

THE LATVIAN LIBERALS AND THE FEDERATIVE TRADITION DURING THE 1917 REVOLUTION

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Liberalism and the federative tradition in Latvia are both unstudied topics — in Latvian history generally and during the 1917 Revolution in particular. There is a great deal of research about Latvian nationalism and even more about socialism, not to mention Latvian communism, but there seems to be no interest in Latvian liberalism. Similarly, there is a great deal on the evolution of the idea of Latvia's independence¹ and the impact of Great Russian imperialism, but hardly a word is ever said about the federative tradition in Latvia's political thought.

Liberalism, as all political concepts, is a matter of definition, and in Latvian history it is not a very frequently used word. Before the Revolution, the word might have been considered too bold, but during 1917, it might already have had a touch of staleness about it. During 1917 there was no party that adopted it as a party designation, while words such as democratic, progressive, and radical were used in many combinations.² Yet it seems that we can speak about liberalism in 1917 Latvia, if for no other reason than only because a category is needed to delineate the opinion that was non-Marxist, non-Social Democratic, and non-Bolshevik.

Latvian politics in 1917 had several peculiarities, and therefore in its analysis one must avoid the conceptualizations used in analyzing Anglo-Saxon politics or French politics of the nineteenth century which are predicated on the existence of a right to left political spectrum. In Latvia there was no right wing to speak of. There were only competing views of progress, change, and social transformation. The group that could be compared to the Russian Octobrists was pitifully small.³ Somewhere, at some times the right wing may outweigh the left, but this fine dialectical counterbalancing did not occur in Latvia. Furthermore, Latvia in 1917 was a socialist country which, considering the circumstances, also means that it was a Marxist country.⁴

For the purposes of this study, it is intended to classify under the label of liberalism all those individuals and groups who believed in constitutional government, land reforms, Latvian autonomy, free press, speech and assembly, and open, frequent, and uncoerced elections. This could include evolutionary socialists but exclude Leninists and other anti-Parliamentarians; include those demanding civil liberties but exclude those demanding exclusively class liberties; include those who believed in the transformation of society but not those believing in its qualitative transformation. In other words, it would exclude the Latvian Social Democratic Party as it was constituted in 1917. This is to exclude the most powerful party, at the time representing the majority of Latvians.⁵ However, it does mean including the majority of Latvian journalists, poets, and leaders of agricultural, cooperative, and refugee organizations. It would also include most of the pre-Revolutionary politicians.

A very significant part of the liberal of 1917 was his commitment to a federative order of states.⁶ He shared this belief with the Social Democrats, but while the Bolshevik branch of the Social Democrats continued to uphold their own brand of federalism during the 1917 Revolution, the liberals did not. To replace the federative formula, in 1917, there arose the ideal of Latvia's independence. By now enough research has been done on the question of the emergence of the demand for Latvia's independence for us to know that 1917 was the crucial year in its development and that, as a serious political formulation, it does not predate the March upheaval.⁷ It seems that one can go even further and say that as a realistic alternative, as opposed to a speculative thought, the idea of sovereign Latvia came in with the collapse of the Provisional Government. It is only then that political realists began to discuss it.

The historians and memoirists who have written about the idea of Latvia's independence have 1) failed to ask a simple and an obvious question: why did the idea not emerge before 1917? and 2) they have assumed that the demand for Latvia's autonomy was in some sense an inferior demand and only a first step toward the demand for independence.⁸ The failure to evaluate the roots of the idea of independence properly has led many historians to overemphasize the idea of independence at the expense of the federative tradition. If anything, the federative idea was valued higher as representing the highest and most progressive principles. Neither does it seem that the idea of independence came as any kind of a theoretical breakthrough. The political options were no secret to anybody. If the Latvian politicians had thought that independence was preferable, they would have agitated for it, but they did not.

The federative idea in Latvia was formed by the confluence of two historical developments: the tradition of political realism and the doctrinaire tradition of visionarism. In terms of 1917, the liberals represented an intermixture of both traditions.⁹ Imperial Russia was not as centralized and homogenized as it is frequently presented in textbooks. Various provinces of the Empire held various degrees of autonomy. In the pre-Revolutionary period, liberal Latvians looked towards Finland for the desired pattern of autonomy, but then there were also the Baltic Provinces with many local privileges.¹⁰ The Baltic privileges had the drawback of being confined mostly to the Germans, and therefore the Latvian attitude toward them was ambiguous, and until the war one of the Latvian demands was for applying the Zemstvo Law in Latvia. Especially with the advent of Social Democracy, autocracy in St. Petersburg was not considered to be any friend of Latvians, but the most serious antagonists, at least until the 1905 revolution, were still the local Germans. Considering the options, from the point of view of political realists in the pre-Revolutionary period, there was no reason why they should not think along the lines of federalism. It was St. Petersburg that could rescind the policies of Russification, and it was St. Petersburg that could grant the Latvians the Zemstvo institutions to cancel German influence.

With the advent of Marxism the federative idea gained impetus, although the focus was different than that of the realists. Social democracy promoted a concept of internationalism, and in none of the theoretical variations that emerged in the debate of the national question did the Marxist theorists of the Austrian, German, and Russian empires advocate the establishment of independent states.¹¹ The same can be said about the Latvian social democrats: M. Skujenieks, P. Stucka, and F. Cielens, to name but three.¹²

The 1917 Revolution provided the crucial test for the federative idea — a test that it did not pass. Practical politics and the flow of revolutionary events intervened to defeat it. Latvia, of course, was not the only one involved in the building of a federative Russia. Many other nationalities of the Russian Empire participated in the process,¹³ and it failed everywhere. The Bolshevik coup in November of the year delivered the final blows, but already during the months of the Provisional Government it began to erode.

For the balance of this study the following topics will be considered:

1. The federative blueprint as it appeared in the programs of liberal parties.
2. The case against the Provisional Government and its opposition to a federative Russia consisting of autonomous nationalities.
3. The agitation against the Provisional Government.
4. Latvia and the Ukraine, the shifting of focus from Petrograd to Kiev as the center for a federation of nations.
5. The failure to establish a national council of Latvia as a factor in the collapse of the federative idea.

The Federative Blueprint of the Liberals

"Free Latvia in a Free Russia" was the slogan with which the Latvian liberals entered the Revolution of 1917. The slogan aptly summarized their concern for civil as well as national liberties, and in a rough way it indicated the kind of relationship that they wanted Latvia to have vis a vis Russia.¹⁴ During the first months of the Revolution, the liberals busied themselves with interpreting the slogan and working out the master plan in which the relationship between Latvia and the Russian federation was defined. It would be superfluous and repetitive to engage in an analysis of the debate, suffice it to say that there were no liberal Latvian newspapermen or politicians who, at the beginning of the Revolution, did not ask for an autonomous Latvia, nor any who asked for separation from Russia.¹⁵ It must also be mentioned that there was a great deal of unanimity about what the plan should be.

The differences that existed were minor; they concerned mostly tactics and tempo, and they stemmed from two basic difficulties. 1, The liberals lacked an institutional base of operations through which the master plan could be acted upon; 2. Latvia was within the theater of war. Kurland was under German occupation, and Riga fell into German hands on August 21, 1917. In addition, about 800,000 ¹⁶ refugees and deportees were scattered throughout Russia. If the cooperation of

Latvian Bolsheviks was needed to meet the first obstacle, then the difficulties caused by war could only be remedied through a strong central government. The restructuring of the Empire into a federative union was likely to weaken the war effort, yet the idea of federative Russia was so powerful in the minds of the liberals that they could not refrain from writing about it and agitating for it. The disagreements among the liberals therefore depended mostly on the evaluation of the objective conditions that were beyond their control: the Bolsheviks, the Germans, and the Provisional Government.¹⁷

Below are pertinent passages from the programs of two liberal parties: the National Democratic Party and the Peasant Union Party. The program of the former goes further than the latter in many particulars. The differences may stem from the fact that the National Democrats were centered in Moscow where they also published their newspaper *Dzimtenes Atbals* (*The Fatherland Echo*). Perhaps they simply could afford to be more abstract, and therefore they demanded many more privileges than did the Peasant Union Party. It can also be noted that the leadership of the National Democrats consisted mostly of journalists and poets while in the leadership of the Peasant Union, there entered people with political experience and leaders of agricultural and cooperative associations.¹⁸ Neither program represented the extreme views that some individual publicists or journalists held. Both were accepted in party congresses with little discussion or change.¹⁹ To trace the models for these programs would be an interesting endeavor. It seems that the program of the Peasant Union has many similarities with the United States Constitution. This would point towards K. Ulmanis' authorship. After the Revolution of 1905, he spent a number of years in that country.²⁰ The program of the National Democratic Party is much more specific on the relationship with the federation, and it allows for fewer ties with it than does the other document.

From the program of the Peasant Union Party

I Russia's System of government

1. The Latvian Peasant Union asks Russia to become a democratic federative republic (the Union of national states) presided over by a college whose members are elected (for three-year terms) from and by the House of Representatives in a joint session with the Council of national state deputies. The House of Representatives is elected for three years, but the Council of national state deputies for six years. The members of the presiding college fulfill the tasks of ministers, mutually assigning the functions. The presiding college elects its head for one year, and *he* is also the head of state. The House of Representatives together with the Council of national state deputies can impeach any minister by a two thirds majority.

II Latvia's autonomy

2. Latvia with its territory, people, and language, being an autonomous state in Russia's federation of states, encompasses all contiguous regions inhabited by Latvians, while in the border areas the boundary is drawn by special mediation commissions. Disputed cases are decided by plebiscite.

3. The colonies of Latvians [meaning those in Siberia and elsewhere in Russia] participate in Latvia's saeima with an advisory vote, as separate subdivisions.

4. Latgale has wide local self government within Latvia, and the Latgallians themselves settle their cultural, economic, and religious matters.

5. a) Latvia has a common diplomacy with the Russian state, with the right to maintain special economic agents abroad as needed.

b) They also have common land and naval armed forces (people's militia). Land forces in Latvia are territorial, with Latvian as the command language. Latvian sailors serve in the Baltic fleet.

c) Customs regulations are common for all of Russia, but the customs officials in Latvia are local inhabitants.

d) Currency in Latvia is the same as in Russia, but Latvia has its own central national bank with the right to issue currency.

e) Local railroads, post office, and telegraph are under Latvia's control.²¹

From the program of the National Democratic Party

I. Territory

1. Latvia's indivisible territory is Kurzeme [Kurland], the Southern part of Vidzeme [Livonia] — (Riga, Cesis, Valmiera, and Valka districts and Ronu Island) —, and Latgale (Rezekne, Ludza, Daugavpils districts in Vitebsk gubernia). The boundaries in the gubernias of Kaunus and Pleskov are to be determined according to ethnographic principles, while all borderland regions where the majority of inhabitants are Latvians must be merged with Latvia by referendum. Riga Bay and the coastal waters of the Baltic Sea are Latvia's territory.

II. The system of government

2. Latvia is a democratic republican state in a federation of Russia's republics.

5. The state language in Latvia is Latvian, but for the local minority nationalities choice of language is guaranteed in their schools and all relationships with the state.

6. Latvia has a completely independent system of schools and of courts, based on local laws with appeals terminating in Latvia; a special fiscal and monetary system and a national bank which has the right to issue currency; its own system of currency; its own national and territorial army, that is a people's militia. Latvia's post office, telegraph, customs office, and system of transportation is the property of Latvia's state; an independent administrative structure; the right to conclude commercial and industrial contracts with foreign states.

7. Colonies of Latvians send their representatives to Latvia's saeima, in proportion to the number of colonists.

III. Relationship with the Federation

8. In the Council of Russia's Federation all confederated states have an equal number of representatives.

9. The state organs of Latvia defend the rights of Latvia's citizens against the Federation.

10. Latvia has joint diplomacy with the Federation, joint decision making in questions of the defense of the state, and joint duties with the other confederated states in maintaining the institutions of the Federation.

11. The Federation decides upon questions of violation of Latvia's constitution.

12. Latvia's constitution is worked out and sanctioned by Latvia's Constituent Assembly which convenes on the basis of direct, equal, general, closed, and proportional elections, and about which an agreement is reached with the All-Russian Constituent Assemblies or the Council of Federation. In case of disagreement Latvia's Constituent Assembly seeks a settlement of Latvia's question in an international conference, basing the complaint on the principle of self determination which the states participating in the conference have declared.[22](#)

The Case against the Government

The relationship between the Provisional Government and the Latvian liberals started out on a note of cooperation. The liberals supported the government beyond question. The Provisional Government was greeted as the bearer of a new age, as the instrument of a democratic and free Russia. *Lidums*, perhaps the most important liberal organ at the time and one which became the spokesman of the Peasant Union Party, wrote on March 4 in an article entitled "The Sunrise of Russia": "We must maintain peace above everything. Let us push aside all rumors and unfounded accusations. Let us listen only to that voice that comes from the new Provisional Government which represents all those forces that want to see Russia rejuvenated." [23](#)

A day later, the same newspaper again wrote: "What duties does the present moment demand of Latvians? — Everywhere and in everything to support the measures of the new government, for the reestablishment of normal circumstances." [24](#)

This feeling of respect towards the Provisional Government and the promise of cooperation did not last long. On the one hand, the Latvian liberals became too impatient, and on the other, the Provisional Government was too slow in responding to the demands of the nationalities. The government became involved in contradictions and inconsistencies that from the point of view of the nationalities made the government appear capricious and ultimately weak. The Revolution presented Imperial Russia of which the Provisional Government was the new spokesman with a dilemma. The Revolution in fact and the Provisional Government in law [25](#) unequivocally guaranteed the fulfillment of civil liberties, among them the freedom of assembly which meant that any group, no matter how constituted, could hold meetings, conferences, and congresses. The Revolution provided an opportunity for numerous assemblies, in Latvia itself and among refugee colonies in Russia, which passed resolutions demanding an autonomous Latvia in a federative Russia. As long as the Provisional Government was willing to uphold civil liberties, the process of agitation for a federative Russia could not be stopped, yet the government at the same time insisted that the autonomy of nationalities, that is federative Russia, was a separate question from civil liberties. [26](#)

The disappointment of the Latvian liberals stemmed from the government's unwillingness to say yes on the following four propositions: that Russia be declared a federative republic, not just a republic; that Latvia be granted an autonomy, not just administrative control over its territory; that Latgale be sequestered from Vitebsk gubernia and become part of Latvia; and, finally, that the Provisional Government be willing to recognize the principle of national autonomies rather than just territorial ones. The Provisional Government throughout the year refused to accede to any of these demands, giving various answers. The one most frequently mentioned was that only Russia's Constituent Assembly could make a decision of such importance. [27](#)

A significant factor in the government's negative approach to the nationalities must have been its connection with the Kadet party. The Kadets, although they did recognize the need for local administrative control, built their concept of the state upon the principles of traditional power politics and thought of Russia as a historical entity that must not be allowed to disintegrate. [28](#)

The pattern of the government's nationality policy was slow to emerge. If on all other significant questions the government managed to make open statements within the first two months, on the nationality question any pronouncement was held back until July 8 when a short statement appeared as part of a general declaration by the new coalition. It read: „Attributing at the same time particular significance to the creation locally of organ¹-of authority vested with the confidence of the entire population, the Provisional Government will immediately bring into the organization of local authority representatives of public organizations in order to form collegiate organs of regional administration, combining a number of gubernias." [29](#)

The main thing that this statement lacked was the same thing that was absent in the policy of the Kadets: concession to the rights of national autonomy and a federative Russia. In this connection it must be recalled that the above statement was made by a coalition that did not have any Kadets in it. They had left the government because of concessions to the Ukraine, after the Ukrainian Rada had announced the Ukraine's autonomy in the First Universal. [30](#)

A significant break appears in the declaration of the third and last coalition on September 25, but by then the Latvian liberals were already so embittered that they did not give it any serious consideration. In this statement the principle of national autonomy is recognized, although the principle of federation was not. The statement read:

"It will recognize for all nationalities the right of self-determination on such principles as the Constituent Assembly shall determine. It will work out and issue laws that will give minorities, in places of their permanent residence, the right to use their native languages in schools, courts, institutions of self-government, and in their dealings with the local State organs. It will establish, attached to the Provisional Government, a council on nationality affairs, in which all the nationalities of Russia will be represented for the purpose of preparing material on the nationality question for the Constituent Assembly.³¹

The above were the official and open statements of the government, yet there was another dimension to its nationality policy. There were three main exceptions, and in one of these instances the government showed that it yielded to force. This began to involve the government in agonizing contradictions.³² The exceptions were Finland, Poland, and the Ukraine.³³ On March 7 the government not so much granted as reaffirmed Finland's autonomy. On March 16 independence was granted to Poland,³⁴ but it must be noted that Poland at that time was under German occupation. On July 2, the government also acceded to the autonomy of the Ukraine³⁵ which, as it will be seen, had great significance for the Latvian liberals. The Ukrainian case taught them that concessions could be obtained through defiance and a show of force.³⁶

More specifically towards Latvians, the Provisional Government's record follows the general lines of its policy. Since the government did not satisfy the general demands of nationalities, they did not come close to satisfying the Latvian ones. The minimal demand if granted might have kept the Latvian liberals quiet for some time. It was their desire to see Latgale separated from Vitebsk gubernia and made part of Latvia. This was fundamentally an administrative question, not a question of autonomy, but even that was rejected outright on several occasions,³⁷ once in a personal audience with Kerensky himself. Two accounts of this conference are available, one in the newspaper *Lidums* in 1917 and a fuller and seemingly more reliable version in the recent memoirs of A. Klive, who was present.

The encounter with the Minister-President occurred on September 19 in the Winter Palace. Present were three liberals, A. Klive, Z. Meierovics, and J. Zalitis, and a Bolshevik, Otto Karklins. There was a twofold purpose for the conference: to urge Kerensky to do something about vandalism and plunder by bands of stragglers and deserters in Vidzeme, and to question him about Latvia's autonomy. The audience started off badly by an acrimonious exchange between Karklins and Kerensky on the radicalism of the Latvian Riflemen. The following is the pertinent passage from Klive's account:

[Z. Meierovics] was saying that Latvia should be granted autonomy without delay as a proof that the new order does not intend to reduce Latvia and Latvians to a lower order than they were under tsarism and German baronage. That must be done immediately in order to tie Latvia to the great Russian revolution and the Empire with unbreakable bonds.

At that moment the Minister-President's aide entered and announced that the allotted 20 minutes for this audience were over, and that the next visitor was waiting.

The President answered that the Latvians most certainly would receive the right of self-determination, comparable to the Zemstvos existing in Russia, but that political autonomy was unthinkable because in that case similar rights should be granted to all nationalities living in Russia, and that would be impossible.

Meierovics had noted, according to Klive, that all nationalities in Russia did not desire autonomy, but that the ones that did could consolidate themselves into a large family of nations, as in Switzerland, the United States, and Great Britain.

Everybody had already risen to their feet because the aide was waiting. Kerensky answered that neither the cantons of Switzerland nor the states in the USA had any autonomy. [A riposte by Meierovics followed.] ... Kerensky bent over the table and began to draw on a piece of paper various squares, quadrangles, and rhombs which supposedly represented the states of the USA, and said that territorial areas such as that were a future possibility for Russia, that would be determined by regional economic needs, but until further developments Latvia must be content with the same Zemstvos that the Russian people had.³⁸

Agitation against the Government

The first salvos against the Provisional Government appeared in early April after a conference of Kadet leaders in Petrograd. Strictly speaking, it was a little rash to castigate the government for statements made by the Kadets, but as events showed the government came to follow the Kadet policy rather closely. The first attack appeared in the organ of the National Democratic Party *Dzimtenes Atbalsas*, published in Moscow. Formally, these attacks were made by individuals, but it is also clear that the liberals at large came to hold these views to a greater or lesser degree during the year, although officially in party congresses they showed more restraint. The following quotations come from an article entitled "The Provisional Government and Latvia." It is the first article that attacked the government so vitriolically, and it can be noted that it came only about one month after the fall of the monarchy.

The congress of the Russian Kadet Party [the VII congress], which occurred recently in Petrograd, has shown to us that the nationality question does not at all exist for the Kadets. The Kadet leaders exerted great effort to assure that the nationality question remains undisturbed. However, from the nationalities, a Moslem representative at the congress squeezed in a resolution which declared that they would not support the Kadets because Kadets were imperialists, because they asked for Constantinople, sought to suppress foreign peoples, and desired the conquest of Turkey. The Moslems are supporting those parties that stand to the left of the imperialist cabinet and Miliukov.

But Latvians, — Latvians, as it again appears, have given themselves to merriment, to rejoicing, to the politics of joy, as it is always evident among them. They are defending the Provisional Government with all their power, and they are defending it everywhere. That is the language of countless

resolutions which are passed in the name of the Latvian nation and telegraphed away. But what is the Provisional Government? With the exception of Kerensky, the only true friend of justice and fighter for it — all this Provisional Government consists of Kadets, that is these Kadets whom the Revolution has left behind at the leftism of republicanism ! But is it not known to all that parties can be doubly republican yet conservative in all respects that concern the juridical questions of the state. ...

But Latvians? It is said that Estonia is separated from Latvia, but why, for what purpose — isn't announced. The Provisional Government as yet has not recognized the separation of Latgale from Russia. Why is there not already a project about it on the table? Or perhaps we intend to let the Russians work it out — the immediate separation of Latgale from Vitebsk gubernia is our first underferrable demand, not a plea!...

Latvian deputies [meaning Duma deputies J. Zalitis and J. Goldmanis] take notice, no longer do we allow pleas — *we can only have demands*. The task of Latvian deputies is not to be concerned with food problems — creative work is demanded of them! Only the slogan for the creation of Latvia's state can and may be the determining factor for their aims and tactics.

What, then, must the Latvians do? Should they shout: down with the Provisional Government? Yes, yes, — Latvians have already shouted: Down with the Workers' and Soldiers' Soviets of deputies! The Provisional Government we may only support in those instances when it carries out the demands for national rights and defends the country against the enemy. But when they clamor after Constantinople — then: down with it!

After some consideration of the strength of Russia's war effort, the article assesses the relative importance of the Provisional Government and the Soviets:

from the system of dual government Latvians and small nations in general can derive only advantages. Our demands are recognized by the Workers' Soviet of Deputies. Through a strong Workers' Soviet of Deputies we can obtain the representation of our rights, but through a strong Provisional Government we will not get a hearing for our demands. Therefore — it is correct for the small nationalities to support Russia's left democracy whenever it does not go against the rights of nationalities.

Then the article proceeds to discuss the Provisional Government's statement on the war in which the author sees no advantage for Latvians because it does not call for giving rights to nationalities but is only concerned with Russia's position in lands under German occupation. Then it continues to discuss the meaning of the word self-determination.

The word [self-determination] has for us already become a phrase void of content which everybody interprets as he pleases. We demand that we as a people participate in peace negotiations with a full vote. Without the declaration of this principle, self-determination is not understandable.

In general, Latvians must be very careful in their sympathies and confidences on this side or the other, but especially in relations with the Provisional Government. We must save, cultivate, and concentrate our forces. Our own power and work is our own safest guarantee. [39](#)

The attacks against the Kadets and the Provisional Government, once initiated, continued [40](#) After the VIII congress of the Kadet Party, May 9-11, approximately one month later, critical comments began to appear in the more moderate *Lidums*, published in Valka.

Up to now the slogans of democracy prevailed everywhere and those parties which disagreed with some of the slogans did not disagree with them in the open. Now the VIII congress of the Kadet Party has expressed itself against a federative state order and against national autonomy. .. In all their activities the Kadets have been fervent Great Russians who, however, know full well how to mask themselves with phrases that are difficult to unravel. ... The struggle has not been declared openly, it is masked, but for that reason even more dangerous. It is like the claws of a cat that are hidden in the soft paws. ... The real aim of the Kadets is to delay the autonomy question until the turmoil in Russia settles and until it will be advantageous for the Great Russians to take on a struggle with the nationalities. [41](#)

During the summer of 1917 and early fall, the agitation against the government continued with varying intensity. The debate settled down on the following intertwining themes:

1. The need to break the impasse with the Provisional Government through revolutionary means.
2. The need to establish a National Council and convoke a constituent assembly.
3. The need to take on contacts with the other nationalities in the Empire.
4. The need to internationalize the Latvian Question. [42](#)

A tone of urgency already existed in writings in the liberal press right after the Revolution. The liberals ceaselessly reminded Latvians that they were too slow in acting and demanding their due. [43](#) Especially on the autonomy and federative questions, action was recommended. One article argued that the autonomy question was much more urgent than the land question because the Provisional Government was committed to deal with the land question as it was but not with the autonomy question, and that any delay might play into the hands of the devious Provisional Government. [44](#) Soon enough, this urgency began to be translated into a demand for what in the Bolshevik vocabulary was called the deepening of the Revolution, but unlike the Bolsheviks, the Latvian liberals were not threatening to overthrow the government but rather to present the government with a fait accompli — an established autonomous Latvia. Linards Laicens, a fiery poet who eventually was to abandon the liberal cause for the Bolsheviks, wrote: "It will be necessary for us to fight the external enemy along with Russia's democracy, but in internal matters, on the question of autonomy, we will need to fight this democracy." [45](#) E. Blanks wrote in May of the year: "More courage in the pursuit of our national political aims. We need more turbulence and militancy. Only then will Latvia obtain true state autonomy." [46](#) A month and a half later, on July 3, the same author had toughened his stand: "Through a revolution towards Latvia's state autonomy." [47](#) In the same issue the lead editorial urged: "In times of revolution, there can only be one tactic — revolution. Through revolution towards a unified Latvia!" [48](#)

In suggesting the revolutionary solution, the writers frequently had Latvians in mind, but even more frequently it was suggested as a tactic for all non-Russians.

The law of revolution is power. Russia's democracy has obtained much through struggle. If the small nations have as yet not obtained anything, then it is because of the passivity of their tactics. The Ukrainians and Finns have been alone in this difficult struggle. They have not been able to change Russia's policy in a more favorable direction. Quite the opposite has occurred. We must be skeptical about Russia because we should not forget that in a free Great Britain the Irish are slavishly suppressed. The same thing can happen in Russia. Therefore the peoples of Russia, unite! [49](#)

The same theme with a slightly different twist is seen in an article by Blanks:

It may all lead to the conclusion that all those nationalities which are now acquiescent will not get a thing. By satisfying the demands of the larger nationalities Great Russia will afterwards be able to handle the smaller ones easily. That must be remembered by all those somnolent types who in four months of revolution have not as yet slept out, and it is vain to hope that the Russian Constituent Assembly or the Ukrainians will present us with a gift — state autonomy. But before it is too late Latvia must take the revolutionary solution. [50](#)

There were two specific results that a revolutionary struggle could give to Latvians: the merger of Latgale with Latvia [51](#) and the convening of a Latvian constituent assembly before the Russian one would give them the permission to do so. The Provisional Government took the position that only Russia's Constituent Assembly had the right to delegate powers, while the nationalities and Latvian liberals argued that if self-determination was to be meaningful, it must come from the nationalities. The question was discussed at two important assemblies, the autonomy conference of July 30 and the First Congress of the Peasant Union Party, July 14-16. In neither case did the assemblies make conclusive decisions, but it is noteworthy that the debate had moved one level higher from the discussion in newspapers. In both instances the assemblies expressed themselves in favor of a Constituent Assembly, but they were non-committal on whether the Constituent Assembly was to meet before, simultaneously with, or after the Russian Constituent Assembly. [52](#)

The theme of the need to internationalize the Latvian Question had a slightly different origin. This topic began to be widely discussed during the late summer of the year, although the K. Upits' article (of April 5), quoted above, already touched upon the possibility. If the need to make revolution against the Provisional Government came from an assumption about the Provisional Government as potentially strong and devious, the need to internationalize the question came from the assumption that Russia was in the midst of collapse, and that Latvia more likely than not would be under German control at the end of the war. [53](#) The call for internationalization should not necessarily be confused with a weakening of the federative idea, although it must be recognized that some weakening was implicit in the considerations simply because Latvia under Germany would be divorced from Russia and other nationalities. In this connection, it is pertinent to note the discussion about a Latvian-Lithuanian federation which was fundamentally predicated upon the collapse of Russia's Empire. The idea was implanted in the minds of the Latvian Moscow group by a Lithuanian professor from America, Dr. Jonas Šliupas. [54](#) Another publicist, S. Staprans, suggested a federation of Northern states: Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Estonia, and Latvia. [55](#) During the summer of 1917, the idea of a sovereign

Latvian state was also discussed, but it was still considered only as a speculative and poetic possibility.

Latvia and the Ukraine

Among the nationalities to whom the liberals paid special attention were the Ukrainians, Finns, and Moslem peoples, but especially the Ukrainians and the activities of the Rada in Kiev. The Ukrainians interested the liberals for several reasons. Legally their positions were similar while, for instance, the Finns had had a different legal arrangement with the capital already before the Revolution. Then, the Ukrainians were admired for their willingness to defy the Provisional Government and to precede it with a declaration of autonomy. The Ukrainians were regarded as valuable allies because there were 40 million of them. Finally, the Ukrainian autonomous state was held as a pivotal one in a federative Russia in case Petrograd did not cooperate with the nationalities. The latter was a development that Kiev quite openly encouraged. Since early spring, many of the Ukrainian statements were marked by some ambiguity. For example, paragraph 5 in the resolution of the National Congress 5-8 April reads as follows:

The Ukrainian National Congress commissions the Central Rada to manifest as soon as possible its initiative in forming a strong union of those people of Russia who, like the Ukrainians, demand national and territorial autonomy on the principles of the democratic Russian republic. [56](#)

A correspondent for the *Dzimtenes Atbalss* in an article "How self-determination of peoples is understood," about the same time in April, reported from the Ukraine:

We see how outlandish the Russians — even when elected to the Soldiers' Soviet of Deputies — understand the slogan of self-determination. With bayonette in hand, this "revolutionary element" threatens the people from other nationalities when they choose to determine their fate. But here we see also another fact — Ukraine's readiness to defend their independence with weapons. And it seems that all small nationalities must be ready for a similar stance if they want to accomplish anything worthwhile. The duty of the larger Latvian organizations should be to send congratulatory telegrams to the Ukrainian congress which began on April 6, to show that the Ukrainians as a politically conscious nation are not alone in the struggle for their rights. [57](#)

Until the fall of 1917, the Latvian relationship with the Ukrainians was mostly inspirational, but in September it began to take on some organizational aspects, which, however, were not consolidated due to the Bolshevik uprising. The Ukrainians acted upon the threat of April 8 and convoked an assembly of Russia's nationalities which met on September 8-11. The Latvian newspapers gave various names to this congress: the Congress of Small Nations; the Autonomy Congress; or even the Union of Small Nationalities. This congress consisted of 80 delegates, representing 20 different nationalities, and it was speculated that if the railroads had run on more regular schedules, there would have been even more. Latvia sent ten delegates.[58](#)

The coverage of the congress in Latvia's press was extensive, and its theoretical and practical implications were discussed at length. "From the Kiev congress the Latvians must return strengthened in their national consciousness," urged Lidums.[59](#) Zigfrids Meierovics' speech at the congress can be taken as a good summary of the special regard that the Latvians had towards the Ukrainians, and it may also illuminate this whole problem of search for a federative Russia. The following are only some of the pertinent excerpts:

The Central Ukrainian Rada, whose guests we are, is in the avant-garde of our [Russia's] nationalities. She was the first to raise her voice and demand her rights. She was the first one to have thought about the fate of other nations and summoned us here. The Central Ukrainian Rada, the oldest of our sisters, deserves heartfelt gratitude from devastated Latvia and a warm handshake from the Latvian people. (Applause) At the moment when our hands slackened, and we did not see any help for our people, in the moment when Latvia is threatened to be crushed between two millstones, the call of the Ukrainians arrived: "Come and we shall close the ranks, we shall struggle together for our rights, for the struggle has only begun!" We shall fight until victory for the welfare of our people. But to gain victory we Russia's non-sovereign peoples must become allies in the true meaning of the word. We must form one unified front, against all who are opposed to the principle of self-determination. (Applause) Here in beautiful Kiev, the cradle of people's autonomy, we shall leave behind us the headquarters for our unified struggle — the Council of Peoples. To this organ, properly constituted, we shall entrust the convening of — even before Russia's Constituent Assembly meets — the Constituent Assembly of Nations, which then will judiciously determine the future of Russia's nationalities. (Applause)

Meierovics continued to enumerate the various Latvian complaints and demands and concluded the speech in a spirit of reconciliation with Russia:

We recognize that these our moderate demands do not threaten the unity of Russia's state and do not impair its general welfare. Therefore we are imploring the Provisional Government at this moment of Russia's history to issue and announce a special decree, recognizing the above demands.

However, — the Latvians shall struggle for their political demands until "victory or defeat. (Prolonged applause).[60](#)

The Liberal Search for a National Council

The liberal protests and their defiance of the Provisional Government in the form of agitation in the press or the more threatening variety of closing ranks with the Ukrainians had an element of futility, if not tragedy. Regardless of what they said or how well they said it, the liberals were incapable of action. They lacked an institutional framework that would be needed if their ideas were to be translated into action. This impotence is illustrated through their failure to organize a Latvian

national council. The very first statements after the Revolution included the demand for a national council; yet nothing came of it. There were two fundamental reasons for this. The war had brought about too many disruptions in Latvia, and the Bolshevik sway in Latvia was too telling. It seems reasonable to say that there would have been a national council, something comparable to the Ukrainian Rada, if it had not been for the influence Bolsheviks wielded in Latvia. The first step in solving the problem was to decide who was to determine that a council was needed. One can agitate for it, yet some legitimate organ must act to convoke it. The most logical solution was to persuade the Vidžeme Land Council to take the necessary action. It was the most broadly representative of the revolutionary institutions, but about 40 % of the deputies on the Council were obedient to the Bolsheviks who had a different idea about Latvia's relationship to Russia and looked negatively on the whole idea of Latvia's autonomy.[61](#) The Vidžeme Land Council went as far as organizing a so-called Autonomy Committee which was to do the preparatory work for the National Council. Without going into details about the work of the committee, the accomplishments were minimal due to the Bolshevik-Liberal conflict in it. The failure of the Autonomy Committee appeared most clearly during the much publicized Autonomy Conference of July 30 which was organized by it. The work at this conference does not appear to warrant the emphasis that it receives in many studies."[62](#) The primary sources on this conference are scanty, and therefore a definitive judgment should not be made, but from what we know it is clear that from the viewpoint of liberals it was a failure, although at the time many did not want to admit it and consequently emphasized the positive.[63](#) The Autonomy Conference had two tasks: to make a concerted decision on the desirability of Latvia's autonomy, and to create a council or some other vehicle that could bring this autonomy about. The decision on the first question was positive, and even the Bolsheviks did not boycott it, but nothing came of the second, which meant that the effect of the first decision was erased. After an extended debate, the congress feebly voted to return the question of Latvia's council and Latvia's constituent assembly back to the Autonomy Committee of the Vidžeme Land Council, from where a decision was not likely to emerge.[64](#)

From the point of view of the liberals, their position weakened even more after the fall of Riga and Bolshevik victory in elections to the Vidžeme Land Council on August 20.[65](#) If before the elections the autonomy question was frustrated in the

Vidzeme Land Council, now it was completely blocked. On October 15, due to an impasse on the autonomy question, the liberals walked out of the Council.⁶⁶

After the disappointment in the Autonomy Conference of July 30 and after the poor showing in the election of August 20, the liberals were forced to rethink their strategy. The choices were limited. They could gain support from the nationalities of Russia, and thus they participated in the Congress of Nationalities in Kiev with such enthusiasm. But the nationalities in Kiev could not help them to organize institutions in Latvia. Therefore private initiative was the only realistic alternative. From Klive's memoirs we learn that this is exactly what happened. J. Goldmanis, with the assent of some like minded people, called a conference in Petrograd for October 2.⁶⁷ Out of this private gathering came the Provisional National Council that met on November 30 in Valka. By that date, much had happened in Russia. The Provisional Government was gone, and the Bolsheviks were in power. It was evident that to build a federative Russia was no longer a feasible alternative. The work of the Provisional National Council belongs to a different political syndrome or paradigm — the tradition of sovereign states. To be sure, there was some speculative preparation during the year for the new turn of events, but notice must be taken that a qualitative shift had occurred that was more than an outgrowth of the speculations about a federative Russia and an autonomous Latvia. J. Goldmanis' attitude illustrated this most clearly. In the beginning of the Revolution he was only a moderate autonomist. In late fall, he was among the most outspoken of proponents of a sovereign Latvia.⁶⁸ It seems that in the final assessment of political shifts it is not so significant to take note of shifts in the opinions of poets or journalists but rather to recognize such shifts among political realists such as Goldmanis. The Temporary National Council showed that the realists had shifted. The federative tradition had come to an end.⁶⁹

1 The most recent treatment of the development of the ideology of Latvia's independence during 1917 is U. Germanis' study "Latvijas neatkarības domas attīstība," *Jauna Gaita*, No. 59-62 (1966-67). The essay is also available in English "The Idea of Independent Latvia and its Development in 1917," *Res Baltica: A Collection of Essays in Honor of the Memory of Dr. Alfred Bilmanis (1887-1948)*, Adolfs Sprudz and Armins Ru-sis, eds (Leyden, 1968), pp. 27-87. For a fine treatment in the memoir literature see Adolfs Klive, *Brīva Latvija* (New York, 1969), pp. 202-238. For a more general and objective view Edgar Andersons' *Latvijas Vesture* (Stockholm, 1967), pp. 136-152 is indispensable. A more partisan account is to be found in Ernest Blanks, *Latvijas tautas cēls uz neatkarīgu valsti* (Stockholm, 1970), especially pp. 159-203.

2 For a discussion of the nature of Latvian parties and their names during 1917, consult A. Ezergailis, "Rīgas Domes vēle-sanas 1917. gada," *Jauna Gaita*, No. 69-71 (1968).

3 The election results of the Riga City Council would indicate this. The ticket of F. Veinbergs' party, The People's Party, elected one delegate out of 120, receiving 1,520 votes. Ezergailis, *Jauna Gaita*, No. 70, p. 40.

4 For a fuller argument of this view see the author's: "1917 in Latvia: The Bolshevik Year," *Canadian Slavic Studies*, Winter 1969, pp. 646-662, and "1917. Gada marta revolūcija Rīgā," *Jauna Gaita*, No. 65 (1967), pp. 37-41

5 *Ibid.*

6 A journalist in 1917 put it this way: "Since the component parts of Russia, Ukraine, Lithuania, Latvia, Georgia and others are striving to establish their own autonomous order with special and local legislative parliaments etc., for us in Russia it is difficult to imagine an order that is other than federative." *Lidums*, 23 April.

7 See especially Germanis, *op. cit.*

8 This is true, for example in all of the accounts enumerated in note 1.

9 The visionary tradition was most clearly represented by the Social Democrats. The thinking of poet J. Rainis would illustrate this. The following excerpt is taken from an article in *Jaunais Yards* (4 and 8 February, 1917) in which Rainis disputes cosmopolitanism as it was understood by the Bolshevik wing of the party: "Similarly the present cosmopolites, renouncing their nation, would not jump into the nationless state of the future but rather only into another greater national state. The present state of development does not ask for national self destruction, but rather in its ordering in national units, in order to obtain full development. These national units would unify themselves into larger and larger territories, until they would encompass the continents and humanity, and then perhaps there would emerge new larger nations with new languages, perhaps with one common language and other individual ones. But that would not be mechanical cosmopolitanism but organic entities and unities. That road is a long one, and one must pass through all of it; one just can't decide that today we have already reached the end. That is not logical thinking, but rather spiritual timidity that fools itself by fantasy. The underclass, the most progressive element, must guard itself against it." *Raina un Aspazijas gada gramata 1970. gadam* ('Sweden, 1969), p. 25.

10 For a discussion of Baltic autonomy, see Arveds Svabe, *Lat-vijas Vesture* (Stockholm, 1958), pp. 17-24. Also by the same author, "Baltic Autonomy until 1918," *East and West*, No. 3, (1954).

11 A full recent discussion of the problem is to be found in Horace B. Davis' *Nationalism and Socialism: Marxist and Labor Theories of Nationalism to 1917* ("New York and London, 1967).

12 Latvian Social Democratic theories of nationalism are discussed throughout in Bruno Kalnins, *Latvijas socialdemokratijas piecdesmit gadi* (Stockholm, 1956). Also Felikss Cielens, *Laikmetu maina* (Stockholm, 1961), I, 393-411. Svabe, *Latvijas vesture*, pp. 724-734, and Andersons, pp. 134-152. Stucka's view is fully discussed in A. Ezergailis, "Nationality Question in Bolshevik Ideology," *Bulletin of Baltic Studies*, No. 5 (1971).

13 For the discussion of the Nationality Congress in Kiev September 8-11, see below. The reverberations in the border-states of the Empire can be seen by glancing at the pertinent pages in Robert Paul Browder and Alexander Kerensky, eds. *The Russian Provisional Government 1917* (Stanford, 1961), pp. 317-433. For the Southern and Eastern part of the Empire, see Richard Pipes, *The Formation of the Soviet Union 1917-1923* (Cambridge, Mass., 1953). For an introductory account on the nationality movement in the Baltic States, Stanley W. Page, *The Formation of the Baltic States* (Cambridge, 1959), pp. 1-86 is valuable. Also Klive, pp. 202-209. The developments in Finland are covered in C. Jay Smith, Jr., *Finland and the Russian Revolution 1917-1920* (Athens, Ga., 1958), pp. 8-38. For the Ukraine, see Arthur E. Adams, *Bolsheviks in the Ukraine* (New Haven, 1963), pp. 3-24.

14 On one occasion Bolshevik P. Stucka ridiculed the slogan by saying: "that it is only play on words when we speak about 'free Latvia in a free Russia'. In an unfree Russia a free Latvia is unimaginable." P. Stucka, *Cina par OMobri*, in *Rakštu Klase* (Riga, 1957), p. 87.

15 Although Germanis' study is basically about the emergence of the idea of independence, for the period in question it supports this conclusion. Germanis, *op. cit.*

16 The most reliable discussion of the numbers of refugees is found in Andersons, pp. 63-75.

17 The following quotation illustrates the weighing of various factors that a liberal was forced to make: "Free Latvia, the same as Lithuania, can ask for independence, but this demand has no practical significance. This kind of demand can be seriously considered only in case we can count on the collapse of Great Russia, or if our demand were supported 'oy a stronger power than Russia. But since it is not so, we are asking for an autonomous Latvian state in Russia's federative republic." *Lidums*, 27 June.

18 The following people entered the council of the National Democratic Party: J. Akuraters, writer; J. Bankovs, editor; E. Blanks, journalist; P. Dale, scholar; A. Kablinskis; A. Ke-nins, writer; J. Lapins, publicist; L. Laicens, poet; R. Laz-dins, publicist; D. Muske, student; Pelcmans, publicist; A. Purins, lawyer; K. Reiss, teacher; J. Rupais, bookdealer; K. Skalbé, poet; J. Silins, student; S. Staprans, publicist; Žiemelis, teacher. *Dzimtenes Atbals*, June 28.

As opposed to the above, the council of the Peasant Union Party consisted of the following: K. Ulmanis, agronomist; A. Bremers, farmer; P. Siecenijs, director; K. Gulbis; J. Pavlovics; O. Nonacs, editor; P. Sauleskalns, agronomist; J. Varsbergs, agronomist; Malta, teacher; Endzelins, farmer; Ed. Laursons, engineer; Gulbits; Smits, ex-teacher, farmer; Tilts, farmer; Murits, agronomist; Liepkalns, farmer; Cakans, farmer; Mrs. Pogina, farmer; Kavjeks, teacher; V. Vankins, farmer. *Lidums*, May 2.

19 For the treatment of the question at the party congress of the Peasant Union, see *ibid.*, p. 38. *Dzimtenes Atbalss* in its reportage of the National Democratic congress is very incomplete (28 June).

20 *Karlis Ulmanis 75 gadi* (Brīva Zeme), pp. 195-199.

21 *Lidums*, 3 May. 40

22 *Dzimtenes Atbalss*, 28 June.

23 *Lidums*, 4 March.

24 *Lidums*, 5 March.

25 Browder, pp. 226-234.

26 The idea that Latvians are not allowed to establish autonomy was almost incomprehensible to them. They felt that they deserved it as a principle of justice for having participated in the revolutionary movement. The events of 1905 were very frequently brought up in this connection. The principle of utility was also invoked. It was argued that Russia, from the economic point of view, was beyond any help, and that regardless of who ruled in Russia, Kadets or socialists, the country could be salvaged only as a decentralized state allowing each national component to take care of its people. *Lidums*, 30 June.

27 The government also used other arguments for the need to hold Russia's state united. In the Appeal to the Ukrainian People, the government argued: "Brother Ukrainians! Do not take the perilous course of splitting up the forces of emancipated Russia. Do not divorce yourself from our common native land. Do not break up our common army at a time of grave danger. Do not introduce fratricidal dissent in the ranks of the people at the very time when all the strength of the people must be concentrated on defending the country against military defeat and on overcoming internal obstacles. In your impatience to secure immediately the (desired) form of government for the Ukraine, do not inflict a fatal blow on the whole state and on yourself, for the ruination of Russia will spell the ruination of your case as well." Browder, p. 386.

28 See Miliukov's speech at the Eighth Congress of the Party of the People's Freedom. Miliukov said: "The Party of the People's Freedom will endeavor to find a solution that, while giving an opportunity to the various regions of Russia to create their local autonomy on the principle of local legislative, will not at the same time destroy the unity of the Russian State." Browder, p. 317.

29 Browder, p. 1387.

30 Documentary evidence on the July governmental crises can be found in Browder, pp. 383-393; and 1383-1387.

31 Browder, p. 1716. In the Draft Project for the Articles of the New Fundamental Laws concerning Autonomy and Federation that was drawn up, the indivisibility of the Russian state was reaffirmed, regional autonomy was allowed, but legislation issued by regional authorities which would be inconsistent with the central authorities was held to be invalid. Browder, pp. 319-20.

32 If autonomy is not granted "then what right is there to declare the peace terms based on the principles of self-determination? Anybody with a sound mind must recognize that the declarations of the Provisional Government devour each other. They are full of contradictions and, looking at the question from the legal side, the government has broken its own laws. If the government is 'breaking' laws, then the laws are being broken by everybody with the exception of Latvians and some other small nations," *Lidums*, 28 June.

33 Estonia is another exception, but its case is different. On March 30 Estonia was unified as an administrative unit. The Estonian inhabited northern part of Livonia was separated from the Latvian inhabited southern part. This fell under the reforms of local government and from the legal angle it has nothing to do with autonomy, although as a practical measure it allowed the Estonians to act in concert. Browder, pp. 300-310. The Estonians elected a Gubernia Assembly which they simply called the Estonian National Assembly, thus obtaining a de facto autonomy. *Ibid.*, p. 404.

34 Browder, pp. 322-323, and p. 334.

35 Browder, pp. 389-390.

36 General studies of the Russian Revolution treat the Ukrainian question very lightly. An exception is the study by Marc Ferro, *La Revolution de 1917* (Paris, 1967), I, 158-169, and 204-230.

37 Klive, p. 203, and Andersons, pp. 175-178.

38 Klive, p. 215. The version in *Lidums* seems exaggerated and presents Kerensky in a rather unfavorable light. In *Lidums'* account the disruption of the conference appears as an insult to the delegation: "The question was repeated,... whether what was allowed to the Estonians will be prohibited to the Latvians, federative unification of all Estonian territories? Kerensky had bent his head, as though falling into deep thought. The question had been repeated several times, increasingly emphasizing it, until Kerensky, as if awakening from his thoughts, commented: 'Yes, perhaps that's the way it was with Estonia...'. At that moment the door opened and it was announced that the minister of foreign affairs urgently needs to speak with the Minister-President. Kerensky arose and, politely excusing himself, said good bye to the delegation." *Lidums*, 23 September.

39 The article was signed by U., which would indicate that it was penned by Karlis Upits. Upits was one of the radical writers for *Dzimtenes Atbalss*, but usually the articles signed with his full name were not quite as sharply worded. *Dzimtenes Atbalss*, 5 April.

40 For the proceedings of the Congress, see Browder, pp. 1289-1294. For the resolutions accepted at the Congress, see *Lidums*, 18 May.

41 *Lidums*, 18 May.

42 The call for an independent Latvia also began to be articulated during the summer of the year, but that particular theme will not be discussed in this study because it belongs to a different syndrome of political philosophy.

43 *Dzimtenes Atbalss*, 8 and 18 March.

44 *Dzimtenes Atbalss*, 22 April.

45 *Lidums*, 4 June.

46 *Dzimtenes Atbalss*, 19 May.

47 *Dzimtenes Atbalss*, 5 July.

48 *Ibid.*

49 *Dzimtenes Atbalss*, 17 June.

50 *Dzimtenes Atbalss*, 5 July. The liberals were pushed towards a revolutionary solution by other reasons than the intransigence of the Provisional Government. It was also argued that only through radicalism could the hold of Bolsheviks be broken in Latvia. *Lidums*, 21 June.

51 *Dzimtenes Atbalss* devoted a special editorial to the question, entitled "The Revolutionary Resolution of the Latgale Question," 5 July.

52 *Jaunais Laiks*, 31 July to 3 August, gives a rather detailed protocol of the Autonomy Conference. The debate on the question at the First Congress of the Peasant Union Party is reviewed in A. Ezergailis "Zemnieku Savienība 1917. gada," manuscript.

53 This theme is also noted by Germanis, *Jauna Gaita*, No. 60, p. 34. For the various attempts to internationalize the Latvian question, see Andersons, pp. 136-152.

54 *Dzimtenes Atbalss*, 1 July. Blanks' comments on the issue appeared in the issue of 8 July.

55 Andersons, p. 244.

56 Browder, p. 372.

57 *Dzimtenes Atbalss*, 8 April.

58 *Lidums*, 23 September.

59 *Lidums*, 6 September.

60 *Lidums*, 24 September. The Congress passed a resolution especially pertaining to Latvia, which communicated to the Provisional Government that all Latvian regions must be unified in one democratic and autonomous Latvia by a special decree of the Government. Germanis, *Jauna Gaita*, No. 61, p. 41.

61 A. Ezergailis, "The Nationality Question in Bolshevik Ideology," *Bulletin of Baltic Studies*, No. 5 (1971)

62 For instance, in Germanis, *op. cit.*, *Jauna Gaita*, No. 60, p. 32; Kalnins, p. 187.

63 *Dzimtenes Vestnesis* in 1917 evaluated the work of the conference very negatively: "The negative side of this conference casts a shadow on its

positive one, and therefore it seems that the conference would have accomplished much more for the national cause if it had decided to convene Latvia's Constituent Assembly. But that was not done, which multiplies the mistakes." *Dzimtenes Atbalss*, 5 August. A similar conclusion is reached by Klive: "The conference does protest against determination over Latvia without Latvian participation and knowledge, but it does not say who should speak for Latvia: plebiscite, Latvia's Constituent Assembly, or some Latvian central organ, or even Russia..." p. 193.

64 *Jaunais Laiks*, 3 August.

65 The Bolsheviks received 60% of the votes.

66 Liberals found the work in the Vidzeme Land Council impossible and consequently 17 of them walked out of it. *Lidums*, 6 October and 17 October. The conflict was brought about by the Council's vote against the participation in the organizational meeting of Latvia's Provisional National Council in Petrograd, October 2.

67 Klive, pp. 223-228.

68 Klive, p. 230.

69 There is one development that this study did not touch upon. After the fall of Riga on August 21, a joint group of Social Democrats and liberals called the *Democratic Bloc* met and proceeded to define a program of action that was similar to the one developed by the Temporary National Council. Andersons, 240-242.