

INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF THE BALTIC CHURCH-HISTORIANS

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Resume

Like any other cultural and artistic processes in the Nazi-occupied Latvia, the same as in Estonia and Lithuania, church art may not be judged without considering the "Terrible Year" and the repeated Soviet occupation at the end of World War II.

The most essential features characterising this stage: 1. rebirth of church and cultural activities in this period, in a way a succession of the prewar processes which were interrupted by the occupational power in 1944-1945; 2. growth of significance of cultural and artistic life in wartime conditions under relatively weak control by the Nazis.

Right after establishing of the Nazi administration some repair work was begun in several Lutheran churches damaged during military operations, among them St. John's Church in the City of Cesis and Vainode-Bata Church.

Several Lutheran churches in 1942-1944 acquired new altarpieces – *Jesus Christ Curing the Sick* by Indrikis Zeberins (Kemerī Church, 1943), *Christ Blessing the Door* (Vangazi Church, 1942) and *Christ among the People* (Pale Church, 1943) by August Annus, *Jesus Teaching the People* (Worship House of the Congregation of Resurrection in Riga, 1944). The postwar fate of some of these is unknown, and it is assumed they have not survived. The altarpieces, like some other smaller works of church art, are a testimony to succession of prewar processes in the Latvian church art; their most typical feature is portraying the image of Jesus and his deeds in the Latvian countryside setting and society, however, the authors retained the most characteristic features of their artistic style.

It is surprising that in the war-time situation with limited access to many materials quite a few churches obtained paintings on glass and stained glass. Baumanis-Fromhold's building glasswork company in Riga was especially active, it produced several stained glass windows for St. Anna's Church in Liepāja and started a large scale project of five stained glass paintings after Sigismunds Vidberg's sketches for Straupe Lutheran Church, of which only four were produced. Alongside traditional church art themes there was one dedicated to the people who were deported on 14 June, 1941, titled "Window of the Deported", which was actually put up only in 1996. One of the last works of wartime church art bearing memorial features, is a glass painting after the sketch of the painter Oscars Vindedzis for Jesus Church in Riga, which was consecrated on 18 June, 1944; unfortunately, it has not survived. A few more cooperation projects by Sigismunds Vidbergs and Karlis Fromholds failed – stained glass for St. Unity Church in Jelgava and for Luther's Church in Liepāja.

In the time when themes related to the dramatic events of the epoch were depicted only in isolated cases (artists preferred to evade them) and when implementation of grand scale projects was eliminated almost entirely, Lutheran churches were practically the most significant clients; as the result one of the most essential works

of art of this period was created, it was the altarpiece by Annus Annus „*God, Help Us, We are Drowning!*” – an embodiment of the tragedy of war and uncertainty about the future, (Aizkraukle Church, 1943)

Less information is available on works of art ordered by and produced for the Catholic and Orthodox congregations.

These processes were interrupted for a long time by reestablishing of the Soviet power; during this time the professional Latvian artists practically did not produce any works of church art. Some of the artists who were involved in church art, like A. Annus, J. Jegers, S. Vidbergs, emigrated from Latvia before the end of the war, while the ones who stayed, in the conditions of the shrinking number of private clients, were obliged to paint portraits of the ones included in the Soviet “iconostasis” and front-rank workers, or make posters for Soviet state holidays in bright red colour as the basic feature.

INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF THE BALTIC CHURCH- HISTORIANS

Iļona Miežīte

Resume

Several Latvian classical poets, actively writing in the 2nd half of the 19 century and the 1st half of the 20 century, originally come from families involved in Brethren congregations. Almost none of them actively participated in them later, however, childhood impressions left their impact on the human consciousness. To validate assumptions of these impacts, it is important to clarify the specific features that differentiate the Hernhutism from the conventional church. Hernhutism focuses on one's personal link with God, emotionality as a value of faith, empathising Christ's sufferings (the cult of suffering and tears stems from here), aspiration to pure-mindedness; accented radical denial of the worldly life; the feeling of God's presence in the nature, which is rooted in folklore, – these are characteristic features of the Latvian Brethren congregations. Juris Neikens was born into a Hernhutian family, but later turned away from the Brethren congregation and accepted the conventional Lutheranism. In his early poetry he put emphasis on God's conception into one's heart, tears, pure-mindedness. Later these motifs disappear, and the „correct” doctrines take their place. Parents of Jānis Poruks were ardent believers in a Brethren congregation. His spiritual way is very complicated, sometimes going astray not only from the Brethren congregation, but from Christianity as such. In his early period poetry there is a radical contrast between getting to know the worldly pleasures and compassion for the lost pure-mindedness. His philosophical pursuits alienate him from the Brethren congregation, he protests against God and His order of the Universe. Having come to a deadlock, Poruks searches the way back to the lost faith of the childhood. The cult of tears is characteristic of him. Matīss Kaudzīte stayed in the Brethren congregation, yet he criticised the shortcomings of its period of decline. In his first poems we see the denial of worldly pleasures, the ideal of pure-mindedness, emotional religious experience. Later he sharply criticised sticking to old customs. Kārlis Skalbe's mother attended the Brethren meetings, however their impact on the family is less significant. In his youth Skalbe turned away from religion, however we see an indirect impression of the pure-minded ideal. Later he depicts his return to God as a shattering emotional experience, God's presence in the nature, motifs of his spiritual way and pure-mindedness. Father of Edurads Veidenbaums was a home preacher, but the conception of life of the Brethren congregation is alien to Veidenbaum's sharp philosophical mind. However, he emphasises the contrast between the insignificance of the obsolescent world and the magnificence of eternity. The spiritual atmosphere in the presence of the Brethren congregations has left an impression on poets from families not directly involved in Brethren congregations. Fricis Bārda is a poet whose poetry is characteristic of personal experience of God's presence, emotionality of religious life, indirect advancing of pure-minded ideal. Augusts Saulietis – shattering experience of repentance, tears, motif of one's spiritual way, the presence of a dream in faith. This spiritual atmosphere has left an indirect impression on the whole Latvian classical poetry tradition.

INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF THE BALTIC CHURCH-HISTORIANS

**Mag. Theol. Priit Rohtmets
University of Tartu**

Resume

The idea of organising professional meetings among theologians in the Baltic countries and Scandinavia was on the agenda already in the beginning of 1920s. The impulse came from the Theological Faculty members of the University of Latvia. The first meeting took place in Helsinki 1927. Initially the main task of the conferences was not so much to evolve a scientific dialogue, but to analyse and to draw parallels between different syllabi in various state universities. At that time the Latvians were developing a curriculum for students of theology. Later the focus broadened and the presentations on theological topics were also included in the agenda. In Helsinki there were participants from four countries: from Latvia, Estonia, Sweden and Finland. The information about the first conference spread quickly and starting from the second meeting, which was held two years later in Riga, professors from two more universities - Königsberg and Uppsala - took part. The second meeting was the most pompous one, it was also the last harmonious and friendly meeting as before the next symposium differences emerged and overshadowed nearly all the conferences that took place during the next decade. The question concerning new members was the main source for conflict. The Estonians and Latvians opposed the idea that the German-minded Herder Institute in Riga and the Luther Akademie in Tartu should be invited to join the conference. When the Estonians succeeded in keeping the Luther Academy away from the participants list, Herder Institute was unexpectedly supported by the University of Königsberg. In 1932 the next conference took place in Tartu (key topic: Christianity and the World), and was of interest for several ecumenical organisations. It was resounded in various magazines, many professors all over Europe asked for information and even participated. Although the deans of the Estonian and Latvian theological faculties had managed to keep Herder Institute away from the conference, the question whether new faculties should be accepted to join the conference, remained on the agenda. After temperamental argument, the question was put to the vote and, surprisingly, Herder Institute supporters won the vote.

The next conference, taking place on 22–25 June in 1934, was hosted by the University of Königsberg. Among others, the Herder Institute was invited, while the evangelical theologians of Kaunas University were not. It seemed like a political decision, which was also suggested by the Latvians who were drawing attention to the political changes taking place in Germany. Because of that the theologians from Riga and Tartu University decided to boycott the meeting. However, the conference itself was very thoroughly thought out. For the first time, presentations were followed by discussions. Presentations mainly dealt with teaching and tutoring questions, including issues such as church work and theology, scientific theology and practical exegesis. The question about member faculties was again debated. It was promised to invite the University of Kaunas to the next conference. However, the conflict between the participants remained in the air. This hampered the planning of next meeting. Since the Herder Institute had already participated once, it was also invited to the next conference which took place in Turku. The danger of recurring of the situation of 1934 forced the organisers to act. Since Riga University refused to participate, all the rest of the deans compiled a common letter asking the Latvians to review their

decision and take part in the conference after all. The Turku conference organised by Åbo Academy could be considered a success as through negotiations the consensus among participants was restored. All invited universities were represented. Considering the location, the emphasis was on questions related to Finland, including the rights of the Swedish minority. Although consensus was reached, there was no time to express it before the Second World War.

In conclusion, it has to be noted that the conferences of the theologians of the Baltic and Nordic countries were seriously affected by one of the main sources of conflict between the two world wars – namely relations between nations and attitudes towards minorities. The conferences in general should be considered more or less successful, since they represented the first attempt to enhance cooperation. Establishing a dialogue, the possibility of a more personal communication as compared to larger conferences meant that many participants got answers to their specific questions and were able to share their thoughts with their closest neighbours.

INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF THE BALTIC CHURCH-HISTORIANS

Livonian liturgy tradition 16 – 18 centuries.

Dr.theol. Darius Petkunas
University of Klaipeda

Resume

The opening years of the Reformation in Livonia were marked by attempts of radical reformers to impose reform by brute force. Therefore Dr. Johann Briesmann was called from Königsberg to establish the Reformation on conservative principles laid down by Dr. Martin Luther. It was on the basis of these principles that Briesmann had created an *Artikel der Ceremonien und anderer Kirchenordnung, etc.*, for the use in Prussia. He produced an almost identical liturgical order for the city of Riga. It was published in 1530, in Rostock, under the title: *Kurts Ordnung des Kirchendiensts, etc.* In 1533 Briesmann's liturgy became the official liturgy in the leading cities of the Livonian Confederation. Its provisions were augmented in editions published in 1537, 1548, 1559, 1567, 1574, and 1592. Briesmann's work continued to serve as the church official liturgy after the arrival of King Gustavus Adolphus and his Swedish army in Riga in 1521. At that time there was no official agenda in force in the Livonian Church. The first agenda was drawn up by Superintendent Hermann Samson and came into use no later than 1632. The first demonstrable church order for Livonia appeared in 1668, authored by Johannes Gezelius, Sr., superintendent of the Livonian church from 1660 till 1664, and later the bishop of Åbo (Turku). In many respects it was similar to the Swedish church order of that day, but in Livonia there was strong resistance to it and it was never accepted. After the publication of the new Swedish church order of 1686, King Charles XI pressed the Livonians and his other foreign territories to accept its provision. The agenda which followed the principles of the new church order appeared in 1693, under the title of *Handbok, ther vti är författat, etc.* At first the Livonians resisted to it, but in 1696 they agreed to its provisional use. In 1708, at the insistence of the new King Charles XII, the agenda was officially adopted and appeared in both German and Latvian language editions. From that time on Livonian worship was in fact Swedish worship, transferred across the Baltic by the overlords of the Baltic nations, and translated into the Baltic tongues. It remained the official liturgy of the Livonian Church, until it was replaced by the new Russian Imperial Lutheran Church order and the agenda of 1832.

INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF THE BALTIC CHURCH-HISTORIANS

**Andrei Sõtšov, Master of Theology
Student of Doctorate in the University of Tartu**

Resume

The aim of the paper is to examine the liquidation process of the orthodox congregations in the Estonian SSR in 1954–1964 and to explore its backgrounds and causes. The main issues of the research can be summarised with the following questions: What were the reasons and factors motivating the closure of the orthodox churches in this period, as the result of which the Estonian Eparchy lost 31 congregation and one monastery representation? Further: Was the liquidation of the congregations a result of their natural decay or of the stiffening of the religion policy of the Soviet Government? How did the liquidation of the congregations of the Estonian Eparchy take place (pleas, methods, scenarios)? The analysis is based upon archive materials to be found in Estonia and Russia, the monographs discussing the issue, and partly upon periodicals from the period under research. To achieve the planned results the author has used the chronological-pragmatic method and has tried thereby to ascertain in every single case of a liquidated congregation if this was the result of violent pressure from the government or it was caused by other factors (like secularisation, decrease of the number of congregation members, unwillingness to pay the state taxes). The results of the research showed that the liquidation process of the congregations could be divided into two main phases: the apex of the “thaw” (1954–59) and the period of the stiffening of the soviet religion policy (1960–64). During the first period the liquidation of congregations was almost nonexistent. Only three congregations were closed in the eparchy (due to the initiative of the local bishop and the small number of the congregation members) and the same number of congregations applied for the official permit for reopening. The second period can be characterized as a mass campaign of the liquidation, during which 28 congregations and a monastery representation were closed. The closure of churches during this period often had a violent nature and was initiated by a representative of the CROC. There were several methods for this: the representative and the bishop persuaded the congregation members by facing them with the fact that the congregation was officially already liquidated. Further, by an artificial increase of state taxes in 1963 and through reorganisation of the urban space, etc. It was planned to disguise the real, discriminating reasons and to present the liquidation process as a natural “vanishing” of the congregations and an alienation from religion. These arguments were much more acceptable for the Khrushchev’s ideology of building communism.

INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF THE BALTIC CHURCH-HISTORIANS

**Tomi Alasalmi, Master of Arts, Master of Theology
University of Helsinki**

Resume

The Herrnhutian pietism was the most remarkable and influential religious movement in the Baltic in the 18th century. The role of the pietism increased significantly after the Swedish rule. The Moravian Church had world-wide missionary enterprises and the influence of this movement spread rapidly beyond Germany to Eastern Europe including the Baltic countries.

After the Great Nordic War the Baltic States became the Baltic provinces of Russia. It meant a rather late renaissance of the feudal system in the Baltic provinces. During these social conditions the first Herrnhutian missionaries came to the Baltic region in 1729-1730. Count Zinzendorf himself visited Riga and Tallinn in 1736. The great Herrnhutian spiritual awakening followed in the turn of 1730's and 1740's.

The Herrnhutian movement offered new forms of Christian faith which were different from the Lutheran church and from the local parishes. Pastors were in a way part of the Baltic German identity and belonged to their social class. The Herrnhutian missionaries lived closer to the peasants and learned their language and their way of life. The Herrnhutian movement had strong social influence and social consciousness. The Herrnhutian movement of the peasants also demanded social improvement. These demands were the primary reason behind the prohibition of the movement in 1742. This argument needs further research, but the history of the early Herrnhutian awakening is much more many-sided than it is often admitted; and it forms the basis for the later forming of the national awakening movement.

INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF THE BALTIC CHURCH-HISTORIANS

**Mag. Theol. Atko Rimmel
Estonia**

Resume

This paper deals with the history of religion and atheism in Estonia during the Soviet era and is based on the materials of ECP (Estonian Communist Party) archives. It describes the emergence, evolution and organizational background of new Soviet rites in Estonia during the anti-religious struggle from 1960s to the end of eighties 1980s.

The methods and nuances of atheist struggle varied among the republics of the Soviet Union. Possibly because the Baltic republics were a shop-window of the Soviet Union for the rest of the world, atheist struggle here took different forms. Using new scientific approaches – history and sociology of atheism – the conclusion was made that the connection of more than 90% of Estonians with the Lutheran Church was based only on rites and not a deep inner belief. This is why the rituals of everyday life became the main battlefield between atheism and religion, and the first task of atheism was to break religious traditions.

Birth, adulthood, marriage, death – for centuries the celebration of all these occasions was a “monopoly” of church. To fight against it, new “Soviet” equivalents had to be worked out, supported by the state and Communist Party. The Estonian Communist Party (ECP) had a coordinative position in this, practical work was carried out by ECP’s branches and dependent organizations.

After the first local success the activity was focused on masses. Religious celebrations were replaced by new ones, and even completely new rites were established which were often overpolitized and the main purpose of which was to create a stronger connection between citizens and the state. The first success of the new rites was registered in the middle of the 1960s.

In developing new rites Estonia gained a leading position among the other republics and the innovations of the Estonian atheists were several times set as an example for all over the Soviet Union. Recent studies show that emphasis on new rites was the keyelement in fighting religion – Estonia is now one of the most secular countries in Europe.

INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF THE BALTIC CHURCH-HISTORIANS

**Dr.theol., Dr. phil Jouko Talonen,
University of Helsinki**

Resume

Professor Ludvigs Adamovičs (1884–1942) was one of the most prominent figures in independent Latvia (1918–1940), for he contributed to Latvia's social and cultural life both as a theologian and as an influential personality. He became an Assistant Professor of Church History in the University of Latvia in 1920. He held this office from 1920 to 1929, and acted as Professor from 1929 to 1940. In addition, Adamovičs twice served as Dean of the Department of Theology (1927-1929 and 1937-1939), and as Vice-Chancellor of the University (1929-1931 and 1933–1936). He served his home country as Minister for Education from 1934 to 1935. Adamovičs was also a member of several social and cultural organizations, taking part in various conferences and events throughout Europe.

When we regard Ludvigs Adamovičs, it is important to remember that he had become the leading Latvian church history researcher by the end of the 1920s. Adamovičs' contribution was of great significance. He published general surveys of the church history of Latvia, and a general church history in 1927. Adamovičs' defended his dissertation 'The Church of Livland and the Latvian Peasant 1710-1740', (*Vidzemes baznīca un latviešu zemnieks 1710-1740*) in 1929. He was also a researcher of Livland Herrnhutism and Ancient Latvian religion. Adamovičs did research work in the Herrnhut Archives (Arhiv der Brüder Unität) in 1928, 1929 and 1939. Altogether he published eight scholarly studies on Herrnhutism in Livland and some newspaper articles between 1927 and 1938. Adamovičs was one of the Latvian scholars who also researched the ancient Latvian religion, Latvian religious practices and habits in the pre-Christian period.

We can say that Professor Adamovičs has created a new national interpretation of Latvian Church history. Previous research concerning Latvian Church history dealt with the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Livland and in Courland. This research done by Baltic Germans had of course paid some attention to so called non-German element. But now Adamovičs took the Latvians as the starting point for his observations. He interpreted Church history from a national viewpoint.

The scope of Adamovičs writings is exceptionally wide, ranging from academic monographs and minor treatises to textbooks on religions, from newspaper and journal articles to studies, reports and speeches. Besides appearing in Latvian, his works have been published in German, English, French, Estonian, Swedish and Slovak. Adamovičs' bibliography numbers as many as 1020 items, including the Acts and Statutes he signed as the Minister for Education from 1934 to 1935.

However, the breakthrough in Latvian Church history writing and in national interpretation occurred in 1933 when Adamovičs' completed and printed dissertation was published. Adamovičs' work was a massive monograph of 659 pages. The

sources for work were mainly in the Archive of Historical Collections of the State of Latvia, and materials located in Germany.

In this bulky monograph, Adamovičs first researched the “old Livland” administration of the Swedish church. Then he tackled the subject of Livland after the Great Northern War and clarified its developmental stage in a severely destroyed area. He pointed out that the war had caused destruction and killed people in the area of Livland. After that Adamovičs clarified the socio-economic position of the clergy, schools, religious literature, and the development of parish life at “grassroots level”. Then he described the influence of Lutheran customs and culture on the home life of the people in the same area. The monograph ends with a lengthy chapter where Adamovičs researched the arrival of the Herrnhutian movement in Livland.