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LATVIAN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN THEOLOGY DURING THE GERMAN OCCUPATION, 1941–1944

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The Faculty of Theology at the University of Latvia was liquidated in 1940 by the Soviet Communist regime, but after the beginning of war between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, from June 1941, there was a great hope for re-opening the Faculty of Theology at the University of Riga. However, the situation was not simple. Even though some faculties received a restricted operational permit from the occupation government in the latter part of 1941, the position of the Faculty of Theology hung precariously in the balance.

After some disappointments for the Lutheran Church and theologians, finally after several stages, the faculty could restore its operations. Full-scale operation began in the spring of 1943 and marked the return of the possibility of finishing degrees. The occupational government of Ostland defined the position of the Faculty in the beginning of December 1943 as the Theological College at the University of Riga (Teoloģijas augstskola Rīgas Universitātē). The Faculty could now accept new students. In practice this marked the restoration of the old Faculty, but its new description shows the attitude of the German occupation government towards theology as a science. Also, the earlier Roman Catholic Faculty of Theology was now opened as a special College at the University of Riga.

Eduards Zicāns was elected Dean in the summer of 1943. Of the Faculty's old teachers, exegete Kārlis Kundziņš (Jr), Professor of Practical Theology, Archbishop Teodors Grīnbergs as well as Fēlikss Treijs (Treus), Arnolds Zviņģis, Haralds Biezais, and Leons Čuibe also continued their work. Lecturer Edgars Ķiploks replaced Ludvigs Adamovičs as the head teacher of Church History. It must be said that ever since Professor Adamovičs had been deported in 1941, Ķiploks was the best-known young academic researcher of church history in Latvia. He also served as a librarian in the Theological College. Ģertrūde Alksne served as an assistant (subasistente).

The new teachers, who had been selected to replace those who died or had been deported to Siberia already in 1941, also had a chance to partake in practical academic work between 1943 and 1944. The new members of the Faculty were Jānis Rozentāls, Lecturer of New Testament Exegetics; docents Edgars Bergs and Arturs Siļķe, who specialised in Practical

Theology; and assistant (subasistents) Pēteris Martens. Professor Alberts Freijs was a leading systematic theologian during the German occupation. At the end of 1943, Edmunds Šmits was appointed Docent (Privatdozent) of Systematic Theology.

All in all, there were 39 men and women who graduated from the College of Theology between 1943 and 1944. Three students graduated from the Department of Orthodox Theology at the Theological College in 1943. Also, we must take into account that Aleksandrs Veinbergs and Fricis Ruperts obtained Licentiate degrees in theology in 1943–1944. Kārlis Bilzens and Edmunds Šmits also defended their dissertations in Systematic Theology in the spring of 1943.

Teachers of the Theological College were active writers on ecclesiastical and theological subjects in journals. Also, many of them did scientific work in the shadow of the war. However, the story of the College of Theology at the University of Latvia was short. The Red Army occupied Riga on 13 October 1944. There was no place for a Theological Faculty at the University of Latvia in the newly established Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic.

Introduction

In the interwar period, the question of the academic education of the clergy was very prominent in the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church (LELC). Opinions were divided. In 1925, Kārlis Kundziņš (1850–1937), an honoured Senior Pastor and *Dr. theol. h. c.* emphasised that the training of pastors at the university was a fruit of the Reformation.¹ Also, in the summer of 1942, his son, Professor Kārlis Kundziņš (Jr) (1883–1967), wrote in the newspaper *Baznīcas Ziņas* (Church News) about how the fathers of the Reformation, Luther (Martin Luther, 1483–1546), Melanchthon (Philip Melanchthon, 1497–1560), Zwingli (Huldrych (or Ulrich) Zwingli, 1484–1531) and Calvin (John Calvin, 1509–1564) in their time took education forward, not backwards.²

It is true that the Reformation was strongly connected with universities in the 16th century. After all, both Martin Luther and Philip Melanchthon were professors at the University of Wittenberg, founded in 1502. Andreas Knopken (Andreas Knöpken, 1468–1539), a Reformer in Riga, also received academic education in Germany. However, academic training of pastors was not just the result of the Reformation. Some priests studied in European universities

already in the Middle Ages. In general, the importance and prestige of universities grew greatly in the late Middle Ages. This was due to the birth of the so-called princely state when more and more trained officials were needed in the administration. Likewise, Biblical humanism and the interest of the Renaissance in ancient culture contributed to the expansion of the university institution before the Reformation.³

In Christianity, including some Lutheran churches, the religious community's own model of education of the clergy detached from universities was also well known after the Reformation. As I have demonstrated in my earlier research, the Theological Institute of the LELC functioned in Riga beside the Faculty of Theology at the University of Latvia from 1923 to 1933.⁴ This question about the education of the clergy also became topical during the German occupation of Latvia from 1941 to 1944 because of Nazi Germany's prevailing ideology.

My study deals with the fate of the Faculty of Theology at the University of Riga⁵ and theological research during the German occupation of Latvia from 1941 to 1944. I use the method of history by looking at things chronologically. I use relevant archival sources as well as published material and

literature. I have earlier published an article about the situation of the LELC during the German occupation.⁶ In this article I focus on the status and development of Lutheran theology between 1941 and 1944.

As the background, we must remember that the Soviet occupation of Latvia from 1940 to 1941 also made big changes to the structure of the University of Latvia, founded in 1919. Theology had no place at the University according to Communist ideological goals. Thus, the Department of Theology at the University of Latvia was disbanded on 5 August 1940, at the beginning of the first Soviet occupation. Its teachers were removed from their office and from positions of trust at the University. The Faculty's 180 students were removed from the student registry.⁷ There were also several changes made to the composition of the Faculty's staff during the Second World War. Thus, professors Voldemārs Maldonis (1870–1941) and Jānis Rezevskis (1872–1941) as well as Docent Vilhelms Rozenieks (Johans Ernsts Vilhelms Rozenieks, 1868–1941) died in 1941.⁸ Professors Ludvigs Adamovičs (Ludvigs Ernests Adamovičs, 1884–1942) and Edgars Rumba (1904–1943) were arrested during “the Night of Terror” on 13–14 June 1941 and were then deported to Siberia. The NKVD (People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs) sentenced Adamovičs to death, and he was shot in the Solikamsk area in 1942. Rumba starved to death in a concentration camp in Resjot in 1943.⁹

The fate of the Faculty of Theology at the University of Latvia in German Ostland

After the war broke out between the Soviet Union and Hitler's Germany at the end of June 1941, the Baltic area was soon occupied by Nazi Germany. Any illusions that this meant a return of independence to the Baltic states soon vanished. For Germany, the area was the General District (*General-*

bezirk) of the *Reichskommissariat Ostland*. From the German point of view, the Baltic was a part of the Third Reich, and a presumptuous occupation government rose to control it. The so-called Self-Administration of the Land was established in March 1942. In practice, it was an executive authority with very limited powers. The Balts were generally disappointed in the new socio-political development, even though it did give churches and religious communities greater latitude than the Soviet Union had in 1940–1941. The Balts received a little more freedom to conduct their own internal affairs only after the German army suffered defeats on the Eastern Front.¹⁰

The occupation government of Ostland aimed to create one large university for the whole Baltic region in Tartu. Only special universities could have operated in Riga and Kaunas. Theology would have been confined to educational units outside the universities. This plan was totally unsuitable in comparison to the definitions of operational policy made by the University of Latvia. Already on 1 July 1941, the meeting of the Deans of the University decided to return the University to the structural framework it had operated under before the Soviet occupation of the summer of 1940. The Theological Faculty's faculty restored it to operation on the same day. A short while later the students of theology, who had been removed from the student registry, received their student rights back. Students who had previously studied theology were given the opportunity to complete their studies. Teachers working in the Faculty were now paid.¹¹

On account of the political aims of the Ostland officials regarding education, the University of Latvia was unable to begin full-scale operation in the fall of 1941. Even though some faculties received a restricted operational permit from the occupation government in the latter part of 1941, the position of the Faculty of Theology hung

precariously in the balance. This was especially evident at the beginning of the occupation, as the Baltic-German leader of the Cultural Directorate, Karl von Stricky (1911–1943), opposed the idea of a Theological Faculty.¹² According to the German occupation administration, the former theological faculties of the University of Latvia had to be transferred out of the University. Separate and independent institutes had to be established for the training of the clergy.¹³

The Principal (Rector) of the University of Riga, Mārtiņš Prīmanis (1878–1950), was now caught between two fires when leading theologians absolutely wanted a place at the University of Riga for the Faculty. So, on this occasion, Archbishop and Professor Teodors Grīnbergs (1870–1962) emphasised that the Faculty was an academic educational unit and a part of the University, not a religious institution. In October 1942, the administration of the University attempted to convince the occupation government that the Faculty of Theology should have its own place at the University.¹⁴

It should be noted that the leading Latvian theologians and Archbishop Grīnbergs considered that Lutheran pastors should be trained at the University. As it was mentioned, Dean of the Faculty Kārlis Kundziņš, Jr, stated, in 1942, that the fathers of the Reformation — Luther, Melancton, Zwingli, and Calvin — in their time brought education forward, not backwards.¹⁵ Likewise, at a meeting of the Deans of the University, on 16 November 1942, Pēteris Strods (1892–1960), Dean of the former Roman Catholic Theological Faculty, declared that the church's own seminary could not replace their Faculty, founded in 1938.¹⁶

However, it was not until 1943, after several different stages, that the Faculty could restore its operations. Full-scale operation began in the spring of 1943 and marked the return of the possibility of finishing de-

grees. The occupation government defined the position of the Faculty at the beginning of December 1943 as a College of Theology at the University of Riga. The Faculty could now accept new students. In practice this marked the restoration of the old Faculty, but its new description shows the attitude of the German occupation government towards theology as a science. Also, the earlier Roman Catholic Faculty of Theology was now opened as a special College at the University of Riga.¹⁷ The meeting of the Deans of the University decided, on 15 November 1943, that 40 new students could be taken in to study theology. The Orthodox Department of the College of Theology was allowed to take in altogether 25 students.¹⁸

The Theological College, established in connection with the University of Riga, in practice the Faculty of Theology, was officially opened at the beginning of December 1943. It operated on the property at *Baznīcas iela 5* (Church Street 5), where part of the earlier Faculty had operated. At the solemn opening ceremony, Luther's battle hymn "*Dievs Kungs ir mūsu stiprā pils*" (A Mighty Fortress Is Our God) was sung. Dean Eduards Zicāns (1884–1946) spoke in his introductory speech on the basis of Psalm 100. The nostalgic atmosphere after the difficult Soviet occupation (1940–1941) was undoubtedly heightened by the national anthem of independent Latvia, "*Dievs, svētī Latviju*" (God Bless Latvia), which was sung at the event. At the very beginning, altogether 22 students began their studies at the Theological College.¹⁹

The University of Latvia and its theologians as well had to work under the pressure of Nazi Germany's ideological goals. Thus, at the meeting of deans held on 20 April 1942, the 53rd birthday of Adolf Hitler (1889–1945), Rector Mārtiņš Prīmanis, on behalf of the University, expressed his gratitude to the hero of the day. The records of the meeting tell us of this Nazi German

influence and also of the pressure by the German Ostland regime.

Opening the meeting, in his speech the Rector stressed the outstanding merits of *Führer* Adolf Hitler for *Grossdeutschland* as well as the rest of Europe, Latvia included, in freeing them from the horrors of Bolshevism and thus giving the Latvian people a chance to continue their work in the fields of culture and science. In the concluding part, the Rector expressed deeply felt gratitude on behalf of the University to *Führer* Adolf Hitler for everything that he had done for the benefit of the entirety of humankind and the Latvian people, wishing to the architect of the New Europe endurance and the best success in the rapid achievement of the final victory and creation of the happy cooperation among the nations of Europe.

The deans of the theological faculties, professors K. Kundziņš and P. Strods, also took part in this ceremonial session of the deans.²⁰

It should also be noted that Nazi racism and anti-Semitism were present at the University, regardless of whether Latvian teachers wanted this ideology or not. The Theological College also had a curriculum for Eugenics. A University teacher was not allowed to have a Jewish family background on the parents' or grandparents' side.²¹ So important was it to them that leading theologians were willing to pay that price to make university education for pastors possible. It is difficult to say whether the church's own priestly seminary could have functioned more independently and freely in relation to the prevailing ideology of Nazi Germany, which was, of course, completely anti-Christian.

The College of Theology operated until the end of August 1944, even though the Soviet Red Army had already conquered parts of Latvia by then. The last administrative session of the faculty was held on 2 October 1944 in Liepāja. The Red Army occupied Riga on 13 October 1944. Courland

was under the control of Soviet troops at the beginning of May 1945. There was no place for a Theological Faculty in the University of Latvia under the higher education system of the new Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic.²²

During the Second World War, Professor Kārlis Kundziņš (Jr) first held the position of the Dean of the Faculty of Theology. His successor was Eduards Zicāns, who was elected Dean in the summer of 1943. Of the Faculty's old teachers, Professor of Practical Theology, Archbishop Teodors Grinbergs as well as Fēliks (Fēlikss) Treijs (Treus) (1903–1958), Arnolds Zviņģis (1944–1967) Haralds Biezais (Haralds Teodors Biezais (1909–1995), and Leons Čuibe (1915–2010) also continued their work. Lecturer Edgars Ķiploks (1907–1999) replaced Ludvigs Adamovičs as the head teacher of Church History. It must be said that ever since Professor Adamovičs had been deported in 1941, Ķiploks was the best-known young academic researcher of church history in Latvia. He also served as librarian in the Theological College.²³ *Lic. theol.* Leons Čuibe had been an assistant (*subasistents*) in the Faculty before the Communist takeover, and he was again called to serve as an assistant in 1943. He taught New Testament Greek.²⁴

The only female belonging to the staff of teachers and researchers of the Faculty in the last years of the 1930s was Ģertrūde Alksne (1907–1970). She was appointed as the help of assistant Čuibe taking care of the library in 1937. During the German occupation, she served as an assistant (*subasistente*). Her work was not restricted only to library activities because Dean Kārlis Kundziņš (Jr) wanted to educate Alksne in scientific work.²⁵

The new teachers, who had been selected to replace those who had died or had been deported to Siberia already in 1941, also had a chance to partake in practical academic work between 1943 and 1944.

The new members of the Faculty were Jānis Rozentāls (1904–1997), Lecturer of New Testament Exegetics; docents Edgars Bergs (1878–1968) and Arturs Siļķe (1908–1965) who specialised in Practical Theology; and assistant (*subasistents*) Pēteris Martens (1904–1945).²⁶ Professor Alberts Freijs (1903–1968) was a leading systematic theologian during the German occupation. At the end of 1943, Edmunds Šmits (1902–1984) was appointed Docent (Privatdozent) of Systematic Theology.²⁷

All in all, there were 39 men and women who graduated from the College of Theology between 1943 and 1944. Overall, between 1921 and 1944, a total of 280 students graduated from the Theological Faculty of the University of Latvia. Additionally, it must be noted that during the time when the operation of the Faculty was interrupted, eight students took exams in the Consistory of the LELC, and they were ordained as ministers. Three students graduated from the Department of Orthodox Theology at the Theological College in 1943. Also, we must take into account that Aleksandrs Veinbergs (1905–1991) and Fricis Ruperts (1912–1992) obtained Licentiate degrees in theology in 1943–1944. Kārlis Bilzens (1912–1993) and Edmunds Šmits also defended their dissertations in Systematic Theology in the spring of 1943.²⁸

New theological research in the shadow of the war

Teachers of the Theological College were active writers on ecclesiastical and theological subjects in the main organ of the LELC, *Baznīcas Ziņas*, which was published from 1941 to 1944.²⁹ Dean Edgars Bergs was chief editor of the newspaper.³⁰ Many teachers also actively pursued their scientific research in the shadow of the war. In what follows, I look at the perspectives of this activity.

Despite Kārlis Kundziņš's (Jr) brilliance and his wide contacts, he created no sig-

nificant school of his own during his time in Latvia, which lasted until 1944. The best known of Kundziņš's students was Jānis Rozentāls. He served as the vicar of Ropaži from 1931 to 1944. From 1936 to 1937, he studied in Leipzig, under the tutelage of Johannes Leipoldt (1880–1965) and Albrecht Alt (1883–1956). An even more significant phase for him was his time at Marburg in 1937 where he studied under the tutelage of Rudolf Bultmann (Rudolf Karl Bultmann, 1884–1976). His connection to Bultmann continued afterwards for 40 years, until the death of the latter. During the Second World War, from 1943 to 1944, Rozentāls was a lecturer at the Theological College of Riga.³¹

Rozentāls' dissertation project on the concept of the Spirit (*pneuma*) in the Gospel of John (*Johanneiska formula 'Dievs ir gars' reliģijas vēstures skatījumā*) received its finishing touches under the guidance of Bultmann. However, Rozentāls, who continued the life's work of Kārlis Kundziņš (Jr), never defended his dissertation because it along with all materials were destroyed in a fire in Riga in 1943.³²

Eduards Zicāns continued his research as well. We can mention his article "*Ģermāņu reliģijas pamatlīnijas*" (The main lines of Germanic religion) in *Latvju mēnešraksts* (Latvian Monthly Magazine) in 1944.³³ Zicāns had earlier been well known as a specialist of the ancient Latvian religion. Now he enlarged his competence as a researcher of the history of religion.

The leading systematician, Alberts Freijs, also served as the Secretary of the Theological College (Faculty) in 1943–1944. During the Second World War, he gave lectures on the history of Dogmatics in modern times.³⁴ He also continued his research on Latvian literature from the point of view of religion. He published a long article on Latvian poetic literature from religious-ethical perspectives in 1943. He investigated how a religious-ethical ethos was present in the

Latvian collections of poems published in 1941–1943. Among poets, Leonīds Breikšs (1908–1942) in particular emphasised traditional Christian faith. Generally speaking, many poets wrote about religious matters, but not just from the point of view of Christianity.³⁵ Freijs also began his research on the author Kārlis Skalbe's (1879–1945) religious-ethical world in 1943. It was impossible to publish the study because the Red Army occupied Latvia again in 1944–1945. The manuscript was eventually published only in 2009, edited by Māra Grīnfelde.³⁶

Methodologically, the research connected with Skalbe represented Freijs's earlier research concerning authors. Skalbe, who had a Herrnhutian background, was raised in a house in which his mother's fear of God and his father's biblicism provided the basis for his religious development. In line with Skalbe's thinking, religiosity belonged to a person's soul. He strongly supported the national Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church and appreciated Herrnhutianism which became apparent as a national movement. He criticised the Baltic-German clergy among many others who belonged to the Latvian intelligentsia. Humanism had a firm position in Skalbe's ethics. He believed in the freedom of the human being. The purpose of work was to fulfil one's own duties, which was specifically the thing that brought happiness to him.³⁷

During the German occupation, Haralds Biezais continued his active research.³⁸ His work *Kristiānisms laikmetu maiņā* (Christianity through the Ages) was published in 1943. To a large extent, the book included religious-philosophical reflections of a young and liberal theologian. Dogma was not of the essence in Christianity — love was more important. Christianity was a historical religion and that is why it was continually changing. According to Biezais, Christianity received significant influences from outside during its history. Greek philosophy had influenced

Augustine (Augustine of Hippo (Saint Augustine), 354 AD–430 AD). Aristotle (384 BC–322 BC) had provided stimulus for the theology of Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274). Instead of revealed Biblical truth and dogma, Biezais emphasised the significance of religious experience.³⁹

It is specifically this book in which the influence of Schleiermacher (Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher, 1768–1834), Rudolf Otto (1869–1937), and his highly admired teachers from the University of Latvia, Kārlis Kundziņš (Jr) and Voldemārs Maldonis can be seen. Velga Vēvere sees specifically in this book the influence of Rudolf Otto's work *The Idea of the Holy*. At the same time, she sees deep substantial and structural parallels with the work by the American religious philosopher William James (1842–1910), *The Varieties of Religious Experience*.⁴⁰

In the history of Latvian Evangelical Lutheran theology, Kārlis Bilzens is the one who wandered his own peculiar pathways. Having gained a degree in theology in 1934, Bilzens worked as a pastor in the LELC as well as a teacher of Religion. From 1941 to 1944 he was a parish pastor at St John's Parish in Riga. Alongside his vocation he continued to study Systematic Theology. The years from 1934 to 1936, which he spent studying at the University of Basel, were very important to him. He listened enthusiastically to Karl Barth's (1886–1968) lectures.⁴¹

In contrast to other famed systematians, Bilzens became an advocate of Barth's theology and also his admirer. In his eyes, Barth was a student of Luther and Calvin who had created an antithesis to the New Protestantism of Schleiermacher, Albrecht Ritschl (1822–1889), Adolf [von] Harnack (Carl Gustav Adolf von Harnack, 1851–1930) and Ernst Troeltsch (Ernst Peter Wilhelm Troeltsch, 1865–1923). Bilzens connected New Protestantism with Hitler's Germany and with the so-called German

Christians (Deutsche Christen). In his eyes, the endeavours of certain Latvian theologians to establish a national Latvian Church were manifestations of the same ideology.⁴²

The dissertation of Bilzens, "Jēzus Kristus augšāmcelšanās un tās nozīme kristīgajā ticībā" un cerībā" (Resurrection of Jesus Christ and Its Importance in Christian Faith and Hope), was printed and ready already in 1940, but it was not until 1943 that he got to defend his thesis at the College of Theology of the University of Riga. In his dissertation, Bilzens leaned on the theological principles of Barth, Emil Brunner (Heinrich Emil Brunner, 1889–1966), Karl Heim (1874–1958), and Paul Althaus (1888–1966). He also used citations from Luther. In contrast to this he distanced himself from Adolf von Harnack's positions. He did not approve of von Harnack's opinion of faith in the idea of resurrection that was detached from the concrete accounts of the Gospels. According to Bilzens's dissertation, only God can give knowledge about himself. The transcendent reality of God is isolated from the immanent reality.

"God's transcendent revelation in immanence, in history, as Jesus Christ is raised and resurrected Jesus Christ has revealed himself in the manifestations of the new life reality, is the subject and object of Christ's resurrection Gospel in the New Testament. With a great and reverent joy, the New Testament proclaims us the news of Christ's resurrection, in which faith admits 1) that God has raised (after his death) Jesus Christ (God's transcendent revelation in immanence, in history), therefore the tomb was empty, and 2) that Jesus Christ has showed himself to the disciples, revealing and exposing himself (to ears and eyes) in the new life reality (a manifestation of God's transcendent revelation in immanence, in history)."⁴³

The paradigm of Bilzens' theology was totally different from the paradigm of New

Protestantism. He saw that empirical-scientific research could not deny God's transcendent revelation in the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the manifestations of the resurrected Jesus Christ. Empirical-scientific research can only agree or disagree with the judgment of faith's knowledge about the resurrection of Jesus Christ and manifestations of the resurrected Jesus Christ. These manifestations were God's transcendent revelations in immanent history.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ was a unique event for which no analogy can be found. At the same time, it was ground for Christian hope. The conclusions of Bilzens were connected to his theological paradigm, which had been influenced by Barth. At the same time, his salvation-historical view of the Bible was expressed in them. The Holy Spirit was an actual author of the Bible. Its centre was Christ, who joined the Old and New Testaments together.⁴⁴

Professor Kārlis Kundziņš (Jr) urged Bilzens to continue his research work after the dissertation in order for him to qualify as a Docent (*Privatdozent*) in Practical Theology, but the war interrupted these plans.⁴⁵ The difficult thing, then, is whether he would have had a future as a strong supporter of Barth in a faculty with a different basis of Biblical theology.⁴⁶

Another young systematician who was already mentioned earlier is Edmunds Šmits, whose high school teachers Kārlis Kundziņš (Jr) and Voldemārs Maldonis drew his attention to theology. In his youth Šmits studied at the Latvian Conservatory of Music and Philosophy at the University of Latvia. He received a Master of Philosophy degree in 1931. However, his interest in theology from his time in gymnasium led him to study in the Faculty of Theology. In 1939, he received a Licentiate of Theology degree and became an ordained pastor. In his thesis in Philosophy of Religion, he delved into Nikolai Hartman's (Paul Nicolai

Hartmann, 1882–1950) ethical principles. Šmits continued his studies and defended his doctoral thesis in the spring of 1943 in the College of Theology at the University of Riga.⁴⁷

Among Latvian theologians, Šmits was the most significant scholar in the field of Augustine studies. Already in his student years, he studied the church father Augustine's inner religious growth.⁴⁸ In contrast to Kārlis Bilzens, Šmits critically assessed some theological principles of Karl Barth. He wrote a long book review of Barth's seminal work *Die Lehre vom Wort Gottes Prolegomena zur kirchlichen Dogmatik I–II* (1932–1938) for the journal *Ceļš* (Way) in 1940. He did not deny Barth's significance for the history of the church and for theology. However, this did not prevent the Latvian philosopher of religion from examining individually different aspects of Barth's theology. According to Šmits, Barth did not define to what extent dogmatic theology as a science was descriptive and to what extent it was normative. Šmits saw an influence of Calvin in Barth's theology of scriptures.⁴⁹

The dissertation of Šmits, "Diskursīvie dievatziņas meklējumi Augustīna I. perioda darbos (386–391)" (Discursive Quest for the Knowledge of God in the works of Augustine: The 1st Period (386–391)), was defended publicly in the spring of 1943. However, the dissertation had already been finished for some time before the Soviet occupation of Latvia in 1940. The dissertation has never been printed. The only copy of this typewritten document can be found in the Library of the University of Latvia.⁵⁰

Šmits's sources were the Latin works of Augustine. The research was concerned with Augustine's philosophy of religion in his early years. In broad terms, the research was connected with the synthesis of faith and reason. Šmits examined Augustine's positions on how human reason could gradually find God by means of conscious reasoning, on

the one hand, and how much human reason is able to understand about the eternal and real essence of God, on the other. The dissertation was concerned with the relation of faith and human reason, which is important in Augustine's thinking. In the theology of the young Augustine, faith was a necessary requirement for perceiving the highest reality (*credo ut intelligam*). At the same time, a human being needed at least some understanding in order for faith to come into being (*intelligo ut credam*). Šmits did not seek an easy synthesis. He sought a formula that could locate both principles perfectly within all special circumstances.⁵¹

Epilogue: Theology in Exile and in the ghetto

Of the 243 pastors who served in the LELC in 1944, 21 (almost 9%) had graduated from "the old" Faculty of Theology in Tartu; 184 (almost 76%) had graduated from Latvia's own Faculty of Theology; and 27 (11%) had been trained in the Church's theological institute. In addition to this, 11 ministers (almost 5%) had studied at the university, but had not finished their studies. This meant that at the end of the Second World War, around 80% of the clergy had been trained to some extent in their own Faculty of Theology, and almost 90% had obtained academic training at that time.⁵²

In the fall of 1944, the majority of the Faculty fled west. Leons Čuibe and Haralds Biezais left for Sweden, the other refugees for Germany. Those who remained in the Latvian SSR were Albert Freijs, who had failed in his attempts to escape, and Arnolds Zviņģis, Arturs Siļķe, and Pēteris Martens.⁵³ Everyone except Zviņģis was arrested between 1944 and 1948. Because he had served in the German army, Pēteris Martens was sentenced to death in 1945. Siļķe was condemned to a labour camp as an "anti-Soviet" person in 1946, and Freijs was imprisoned in 1948.⁵⁴ They were both freed

in the late 1950s. After the Second World War, they continued as pastors in the Soviet Latvia and also, they both taught at the Church seminary. Freijs was also active in the research field, and he continued his research focused on the religious world of Latvian authors. Later, after the collapse of Communism, many of his texts were published in Riga. In the 1960s, Freijs also belonged to the leading staff of the LELC; he was even an Acting Archbishop in 1968 just before his death.⁵⁵

Those theologians who had fled west served as pastors and academic scholars in Sweden, Germany, and the United States. The theological heritage of the University of Latvia from the interwar period had been split in two.

The Latvian theological tradition continued in exile by the former teachers of the Theological Faculty. Also, a new generation of theologians has grown up in exile. Eduards Zicāns died in Germany already in 1946. Teodors Grīnbergs served as Archbishop of the LELC in exile until his death in 1962. The former Dean of the Faculty, Professor Kārlis Kundziņš (Jr), was internationally well known and also a largely well-known personality among exile Latvians. He served as pastor in Seattle and later as Archbishop of the LELC in exile after Grīnbergs from 1962 to 1965. He died in 1967. Kundziņš also wrote memoirs in two volumes in the 1960s.⁵⁶

Edgars Bergs served a short time as the leading person of the Department of Theology in the Faculty of Philosophy at the Baltic University in Exile, which was founded by Baltic exiles at the end of 1945 in Hamburg. This exile university operated from 1946 to 1949.⁵⁷ Later, Bergs served as pastor and Dean in the service of the LELC in exile in Great Britain. He also published some devotional texts. It is very interesting that just Bergs was the only Lutheran pastor who was invited to the coronation of Queen

Elisabeth II (1953) at Westminster Abbey.⁵⁸ Feliks Treijs (Felixss Treus), the nephew of Kārlis Kundziņš (Jr), moved to Germany in 1944. In 1950, he emigrated to the USA. He served a short period as a teacher in Greenville College in 1953–1954 and after that in the Latvian Bible translation service. He died in 1958.⁵⁹

After the Second World War, Haralds Biezais lived in Sweden. His scholarly interest was later directed more and more to the field of comparative religion, although in many ways he was a multi-instrumentalist in theology. Biezais defended his Doctorate in Philosophy in Upsala in 1956. He later became a docent at Uppsala University and also held the position of professor.

Biezais' literary production was exceptionally extensive and varied, and has been published in several languages. This Latvian scholar of comparative religion, who finally became internationally known, was a person who always expressed his views courageously. From 1970 to 1978, Biezais worked in Finland as a professor of comparative religion at Åbo Akademi. He was made an honorary doctor of theology by the University of Helsinki in 1980. Biezais' scholarly career as a theologian and comparative religionist could be characterised with the classical saying *per aspera ad astra*.⁶⁰

Jānis Rozentāls and his family fled to Germany in the autumn of 1944, and from there to the United States in 1950. His academic career reached its peak in the United States after the Second World War, since he served as a professor at the Northwestern Lutheran Theological Seminary (now Luther Seminary) in St. Paul, Minnesota, from 1950 to 1974. He had broad international contacts in the international academic exegetical community.⁶¹

The professor, who was linguistically exceptional, mastered nine languages. Rozentāls held Bible lessons at the Third

General Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) in Minneapolis in 1957.⁶²

Rozentāls, who began his career as a theologian as a student of Kārlis Kundziņš (Jr) and Rudolf Bultmann in the interwar period, increasingly moved into the line of the Biblical conception of salvation as he grew older. Exegetic knowledge alone was not enough to open the Bible as the Word of God. Faith was necessary. He stated to a group of Latvians who visited him in his last summer of 1997: "In no way have I denied God and the Saviour Jesus Christ."⁶³

Kārlis Bilzens was one of those Latvian pastors who ran away from the Red Army and went to the West in 1944. First, he served as the director of the social welfare programme with the LWF in U.S.-occupied Germany. Bilzens moved to the United States in 1950 and was a church pastor in Minnesota. In addition, he taught Philosophy, Religion, and languages at Concordia College and at Augsburg College and Theological Seminary in Minneapolis. He also continued his literary activity and scientific work during his exile. Bilzens lived in the Washington (DC) area after 1957. From the early 1960s, he wrote and lectured on Latvian church history and also made trips to the Soviet Socialistic Republic of Latvia, Latvian SSR.⁶⁴

Kārlis Bilzens' travels to Soviet Latvia caused controversies in the LELC in exile, which was very anti-communist. He also had other tensions with Arnolds Lūsis (1908–1993), who served as Archbishop of the church in exile from 1966 to 1992. Bilzens was in the Archbishop's election of the LELC in exile as a contender to Lūsis in 1965, but narrowly lost the election. Theologically and ecclesiastically independent, Bilzens lost his rights to serve as pastor in the Latvian exile church in early 1973.⁶⁵

Edmunds Šmits was among those Latvian pastors who joined the wave of refugees billowing towards the West in the autumn

of 1944. Šmits settled first in Germany and taught at the Baltic University in Hamburg. In 1950, he moved to the United States of America. He managed to get a teaching position and served as Professor at St. Paul's Lutheran Seminary in Minnesota until 1972.⁶⁶

When the Soviet Red Army was approaching Latvia in the autumn of 1944, Edgars Ķiploks joined the enormous wave of refugees fleeing to Germany. He served at first in Berlin in 1944, organising the work of the Latvian parishes in exile there, and, for a short time, as the secretary of Archbishop Teodors Grīnbergs. Later, Ķiploks lived in Augustdorf near Detmold, serving the Latvian refugees as their minister. After 1948, the LWF was his employer, as he continued his work among the refugees. Ķiploks emigrated to the United States in 1950. After the Second World War, Ķiploks became a preserver and developer of the Latvian church history tradition in exile. He had a part in creating the Archive of Latvian Church History (ALCH), which since 1992 has been in Chicago. He published actively into his old age.⁶⁷

Leons Čuibe continued his studies in Sweden and obtained a licentiate degree in Philosophy in 1964. He worked for the Uppsala University Library in various positions until 1980.⁶⁸ Čuibe published articles and small booklets in which he highlighted the problematic situation of the Lutheran Church in Soviet Latvia. These booklets brought the Soviet religious policy in Latvia during the Cold War period to the attention of the West.⁶⁹ Thus, the problematic situation of the LELC in the Latvian SSR became better known internationally. Of course, Čuibe was not the only one who wrote this kind of real information about Soviet religious policy.

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LATVIJAS EVAŅĢĒLISKI LUTERISKĀ TEOLOĢIJA VĀCIJAS OKUPĀCIJAS LAIKĀ, 1941–1944

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Kopsavilkums

Atslēgvārdi: *Vācijas okupācija, teoloģija, Ostlande, Rīgas Universitāte*

Padomju komunistu režīms 1940. gadā slēdza Latvijas Universitātes Teoloģijas fakultāti, bet, kad 1941. gada jūnijā sākās karš starp nacistisko Vāciju un Padomju Savienību, bija lielas cerības, ka Teoloģijas fakultāte atkal sāks darboties. Tomēr situācija nebija vienkārša. Neraugoties uz to, ka dažas Universitātes fakultātes 1941. gada otrajā pusē saņēma no okupācijas valdības atļauju ierobežotai darbībai, Teoloģijas fakultātes liktenis karājās mata galā.

Pēc vilšanās, ko šī situācija sagādāja luterāņu Baznīcai un teologiem, un pēc vairākkārtīgām pūlēm fakultāte galu galā varēja atsākt darbību. Pilnvērtīga darbība atsākās 1943. gada pavasarī, tas deva iespēju pabeigt zinātnisko grādu iegūšanu. 1943. gada decembra sākumā Ostlandes okupācijas valdība definēja fakultātes statusu — tā kļuva par Teoloģijas augstskolu Rīgas Universitātē. Beidzot Teoloģijas fakultāte varēja uzņemt studentus. Praksē tas nozīmēja iepriekšējās fakultātes atjaunošanu, tomēr tās jaunais apraksts liecināja par Vācijas okupācijas valdības attieksmi pret teoloģiju kā zinātņi. Arī agrāk pastāvošā Romas Katoļu teoloģijas fakultāte darbību atsāka kā speciāla Latvijas Universitātes koledža.

Par Teoloģijas fakultātes dekānu 1943. gada vasarā ievēlēja Eduardu Zicānu. No fakultātes iepriekšējiem mācībspēkiem darbu turpināja ekseģēts Kārlis Kundziņš (Jr), praktiskās teoloģijas profesors arhibīskaps Teodors Grīnbergs, kā arī Fēlikss Treijs (*Treus*), Arnolds Zviņģis, Haralds Biezais un Leons Čuibe. Lektors Edgars Ķiploks nomainīja Ludvigu Adamoviču un kļuva par galveno baznīcas vēstures pasniedzēju. Jāuzsver, ka kopš profesora Adamoviča deportācijas 1941. gadā Ķiploks bija vislabāk zināmais jaunais akadēmiskais baznīcas vēstures zinātnieks. Viņš arī strādāja par bibliotekāru Teoloģiskajā koledžā. Ģertrūde Alksne bija subasistente.

Jaunie pasniedzēji, kuriem bija jāaizvieto mirušos vai jau 1941. gadā uz Sibīriju deportētos mācībspēkus, varēja sākt akadēmisko darbību starp 1943. un 1944. gadu. Jaunie fakultātes darbinieki bija Jaunās Derības ekseģētikas pasniedzējs Jānis Rozentāls, docenti Edgars Bergs un Arturs Siļķe, kuri specializējās praktiskajā teoloģijā, un asistents Pēteris Martens. Profesors Alberts Freijs Vācijas okupācijas laikā bija vadošais sistemātiskās teoloģijas speciālists. 1943. gada beigās Edmundu Šmitu nozīmēja par Sistemātiskās teoloģijas docentu (*Privatdozent*).

Kopumā laikā no 1943. līdz 1944. gadam Teoloģijas koledžu beidza 39 vīrieši un sievietes. Trīs studenti 1943. gadā beidza Teoloģijas koledžas Pareizticīgo teoloģijas katedru. 1943.–1944. gadā Aleksandrs Veinbergs un Fricis Ruperts ieguva teoloģijas licenciāta grādu. Kārlis Bilzens un Edmunds Šmits 1943. gada pavasarī aizstāvēja disertācijas sistemātiskajā teoloģijā. Teoloģiskās koledžas mācībspēki daudz rakstīja žurnālos par baznīcas un teoloģijas tēmām. Vairāki no viņiem kara ēnā strādāja zinātnisko darbu. Tomēr Rīgas Universitātes Teoloģijas koledžas stāsts bija īss. Sarkanā Armija okupēja Rīgu 1944. gada 13. oktobrī. Jaunajā Latvijas Padomju Sociālistiskajā Republikā Latvijas Universitātes Teoloģijas fakultātei vieta neatradās.