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The Baltic Germans and the parliamentary Republic of Latvia: Higher education context

Niemcy bałtyccy w Republice Łotewskiej w dobie demokracji parlamentarnej: kontekst szkolnictwa wyższego

Celem artykułu jest ocena roli Niemców bałtyckich w łotewskim systemie szkolnictwa wyższego w okresie międzywojennym w parlamentarnej Łotwy ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem roli ideologii narodowej państwa łotewskiego w Uniwersytecie Łotewskim (UL). Niemcy bałtyccy to specyficzna i wyjątkowa grupa etniczna w historii regionu bałtyckiego, bez której nie byłoby możliwe dzisiejsze łotewskie szkolnictwo wyższe. Łotewskie szkolnictwo wyższe rozpoczęło się od założonego w 1862 r. przez Niemców Riga Polytechnikum, które w pierwszej połowie lat dwudziestych XX wieku zostało przekształcone w UŁ. Na tej uczelni po raz pierwszy rozpoczęło się szkolnictwo wyższe w języku łotewskim. Jednak ze względu na dziedzictwo historyczne obok języka łotewskiego na uczelni używano języków niemieckiego i rosyjskiego. Niniejszy artykuł oparty jest na dokumentach pochodzących z Łotewskiego Państwowego Archiwum Historycznego Łotewskiego Archiwum Narodowego (LNA LVVA) i Muzeum Uniwersytetu Łotewskiego. Ponadto autor wykorzystał bogatą literaturę przedmiotu na temat historii Niemców bałtyckich. Autor przybliży genezę szkolnictwa wyższego w Łotwa i utworzenie Uniwersytetu Łotewskiego. Jednocześnie próbuje oszacować straty i zyski Niemców bałtyckich w Republice Łotewskiej oraz określić stosunek państwa łotewskiego do ich obecności w szkolnictwie wyższym.

Słowa kluczowe: Niemcy bałtyckie, szkolnictwo wyższe, Uniwersytet Łotewski, mniejszości narodowe, Politechnika Ryska/Instytut Politechniczny w Rydze, Uniwersytet w Dorpacie/Uniwersytet w Tartu

The Origins of the Latvian Higher education

Higher education in Latvia, and to some extent in Estonia, has been influenced by the Germans, who, in the 18th-19th centuries under the German born Russian Empress Catherine II, settled in the vast western part of the Russian Empire, establishing German communities in the Baltic, St Petersburg, the Volga, the Black Sea and Transcaucasia.¹ It should be noted that the Baltic Germans were not the only made up of immigrant Germans, but also of Germans who had lived for generations on the territory of modern Latvia and Estonia since the 13th–16th centuries Livonian Order states. Although Catherine II was born in Stettin, Pomerania (modern Szczecin in north-western Poland), the University of Dorpat (UD), which stopped functioning due to Great Nordic war (1700–1721), was not revived during Catherine II reign because of Russia's centralisation policy, which did not entrench higher education institutions as national centres of nations.² Before the founding of the Riga Polytechnikum/Riga Polytechnical Institute (RP/RPI), the UD was the main institution of higher education and science in the entire Baltic General Governorate (Provinces of Estonian, Livonia and Kurland), where not only Baltic Germans, but also Latvians, Estonians, Poles, Russians and other nations received higher education.³ The changes that followed in the 19th century – nationalism and the Industrial Revolution – had an impact on higher education in the Baltic region, when nationally-minded Latvian intellectuals from the UD, the so-called Young Latvians (*Jaunlatvieši*), led by Atis Kronvalds, raised the idea of a higher education and scientific institution where Latvian language is used to oppose to German language at UD. The Young Latvians

¹ T. H. Herbert, *Das Baltikum: Siebenhundert Jahre Geschehen an der Ostsee (1. Auflage)*, Berg 1994, Seite 444–445.

² K. Benjamins, No privilīģētas valdošās šķiras līdz minoritātei – vācbaltieši, [in:] *Latvija (1918–2018): Valstiskuma gadsimts*, eds: I. Ijabs, J. Kusbers, I. Misāns, E. Oberlanders, Rīga 2018, 63. lpp.

³ A. Schmidt, *Geschichte des Baltikusms: Von den alten Göttern bis zur Gegenwart*, München 1999, Seite 257.

dreamed of the University of Latvia (UL) as a symbol of development of Latvian state through Latvian national science and higher education.⁴ Speaking about the industrial revolution, the need for technical specialists for the growth of Baltic industry and trade was raised. In this situation, a polytechnical school was founded, known as the RP/RPI. It was a specific higher education institution which undertook to train technical specialists (architects, engineers, mechanics, agronomists, trade specialists, etc.) for the growth of the Baltic provinces.⁵ It was a German established institution of higher education, but in addition to Germans (Baltic Germans, Black Sea Germans, Volga Germans, etc.), Poles, Russians, Jews, Latvians, Estonians, and Lithuanians from modern-day territories of Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Poland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania also received higher education in RP/RPI. Thus, the RP/RPI played a role not only in the technical and economic development of the Baltic, but also of Central and Eastern European regions.⁶ In contrast to the UD, the RP/RPI did not experience the severe Russification that began in 1887 and ended in 1904. As a classical university, it was easy to replace German speaking lecturers of UD with Russian speaking lecturers by sending them from the universities of St Petersburg or Moscow. In contrast, RP/RPI, as the only polytechnical school in the entire Russian Empire, was undergoing a moderate Russification, as it needed not only lecturers who understood Russian, but also specialised in complex, specific technical disciplines.⁷ Despite the Russification policy, the Riga Polytechnikum was reorganised into the Riga Polytechnic Institute in 1896, when it had grown from a regional Baltic university to a state university

⁴H. Strods, *Latvijas Universitātei (1919–1940)*, [in:] *Latvijas Universitāte 75*, eds: A. Varslavāns, Rīga 1994, 46.–47. lpp.

⁵V. Daukste, *Vācbaltiešu elites skolu politika un tautas izglītība Vidzemē 19. gadsimtā*, Rīga 2021, 29. lpp.

⁶R. Rubenis, *Polijas-Latvijas diplomātisko attiecību Simtgades medaļa*, <https://dspace.lu.lv/dspace/handle/7/54201> [skatīts: 29.12.2021]

⁷M. Lukss, *Vācieši Rīgā*, [in:], *Katram bija sava Rīga: Daudz nacionālas pilsētas portrets no 1857. līdz 1914. gadam*, eds: K. Volfarte, E. Oberlanders, Rīga 2004, 101.–102. lpp.

of the Russian Empire. The higher education diploma obtained there was equated with diplomas obtained in Moscow, St Petersburg, etc. The graduates of the RP/RPI received the right to work in the public service of the Russian Empire.⁸

Among the Baltic Germans who graduated and worked as teaching staff in the RP/RPI were the chemists Wilhelm Ostwald and Paul Walden. Dr Ostwald won the Nobel Prize for his molecular research and Dr Walden was the student of the Nobel Prize winner.⁹ Dr Walden had the opportunity to become the first Rector of the UL on 28 September 1919, when the national *Alma Mater* of the independent Latvian state was founded during the Latvian War of Independence (1918–1920). He was the first to be entrusted with the leadership of the UL because of his experience in administrating the academical institution. He was the director of the RP/RPI from 1902 to 1905, and from 1917 to 1918. Dr Walden successfully led the re-evacuation of the RP/RPI from Moscow to Riga at the end of the First World War, when on 3 March 1918 the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was signed between the German Empire and the newly established Soviet Russia, ending hostilities on the Eastern Front. On the bases of the RP/RPI the UL was founded, where higher education in Latvian began. However, the Baltic German scientist left for Germany before the foundation of the UL and did not return. Dr Walden refused to take part in the transformation of RP/RPI into UL because he was not in favour of the subordination of higher education and science to the national ideology of the Latvian state. However, with the formation of UL, things went differently from what the Young-Latvians of 19th Century expected – a sole Latvian university.¹⁰

⁸ Ē. Jēkabsons, *Valstsvīrs: Voldemārs Roberts Zāmuels (Latvijas 20. gadsimts)*, Rīga 2022, 22.–23. lpp.

⁹ J. Stradiņš, *Trešā atmoda*, Rīga 1992, 240.–241. lpp.

¹⁰ H. Strods, *Latvijas Universitātei (1919–1940)...*, op. cit., 46.–47. lpp.

The establishment of the University of Latvia: benefit or loss for the Baltic Germans

When UL was established from 1919 till 1926, it inherited the technical faculties, staff, and students from the RP/RPI times.¹¹ The students and teaching staff of the RP/RPI studied and lectured in German and Russian, and it was difficult to establish a Latvian higher education and science. Baltic Germans studied not only in the „old” technical faculties (Architecture, Engineering, Mechanics, Agriculture and Chemistry), but also in the „new” faculties of sciences and humanities – Economics and Law, Mathematics and Natural Sciences, Veterinary Medicine, Medicine, Theology, Philology and Philosophy.¹² The UL Constitution, ratified by the Latvian Government on 23 August 1922 and ratified by the Latvian Saeima (Parliament) on 28 March 1923, did not prevent students from obtaining higher education if they were not Latvian or their mother tongue was not Latvian.¹³ However, the Baltic Germans were required to study and receive higher education in Latvian, which was especially demanded for teaching staff to learn it in 3–5 years¹⁴ and the compulsory Latvian language entrance examination for students, regardless of the specialisation chosen, even if the use of Latvian language was not a priority there. The situation was complicated that the UL Council decided to make exceptions for the Latvianisation of higher education.¹⁵

¹¹ *Latvijas Universitātes divgadu darbības pārskats (1924–1926)*, <https://dspace.lu.lv/dspace/handle/7/34498> [skatīts: 29.12.2022]

¹² R. Rubenis, Vācbaltiešu sociālpolitiskā ietekme uz Latvijas augstāko izglītību Politiskās pārvaldes redzeslokā parlamentārisma perioda beigās, [in:], *Jauno vēsturnieku zinātniskie lasījumi (7/2021)*, eds: G. I. Bikše, Rīga 2022, 208. lpp.

¹³ *Latvijas Universitātes Satversme*, Rīga 1923, 3. lpp.

¹⁴ P. Bolin, *Between National and Academic agendas: Ethnic Policies and “National Disciplines” at the University of Latvia, 1919–1940*, Stockholm 2012, page 120–121.

¹⁵ R. Rubenis, *POSSIBILITIES TO OBTAIN HIGHER EDUCATION IN GERMANY FOR LATVIAN BALTIC GERMAN STUDENTS (1920–1934)*, <https://www.apgads.lu.lv/lv/izdevumi/htqe-2021/91/> [29.12.2022]

For example, on 1 September 1919 the Commission of the Organisation of the UL (predecessor of the UL Council) allowed Baltic German mechanics professor Paul Denfer from the Faculty of Mechanics to lecture in Russian and German¹⁶, because he had previously worked in the Mechanics Department of RP/RPI (he started working at RP/RPI on 29 August 1899).¹⁷ A similar situation existed when on 1 April 1920, the Latvian Minister of Education, Kārlis Kasparsons, confirmed Baltic German chemist Carl Blacher as a professor at the Faculty of Chemistry¹⁸; before that, he had been a professor at the RP/RPI Chemistry Department from 1 July 1906 to 1 April 1920.¹⁹ On 28 April 1927, Dr Blacher was allowed by the Dean of the Faculty of Chemistry, the Latvian chemist Eduards Zariņš, to give lectures in Russian without a fixed period, but he also gave lectures in German at the request of students.²⁰ The Faculty of Chemistry was one of the most German speaking faculties, with 50 Baltic German and 88 Jewish students in the spring semester of 1927.²¹ The language of the lectures depended on the students in the audience – if, for example, the majority were German speaking, the lectures were given in German. The Council of the Faculty of Chemistry and it's the Dean E. Zariņš unanimously supported the extension of the deadline for lecturing in Russian and German for 5 years – till 1 July 1937.²² It is important to note that from 15 May 1934 until 17 June 1940, the Latvian state was under an authoritarian dictatorship which strongly advocated the complete domination of the Latvian language in public and educational life.²³

¹⁶ R. Rubenis, *Vācbaltiešu sociālpolitiskā ietekme uz Latvijas augstāko izglītību Politiskās pārvaldes redzeslokā parlamentārisma perioda beigās...*, op. cit., 210. lpp.

¹⁷ LNA LVVA, 7427. f., 13. apr., 372. l., 51. lpp.

¹⁸ LNA LVVA, 7427. f., 13. apr., 221. l., 145. lpp.

¹⁹ LNA LVVA, 7427. f., 13. apr., 221. l., op. cit., 175. lpp.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, 84. lpp.

²¹ *Latvijas Universitātes divgadu darbības pārskats (1924–1926)*, <https://dspace.lu.lv/dspace/handle/7/34498> [skatīts: 30.12.2022]

²² LNA LVVA, 7427. f., 13. apr., 221. l., op. cit., 92. lpp.

²³ P. Bolin, *Between National and Academical agendas, ...,* op. cit. page 264.

The fact that Dr Blacher as a lecturer of the UL, who was allowed to lecture in non-Latvian languages, partly refutes the fact that the Organisations Commission of the UL demanded its professors to learn Latvian in 5 years. This refuted fact was previously mentioned by Swedish history professor Per Bolin from the Södertörn university in Stockholm, who, however, points out that Professor Jānis Endzelīns, a Latvian Baltic philologist at the Faculty of Philology and Philosophy, made a proposal to give lectures in different languages depending on the language skills of the students. The proposal of Dr Endzelīns was supported by the Organisation Commission of the UL, which allowed lectures to be given in Latvian, Russian and German.²⁴ Dr Blacher was lucky that in 1927 the Latvian history professor Augusts Tentelis was the rector of the UL, who a month later (on 27 May) got the Council of the UL to allow lectures in Latvian, Russian and German, freezing the Latvianisation of the UL. The Latvianisation remained frozen till the end of 1930s.²⁵ The fact of K. Blachers also proves that lecturing in Latvian, Russian and German continued during the authoritarian period. Dr Bolin explains that the rector of UL, Latvian chemistry professor Jūlijs Auškāps, developed good relations with the Latvian authoritarian dictator, Latvian Prime Minister, and President of Latvia Kārlis Ulmanis, so the Latvian government did not interfere in UL academic language issues. If the Baltic Germans were competent and experienced in their field of study, there was no reason to dismiss them, otherwise it could paralyse academical work at UL.²⁶

Another good example is the situation at the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences which was different from that at the Faculty of Chemistry, because there the Baltic German physics teaching staff were not RP/RPI graduates. During the RP/RPI time, physics was not an independent academic science, but a compulsory subject for students of the

²⁴ Ibidem, page 125.

²⁵ A. Šnē, Latvijas Universitātes rektors profesors Augusts Tentelis, [in:], *Profesors Dr. honoris caus Augusts Tentelis: Dzīve un darbs*, eds: M. Saviča, Rīga 2009, 15. lpp.

²⁶ P. Bolin, *Between National and Academical agendas*, ..., op. cit. page 264.

Departments of Chemistry, Architecture, Engineering and Mechanics, as well as Agriculture. Physics as an independent academic science only started in UL, while Chemistry as a permanent science was inherited from RP/RPI by creating the Faculty of Chemistry of UL based on the Department of Chemistry of RP/RPI.²⁷ The scientific work in physics was headed by Fricis Gulbis, a Latvian physicist who graduated from the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics of St. Petersburg University in 1916.²⁸ The Latvian physicist supervised two Baltic Germans physicists, Rudolf Meijer, and Friedrich Trey, both graduates of the UD. As the UL faculty was composed of graduates and scientists from universities of the Russian Empire, it was important for the UL to equate the diplomas of UD graduates. On 4 December 1926, the dean of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences of UL, the Latvian mathematician Edgars Lejnicks, informed the rector of UL, Dr Tentelis, that there were no obstacles for recognising the academic and professional rights of graduates of Latvian and Estonian universities, thus allowing graduates to work at the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural sciences.²⁹ On 22 February 1927, Dr Tentelis informed the Latvian Ministry of Education that the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural sciences had concluded the recognition of the rights of graduates of the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics of UD in Latvia. The fact that the rights of UD graduates had been recognised complements the biography of F. Gulbis written by the director of the Institute of Solid-State Physics of UL, the Latvian physicist Jānis Jansons, where he mentions facts about Baltic German physicists as UD graduates and UL teaching staff.³⁰

On 20 November 1919, the Baltic German physicist Dr Meijer was approved as an assistant professor of physics at UL on the basis of the

²⁷ J. Jansons, *Latvijas Universitātes Fizikas institūts (1919–1944) un tā sagatavotie fiziķi*, Rīga 2008, 10. lpp.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, 16.–17. lpp.

²⁹ LNA LVVA, 7427. f., 6. apr., 119. l, 108. lpp.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, 113. lpp.

resolution of the Latvian Minister of Education Kasparsons No.921.³¹ On 7 September 1923, the University of Tartu (UD's successor) in Estonia sent to UL a certificate about its graduate Dr Meijer, certifying that he had been prepared for a professorship in meteorology and physical geography at UD from 1 April 1905 till 1 December 1906 by passing the master's examination. The purpose of the certificate was to confirm that Dr Meijer could work at UL as part of teaching staff.³² After obtaining his master's degree, Dr Meijer was accepted as an assistant in physics at RP/RPI, and on 5 August 1913 he obtained his master's degree in physical geography at the University of Warsaw (UW), defending his master's thesis on 5 May of the same year. He received his Doctoral degree in physical geography at the University of Berlin, Germany, in 1924.³³ In view of Dr Meijer's academic connections with the UW, in 1920 Dr Gulbis established official contacts between the Institute of Physics of UL and the Institute of Physics of UW. Dr Gulbis gained contacts with the UW Rector, the Polish physicist Stefan Pienkowski, who was awarded an honorary doctorate (Dr. phys. h.c.) in mathematics by the UL.³⁴

On 19 March 1932, Dr Meijer approved his colleague, another Baltic German physicist, F. Trey, for a position at the UL, certifying with his signature that he had worked at RP/RPI from 1 September 1912 till 16 November 1916 as an assistant professor of physics, after graduating from the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics of the UD in 1910 and being trained as professor from 1 September 1911 till 1 September 1912.³⁵ Dr Trey started his career at UL on 1 October 1919, but as a confirmed assistant at the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences. Only on 1 July 1923 was Dr Trey approved as a freelance assistant professor at the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, and on 1 July

³¹ LNA LVVA, 7427. f., 13. apr., 1122. l, 10. lpp.

³² LNA LVVA, 7427. f., 13. apr., 1122. l, 8. lpp.

³³ *Latvijas Universitāte Divdesmit gados (1919–1939): II daļa (Mācību spēku biogrāfijas un bibliogrāfija)*, Rīga 1939, 302. lpp.

³⁴ J. Jansons, ..., op. cit., 10. lpp.

³⁵ LNA LVVA, 7427. f., 13. apr., 1794. l, 8. lpp.

1928 he was elected assistant professor.³⁶ He had previously obtained his doctorate from the University of Münster, Germany, in 1926. Dr Trey himself lectured the students in German, Russian and even Latvian, and it was in Latvian that he showed great dedication. However, he was not very good at Latvian, because he lacked good speaking skills.³⁷

Latvian state attitude towards the Baltic Germans in the University of Latvia

As the national *Alma Mater* of the independent Republic of Latvia, UL played a role in strengthening the national ideology of the Latvian state. UL's motto is „For Science and the Fatherland” (in Latin *Scientiae et Patriae*), founded with the philosophical idea as „a university of universal and national significance”. It was needed by the entire Latvian nation, especially the Latvians. The national *Alma Mater* of Latvia was established as a „uniter of technical, natural sciences and humanities” to create a comprehensive, intelligent, and educated Latvian citizen for the growth of the national Latvian state.³⁸ Although it was modelled on Western European universities, it retained the university system of the former Russian Empire – RP/RPI and other imperial Russian university graduates as teaching staff, and RP/RPI technical faculties. The Higher education was also more difficult to access at UL than at Western European or American universities because of the two-tier system of degrees – Candidate of Science and Doctor of Science. The degree of Candidate of Science (after 1939 the master's degree) was awarded at the same time as the diploma, while the Doctor's degree was awarded by decision of the UL Faculty Council, after public presentation of a doctor's thesis of independent research. As a result, the UL Doctors degree was more prestigious than that of Western European and American universi-

³⁶ Ibidem, 1. lpp.

³⁷ J. Jansons, ..., op. cit., 33. lpp.

³⁸ M. Kūle, Universitāšu filosofija un Juris Zaķis kā rektors-filosofs, [in:], *Profesors Dr. habil. Phys. Juris Zaķis: Dzīves un darbs*, eds: M. Saviča, Rīga 2022, 27. lpp.

ties, and it was equated with the master's degree of the universities of the Russian Empire. Although higher education at UL was more difficult to access than in Western Europe and USA, it was more readily available than in the Russian Empire. In the Russian Empire there was a three-tier system – Candidate of Science, Master, and Doctor. The UL made it possible for persons who had difficulties in obtaining a doctor's degree at the universities of the former Russian Empire to do so.³⁹

To strengthen UL's ties with the independent state of Latvia, its faculty teaching staff, including Baltic Germans, received the highest awards of the Latvian state for their merits in strengthening higher education and science of the Latvian state. On 16 November 1926, two days before the 8th anniversary of the Republic of Latvia, Latvian Minister of Education, the Latvian engineer Edmunds Ziemelis, who was also a professor at the Faculty of Engineering of UL⁴⁰, wanted to award Dr Denfer with the Order of Three Stars IV class (officer rank). Minister Ziemelis recognised Dr Denfer's active involvement in the reorganisation of RP/RPI into UL and the integration of the Department of Mechanics in the UL as Faculty of Mechanics, that he wanted to award him a state decoration as a token of gratitude.⁴¹ Dr Denfer refused the state order, but he continued to strengthen UL's academic links with Western Europe. For example, from 22 October till 13 November 1927, Dr Denfer participated in the International Mechanics Congress *Werkstofftagung, Werkstoffschau and DATsch-Tagung (Deutscher Ausschuss für technisches Schulwesen)* held in Berlin, Germany.⁴² At the congress, the Baltic German professor gained experience and knowledge in the use, processing, and study of metals, as well as the latest techniques for improving the properties of materials. This exchange of experience and knowledge was used to complement the mechanics courses in Faculty of Mechanics.⁴³

³⁹ H. Strods, *Latvijas Universitātei (1919–1940)...*, op. cit., 54. lpp.

⁴⁰ *Latvijas Universitāte Divdesmit gados*, ..., op. cit., Rīga 1939, 132. lpp.

⁴¹ LNA LVVA, 1303. f., 2. apr., 110. l., 50. lpp.

⁴² LNA LVVA, 7427. f., 13. apr., 372. l., 34. lpp.

⁴³ *Ibidem*, 33. lpp.

Another professor of the Faculty of Mechanics, professor Nikolai Schieman received support from his faculty on 13 April 1923 to go on a working trip to Sweden to learn about modern methods and means of producing and using peat.⁴⁴ The Faculty of Mechanics was interested in the great importance of peat as a fuel for the Latvian economy, which Dr Schieman was able to study and practise in his academic work. He visited the Gothenburg Technical Exhibition to learn about peat processing methods and their application to Latvia's conditions. He decided to clarify these issues only through in-depth studies by going on an exchange visit to Sweden.⁴⁵ For his contribution in the field of mechanics, Dr Schieman was awarded an honorary doctorate in mechanics (Dr.art.ing. h.c.) on 21 September 1929, and in November 1935 he was awarded the Order of the Three Stars, III Class (Commander rank).⁴⁶

Conclusion

It can be concluded that the Baltic Germans in Latvian higher education was an obstacle to the full establishment of UL as a Latvian higher education and scientific institution. All the plans for a UL where only the Latvian language would prevail were not fully realised. This was not realised because of the legacy of the German-founded RP/RPI in the academic activities of the UL, which was manifested in the integration of the Baltic German lecturers and students as well as the technical faculties into the new UL system. The UL system partly overlapped with the RP/RPI system, so that RP/RPI was in fact transformed into UL, with the addition of faculties of Natural sciences and humanities, whose teaching staff consisted of graduates and faculty members from UD and other universities of the former Russian Empire. However, the transfor-

⁴⁴ LNA LVVA, 7427. f., 13. apr., 1680. l, 34. lpp.

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*, 32. lpp.

⁴⁶ *Latvijas Universitāte Divdesmit gados*, ..., op. cit., Rīga 1939, 362.–363. lpp.

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The aim of the article is to evaluate the role of the Baltic Germans in the higher education system of Latvia during the interwar period in the parliamentary Republic of Latvia, paying attention also to the role of the national ideology of the Latvian state in the University of Latvia (UL). The Baltic Germans are a specific and unique ethnic group in the history of the Baltic region, without whom today's Latvian higher education would not be possible. Latvian higher education began with the German founded Riga Polytechnikum/Riga Polytechnical institute (RP/RPI) in 1862, which in the first half of the 1920s was transformed into the UL, where higher education in Latvian first began. However, due to the legacy of the RP/RPI, German and Russian academical languages were retained as well as the Latvian academical language. The article is based on the Documents of the Latvian State Historical Archives of Latvian National archive (LNA LVVA) and the Museum of the University of Latvia, the existing historiography of Baltic Germans history problems, structured around the following issues: Origins of higher education in Latvia; the establishment of the University of Latvia: benefit or loss for the Baltic Germans; the attitude of the Latvian state towards Baltic Germans in higher education.

Keywords: Baltic Germans, Higher Education, The University of Latvia, National minorities, The Riga Polytechnicum/Riga Polytechnical institute, University of Dorpat/ University of Tartu