

***ANATIONAL* STATE AND THE AGE OF NATION-STATISM**  
**PAUL SCHIEMANN'S LIBERALISM AND THE CHALLENGE**  
**OF AUTHORITARIAN REGIMES**

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I would dedicate my thesis to the memory of my grandfather, József Rédlí.

## Abstract

Paul Schiemann (1874-1944), the extraordinary Baltic German politician and journalist was born as a subject of the Russian Tsar and died as a Latvian citizen in German occupied Riga; he lived his life in a permanent minority situation. He was in minority in the sense that he did not belong to the titular nation of his homeland and also because he was one of few interwar politicians who did not represent populist ideas.

In the historiography he is famous for his oppositional standpoint towards Bolshevism, radical nationalism and Nazism. His idea about the state which acknowledges itself *anational* made him well known. The concept of *anational* state is a long-term vision for guaranteeing the peaceful coexistence of nations in Europe. This plan based on the duality of national and state communities with distinct responsibilities and tasks. He believed in a state with reduced functions and in the right of people to decide about their national affiliation, which he considered as a pure spiritual commitment.

He was able to promote his convictions until the end of 1920s without restrictions because the “new nationalist wave” undermined his aspirations and achievements. My thesis analyses the ideas of Schiemann about the relations between the minority and state in the context of his co-nationals, his state community and on European level.

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## Introduction

“There has been something fateful about everything in the effect of nationalism in Eastern Europe, and once set off, the process can never come to a halt as long as this region cannot produce a concept harmonizing the national notion with the imperial idea”<sup>1</sup>  
(László Németh, “In minority”)

Our demand for a national autonomy means the acknowledgement of the fact that you gentlemen by the foundation of Latvia simultaneously accomplished the national ideal. We confess the Latvian character of the state, and the logical consequence of this is that we ourselves grew up to the cultivation of our culture and then we participate in the cultural affairs obviously in accordance with our tax payments. [...] First the spirit of a new era provided you, gentlemen the right for self-determination on which the Latvian State is based. The same right, however, claims national autonomy for us. This new spirit which is articulated explicitly in the aspirations of the League of Nations most certainly should not be violated by the young States of the East.<sup>2</sup>

Paul Schiemann in his speech at the session of the Constituent Assembly of Latvia in 1921 defined his position regarding the relation between the state and its German minorities. Moreover he clarifies his attitude to the changes occurred at the end of the First World War, most importantly to the Latvian statehood. Although there were few things he criticized more frequently than the attempts to realize the nation-state idea he contributed to the work of founding the Latvian state from its very early stages. Not only in order to articulate the interests of the Latvian Germandom but he was also convinced that “whoever helps build it up, will also find a place within it.”<sup>3</sup>

Paul Schiemann (1876-1944), the influential Baltic-German publicist, politician and minority rights activist also recognized along with his wife as “Righteous among the

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<sup>1</sup> Németh László, “Kisebbségben,” (In Minority) (translation: Dávid Oláh) in *Anti-modernism: Radical revisions of collective identity*, ed. Diana Mishkova, Marius Turda, Balázs Trencsényi (Budapest: CEU Press, 2014) 233-245. in print

<sup>2</sup> Paul Schiemann, “Die nationale Autonomie der Minderheiten,” in *Rigasche Rundschau* 29 April 1921, in vol.2. booklet 3 in *Leitartikel, Reden und Aufsätze* ed. Hans Donath (Frankfurt am Main: H. Donath, 1987), 858-859. (if not marked otherwise, the translations are mine, A. Ö.)

<sup>3</sup> John Hiden & Martyn Housden, *Neighbours or enemies? Germans, the Baltic and beyond* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2008), 39.

nations” by Yad Vashem in Jerusalem,<sup>4</sup> can be treated as a “prominent defender” of liberal values of the interwar period. John Hiden, the author of Paul Schiemann’s political bibliography refers to him as one of the “forgotten Europeans” who is worthy of celebration.<sup>5</sup>

Schiemann’s main task after the Great War was to create the conditions for the Latvian Germans and indirectly to other minority groups in the newly established state not for a peaceful coexistence moreover for a fruitful coexistence, which means in his reading a supportive environment for cultural development. He attempted to complete his mission through the influential liberal daily, the *Rigasche Rundschau*,<sup>6</sup> of which he was the editor-in-chief from 1919. He used this means to convince the German minority in Latvia about its tasks and responsibilities in the framework of the new system. In addition, Schiemann was an active politician and leader of the German Balt Democratic Party<sup>7</sup> and chair of the Committee of German Balt Parties,<sup>8</sup> frequently also managed to unite all minority parties in the *Saeima*, the Latvian Parliament.

According to Schiemann, there are two ways to acknowledge the right of the national minorities to the unrestricted cultivation of their cultures. One alternative is “to conceive the state as *anational*,” and either obligate it to leave the task of taking care of culture to particular communities or consider every culture equally.<sup>9</sup> As the new states of Latvia and also Estonia opted for the nation state solution, following the Schiemannian argument, the establishment of national cultural autonomy, a self-administration in cultural affairs was required for the nationalities as under these circumstances it is inconceivable that

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<sup>4</sup> The Righteous among the Nations

<http://db.yadvashem.org/righteous/family.html?language=en&itemId=4022625>, accessed: 6 May 2014

<sup>5</sup> John Hiden, *Defender of Minorities* (London: Hurst & Company, 2004), 250.

<sup>6</sup> David J. Smith & John Hiden, *Ethnic Diversity and the Nation State: National Cultural Autonomy Revisited* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 24.

<sup>7</sup> Hiden, *Defender of Minorities*, 50.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. 59.

<sup>9</sup> Schiemann, “Die nationale Autonomie der Minderheiten,” 858.



the state could serve the German, Russian or Jewish cultural matters simultaneously.<sup>10</sup> Many Baltic German politicians shared this idea and were persuaded that the widespread of this practice could be a solution for the biggest problem of interwar Europe, namely for the situation of 40 million people who lived outside the ‘nation-state of their own’<sup>11</sup> in ethnically diverse states.

The mission of Schiemann grew to European dimension with the foundation of the Congress of European Nationalities in 1925. He participated in the activities of this “NGO” until the Jewish deputies left the organization in 1933, because the Congress did not supported a resolution which disapproved of the discrimination against citizens of Jewish origin in Germany. This year also meant the end of his career at *Rigasche Rundschau*, he left Latvia and moved to Vienna where he stayed until the *Anschluss*. Afterwards he returned to Riga and lived there until his death in 1944. Even in “exile” he continued his theoretical fight against the emergence of “new nationalism” and Nazism. He founded a new organization in 1937, the German Association for National Peacekeeping in Europe (*Deutscher Verband der Nationalen Befriedigung Europas*) with the aim of remaining true to the original principles of the Congress, but that was a hopeless endeavor.<sup>12</sup>

The new East had its “liberal moment”<sup>13</sup> and Schiemann contributed to it also remained true to this ideology throughout his life. Although the *anational* ideal seemed to be a potential alternative to the problematic applications of the nation state concept at one time, even the earlier supporters of Schiemann helpfully contributed in getting away from that ideal and praised and desired the congruence of the state and the nation. My main goal is to observe, how the ambitions of Schiemann which disposed the progressive path towards

<sup>10</sup> Schiemann, “Die nationale Autonomie der Minderheiten,” 858.

<sup>11</sup> Smith & Hiden, *Ethnic Diversity and the Nation State*, 19.

<sup>12</sup> Eiler Ferenc, *Kisebbségvédelem és revízió: Magyar törekvések az Európai Nemzetiségi Kongresszuson (1925-1939)* (Minority protection and revision: Hungarian ambitions at the European Congress of Nationalities) (Budapest: Gondolat, MTA Kisebbségkutató Intézet, 2007), 258. accessed: 28. 10. 2013, <http://www.mtaki.hu/adatbazis/Kisebbssegvedelem-es-revizio-Magyar-torekvesek-az-Europai-Nemzetisegi-Kongresszuson-1925-1939-/3/53/3>

<sup>13</sup> Quote from Balázs Trencsényi, 3rd April, 2014

peace in Europe were objected, twisted and turned on their wrong sides. I contrast the fundamentals of the *anational* state with the features of the authoritarian states. I demonstrate how his mission was undermined step by step by the environment/milieu which I call with reflection to Michael Mann as the era of “nation-statism.”<sup>14</sup> I analyze the theoretical works in the mirror of his practical political activism which he exerted on several levels in order to point out potential controversies in his arguments which evolved from entanglements of these different roles he played.

The *anational* state in the title of my work refers not only to the analysis of the afterlife of this notion but also to the matter to be served, the autonomy and the Congress. Moreover it operates as a metaphor of the principles represented by Schiemann himself. It is not an exaggeration to state that by 1919 he possessed a worldview according to which the life on the continent could continue after the war. This worldview which was modified and supplemented throughout the years consisted of principles and visions considering the Germans in Latvia, the Latvian State, the Germandom living outside Germany and also Europe as an idea.

The historiography of Schiemann consists of numerous works among them Hans von Rimscha, Michael Garleff and John Hiden wrote the most valuable monographs.<sup>15</sup> My work can contribute to the existing literature with a perspective which gives opportunity to supersede the exclusively positive evaluation of Paul Schiemann’s work by pointing out the controversies in his theories and practice resulting from his contesting identities. Instead of following a chronological line in the narrative I focus on various spheres of his stance on the minority situation in my analysis.

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<sup>14</sup> Michael Mann, *Fascists* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 2.

<sup>15</sup> See Hans von Rimscha, “Paul Schiemann als Minderheitenpolitiker,” *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 4(1956); Michael Garleff, “Paul Schiemanns Minderheitentheorie als Beitrag zur Lösung der Nationalitätenfrage,” *Zeitschrift für Ostforschung*, 25(3) 1976; John Hiden, *Defender of Minorities* (London: Hurst & Company, 2004)

I begin my essay with a biographical review about the life of Paul Schiemann prior to the war, focusing on the turning points in the Baltic German history. The creation of German unity in 1871 affected the situation of German nobility in the Baltic Provinces, and significantly influenced the attitude of the Romanov Empire towards the Latvian national awakening. I would also like to point out the relevance of the 1905 revolution in the change of interethnic relations. The main question of this part is how Schiemann related himself to the Latvian nation-building process.

In order to emphasize the different identities Schiemann possessed I distinguish three different fields of his activities which coincide with his identities. In all spheres he was in minority not only in numerical terms but also when it comes to his opinions. Paul Schiemann lived his life in a permanent minority.

As a Baltic German (*Balte*) and later as a Latvian citizen<sup>16</sup> he belonged to the group of those ethnic Germans who lived outside the territory of the German *Reich* and the Weimar Republic respectively. The group of *Auslandsdeutschen* consisted of 9 million people;<sup>17</sup> this was the most numerous among the minority groups in interwar Europe. The claim to organize themselves was realized in 1923 with the foundation of the *Verband der Deutschen Minderheiten Europas* in which Schiemann was elected as a committee member for Latvia's Germans.<sup>18</sup> One of the notions used frequently in the arguments of minority politicians is the *Volksgemeinschaft*, the national community which with the network of the *Verband* gained transnational dimension. In the second chapter of my thesis I focus on the theories about the "cross-border" and transnational nature of the *Volksgemeinschaft*, which lead from the obvious claim for cooperation of cultural bodies to the definition of the

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<sup>16</sup> After the foundation of the Latvian and the Estonian states he emphasized that the category of *Balts* ceased to be exist, and from that time on there are only *Estlānders* and *Lettlānders*, meaning Estonian and Latvian citizens. Paul Schiemann, "Deutsche, Balten, Lettlānders," in *Rigasche Rundschau* 11 September 1920, vol.2. booklet 2. in *Leitartikel, Reden und Aufsätze* ed. Hans Donath (Frankfurt am Main: H. Donath, 1987), 542.

<sup>17</sup> "Zehn Jahre des Zusammenwirkens der deutschen Volksgruppen in Europa", *Nation und Staat*, October 1932, 2

<sup>18</sup> Smith & Hiden, *Ethnic Diversity and the Nation State*, 24.

*Volksgemeinschaft* as racial community<sup>19</sup> and to the justification of resettlement and population change, in the case of Baltic Germans a resettlement to the newly occupied territory of Warthegau in 1939.<sup>20</sup>

Schiemann's ideas considering the state and its functions, his aversions towards the nation state can be demonstrated especially through his writings about Latvian domestic issues. The Latvian history professor, Leo Dribins refers to Schieman as a politician who defended the interests of all inhabitants of the Latvian state and not only of the minorities.<sup>21</sup> The aim of the chapter dealing with the Latvian dimension of Schieman's activities is to point out how far his quest became impracticable thanks to the changes of the domestic political milieu. By explaining the Law of School Autonomy and evaluating the degree of achieved cultural autonomy of the minorities I would underline that although in Latvia the cultural autonomy was never codified as a law, the minorities lived in a "fruitful coexistence" with the titular nation for some years. Although in those peaceful years there were interethnic clashes which I show on the basis of state of affairs reports published in the journal *Nation und Staat*, particularly the German minority managed to build up a wide autonomy for themselves with foundation of new organizations and the cooperation between the political parties and educational and cultural bodies.

Schiemann contributed to the nation and state-building process in Latvia, which began to exist on the principles of a liberal constitution. By that time there was a place for him among its citizens. The state turned to be authoritarian in 1934 however the discrimination of minorities and all type of "others" began already in 1931.<sup>22</sup> I analyze the

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<sup>19</sup> Marion A. Kaplan, *Between dignity and despair: Jewish life in Nazi Germany*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 44.

<sup>20</sup> David Feest, "Abgrenzung oder Assimilation: Überlegungen zum Wandel der deutschbaltischen Ideologien 1918-1939 anhand der 'Baltischen Monatschrift,' *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung*, 45, 4 (1996): 506.

<sup>21</sup> Leo Dribins, "Die Deutschbalten und die Idee von nationallettischem Staat (1918-1934)," *Special Edition of Nordost-archiv* 2 (1996): 292, accessed April 7, 2014.

<http://www.ikgn.de/cms/index.php/downloads/summary>.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.* 275.

causes and effects of the Ulmanis coup by referring among others to two recent works on the topic, one volume dealing with Baltic eugenics,<sup>23</sup> the other one is focusing on the culture of authoritarianism in Latvia.<sup>24</sup> My intention is to observe what attempts were made in order to create from the state of nationalities a nation state in Latvia.

Although the concept of national cultural autonomy and also the Congress of European Nationalities were German initiatives, more precisely Baltic German ones, Smith and Hiden argue that neither the autonomy nor the Congress was a “purely German endeavor.”<sup>25</sup> In this regard in the fourth chapter of my thesis I am going to ask how far the national cultural autonomy was an acceptable solution for other minorities, whether not only German communities could profit from this solution.

Special attention should be paid to the debates about the future of the Jewish national minority groups. The organization of the Congress can be interpreted as a step towards a peaceful Europe as Schiemann had visions about it. I suggest that his thoughts clearly deserve place among ideas about the European integration. I will refer to his frequent arguments with Aristide Briand and Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi considering the concept of Europe.

On the other hand, in the evaluation of the Congress’ achievements the questions about the degree of German influence on the work of the organization inevitably arise. The entanglement of the Congress and the *Verband der Deutschen Minderheiten Europas* regarding leading personalities and also aims is obvious, moreover the subordination of the Congress to the all-German (*Gesamtdeutsch*) targets that I want to demonstrate. The sphere of the *Verband* and the Congress is problematic to divide. For Schiemann the separation of these two spheres was a fundament, but as I will emphasize for other German minority

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<sup>23</sup> Björn M. Felder & Paul J. Weidling, *Baltic Eugenics: Bio-politics, race and nation in interwar Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania 1918-1940*, (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2013)

<sup>24</sup> Deniss Hanovs & Valdis Tēraudkalns, *Ultimate freedom-no choice; The Culture of Authoritarianism in Latvia, 1934–1940*, (Leiden: Brill, 2013)

<sup>25</sup> Smith & Hiden, *Ethnic Diversity and the Nation State*, 76.

leader the Congress was a tool to achieve the goals of the *Verband* which changed significantly within one decade.

To compare the nation building processes of the inter-war Latvian state and of post-Soviet Latvia is a common approach in scholarship. In the conclusive part of my work I will highlight the differences between the minority concepts of the Latvian state in these different eras of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with special emphasis on the criteria of historical or autochthonous minorities.

The centralized state and the notion of a unified political nation were foreign for the German state theory. The strong individualism, appreciation of freedom and the desire for autonomy is embedded in the German state development.<sup>26</sup> The notion of a German nation in the sense of *Volk* was a late phenomenon coined by Johann Gottfried Herder. The term *Volk* does not have a proper equal in English so I will refer to it by using the original German word. In contrast to the nation it signifies an ethno-cultural community and not a political one (*Staatsgemeinschaft*). It is not the authority of the state which gives meaning to that entity whereas the *Volksgemeinschaft*, the ethno-national community is founded on the same language and on “linguistically embedded culture” and it is “detached from the state.”<sup>27</sup> Brubaker argues that the concept of one political nation (*Staatsnation*) also appeared in the German state development by the foundation of the German *Reich* in 1871.<sup>28</sup> The formation of the German Empire did not mean the coincidence of *Volksgemeinschaft* with the *Staatsgemeinschaft*. One of its significance from our point of view was that the formerly autonomous units: city states, kingdoms, principalities more or less accepted the central power above themselves. On the other hand it is also relevant to mention that with the realization of the small German concept significant parts of the

<sup>26</sup> Paul Schiemann, “Um ein neues Recht,” In *Rigasche Rundschau* August 30, 1926, vol. 2, booklet 10, in *Leitartikel, Reden und Aufsätze*, edited by Hans Donath, 2919-2924. Frankfurt am Main: H. Donath, 1989.

<sup>27</sup> Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism reframed: nationhood and the national question in the New Europe*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996), 132.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. 116.

*Volksgemeinschaft*, namely the German population of Austria stayed out of the unification process.

In the multiethnic Austro-Hungarian Monarchy the separation of national groups on a territorial basis were impossible, and with the urbanization the cities became more diverse than the country sides. Parallel to this phenomena the claims for the cultivation of the own culture appeared from the side of the national groups. Karl Renner the Austro-Marxist ideologist in his theoretical work *Staat und Nation* elaborated the concept of the national cultural autonomy which could solve the nationalities question in the Austrian part of the empire.<sup>29</sup> The basic principle of Renner's concept is that "people" (*Volk*) creates a constitutional unit, as a "totality of material and social interests," whereas the nations (*Nationen*) should be grasped as "cultural and spiritual communities."<sup>30</sup> Renner argued for the separation of the tasks between state and nationalities as different spheres of interests. According to him it is the state which is linked or moreover manifests itself in territory whereas the nation (in its *völkisch* sense obviously) is a consciousness can be grasped in feelings and thoughts.<sup>31</sup> The essence of the national-cultural or personal autonomy is the creation of self-governmental institutions which become objects of the law with the responsibility to manage the cultural tasks of the given national groups. The bases of these bodies are the national cadastres to which the members of the national group could register voluntarily. The liberal nature of this concept could be underlined by the fact that people could decide on their own to which national cadastre they would belong. In contrast to territorial autonomy these self-administrational bodies were not bounded to territorial units,

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<sup>29</sup> Karl Renner (Synopticus) *Staat und Nation. Zur österreichischen Nationalitätenfrage. Staatsrechtliche Untersuchung über die möglichen Principien einer Lösung und die juristischen Voraussetzungen eines Nationalitätengesetzes*. (Wien: Eigenverl. 1899)

<sup>30</sup> The English translation published in Ephraim Nimni (ed.) *National Cultural Autonomy and its contemporary critics* (New York: Routledge, 2005) 24. and Renner: *Staat und Nation*, 12.

<sup>31</sup> Nimni, *National Cultural Autonomy*, 25.

they represented extraterritorial principle which helped to overcome the problems caused by mixed population.

The dichotomy between state community and ethno-national community was a fundament in the arguments of Schiemann as well. But whereas Renner elaborated the idea of personal autonomy in the imperial framework Schiemann and others applied the concept in the newly emerged nation states in the new Eastern Europe in order to overcome the national conflicts caused by the principles of the post Versailles order. As John Hiden phrases the challenge of the minority activists was that “the post-war espousal of national self-determination merely provided new theoretical grounds for the idea of forging an identity between belonging to the state and belonging to a nation.”<sup>32</sup> In my point of view the biggest novelty in the Baltic solution for the problem of diverse society was the capability to apply the framework which was thought to be fitting in Empires. Although it should be admitted that Estonia and Latvia in 1920s can not be treated as clear examples of nation states.

The establishment of the dictatorships in both states meant the end of the liberal democratic system in the 1930's. As Bamberger-Stemmann, a German historian characterizes the authoritarian regimes the “extreme form of coincidence between a state and its titular nation (*Staatsvolk*) is when the synchronicity between ethnic nation-state and state leadership is produced for ideological reasons by means of codification.”<sup>33</sup> This unity model coined by these regimes identifies state with the nation in ethnic or racial term and designs a citizen, who exclusively should belong to the titular nation and supports the political convictions of the authoritarian regime. The concept of the unity between state and

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<sup>32</sup> Hiden, *Defender of Minorities*, 193.

<sup>33</sup> Sabine Bamberger-Stemmann, “Staatsbürgerliche Loyalität und Minderheiten als transnationale Rechtsparadigmen im Europa der Zwischenkriegszeit” in *Staat, Loyalität und Minderheiten in Osmittel und Südosteuropa 1918-1941* ed Peter Haslinger, Joachim von Puttkamer, (München: R. Oldenburg Verlag, 2007), 218.



titular nation coined the legitimacy of the dictatorial regimes.<sup>34</sup> A more radical form of this unity what Michael Mann calls as nation-statism referring to the combination of modern nationalism and statism in the National Socialist ideology. The aim of this movement is according to Mann to turn democratic aspiration on their head, into authoritarian regimes, seeking to “cleanse” minorities and opponents from the nation.”<sup>35</sup>

Ivars Ijabs who is one of the few Latvian scholar who studied the work of Schiemann, opposed the practice which treats the political thoughts of Schiemann as “supplements of his practical activities.”<sup>36</sup> Ijabs emphasizes the relevance of observing the political view’s independently. Admitting that Schiemann was not only as Ijabs phrases “an ad hoc theoretician”<sup>37</sup> I argue that his thoughts and achievements in the political field create his coherent oeuvre, otherwise the changes in his interpretations in time and according to audience would not be palpable.

Paul Schiemann was a very productive theoretician and journalist, his work consists of three monographs<sup>38</sup> and thousands of editorials, leading columns, speeches, and essays which were published and edited by Hans Donath between 1980 and 1992.<sup>39</sup> The 28 volumes long edition contains several ordinances but moreover the photocopies of Schiemann’s and others for the editor fascinating articles from *Revalsche Zeitung* and from *Rigasche Rundschau* from 1907 to 1933. Later works of Schiemann which were published mostly in the newspapers *Der Deutsche in Polen* and in *Neues Wiener Tageblatt* were

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<sup>34</sup> Bamberger-Stemmann, “Staatsbürgerliche Loyalität,” 218.

<sup>35</sup> Mann, *Fascists*, 2.

<sup>36</sup> Ivars Ijabs, “Strange Baltic Liberalism: Paul Schiemann's Political Thought Revisited,” *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 40,4 (2009): 496

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> *Das Fiasko der russischen Demokratie: Ein Beitrag zur Psychologie der letzten Revolution* (Berlin: Curtius, 1918), *Die Asiatisierung Europas: Gedanken über Klassenkampf und Demokratie* (Berlin: Grübel, 1919), *Ein europäisches Problem: Unabhängige Betrachtungen zur Minderheitenfrage* (Wien, Leipzig: Reinhold-Verlag, 1937)

<sup>39</sup> *Leitartikel, Reden und Aufsätze* ed. Hans Donath (Frankfurt am Main: H. Donath, 1988-1992)

collected and edited in a slender volume by the Latvian historian Helēna Šimkuva and Dietrich Loeber in 2000.<sup>40</sup>

Other relevant medium where his publications appeared was the journal of the Association of German Minorities in Europe (*Verband der Deutschen Minderheiten in Europa*), the *Nation und Staat* founded in 1927. This organ became the official publication of the Congress of European Nationalities after 1931. As long as Schiemann was active participant of the Nationalities Movement and also member of the editorial committee of this journal his views and with them the situation of minorities in Latvia were in the focus. After 1933 Schiemann published only once, namely the necrology of Baron Wilhelm Fircks, the leader of Latvian Germans conservatives in 1934. The last report about the minority situation in Latvia was published in 1936.

The selection of publications which I integrate into my analysis could seem to be arbitrary. In order to avoid this accusation I should state that the framework of a master thesis did not allow me to do a comprehensive research of the Schiemannian oeuvre. I restricted the timeframe and focused on his publications between 1919 and 1939. Thematically I was looking for articles which problematize the state-minority relations, the nature of the nation state and the essence of the ethno-national community.

My work, however, not aimed at research the relevance of Schiemann from the history of press point of view. I would analyze Paul Schiemann's political thinking by embedding them in various contexts, by comparing his ideas with other theoreticians, and creating a synthesis of the German, Baltic and European dimensions of his ideology.

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<sup>40</sup> *Paul Schiemann: Veröffentlichungen 1933-1940* (ed) Helēna Šimkuva, Dietrich A. Loeber (Hamburg: Dietrich A. Loeber, 2000)

## 1 Paul Schiemann in the context of the Baltic Provinces

This chapter is aimed at locating Paul Schiemann's early career in the historical context of his homeland, by observing his social background and the ideological trends he was influenced by. The social landscape of the Baltic Provinces in the second half of the long nineteenth century is heterogeneous and complex, it was also divided by deep ethnic, social and political fault lines, which overlapped and therefore strengthened each other. The Baltic Germans were fighting for their privileges because the emerging nationalism from the imperial core threatened their position. In this fight the Latvian national-consciousness became stronger. It considered the Germans as the bigger enemy and also accepted the support of their national aspirations by the Russian Empire. The situation was sharpened by the events of the 1905 revolution when Latvians destroyed several baronial courts as symbols of oppression and also killed many Germans and Russians, while the Germans were actively involved in the repression of the Latvian uprising.

### 1.1 Features of the Baltic German society

The concept of mobilized diaspora can describe the situation of the Baltic Germans in the context of the Romanov Empire. John Armstrong, an American political scientist, defines the mobilized diaspora as a community which "enjoys many cultural and material advantages compared to other groups in a multiethnic society."<sup>41</sup> The "economic and cultural dominance"<sup>42</sup> of the Germans in the Baltic Provinces originates from their so-called *Privileges* or *Capitulations of the Knightly Orders* (*Privilegien – Kapitulationen der Ritterschaften*) which after the end of the Nordic War were renegotiated with Peter the Great and Alexander II. The pact included the conditions under which the provinces of

<sup>41</sup> John A. Armstrong, "Mobilized and Proletarian Diasporas," *The American Political Science Review*, 70, 2 (1976): 393, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1959646>, accessed: 23 May 2014

<sup>42</sup> Ivars Ijabs, "Break out of Russia: Mikelis Valters and the National Issue in Early Latvian Socialism," *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 43, 4 (2012): 440.

Livonia, Estonia and Courland separated from the Holy Roman Empire, but belonging to the German cultural sphere could be incorporated into the Russian Empire.<sup>43</sup> The essence of this agreement was “to guarantee the uninterrupted continuity of the clerical, linguistic and legal situation in the provinces.”<sup>44</sup> In response, unconditional loyalty was required from the Baltic Germans towards the Tsar. This loyalty was tested, for example, by Catherine the Great who attempted to weaken the Baltic Germans by offering them “career opportunities” in the court.<sup>45</sup>

### 1.1.1 *Ritterschaften vs. Literaten*

Main beneficiaries of this social structure were the members of the Knightly Orders. These so-called *Ritterschaften* were constituted of the German nobility and members of the upper class, which from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards were divided in to the territorial units of Courland, Livonia, Estonia and Oesel. These communities controlled the rural areas through their provincial assemblies (*Landtags*) and the cities, mainly Riga, through the Small and Great Guilds, which united the burghers.<sup>46</sup> The Latvian and Estonian population of these provinces was mostly peasants by the time the “incorporation” still serfs and the control over them was transferred to the hands of the German landlords. In a retrospective article about the history of the Livonian *Ritterschaft* published in 1929, Eduard Freiherr von Stackelberg emphasized that it was the decision of these administrative bodies of the Germans to abolish serfdom. This measure had a preemptive character and meant at the same time the voluntary release of the German privileges in his point of view.<sup>47</sup>

The archaic construction of the Baltic society which did not undergo significant changes for centuries was undermined by several factors from the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Eduard Freiherr von Stackelberg, “Die Livländische Ritterschaft,” *Nation und Staat*, January 1929, 245.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid. 245-246.

<sup>45</sup> Alexei Miller, “The Romanov Empire and the Russian Nation,” in *Nationalizing Empires*, ed. Alexei Miller and Stefan Berger, (Budapest: CEU Press, 2014) in print

<sup>46</sup> Hiden, *Defender of Minorities*, 2.

<sup>47</sup> Stackelberg, “Die Livländische Ritterschaft,” 246.

century. In this process the abolition of serfdom meant only a small step in that the question of land ownership remained still unclarified, and the status of Landlords was untouched. The first attacks on the “fortress of the Germandom” came from the side of other “compatriots.”

The appearance of the strata called *Literaten* was a sign in itself of the ongoing changes, but the German middle class which consisted of teachers, pastors, lawyers and academics became louder from the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and questioned the exclusive authority of the nobility in the provinces. The members of this class were well informed, spoke several languages, and were open to cooperation with the Latvian and Estonian population. On the other hand, the formation of the Latvian and Estonian middle class, and I would emphasize the Latvian and Estonian working class meant a challenge for the status quo as well. The signal should have been clear for the powerful Knightly Orders that they had to face modernization. Some members understood the nature of the changes and began to present a more liberal tone.<sup>48</sup>

## 1.2 Russification and the support of Latvian national awakening

The *Ritterschaften* permanently complained about the shortening of their privileges by the Russians,<sup>49</sup> even though the process of “real” Russification began in 1830s. It is obvious that for centuries Latvians and Estonians did not have a role in the fights over power and authority. The national awakening of these “oppressed” nationalities began in the middle of the 1850’s as a reaction to the ideas of Romanticism and to the hegemonic fights between Russians and Germans. They were considered as serious player when the Empire actually wanted to curtail German dominance after 1871.

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<sup>48</sup> Gert von Pistohlkors, “Russifizierung und die Grundlagen der deutschbaltischen Russophobie” *Zeitschrift für Ostforschung* 25, 3 (1976): 631.

<sup>49</sup> Stackelberg, “Die Livländische Ritterschaft,” 246.

Russification was understood by the Baltic Germans as a real threat for their existence.<sup>50</sup> Reading Alexei Miller's definition of this process; the enculturation of all peoples of the state with Russian ethnicity,<sup>51</sup> the German attitude is understandable. For a group which is united by its privileges regarding the possibility of cultivating their own culture isolated in one of the most prosperous corners of the Empire, the ambitions of III. Alexander for "centralization and modernization with a national edge" meant a tragedy.<sup>52</sup> Following the imperial logic, the power of German co-nationals within the Russian Empire needed to be reduced. Miller argues that the Romanov Empire from 1870 onwards supported the Latvian and Estonian nationalism in the Baltic provinces with the aim to "counterbalance the German nationalist claims" which originated from the foundation of the united German Empire.<sup>53</sup> Because of the increasing demand for Russification many Baltic Germans left the Provinces, mainly publicists and scientists.<sup>54</sup> As a consequence Baltic Germans found themselves in a hostile environment, which transformed their highly honored University of Dorpat into a Russian language institution in 1893. In sum the former loyal elite was challenged by the nationalist perspectives of the imperial metropolis.<sup>55</sup>

The center of the region, the city of Riga was a place of significant changes it was one of the main participants of the Russian 'industrial boom.'<sup>56</sup> As a consequence of industrial development a demographic change occurred in the city, which affected not only the social but also the ethnic composition of Riga. The city of Riga attracted Latvian, Russian and Jewish workers and also the German middle class. Ulrike von Hirschhausen observes the ethnic milieus which evolved after the 1860s. In order to highlight how diverse

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<sup>50</sup> Pistohlkors, "Russifizierung," 624.

<sup>51</sup> Miller, "The Romanov Empire and the Russian Nation,"

<sup>52</sup> Hiden, *Defender of Minorities*, 3.

<sup>53</sup> introduction to *Nationalizing Empires*

<sup>54</sup> Michael Garleff, "Ostmitteleuropa. Baltikum: Estland, Lettland und Litauen," in *Enzyklopädie Migration in Europa: vom 17. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. Klaus J. Bade, Pieter C. Emmer (Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink, 2007) 246.

<sup>55</sup> introduction to *Nationalizing Empires*

<sup>56</sup> Anders Henriksson, "Growth, conflict and the limitations of good government 1850-1914" in: *The city of late imperial Russia*, ed. Michael F. Hamm (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986) 180.

the society of this was, I quote her table of ethnic composition of Riga based on spoken language at home.<sup>57</sup>

Table 1. Ethnic composition of Riga based on language of everyday life

Year	Germans		Latvians		Russians		Jews		Poles		Others	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1867	43 980	42.9	24 199	23.6	25 772	25.1	5 254	5.1	No data	-	3 385	3.3
1881	66 775	39.4	49 974	29.5	31 976	18.9	14 222	8.4	3 197	1.9	3 176	1.9
1897	65 332	25.5	106 541	41.7	43 338	16.9	16 521	6.5	12 869	5.0	11 278	4.4
1913	80 823	15.9	205 204	40.4	110 620	21.8	21 771	4.3	36 868	7.2	52 190	10.4

To sum up the tendencies in the development, it should be emphasized that the population of the city quintupled within half a century and the proportion of the different ethnic groups underwent a significant change, namely although Latvians remained still in a minority position, they became the biggest ethnic group in numerical terms. This fact does not mean at all that the existing hierarchy between the ethnic groups which more or less coincided with the social and ethnic positions had been overwritten.

### 1.3 Paul Schiemann, a *Literat* prototype

Born as a son of a Baltic German lawyer in 1876 in Mitau/Jelgava, Paul Schiemann belonged to the group of the *Literaten*. His father was an admirer of the Kaiser after 1871. Julius Schiemann, the father, believed in the quality of German schools and decided to send his son to the Reich in order to get a proper education after he gained elementary knowledge through private teachers. Paul Schiemann finished his studies as a lawyer with a magna cum laude doctorate from the University of Greifswald in 1902.<sup>58</sup>

Thanks to his uncle, Theodor Schiemann, a prominent history professor and consultant of the *Kaiser*, Paul Schiemann was given the chance to meet the most influential and prominent figures of the Wilhelmian era. Despite his uncle's efforts, Paul Schiemann

<sup>57</sup> Ulrike von Hirschhausen, *Die Grenzen der Gemeinsamkeit. Deutsche, Letten, Russen und Juden in Riga 1860-1914* (Göttingen: Vadenhoeck&Ruprecht, 2006), 57-58.

<sup>58</sup> Hiden, *Defender of Minorities*, 4-5.

came under the influence of liberal ideology during his years in the *Reich* and he was also ready to express his ideas as a journalist.

For “Uncle Theodor,” it was a disappointment because he considered working for the liberal press a sickness<sup>59</sup>. He was one of the members of the *Literaten*, who left the Baltic homeland in 1897 because of the unbearable intensity of the Russification.<sup>60</sup> After resettling, he worked also as a journalist and focused mainly on the grateful task of promoting an unfavorable picture about Russia in the German Empire. Although uncle and nephew were on different ideological standpoints, Theodor Schiemann tried his best to support Paul Schiemann’s career. The quest of finding a job for a Russian citizen not to mention for a reserve officer of the Tsar in the German Empire seemed to be impossible.<sup>61</sup> As a result Paul Schiemann went back to his homeland, more precisely to Reval/Tallinn to the province of Estonia and began his career as a political journalist at *Revalsche Zeitung* in 1903.<sup>62</sup> From his earlier theater critics Schiemann’s positive attitude towards modernism was clear and also the fact that he used political connotations in writing about art made him suspicious in the eyes of the welcoming society.<sup>63</sup> After he began his work at *Revalsche Zeitung* his “distaste for the demeanor of the aristocracy and for their political priorities”<sup>64</sup> was no longer an accusation.

#### 1.4 Schiemann’s standpoint on 1905

The revolution of 1905 meant a milestone in the development of the national movements in the Russian empire and was also a clear expression of their progress considering legal thought. During and also after the uprising, the preferences and interests of political groups became obvious within every ethnic community. As a political journalist,

<sup>59</sup> Hiden, *Defender of Minorities*, 7.

<sup>60</sup> Michael Garleff, “Ostmitteleuropa. Baltikum: Estland, Lettland und Litauen,” in *Enzyklopädie Migration in Europa vom 17. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart* (Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink, 2007) 246.

<sup>61</sup> Hiden, *Defender of Minorities*, 6.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid. 8.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid. 8-9.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid. 9.



Paul Schiemann had a real chance to phrase his ideas about the future of the Russian Empire.

The widespread violence in the Baltic Provinces occurred after Bloody Sunday Massacre on 13 January 1905 in St. Petersburg.<sup>65</sup> Four days later a demonstration was stopped by Tsarist troops and 70 people were killed in Riga; the violence was unstoppable, 140 baronial manor houses were destroyed, 600 Russians and Germans were killed.<sup>66</sup> After the proclamation of the October Manifesto the reprisals began, in collaboration with the Germans; “2,014 Latvians were shot or hanged, 300 peasant farms were burned, 600 manor houses destroyed, 1000 people received punishment.”<sup>67</sup>

The *Rigasche Rundschau* in 1930 reported from a discussion evening where witnesses and earlier participants talked about the achievements of 1905. They came to the conclusion that “the revolution was not only against the state system, but moreover against the unbearable national oppression of the Latvian nation by the Russian state authority.”<sup>68</sup> This summary can be considered as the interpretation by the Latvian middle class, according to which the social dimension did play a role and also the attacks against the economic oppressors were best ignored.

The main theoretician of the Latvian uprising, the by that time Social Democrat Mikelis Valters, with his article “Down with Autocracy! Down with Russia!” tempered the mood of the landless peasants and the unsatisfied workers.<sup>69</sup> He argued that Russia was a repressive state, a “despotic autocracy”<sup>70</sup> it was not even a state because it failed to

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<sup>65</sup> Modris Eksteins, *Walking Since Daybreak: A Story of Eastern Europe, World War II, and the Heart of Our Century* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1999), kindle edition

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> “Wie steht das lettische Bürgertum zu 1905?” in *Rigasche Rundschau*, Januar 1929 - März 1930, vol. 2, booklet 13, in *Leitartikel, Reden und Aufsätze*, edited by Hans Donath, 4021, Frankfurt am Main: H. Donath, 1987.

<sup>69</sup> Valters began his political career as a social democrat, during the independence war he supported Ulmanis, in the 1930s he created justification for the coup d'état by accusing the weaknesses of parliamentary system for the crisis. (Ijabs, “Break out of Russia,” 439-440.)

<sup>70</sup> Ijabs, “Break out of Russia,” 449.

acknowledge the rights of the citizens so he signifies that entity as a “bunch of slaves” instead.<sup>71</sup> Ivars Ijabs, professor of political theory at the University of Latvia points out that Valters’ words are misinterpreted by historians in that they incorrectly consider the demand for secession from Russia as the first claim for a Latvian state.<sup>72</sup> Interestingly, it was Bakunin who expressed the right of Latvians to decide about their faith “independently of those 20,000 Germans who have oppressed, still oppresses, and are hated by it [the Latvian nation].”<sup>73</sup> What Valters objected to was moreover the centralization of the state, and he also believed in the all-Russian socialist revolution with the participation of the independent “self-organizing national communities.”<sup>74</sup>

Although for different reasons and with different consequences, Mikelis Valters and the young journalist, Paul Schiemann had common points in their thoughts about the problems with the Russian Empire and about the optimal state system in the Provinces. Paul Schiemann experienced the events of 1905 in Reval where the revolution was far less bloody than in Courland or in Livonia. For him the uprising was about the constitutional rights of the individuals in contrast to the oppressive Russian autocracy. Schiemann saw chances that Russia could turned into a constitutional monarchy, which finally could give chance for the consideration of the individual. As he phrased it in a later editorial in 1919 “Russia and we:”

Since Peter the Great [...] from the Pacific Ocean to the Vistula from the Arctic Sea to the Black Sea all inhabitants have been pressed into the same form. In this way only a barrack like uniformed coating could be generated, therefore the personality had no chance for development unlike in Germany where the small state system artificially raised the individualism.<sup>75</sup>

According to Ijabs, the roots of Valters’ ideas to be found in *narodnichestvo* in the sense that he fostered emancipatory politics, believed in popular revolution, represented anti-

<sup>71</sup> Ijabs, “Break out of Russia,” 445.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid. 444.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid. 450.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Paul Schiemann, “Russland und wir,” in *Rigasche Rundschau*, 11 September 1920, vol. 2, booklet 2, in *Leitartikel, Reden und Aufsätze*, edited by Hans Donath, 496. Frankfurt am Main: H. Donath, 1987.

Tsarist radicalism, and denied the reform from above.<sup>76</sup> But he opposed the anti-Western and pan-Slavic attitude and the strong anti-individualism attitude of the movement.<sup>77</sup> The individualist claims in the case of both Valters and Schiemann is correlated to their demands for establishment of citizen-state relation instead of the existing feudal system, the estate based state. They were also both convinced about the affectivity of the ‘bottom-up’ policy making by small autonomous communities.

Both Valters and Schiemann managed to isolate themselves by turning against the reactionary leading elites of their ethnic groups. For Valters the establishment of the national autonomy should have been the aim of the revolution and in this fight the Latvian bourgeoisie behaved as pro-Tsarist, so he was convinced that the revolutionary Latvian proletariat should take over the realization of the mission.<sup>78</sup> Schiemann accused the *Ritterschaften* of being short-sighted in political terms and not counting with constitutional rights of individuals.<sup>79</sup> Instead of total independence he envisaged the possibility of cooperation and coexistence.

Whereas Valters demanded the participation of the whole population in politics, for Schiemann the democratization of franchise was not necessarily.<sup>80</sup> The events of the revolution astonished and appalled Schiemann at the same time, the young Baltic German intellectual faced for the first time in his life the power of the masses.<sup>81</sup> Schiemann argued for the coexistence of the German and Latvian communities, but he never forget about the existing hierarchies. The mass politics in his eyes were synonyms of *Asiatisierung*.

Dirk Crols in his dissertation emphasizes that the dilemma of the revolution for Social Democrats was how to merge the desire for international solidarity with the claim of

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<sup>76</sup> Ijabs, “Break out of Russia,” 448.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Ijabs, “Break out of Russia,” 451

<sup>79</sup> Hiden, *Defender of minorities*, 16.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid. 14.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

non-Russian nationalities for self-determination in the sense of cultivation of own culture, and usage of own language in education. The solution was found in an ideology which combined socialist ideals with nationalism.<sup>82</sup>

A Latvian social democrat and a Baltic German liberal came to the same conclusion that the nationalities question should be solved by establishing a new state system which is based on the cooperation of small autonomous national units. Importantly both of them saw the imperial context as adequate for this change.

### 1.5 *Ober Ost* and the planned German cultural invasion

Modris Eksteins, the Latvian-Canadian historian, claims that after the 1905 tragedy the „sympathy of the Latvians lay with Russia”<sup>83</sup> in 1914 at least. For the German community the decision should be made between the *Reich*, which represented the culture they belong to and Russia where their homeland was situated and to which they are tied through citizenship, some of them through military service. Paul Schiemann served in the Russian Army at the beginning of the war, his brother fought on the German side, their mother was supposed to be transported to Siberia as the mother of a German soldier living in Russia, but the fact that her other son was a “decorated Russian officer” overwrote the verdict.<sup>84</sup>

From 1907 onwards, Schiemann worked for the German speaking daily, the *Rigasche Rundschau*. The paper was forced to be published in Russian following the outbreak of the war. Other cultural and educational institutions of the Baltic Germans were banned, which also meant the suspension of the loyalty towards the Tsar from their side. In August 1915 the German troops occupied some parts of Courland and Livonia; the front line

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<sup>82</sup> Dirk Crols, “From Tsarist Empire to League of Nations and from USSR to EU: Two Eras in the Construction of Baltic State Sovereignty” (PhD diss., University of Glasgow, 2006), 14. <http://theses.gla.ac.uk/2453/1/2006crolsphd.pdf>, accessed 28 April 2014.

<sup>83</sup> Eksteins, *Walking since Daybreak*

<sup>84</sup> Hiden, *Defender of Minorities*, 22

divided the Provinces for two years. After the occupation of Riga, 16<sup>th</sup> September 1917, and of the rest of Livonia and Estonia in 1918 February, the whole territory of these provinces was incorporated into the administrative unit of the occupied lands in the East, the *Ober Ost*.<sup>85</sup> Ludendorff settled German peasants in the Baltic parts of the *Ober Ost*, the area was prepared for future colonization.<sup>86</sup>

At the beginning “the German troops were welcomed as liberators from the unbearable Russian pressure.”<sup>87</sup> About the attitude of the Baltic Germans towards the occupation Wolfgang Wachsmuth’s article gives an overview.<sup>88</sup> In the “History of the establishment and development of the German education administration in Latvia” Wachsmuth also admits that “the administrative methods of the occupational power more and more taught that the unconditional absorption in the German *Reich* would not be in the land’s interest.”<sup>89</sup> The Baltic Germans, at least some of their members, found out that Prussianization, the uniformed understanding of German culture, would threaten their peculiar self-reliance which they improved throughout the centuries. The degree of nostalgia made the reliability of Wachsmuth’s phrases questionable, but he points out that when it came to melting into Germandom, the special Baltic community of the nations, and the special way of Baltic German development came up as a counterargument. Even a kind of responsibility towards the ‘indigenous people’ took shape during the German occupation. Ironically, the experience of the German occupation led many Baltic Germans to consider the independence of Courland and Livonia as a serious possibility.

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<sup>85</sup> Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius, *War Land on the Eastern Front*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 33.

<sup>86</sup> Eksteins, *Walking since Daybreak*.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid. 155.

<sup>88</sup> Wolfgang Wachsmuth, “Zur Entstehungs- und Entwicklungsgeschichte der Verwaltung des deutschen Bildungswesens Lettlands I.” *Nation und Staat*, December 1931, 155.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

## 1.6 Variants on an Eastern European future

Eksteins emphasizes that while before the war there was no German concept for the organization of the newly gained territories, the “annexationist phantasies” mushroomed after the quick successes in the Eastern Front.<sup>90</sup> Next to them Friedrich Naumann’s plan about the establishment of a confederation and an economic zone in the areas met with the most positive response.<sup>91</sup> Naumann was impressed by the newly created order in the former borderlands of Russia, his *Mitteleuropa* concept counted on the long existing German control over these lands.<sup>92</sup>

The Baltic German lobby, as Eksteins calls the group around Theodor Schiemann, argued for the annexation of the Baltic. They suggested that the incorporation of these territories into the *Reich* could be the “pearl on the crown of the emperor.”<sup>93</sup> The consequence of their plan would be the total Germanization of the territories based on the principle that in 1905 the non-German nationalities proved, however, in different extents how “distrust[ful], treacherous, brutish race[s]” they were.<sup>94</sup>

In an adventurous way Paul Schiemann managed to leave Riga where he was arrested for several reasons, by several groups and he fled to Germany. As an expert of Baltic issues he was asked to write an essay for the *Preussische Jahrbücher*.<sup>95</sup> According to the post Brest-Litovsk conditions, he argued for a united Baltic State consisting of Courland, Livonia and Estonia. In his point of view the Bolshevik type of radicalization should be prevented by the establishment of this new state. Order should be maintained in these territories and the *Reich* had an essential role in this process. He argued that the Germans should teach the Baltic population politically in order to convince them what was in their

<sup>90</sup> Eksteins, *Walking since Daybreak*

<sup>91</sup> Liulevicius, *War Land on the Eastern Front*, 169.

<sup>92</sup> Hiden, *Defender of Minorities*, 23.

<sup>93</sup> Eksteins, *Walking since Daybreak*

<sup>94</sup> Hiden, *Defender of Minorities*, 32.

<sup>95</sup> The article was published in 1918 under the title “Über die Aussichten des Baltischen Staates”

interest. The Baltic population should opt for the united Baltic State because it would acknowledge them as part of the political nation. In Schiemann's plan, the political power would be practiced by the national parliament consisting of three curiae: the Baltic German, the Estonian and the Latvian.<sup>96</sup>

The main points in Schiemann's concepts define his convictions which he followed in his further work during the state-building phase in the Baltic arena. Although he considered the Estonians and Latvians as politically immature, he saw them as equals in legal sense and attempted to entitle them with political rights. With this step the national aspirations of these nations could be satisfied and the cooperation of nations would become possible for the first time in the history of this region. Admitting that his idea is based on liberal values and on the principle of national tolerance it should be highlighted that his plan is permeated by German superiority. Thinking merely in numbers, there were more Russians and Jews living in the Provinces than Germans, and they were not considered as constituents of the political nation. Also the notion of immature and mature nations demonstrates that Schiemann believed in the existence of a hierarchical system between national groups.

Schiemann's plan was supported by different circles of German liberals, and was obviously heavily objected to by his uncle. However, the situation changed significantly with the German collapse in the West and other actors appeared with their own plans and claims for the Baltic future. The war itself and its consequences produced a crisis situation. In the following chapters I will analyze how Schiemann reacted to the different crisis situations.

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<sup>96</sup> Hiden, *Defender of Minorities*, 30.

## 2 Schiemann and his *Volksgemeinschaft*

In his editorial in June 1925, “We and the German *Volksgemeinschaft*,” Schiemann wrote that the “civilized world raised in the peace of Versailles the monument of ignominy to the memory of the 20th century.”<sup>97</sup> Unsatisfied with the principles and the consequences of the peace treaties, half a decade later he found opportunities in the new system. In his point of view it was firstly the Weimar Republic which actually took care of the co-nationals. The Bismarckian legal thought, as Schiemann remarks, was not able to discover the cultural togetherness with those who did not want to change their state belonging.<sup>98</sup> For Schiemann, the ethno-national togetherness is of pure spiritual value, it should be an apolitical cultural community. The “awakening of national sense of togetherness”<sup>99</sup> and the revalued role of cultural ties characterized the postwar European atmosphere, but the Germans were especially sensitive to this issue.

Caring for the co-nationals living outside Germany was initiated primarily by civil society and not by the state, which to a certain degree guaranteed an apolitical type of cooperation. As the so-called *Volkstumspolitik* was put on the foreign policy agenda in Germany, minorities had to clarify their relations with the co-national state and with their homeland. The slogan of the Association of German Minorities in Europe (*Verband der Deutschen Minderheiten*, in the following *Verband*) of which Paul Schiemann was a founding member, was that [it should be given] “to the state what is the state’s and to the ethnic community what is the ethnic community’s.”<sup>100</sup>

<sup>97</sup> Paul Schiemann, “Wir und die deutsche Volksgemeinschaft,” in *Rigasche Rundschau*, 4 June 1925, vol.2, booklet 9, in *Leitartikel, Reden und Aufsätze*, edited by Hans Donath, 2564. Frankfurt am Main: H. Donath, 1989

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Ewald Ammende, “Richtlinien zur Begründung der Volksgemeinschaft,” *Nation und Staat*, April 1932, 465.

<sup>100</sup> „Zehn Jahre des Zusammenwirkens der deutschen Volksgruppen in Europa” without author, *Nation und Staat*, October 1932, 4.



In this chapter I observe how Paul Schiemann, compared to other leading minority politicians, saw the separation of spheres of interests between the homelands and the co-nationals and how the co-national state was entangled in these relations.

## 2.1 Germans abroad

According to the estimation of Ewald Ammende, an Estonian politician of German origin, 9 million Germans were living in minority situations outside the borders of Germany after the First World War.<sup>101</sup> Almost every state in East Central Europe had Germans in significant numbers. The Germans abroad were divided into two categories and they were treated separately; the *Auslandsdeutschen* (Germans abroad), who lived in the “real abroad” and the *Grenzdeutschen* (Border Germans), who lived in neighboring countries and whose situation was considered temporary.

The first organizations aimed at supporting the Germans outside of the *Reich* were founded before WWI, like the Association for Germanism Abroad (*Verein für das Deutschtum in Ausland* in the following *Verein*) and also the radical Pan-German League (*Alldeutscher Verband*). The League at some point demanded the incorporation of territories into the *Reich*, where, according to their arguments, “hard pressed” Germans lived.<sup>102</sup>

The *Verein* survived WWI gained 2 million members and played a significant role in forming the *Volkstumspolitik* along with more than a hundred “Germanism-oriented” associations which mushroomed after the war. Brubaker sees the task of these organizations in “forming public opinion, sustaining public interest in the fate of minority Germans, and supporting the understanding of the German nation as a state transcending ethno-cultural unity.”<sup>103</sup> Regarding the reasons behind these foundations he remarks that the state was

<sup>101</sup> “Vortrag Dr. Ammendes im Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland,” *Nation und Staat*, Juni 1931, 644

<sup>102</sup> Brubaker, *Nationalism reframed*, 115.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.* 122.

weak and impotent, while the German nation was “vigorous and autonomous” and it turned to the co-nationals and intended to organize life under the new circumstances.

Some of the associations’ tasks had to be taken over by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs (*Auswärtiges Amt*), and also the responsibilities had to be clarified. This happened only in 1922 when the authorities finally elaborated a plan how to take care of *Grenz-und Auslandsdeutschtum*.<sup>104</sup> About the directions in *Volkstumspolitik*, it can be stated that its interest was to maintain Germandom abroad and not to support their settlement inside of Germany. In contrast, those who were ready to leave Germany and go back to their homelands got financial support (*Rückwanderhilfe*). They were treated by the government foremost as “agents and propagandists,”<sup>105</sup> who potentially could energize foreign trade, facilitate relations with other states, and help to regain the old reputation and strength of the German economy. This requirement from the state already contradicts the principles of the minority leaders, among them Paul Schiemann, who considered economy as the interest sphere of the homeland. To prove how unrealistic this Schiemannian principle was I would highlight that according to John Hiden the *Rigasche Rundschau* enjoyed financial support from the German government via the “cover organization Concordia, *Literarische Anstalt*.”<sup>106</sup> Most probably the working of the biggest and most read Eastern European German language daily was considered by Schiemann as a tool to maintain ties with the whole Germandom, and as such the mission of the daily was of a strictly cultural nature.

In sum, Schiemann was not immune to the new ideas emphasizing cultural ties between all parts of Germandom (*Volksteile*). As for other actors of the *Volkstumspolitik*, for Schiemann it was also essential to decrease the importance of state borders and to

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<sup>104</sup> John Hiden, *The Baltic States and Weimar Ostpolitik*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987) 43.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid. 46.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid. 54.

“strengthen the *Volk*.”<sup>107</sup> Although for him the aim was not to create a “self-subsistent autonomous entity.”<sup>108</sup>

## 2.2 The genesis of the *Verband*

One of the several associations for Germans abroad was the organization of the German minorities, which created a common platform for Germans from the whole of Europe. It was the initiative of Dr. Ewald Ammende, who came up with the idea of this association while he was travelling and visiting minority leaders in the continent. The first meeting of the members was in Vienna in October 1922.<sup>109</sup>

At the first official session of the *Verband* in 1923, Rudolf Brandsch was elected as the leader of the association and Ammende as secretary. As Ammende was travelling around the world permanently he was replaced by Carl Georg Bruns, a Berlin based specialist in international law.<sup>110</sup> Hiden and Smith argue that Ammende was disappointed because he did not get the leadership and was keen on finding a new function for himself. He began to visit non-German minority groups as well,<sup>111</sup> and the idea of the Congress of European Nationalities was born this way.

The idea of this organization originated from the conviction that the German communities were living isolated and helpless. In order to help these groups, the opportunity should be provided for them to discuss their problems. It was maybe first time in Vienna when these leaders met each other.

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<sup>107</sup> Brubaker, *Nationalism reframed*, 123.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> The founding members and representatives of the *Verband* were: Rudolf Brandsch – Transsylvanian Saxon, Romania; Ewald Ammende – Estonian German; Dr. Caspar Muth – Swabian from Banat, Romania; Dr. Stephan Kraft – Yugoslavia; Dr. Guido Gündisch – Hungary; Dr. Reut-Nicolussy – Southern Tirol, Italy; Dr. Brunar and Dr. Gustav Peters – Sudeten Germans, Czechoslovakia; Dr. Schmidt – Bratislava, Dr. Carl Georg Bruns – Poland; I. Wetter von Rosenthal – Estonia, Hummel and Schwab – Russia. Paul Schiemann could not participate at the opening session, but he was a member as representative of the Latvian Germans. („Zehn Jahre des Zusammenwirkens“)

<sup>110</sup> „Zehn Jahre des Zusammenwirkens,” 3.

<sup>111</sup> Smith & Hiden, *Ethnic Diversity and the Nation State*, 71.

The *Verband* was also a platform to promote the concept of cultural autonomy for the German minority groups.<sup>112</sup> Characteristically the functions of this organization were interpreted in a different way by the members. Ewald Ammende, a confirmed anti-Bolshevik, saw the major task as the promotion of cultural autonomy in the overthrow of Soviet propaganda.<sup>113</sup> Paul Schiemann, who was a member of the *Verband's* management board, considered this association as the possible basis for a permanent committee next to the League of Nations which could give voice to minorities.<sup>114</sup> According to Bamberger-Stemmann, the foundation of the *Verband* meant the institutionalization of German minority activism which related to the subvention politics of the *Reich* towards co-nationals abroad.<sup>115</sup>

Similarly to other organizations of Germans abroad this organization was also treated as a propagandistic tool and financially supported by the *Auswärtiges Amt*. The propagandistic value was increased through the establishment of the monthly journal, *Nation und Staat*, the German journal of European minority problems (*Deutsche Zeitschrift für Europäische Minoritätsproblem*), which was firstly published in September 1927.<sup>116</sup> The *Nation und Staat* like the *Rigasche Rundschau* was sponsored through the Concordia *Literarische Anstalt*.<sup>117</sup> Bamberger-Stemmann points out that there were varied motivations behind the establishment of the journal. One of them was to prevent the possible hegemony of the minority journals which could follow the Hungarian line. Elemér Jakabffy, a Romanian politician of Hungarian origin, edited the journals *Magyar Kisebbség* (Hungarian Minority) and the *Glasul Minorităților* (The Voices of Minorities), the latter was published

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<sup>112</sup> Smith & Hiden, *Ethnic Diversity and the Nation State*, 71

<sup>113</sup> Ibid. 72

<sup>114</sup> Ibid. 24.

<sup>115</sup> Sabine Bamberger-Stemmann, *Der Europäische Nationalitätenkongreß 1925 bis 1938: nationale Minderheiten zwischen Lobbyistentum und Grossmachtinteresse* (Marburg:Verlag Herder Institut, 2000), 60.

<sup>116</sup> The editorial board of the journal consisted of Jakob Bleyer, Rudolf Brandsch, Paul Schiemann, Johannes Schmidt-Wodder, the editor in chief was Baron von Uexküll-Güldenband. The publisher was Wilhelm Braumüller in Vienna. (*Nation und Staat*, 1927 September)

<sup>117</sup> Bamberger-Stemann, *Der Europäische Nationalitätenkongreß*, 241.

in German and French as well after 1926. Also the minority groups living in Germany founded their own journal, the *Kulturwehr*,<sup>118</sup> which according to governmental opinions was dominantly Polish. The *Nation und Staat* aimed at countering this medium.<sup>119</sup> Gustav Stresemann used the *Nation und Staat* as a propaganda tool just like the National Socialists later, and because of the small size of the editorial board only some people had to be convinced.<sup>120</sup> The liberal standpoint represented by Paul Schiemann among the editors was tolerated until 1932, later he distanced himself from the new leadership headed by Werner Hasselblatt.<sup>121</sup> After the *Anschluss*, “the camouflage could be stopped” and the editorial office could move the headquarters of the *Verband*, to Berlin.<sup>122</sup>

Between 1927 and 1938, the timeframe I researched, several important opinions, state of affairs reports, and retrospective summaries were published in the *Nation und Staat*. Next to leading minority leaders of German origins, other figures were also published. The critical reading of this journal significantly contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the nature of interwar minority politics.

### 2.3 Defender of Minorities- *Volkstumspolitik* of the Stresemann era

The year 1925 had symbolic relevance in *Volkstumspolitik*. After long debates, national-cultural autonomy was introduced in Estonia. For the German minority it was a great success, they were the first national group which inaugurated its cultural council. About the historic significance of the events, the Estonian politician, Ado Birk, noted that cultural autonomy was implemented in Estonia for the first time in the world, and that this practice was vital to maintaining peace in Europe.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> The *Kulturwehr* was founded in 1925 as a common endeavor of Danish, Polish, Sorbian, Lithuanian and Frisian minority groups. The editor was Jan Skala, Sorbian politician leader. (Bamberger-Stemmann, *Der Europäische Nationalitätenkongreß*, 235.)

<sup>119</sup> Ibid. 235.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid. 247.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid. 242.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Smith & Hiden, *Ethnic Diversity and the Nation State*, 50

The claim for national-cultural autonomy had been on the agenda of German minority groups since the end of WWI. When the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Gustav Stresemann, initiated it for the minorities living inside Germany, the case gained special relevance.

The official beginning of the minority protection activities of the Weimar Republic was a circular letter written by Stresemann to the authorities at federal and provincial level in 1925, January 13. Although it touched upon the cultural autonomy of minorities inside Germany, it meant a paradigm shift in the *Volkstumspolitik*.<sup>124</sup> As Bastiaan Schot points out, the main argument for the application of this practice inside Germany was the belief in its propagandistic effect. According to expectations, this measure would improve the reputation of Germany and might send the message to other states to follow the German pattern.<sup>125</sup>

Schiemann welcomed the words of Stresemann that “cultural autonomy is a natural right of every minority.”<sup>126</sup> However, the way they interpreted the role of cultural autonomy differed significantly. Schiemann argues that cultural autonomy is the only explicit renunciation of irredentism, because demanding it means the acceptance of the existing situation, and looking for solutions under the given circumstances.”<sup>127</sup> All German minorities who are counting on changing their state belonging, by resettlement or by revision of borders, according to Schiemann, “refuse cultural autonomy fundamentally and resolutely.”<sup>128</sup>

In contrast, Stresemann clearly stated in his circulation letter that the step-by-step revision of the politically and economically unsustainable determination of boundaries is the most immediate aim of German foreign policy. As following the revision of the borders

<sup>124</sup> Bastiaan Schot, *Nation oder Staat? Deutschland und der Minderheitenschutz zur Völkerbundspolitik der Stresemann – Ära*, (Marburg/Lahn: J.G. Herder Institut, 1988), 146-147.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid. 147.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Schiemann, “Wir und die deutsche Volksgemeinschaft,” 2564.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

significant non-German population would join Germany, it should be proved to them even beforehand that “inside the borders of Germany their cultural freedom is guaranteed.”<sup>129</sup> Stresemann at the opening ceremony of the German House in Stuttgart<sup>130</sup> on 21<sup>st</sup> May 1925, which was a “festive day for the Germans in the whole world,”<sup>131</sup> facilitated the national-cultural autonomy as “best practice” both inside and outside of Germany. He began his campaign to join the League of Nations, a step which at the same time would open gates for revisionism and would help to defend the rights of co-nationals more effectively.<sup>132</sup>

A reason why Schiemann failed to notice the motivation of the German aspirations in the field of minority protection could be that he approached Stresemann’s words from a different aspect, namely from the aspect of a person in the minority situation. For Schiemann, cultural autonomy as such meant the clarification of the legal ties between the minority and the state. About the nature of autonomy he said that it is “not only the commitment to the culture of one’s own nation but also the commitment to the state in which the minority live.”<sup>133</sup> That is why Stresemann, according to Schiemann, expect the minorities in Germany to demand cultural autonomy, because that gesture would mean that they were committed to the German state.”<sup>134</sup> Schiemann’s theories and convictions are real attempts to find a synthesis between the duties originating from citizenship and those originating from the side of the ethno-national community. He emphasized throughout his career that the co-national state in this relation had a minor role. Carole Fink gave the title to her PhD dissertation in 1968 “The Weimar Republic as Defender of Minorities 1919-1933”. Interestingly, John Hiden gave the same title “Defender of Minorities: Paul Schiemann 1874-1944” to his political biography. Although this attribute is not exclusive, the obviously

<sup>129</sup> Schot, *Nation oder Staat?*, 147.

<sup>130</sup> Schiemann refers to it as *Deutsches Haus* (“Wir und die deutsche Volksgemeinschaft,” 2564), Schot as *Deutsches Auslandsinstitut* (*Nation oder Staat?* 149.)

<sup>131</sup> Schiemann, “Wir und die deutsche Volksgemeinschaft,” 2564

<sup>132</sup> Brubaker, *Nationalism reframed*, 128.

<sup>133</sup> Schiemann, “Wir und die deutsche Volksgemeinschaft,” 2565.

<sup>134</sup> Schiemann, 2565

different motivation behind their policies made the use of this title questionable in both cases. Also it should be emphasized that Stresemann's role which he played in minority policy was artificial, as Brubaker notes, the Weimar Republic was "the would-be defender of minorities."<sup>135</sup> In contrast, Schiemann was truly engaged with the solution of minority questions along democratic and universal lines.

## 2.4 The cross-border and transnational ethnic community

Importantly cultural autonomy helped certain minority groups to grasp the conceptualization as communities and not as a group of random individuals. The idea of *Verband* was based on the existence of an ethno-national community of cross-border or transnational nature, in which the concept of co-national solidarity played a significant role. The members of the association wanted to develop further this notion and fill the framework of *überstaatliche Volksgemeinschaft* with content. The existence and the relevance of this concept was not questioned by any of them, however, the possible functions of this community differed in their interpretations.

Paul Schiemann's famous speech at the Nationalities Congress in 1925<sup>136</sup> emphasized that the ethno-national communities (*Volksgemeinschaften*) and the state communities (*Staatsgemeinschaften*) should be distinguished. The interest spheres and the functions of these two communities should be clearly defined in order to maintain peace in Europe. Schiemann describes the *Volksgemeinschaft* as an "emotional and spiritual community with shared origins, history, language, customs, character and culture."<sup>137</sup> He rejects the concept of a nation claiming that it has no justification in the East Central European context because it is a state construction of the Western European kind.<sup>138</sup> The

<sup>135</sup> Brubaker, *Nationalism reframed*, 131.

<sup>136</sup> Schiemann, "Um ein neues Recht," and "Volksgemeinschaft und Staatsgemeinschaft," *Nation und Staat*, September 1927, 21-42.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid. 28.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid. 23.



moment for creating a real *Volksgemeinschaft*, based on cultural cooperation without the “fanfares of imperialism”, came with the new era. Under the new circumstances it became possible that also the German state acknowledged notion of an ethno-national community which includes Germans with different citizenships. This group, according to Schiemann, is united in pride as a cultural Volk and not in thoughts about revenge in political plans which can unify only parts of the community.<sup>139</sup> Schiemann elaborated his famous thesis about the *anational* state on these considerations, which is analyzed in the following chapters.

Ewald Ammende imagined the European future in which cultural exchanges would be based on the organizations of ethno-national communities. At the same time he wisely admitted that it still needed to be clarified how this kind of organizations would work in favour of a peaceful compromise between nations. In order not to destroy the fragile system, he summarized the criteria for creating a transnational ethno-national community: The first and most fundamental rule is that the field of the community’s activity should be restricted to the cultural sphere and should stand above parties.<sup>140</sup> Also confessional commitment is not acceptable, as he writes the “Catholic and Lutheran co-nationals should cooperate in harmony.”<sup>141</sup> According to Ammende, all elements whose existence of a clear ethno-national consciousness is not recognizable should stay out of the community.<sup>142</sup> Obviously the community should be of a transnational nature, and have tolerant attitude towards other ethnic communities.<sup>143</sup> Ammende saw the relevance of these communities in confronting “state oriented factors.”

The notion of transnational ethno-national community originated from the claim to cultivate one’s own culture in the form of a codified national-cultural autonomy. The minority activists realized that without the cooperation of co-nationals and with the co-

<sup>139</sup> Schiemann, “Wir und die deutsche Volksgemeinschaft,” 2564.

<sup>140</sup> Ammende, “Richtlinien zur Begründung der Volksgemeinschaft,” 467.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid. 468.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

national state this endeavor was impossible. One of the fundamentals of the national-cultural autonomy is the free choice of the individual about their ethno-national belonging. Schiemann stayed true to this conviction throughout his life. When Ammende states that the national-consciousness of the members should be recognizable he contradicts that principle.

Touched by the crisis narrative of Germandom, Hasselblatt pointed out that the nation has connotations of power, glory and state success,<sup>144</sup> all features Germany was short of in the 20's, whereas the German *Volk*, is co-national and spiritual and not related to the state. Living fragmented throughout centuries, the German *Volk* was the least touched by political and statist definitions of national consciousness.<sup>145</sup> Astonishingly Hasselblatt in his writing entitled "Spiritual obstacles"<sup>146</sup> came up with a classification of nationalities according to horizontal and vertical dimensions. By horizontal he meant the number of members, the extent and the space occupied by the nationality, whereas the vertical dimension referred to the value, rate and worth of the specific nationality.<sup>147</sup> Regarding Europe, Germandom was relevant both in 'horizontal' and in 'vertical' terms, in the Baltic context the outstanding vertical dimensions of the Germans had to be emphasized. Hasselblatt was deeply convinced that the word minority (*Minderheit*) has a connotation of minor value (*Minderwertigkeit*) and he was permanently fighting against the usage of this term.

Out of the three most active Baltic German members of the *Verband*, Hasselblatt was influenced by the conservative revolutionary and the national socialist ideologies. His emphasis on the supranational cooperation of the separate cultural councils belonging to the same *Volk* should be analyzed from this perspective.

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<sup>144</sup> Werner Hasselblatt, "Geistige Verkehrshindernisse," *Nation und Staat*, January 1928, 336.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid. 337.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid. 336.

Like the Baltic émigrés, he also questioned the reason for the existence of the Baltic States, claimed the principle of self-determination for all miseries, and confessed the priority of the *Volksgemeinschaft* above all. In Hasselblatt's understanding next to the widely used analogy of the transnational *Volksgemeinschaft*, with the transnational community of people belonging to the same confession, the parallel with the International also noticeably appears. He emphasizes that "the ethno-national community should not been encapsulated in state borders, because it is just like the church creates and cultivates commonalities above the borders."<sup>148</sup> At some point he argues that the transnational ethnic community should be constructed like the International, and should be named Co-national; 'people of same ethno-national belonging from every country, unite!'<sup>149</sup> The socialist analogy demonstrates that the individual values could be sacrificed when it comes to the unity of the *Volk*, which was for Schiemann absolutely unacceptable.

Hasselblatt's attitude marks a shift in the priorities of the *Auslandsdeutschen* as well,<sup>150</sup> because in 1931, after the death of Carl Georg Burns, Hasselblatt led the office of the *Verband* in Berlin. One of his first steps was to rename the organization the Association of German Ethno-National Groups (*Verband der Deutschen Volksgruppen Europas*).<sup>151</sup> This measure can be read as a step towards the merger of all co-nationals. Whereas the 'minority' in the name of the organization refers to those living outside Germany in a minority situation, the 'ethno-national groups' emphasizes that it covers also Germans living inside the German state.

Hidden argues that a fault line occurred inside Germandom abroad; one group was thinking in democratic and liberal values and believed in the future characterized by

<sup>148</sup> Werner Hasselblatt, "Überstaatliche Volksgemeinschaft - eine Panbewegung," *Nation und Staat*, April 1932, 442.

<sup>149</sup> Gleichnationale aller Länder, vereinigt euch! (Hasselblatt, "Geistige Verkehrshindernisse," 331.)

<sup>150</sup> Hidden, *Defender of Minorities*, 191.

<sup>151</sup> Smith & Hidden, *Ethnic Diversity and the Nation State*, 87

“domestic and European harmony.”<sup>152</sup> The *völkisch* oriented part of the community hoped that the cultural autonomy sooner or later would lead to a “pan-German order.”<sup>153</sup>

#### 2.4.1 “Misunderstood unification aspirations”<sup>154</sup>

Paul Schiemann in his settled tone remarked that the totalitarian claims of the National Socialist legal theory was transferred on the *völkisch* thoughts about community, which caused misery in *Auslandsdeutschtum*.<sup>155</sup> He followed his article with the repetition of the Schiemannian principles as guidelines:

As old minority politicians we know that the ties between a minority and its nationhood (*Muttervolk*) are and have to remain of pure cultural nature. The minorities should be politically engaged only in their own states. They should not be involved into or influenced by other states’- neither by the conational state’s political affairs. [...] Otherwise the titular nation could spill the trust in the minorities and the perspectives for a fruitful coexistence could be blocked.<sup>156</sup>

The community life of the Germans abroad was already ‘poisoned’ by the National Socialist ideas which “misunderstood the unification aspirations” of the *Volksgemeinschaften* and aimed at the annihilation of the personality.<sup>157</sup> Hasselblatt argued that the borders of the *Volkstum* should be considered even more sacramental than state borders. He also reframed the aims of the minority activists claiming that it needed to achieve that national consciousness becomes a source of strength for supranational tasks and values of European people.<sup>158</sup>

Hiden argues that the concept of nation of the National Socialists was related to the state, so they could not think about supporting Germans abroad without incorporating them into the state.<sup>159</sup> This was possible through the “detachment of the *Auslandsdeutsche* from

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<sup>152</sup> Hiden, *Defender of Minorities*, 147.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> Paul Schiemann, “Auslandsdeutsche Lebensfragen” *Deutsche in Polen*, March 22, 1936 In *Paul Schiemann: Veröffentlichungen 1933-1940*, edited by Helēna Šimkuva and Dietrich A. Loeber, 56-57. Hamburg: Dietrich A. Loeber, 2000

<sup>155</sup> Ibid, 57.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

<sup>158</sup> Hasselblatt, “Geistige Verkehrshindernisse,” 335.

<sup>159</sup> Hiden, *Defender of Minorities*, 193.

the nation-states”<sup>160</sup> The concept of the “great German Reich, which could be valued as a power” literally poisoned the minority leaders. Hasselblatt on the occasion of the *Anschluss* celebrated: “Great Germany arose from the *Volkstum* (the unity of German ethno-national communities) [...] only the *Völker* as divinely ordained different units could present those blocks of stone from which a new and better Europe could be built.”<sup>161</sup>

From 1919 until his withdrawal, Schiemann was working against the change of the *status quo* and creating responsible minority groups from the *Auslandsdeutschen*. The criteria of the responsible minority consisted of the strong refusal of *Volksgemeinschaft* building through changing state belonging, the acceptance of the homeland state and the contribution to the building of it. In the following chapter I observe how he achieved these aims in Latvia.

The early enthusiasm with that Schiemann welcomed the postwar order lasted until 1932 but the differences between his ideas and of the Germanism became obvious earlier. Schiemann did not face or did not want to face with the hidden aims of the minority politics of Stresemann that behind the claims to protect minorities domestic and abroad the preparation for revisionism can be found. The fact that he did not consider the financial support of Berlin as intervention of the co-national state which is against the principles of the sharp division between state and national belonging points out a controversy in his arguments. The role of the German state was crucial in creating the transnational German ethno-national community, so it is an obvious consequence that this community became under the influence of the emerging Nazi ideology. This community according to Schiemann was “widened into a total community in which there was no place for obligations towards the

<sup>160</sup> Brubaker, *Nationalism reframed*, 133.

<sup>161</sup> Werner Hasselblatt, “Österreichs Heimkehr zum Reich,” *Nation und Staat*, March 1938, 351.

homelands, distinct responsibilities and individuality.”<sup>162</sup> After this turn in the treatment of minorities abroad, he followed his argument there are only two possible scenarios: the conquest or the forced resettlement.<sup>163</sup> The difference between *Grenz* and *Auslandsdeutschtum* became very clear in this regard.

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<sup>162</sup> Paul Schieman, “Die Umsiedlung 1939 und die europäische Minderheitenpolitik,” *Jahrbuch des baltischen Deutschtums*, 1973 In Paul Schieman: *Veröffentlichungen 1933-1940*, edited by Helēna Šimkuva and Dietrich A. Loeber, 82. Hamburg: Dietrich A. Loeber, 2000.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*

### 3 Schiemann and his *Staatsgemeinschaft*

The dissolution of the four contiguous European Empires after the First World War created a peculiar situation in Central and Eastern Europe. On the ruins of the Habsburg, Ottoman, Romanov and the German Empire a new Eastern Europe emerged. Some states were enlarged significantly by new territories; some regained their statehood, while others like Estonia, Latvia and Finland through the declaration of their independence formed themselves. Ādolfs Bļodnieks, a prime minister of the Latvian State in the interwar period, remembers in his memoirs the day when Latvia declared her independence:

The 18<sup>th</sup> of November 1918, had arrived, the day when the age old hopes of Latvian people came true when after a long thorny road we were reaching for the stars which were to crown the Latvian coat-of-arms, formed into a constellation of symbolizing the unity of Latvian lands.<sup>164</sup>

Although the unification of the territories with Latvian population remained in the memories of Bļodnieks as a glorious moment, with the new lands the independent state also gained a population which reacted to the realization of the Latvian hopes with less enthusiasm than the members of the Latvian national intelligentsia. In the following chapter I analyze how Schiemann related himself to the Latvian state, how the coexistence of the *Volksgemeinschaft* and *Staatsgemeinschaft* was realized in his case.

As one of his main arguments is that these two communities should not come into conflict, my intention is to point out that nevertheless they had to be prioritized. Firstly, cultural affairs and the politics became inseparable due to the special kind of autonomy established by Germans in Latvia, secondly the nationalizing efforts from the side of the state created second rate citizens from the members of the minority groups, finally the exclusivity of loyalty became a serious issue.

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<sup>164</sup> Ādolfs Bļodnieks, *The undefeated nation*, (New York: Robert Seller & Sons, 1960), 148-149.

### 3.1 The “impossibility” of a Latvian nation-state

In a recently published article, Ádám Németh, a Hungarian geographer analyzes changes in the ethnic diversity index of Latvia between 1897 and 2011 based on available census data.<sup>165</sup> The changes in EDI can follow the trend of homogenization or heterogenization, the EDI of the Latvian territories was 0.51 in 1897, 0.42 in 1925 and 0.40 in 1935. As the 0.00 value refers to an absolutely homogenous society regarding ethnicity and the value of 1.00 shows a society where everybody has different ethnicity,<sup>166</sup> the results of Latvia demonstrates a diverse society with an obvious trend of homogenization in the researched period.

The Latvian historian, Leo Dribins, suggests that the attempt to form the newly founded Latvia into a nation state was problematic, in terms that it had a multinational society.<sup>167</sup> Dribins refers to Theodor Veiter, an Austrian-German expert of international law, who stated that to treat Latvia as a nation-state is “legally impossible and politically unrealistic.”<sup>168</sup> This was because as he argues “there is lack of homogeneity, and also the harmony is missing from the relations of minorities and nations.”<sup>169</sup> According to the 1920 census 73% of the population was Latvian, 12, 53 % Russian, 5% Jewish, 3, 6% German, based on language usage.<sup>170</sup> In 1922 with the ratification of the constitution a political system was established which handled this question flexibly.

#### 3.1.1 *Nation state, state of nationalities or anational state*

Dribins argues that during the war a spontaneous nationalism became widespread among the Latvians. The Latvian middle-class understood that without demanding a nation

<sup>165</sup> Németh Ádám, “Ethnic diversity and its spatial change in Latvia, 1897-2011,” *Post-Soviet Affairs* 29, 5(2013): 404-437

<sup>166</sup> Ibid. 408-413.

<sup>167</sup> Leo Dribins, “Die Deutschbalten und die Idee von nationallettischem Staat (1918-1934),” *Special edition of Nordost-archiv* 2 (1996): 276, <http://www.ikgn.de/cms/index.php/downloads/summary>, accessed 7 April 2014

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid.

<sup>170</sup> Percy Vockrodt, “Das nationale Ergebnis der Volkszählung,” *Nation und Staat*, October 1930, 46.



state there would have been no perspective of building up their own state power. And they were the only group who could provide a positive vision for the future.<sup>171</sup> On 17 November 1918, the National Council came together, where all non-communist Latvian parties were invited. This body with the proclamation of the independence of Latvia and the foundation of a provisory government under the leadership of Kārlis Ulmanis, leader of the Farmers' Party, realized the right of the Latvian cultural nation to self-determination.<sup>172</sup>

Several groups of Baltic Germans understood the aspiration of the Latvians. The German-Balt Progressive Party (*Deutsch-Baltische Fortschrittliche Partei*), which was founded on 18 November 1918 made a decree in which the right of the Latvian nation to form its own nation-state was acknowledged.<sup>173</sup> Later the *Jungbaltenbund* from Libau/Liepāja adopted the same policy.

The formation of a state of nationalities (*Nationalitätenstaat*) was embedded in the legal thinking of the Latvian elite. After the declaration of independence Kārlis Ulmanis, the provisory president of Latvia, stated that the minorities were welcome to participate in the work of the government bodies.<sup>174</sup> Mikelis Valters, a social democrat politician and one of the earliest representatives of the idea of the Latvian state, “invited” the Baltic Germans to be a constructive part of the Latvian nation (*Staatsvolk*). Also Kārlis Ducmanis, a Latvian diplomat, emphasized the multiethnic nature of the Latvian political nation (*Staatsnation*). The Latvian daily, *Jaunākās Ziņas* in an article published on 19 November 1918 claimed that the ethnocentric basis of statehood should be rejected and instead it should be based on the equality of fellow citizens with different national belongings.<sup>175</sup> Dribins suggests that the idea of the multiethnic political nation of Latvia was born simultaneously with the nation state aspirations. In contrast to Dribins, another Latvian historian, Aldis Purs in his PhD

<sup>171</sup> Dribins, “Die Deutschbalten,” 283.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid. 283.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid. 280.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

dissertation claims that the “potential ethnic dimensions of a Latvian state were purely understood.”<sup>176</sup>

There was also a second option represented by the Baltic German National Council (*Baltisch Deutscher Nationalausschuss*), which in February 1919 summed up in 14 points its demands from the new state. From these points an idea of a “bi-national state” took form, the claim for equal status of Latvian and German language or the transformation of the army into separate German and Latvian units lead us to this conclusion. Among the demands of the *Nationalausschuss* also the inviolable property rights and the multiethnic bureaucracy appeared.<sup>177</sup>

Due to the military situation the National Council had no other choice but to continue the negotiations with the *Nationalausschuss*. On 6<sup>th</sup> April 1919, during the time of their session a putsch occurred, in order to form a bi-national state with the leadership of Andrievs Niedra, a Latvian pastor as prime minister.<sup>178</sup> Niedra is now treated as the betrayer of the nation because he was convinced that Latvia as an independent state could not maintain order, safety and progress, so the state-building project could be realized only with the help of one Great Power even with the partial sacrifice of the state’s sovereignty.<sup>179</sup>

Dribins argues that at the end of the day the debate about how the Latvian state should be constructed “was decided by the weapons of the Estonian army and not by a referendum or by elected representatives.”<sup>180</sup> I would suggest that even though the Estonian Army won the Battle in Wenden/Cēsis in June 1919 against the German troops, the questions about clarifying the state construction of Latvia were discussed next to the conference table by actual statesmen.

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<sup>176</sup> Aldis Purs, *Creating the state from above and below, local government in inter-war Latvia*, PhD dissertation, University of Toronto, 1998, 72,  
<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/obj/s4/f2/dsk3/ftp04/nq35290.pdf?> accessed: 10 April 2014

<sup>177</sup> Dribins, “Die Deutschbalten,” 284.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid. 285.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid. 286.

Due to the activity of Paul Schiemann and Wilhelm von Fircks, the leading Baltic German politicians in Latvia, who after the battle set up the minimum criteria for a compromise between nationalities, the new National Council welcomed German, Jewish and Russian deputies as well. The priorities of the liberal and conservative Germans were different. For Schiemann the most important condition was the exclusion of an ethnocratic system from the possibilities. The conservative Fircks demanded the respect of property rights.<sup>181</sup> He was worrying that in the new era the lands, real estates, firms, all German possessions would be nationalized in order to change the ethnic construction of the economy. Both politicians stated that the attitude of Baltic Germans towards the new Latvian state depended on what they could expect from it. Schiemann declared that the Germans could associate themselves only with a state which was ready to document the appreciation of their belonging through acknowledgement of their culture. In response, the Germans would respect the same and as he phrased, they absolutely agreed that the Latvian state had the right to demand knowledge of Latvian language from all, “in the course of time.”<sup>182</sup> The leading Baltic Germans sent a clear message; Latvia should be a home not only of Latvians, but all historical minorities who lived there.<sup>183</sup>

Whether the Latvian Republic in its early phase should be considered as a nation-state or not, is an open question. The political order established by the constitution inspired Schiemann to think about the coexistence of nations in ‘unorthodox’ ways. Dribins claims that “the idea of a Latvian nation-state remained not understood by the Germans” for them it seemed that the Latvian nation is not ready to build a state, and could not represent the required intellectual potential without the Germans and the required economic potential

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<sup>181</sup> Dribins, “Die Deutschbalten,” 287.

<sup>182</sup> Paul Schiemann, “Zur Sprachenfrage in Lettland,” In *Rigasche Rundschau* 29 July 1919, vol. 2, booklet 1, in *Leitartikel, Reden und Aufsätze*, edited by Hans Donath, without page number. Frankfurt am Main: H. Donath, 1987.

<sup>183</sup> Dribins, “Die Deutschbalten,” 287.

without the German and Jewish owners.<sup>184</sup> Schiemann adhered to his interpretation according to which the Latvian Constitution rejected the idea of the nation state,<sup>185</sup> since it stated that the sovereign power of the State of Latvia was vested in the people of Latvia”, and also the official language as such is not mentioned in it.<sup>186</sup> Dribins also acknowledged that “this interpretation of the titular nation was a great novelty,” which had to be filled with content in the future, otherwise it remained only declarative.<sup>187</sup> The real novelty was that the titular nation was not named in the constitution. It was Paul Schiemann and other leaders of the Latvian Germandom who attempted to utilize the flexible boundaries of this peculiar state construction.

This special situation led Schiemann to the idea of the *anationally* acknowledged state as an alternative to the state which acknowledges itself as national. In an *anational* construction the equality of the nationalities is guaranteed or the state absolutely withdrew itself from the cultural sphere. Schiemann argued that according to the constitution all those states should be based on the *anational* principle, which states the equality of all citizens.<sup>188</sup> During the debate of the Constitution, Schiemann argued that Latvia accomplished the national idea in terms that it expressed the Latvian character of the state. By acknowledging this fact the nationalities reserved the right to cultivate their culture through the bodies of national-cultural autonomies. A united political nation is able to cultivate different cultures through this way.

The adopted constitution remained a torso, as Schiemann referred to it.<sup>189</sup> The second part of it which would consist of the article 115 was rejected by the Constitutional

<sup>184</sup> Dribins, “Die Deutschbalten,” 287

<sup>185</sup> Paul Schiemann, “Staatsvolk und Minderheit,” in *Rigasche Rundschau* 8 May 1926, vol. 2, booklet 10, in *Leitartikel, Reden und Aufsätze*, edited by Hans Donath, 2883. Frankfurt am Main: H. Donath, 1989.

<sup>186</sup> “Die Verfassung der Republik Lettlands” in: *Dokumente und Materialien zur ostmitteleuropäischen Geschichte. Themenmodul "Lettland in der Zwischenkriegszeit*, edited by Janis Keruss, in: Herder-Institut (ed) <http://www.herder-institut.de/resolve/qid/1356.html> accessed.: 12 May 2014

<sup>187</sup> Dribins, “Die Deutschbalten,” 291.

<sup>188</sup> Schiemann, “Volksgemeinschaft und Staatsgemeinschaft,” 40-41.

<sup>189</sup> Schiemann called it *Rumpfverfassung* (Dribins, “Die Deutschbalten” 290.)

Assembly in 1922. This article stated the right of non-Latvians to use their language in several institutions and in the court, and in municipalities, but acknowledged Latvian as the official language of the state, the autonomy of the non-Latvians. The ratification of this constitution could mean a compromise between the nation state and state of nationalities principles. In 1926 when an unsatisfied Latvian of German origin claimed to guarantee the Germans the status of titular nation, like for Latvians, Schiemann tried to convince this man and other co-nationals that the best scenario that could happen to the Latvian constitution, was not to name any titular nation at all, which is unique in the East Central European context.<sup>190</sup>

### 3.2 The affirmation of the state

Next to the demographic, economic and political changes as consequences of the war, the biggest challenge for the Baltic Germans was to digest that they had dropped from leading stratum to national minority.<sup>191</sup> The positive attitude towards and the affirmation of the new state (*Staatsbejahnung*) from the side of the German minority was a long process to achieve and a permanent confirmation was needed to keep the members of the community in this mood. In this regard the cooperation between the conservative Fircks, as representative of the *Ritterschaften* and the liberal Schiemann, who was more accepted in the urbanized middle-class was decisive.

The leader of the conservatives, Wilhelm von Fircks argued for the affirmation of the state with the rootedness of the Germans to the soil, and non-material values this term is related to (*Bodenständigkeit*).<sup>192</sup> Schiemann was enthusiastic about being part of creating

<sup>190</sup> Schiemann, "Staatsvolk und Minderheit," 2881.

<sup>191</sup> Michael Garleff, "Zwischen Loyalität und Verweigerung. Zur Autonomie der Deutschbalten in Estland und Lettland," in *Aufbruch und Krise. Das östliche Europa und die Deutschen nach dem ersten Weltkrieg*, ed. Beate Störckuhl, Jens Stüben, Tobias Weger, (München: R Oldenbourg Verlag, 2010), 302.

<sup>192</sup> David Feest, "Abgrenzung oder Assimilation," 519.

something new in the early period of the state building.<sup>193</sup> His main reason for staying in Latvia and contributing to the new state was that that was the only way to prevent the peculiarities of the Baltic Germandom. Schiemann from the summer of 1919 onwards identified the main problems of Latvian statehood, namely economic issues, the question of autonomy, interethnic fights for prestige and the nature of Baltic democracy.

The problem of Latvian statehood was above all an economic problem, because according to his argument the state is above all an economic unit. The existence of the state depended on how quickly it could build up its own economy and earn creditability in the eyes of the international capital. He also emphasized that nationalization mainly in agriculture would be catastrophic, the time for socialization had not come yet in Latvia and production should be organized by private firms who know how to utilize them satisfactorily.<sup>194</sup> His words were also a warning for the state, that the nationalization of the land was a mistake in Estonia and that state independence had its main consequences in the economic field and these experiences could be painful for a small country whose population had been used to the imperial framework.

Latvia, following the Estonian pattern, maximized the size of the property and nationalized the lands of German landowners in 1920.<sup>195</sup> The law on compensation of the prewar ruble demands abolished 95% of the obligations of Latvian house owners towards Landowners.<sup>196</sup> Resulting from these radical laws Germandom faced a falling living standard and impoverishment, which meant the dissolution of the old public living forms.<sup>197</sup> The loss of their traditional dominant positions led the Baltic Germans into an identity crisis

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<sup>193</sup> Paul Schiemann, "Wehe den Kleinmütigen" In *Rigasche Rundschau* July 22, 1919, vol. 2, booklet 1, in *Leitartikel, Reden und Aufsätze*, edited by Hans Donath, without page number. Frankfurt am Main: H. Donath, 1987."

<sup>194</sup> Paul Schiemann, "Lettlands Staatsproblem," In *Rigasche Rundschau* November 1919, vol. 2, booklet 1, in *Leitartikel, Reden und Aufsätze*, edited by Hans Donath, without page number. Frankfurt am Main: H. Donath, 1987.

<sup>195</sup> Feest, "Abgrenzung oder Assimilation," 520.

<sup>196</sup> Dribins, "Die Deutschbalten," 294.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.* 290.

in which the main question was whether to be loyal to the new state or to deny the existence of it. Michael Garleff argues that this identity crisis meant a choice between what he calls old Baltic ‘organic’ thinking pattern (*altbaltisches Denkmuster*) and the efforts of democratic politicians, which was considered as mechanistic compared to the former.<sup>198</sup> Obviously one option was to emigrate and leave the Baltic sooner or later because being loyal to the new state became problematic for these ‘old imperial Baltic Germans’ (*Altreichsbalten*) as Garleff refers to them.<sup>199</sup>

### 3.2.1 *The infrastructure of autonomy*

Leo Dribins quotes the words of Bernhard Lamay, who wrote in 1931 that Latvia is a juridical Laboratory for minority rights with absolutely positive results. Between 1922 and 1925 the German deputies did everything possible in order to achieve the support of the Parliament for the Law on Cultural Autonomy.<sup>200</sup> Without having that law the minorities, but especially the Germans, built out a network of their institutions and the most effective working mechanism of them in order to enforce the rights granted in the constitution: the equality of all citizens of Latvia.

Percy Vockrodt, a Baltic German minority activist began his review of ten years of German school autonomy that in minority politically qualified circles of Europe is generally known that Estonia as the first state in the world realized the idea of national-cultural autonomy. However, much less noted, is that 5 years earlier in Latvia a regulation for minority school was established with the same degree of self government.<sup>201</sup> In the case of Estonia Kari Alenius analyzed the circumstances under which such progressive legislation could come to force in the interwar milieu.<sup>202</sup> Among the factors, he refers to the small

<sup>198</sup> Garleff, “Zwischen Loyalität und Verweigerung,” 291.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid. 297.

<sup>200</sup> Dribins, “Die Deutschbalten,” 221.

<sup>201</sup> Percy Vockrodt, “Die deutsche Schulautonomie in Lettland,” *Nation und Staat*, January 1930, 218.

<sup>202</sup> Kari Alenius, “The birth of Cultural autonomy in Estonia: How, why and for whom?” *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 38,4 (2007): 445. accessed: 31 October 2013, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01629770701682723>

percentage of the minorities, who did not have radical goals, the “maturity” of the Estonian society to behave as “noble victors,” but they put the main emphasis on the need for political stability and support of minorities, mainly the Germans to prevent a possible communist takeover.<sup>203</sup>

Having still fresh memories about the decision, Percy Vockrodt in his article published in 1930 also summed up which circumstances played a role in the codification of the Law on School Autonomy in Latvia. Next to the aspirations for autonomy of the Latvians in the Russian Empire, their ability to understand the German resistance against “being taught in a different language” was emphasized by Vockrodt. He also claimed that the Latvians were aware of the necessity of a German-Latvian cultural cooperation in the newly founded state. Vockrodt proved his words by the fact that Karl Keller the German pastor of Riga was invited to the National Council as a consultant next to the minister of education. The Law on School Autonomy (*Schulgesetz der Minderheiten Lettlands*) was adopted on 8<sup>th</sup> December 1919 by the National Council.<sup>204</sup> According to Michael Garleff, the German minority successfully utilized the instable situation in Latvia in order to ensure the required support for the autonomy law, at that time the ‘government’ had two Baltic Germans and one Jewish member.<sup>205</sup>

The national educational governments were established in 1920 by Jews, Russians, White Russians, Poles and Germans.<sup>206</sup> Every educational government had a head who worked as a consultant next to the Minister of Education. This person was appointed by the state, but his colleagues in the case of the German minority were elected by the assembly of the German national community, the fraction of German parties.<sup>207</sup> The relevance of the

<sup>203</sup> Alenius, “The birth of Cultural autonomy in Estonia,” 447.

<sup>204</sup> Wolfgang Wachsmut, “Zur Entstehungs- und Entwicklungsgeschichte der Verwaltung des deutschen Bildungswesens Lettlands I.” *Nation und Staat*, December 1931, 154.

<sup>205</sup> Garleff, “Zwischen Loyalität und Verweigerung,” 293.

<sup>206</sup> Vockrodt, “Die deutsche Schulautonomie in Lettland,” 219.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid. 220.



autonomy was that the Germans “could preserve the school types suitable for the Germans, the curriculums and exam regulations”<sup>208</sup> Also the self government had the right to decide about the teachers. The balance of the 10 years was that compared to school year 1919/20 when 45 German schools operated Latvia-wide in 1928/29 there were altogether 110. The new schools were established in small towns and in peasant settlements in order to prevent the population from degermanization.<sup>209</sup> Also the Herder Hochschule the private German language college was accredited by the Latvian Ministry of Education in 1927.

Cooperation between the political parties, the *Zentrale Deutsch-Baltischer Arbeit* (founded in 1923 changed its name to German national Community in 1928)<sup>210</sup> and the cultural and educational bodies guaranteed the “almost complete” national-cultural autonomy for the Germans. It is in sharp contradiction with the principle of separation of political and cultural issues, promoted by Schieman, as the basis of national-cultural autonomy. But it was the only way to handle the situation which originated from the lack of state approved cultural council.

Schiemann and others found ways and means how to survive in the quasi nation state framework. In Latvia instead of the institutions which supposed to be subjects of the public law, like the German Cultural Council in Estonia, private organizations were founded with the aims to cultivate the German culture, such as the Association of Parents, the Baltic German National Community. The field of activity of the latter was “to realize everything in a private way that the state denied the Germans.”<sup>211</sup> According to Vockrodt the financial and administrative shortfalls in schooling issues and the lack of Law on Autonomy could be filled thanks to the loyal responsiveness of most of the relevant Latvian personalities and the

<sup>208</sup> Vockrodt, “Die deutsche Schulautonomie in Lettland,” 220.

<sup>209</sup> Vockrodt used the word *Entgermanisierung* in the original, (“Die deutsche Schulautonomie in Lettland,” 222.)

<sup>210</sup> Inesis Feldmanis, “Die Deutschbalten: Ihre Einstellung zum Nationalsozialismus und ihr Verhältnis zum Staat Lettland (1933-1939)” Special edition of Nordost-archiv 2 (1996): 365., <http://www.ikgn.de/cms/index.php/downloads/viewcategory/33-band-v-1996-h-2>, accessed: April 28, 2014.

<sup>211</sup> Vockrodt, “Die deutsche Schulautonomie in Lettland,” 222.

private German organizational bodies as well as to the willingness of people to make sacrifices.<sup>212</sup>

Due to the incomplete legal regulation the fundraising activity of the German community was allowed by the state authorities. The money from the budget was not enough to cover the costs of the above mentioned activities. Two times a year 400 volunteers knocked on the doors to ask for donations. There were many problems with this system of fundraising, so the *Zentrale* decided to shift to voluntary system of self taxation in 1926. Dr. A. Boettcher points out in his article that the German community was seeking to put its members under a “moral pressure” considering the participation in taxation. The *Zentrale* evolved a scale for taxation rates. The monthly contribution ranged from 0.5% to 3% depending on the income.<sup>213</sup> In 1927 8800 people paid taxes out of 12 000 employed Germans in Riga, the most active taxpayers were doctors, teachers and pastors.

The parliamentary work was more essential for the Latvian Germans than for those living in Estonia, because of the higher proportion of minorities there was more space for party politics. For the effective parliamentary representation the involvement of the parties in the community affairs was unavoidable. Schiemann was the central figure of the entire construction of this German-Balt contribution (*Deutsch-Baltische Mitarbeit*). He was the leader of the *Zentrale*, the head of the German fraction in the parliament and also editor-in-chief of the influential German language daily. As Hiden points out the controversy between Schiemann’s rhetoric and praxis; “far from wishing to encourage the simplistic idea of a separation of politics and culture [...] Schiemann was bent on heightening the political awareness of his community.”<sup>214</sup>

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<sup>212</sup> Vockrodt, “Die deutsche Schulautonomie in Lettland,” 222.

<sup>213</sup> Dr. A. Boettcher, “Die freiwillige Selbstbesteuerung der Deutschen Lettlands,” *Nation und Staat*, April 1928, 545-547.

<sup>214</sup> Hiden, *Defender of Minorities*, 98.

### 3.2.2 *The presence of the state on symbolical level*

During the parliamentary period of the Latvian republic, between 1922 and 1931 there were four elections for the *Saeima*, and Germans were represented in every parliament through Baron von Fircks, Paul Schiemann and other politicians. The governments, however, were rather unstable in this period altogether eighteen governments followed each other, out of them fifteen were supported by the German Faction.

Vockrodt provided a political analysis, in which he explained why the situation in Latvia was so unique among those states where German minority groups lived. He suggested that interestingly in the case of Latvia the less adverse the right wing middle class parties had against the Germans and the most chauvinist attitude were coming from the left wing parties. Vockrodt claimed that the reason of that was coming from the fact that Germans provided a politics of cultural orientation to the west, an articulated *bürgerlich* mind-set, and they were strongly bounded to the *Heimat* (homeland). All of these pillars were shared and were acceptable for the right wing Latvian parties. Vockrodt emphasized that the fact that Germans “prevented Latvians of falling into the Slavdom” was highly appreciated by the right wing Latvian politicians.<sup>215</sup>

For Schiemann and also other German politicians the biggest issue considering the nature of Baltic democracy was to accept the principle of proportionality as a fundamental element of the constitutional order. Schiemann claimed that it offers the opportunity to misuse this benefit, “the factual majority causes that the national majority has an idea about its constitutional position.”<sup>216</sup> It is true that in reality in the parliament the majority can actually vote down the minority, that injustice called Schiemann as the “bondage of the majority’s will,” which causes the crisis of democracy.<sup>217</sup> As leader of the German fraction his task was to unite the Germans in one platform and never allow a division in that small

<sup>215</sup> Vockrodt, “Die lettischen Parteien und die Deutschbalten,” *Nation und Staat*, May 1930, 551-552.

<sup>216</sup> Schiemann, “Staatsvolk und Minderheit,” 2882

<sup>217</sup> Schiemann, “Volksgemeinschaft und Staatsgemeinschaft,” 41.

group. He stated that a clash of interest could exist only in cultural questions between national minorities and majority because those are connected to the national question.<sup>218</sup> In all other situation the state interest should be considered at first place: “from the constitutional point of view the state interests are the interests of the collectivity, so the interests of a single nationality should not be damaged at someone else’s expense. That is the fundamental of the German fraction hitherto represented politics.”<sup>219</sup> Schiemann was asked once by the state president, Gustavs Zemgals to form a government, but because he managed to gain the support of only 51 maximum 52 deputies out of the total 100, he refused to do that because he felt this support unsatisfactory.<sup>220</sup> Dribins evaluates this step as a proof of the wide consensus of Schiemann’s figure, of a man who defended the interests of all inhabitants of the Latvian state and not only of the minorities.

Even though the constitution rejects the nation state idea, the Latvian character of the state manifested itself in certain aspects. The biggest scandal occurred around the legislation on the former *Landeswehr* soldiers. This case demonstrated that the power of the Latvian flag, the crimson-white-crimson had its symbolical meaning which differs from the constitutional understanding of the Latvians.

The fight against the agrarian law became a national issue of the whole Baltic German community. Due to this legislation they lost their rootedness to the soil, also their functions in the social life of Latvia.<sup>221</sup> For the Latvians this law was ‘revenge’ and it had a symbolical relevance that in the first line those received land who participated in the 1905 revolution.<sup>222</sup> After the adaptation of the agrarian laws the former German landowners began to activate themselves on several forums, they signed petitions for compensation. When it was said by the court that they have right for compensation the statue of

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<sup>218</sup> Schiemann, “Staatsvolk und Minderheit,” 2883

<sup>219</sup> Ibid.

<sup>220</sup> Dribins, “Die Deutschbalten,” 292.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid. 295.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid. 294.

*Landeswehr* fighters in the Riga cemetery was blown up, the Latvian War Association started a people's initiative about the exclusion of former *Landeswehr* soldiers from the redistribution of the lands.<sup>223</sup>

Referring to Schiemann's standpoint on proportionality in the last section, I suggest that the institution of people's initiative is the real 'nightmare' of a minority politician. According to the Latvian laws if more than one tenth of the people eligible to vote sign it, the parliament have to discuss and decide about the issue. If the *Saeima* rejects the initiative, a referendum should be assigned. The minorities thought this practice will strengthen and give more space for seditions of the Latvian population.<sup>224</sup> In the case of the *Landeswehr* incident there was no need for the referendum because the people's initiative was supported in the parliament by Social Democrats, Communists, four Russian deputies out of the six, and three left wing parties of the middle class. The Germanom felt betrayed, the basis of coexistence was betrayed in his eyes. The German parties immediately left the coalition and withdrew their minister from the government.

This act of the exclusion of *Landeswehr* soldiers from the land distribution highlights the problems originating from the different interpretations of the past. The right to have one official version of the past is also a privilege of a nation state, and with this legislation the Latvian ethnic-community clearly claimed their nation-state. The question whether the soldiers of the *Landeswehr* supported the Latvian state or were against it is hard to decide accord to Vockrodt, who argued that the Latvian state as such did not exist by that time. On the other hand he admitted that the troops of *Landeswehr* fought against the provisionally Latvian government.<sup>225</sup> The question is complicated because during the

<sup>223</sup> Percy Vockrodt, "Zwei Konflikte um die Landbesitzrechte der Deutschbalten," *Nation und Staat*, July 1929, 683-687.

<sup>224</sup> Percy Vockrodt, "Das Recht auf Naturalisation," *Nation und Staat*, September 1927, 42-43.

<sup>225</sup> Percy Vockrodt, "Die deutsche Fraktion aus der Regierungskoalition ausgetreten" *Nation und Staat*, December 1929, 177.

Bermond von der Goltz affair they fought against the Bolshevik troops in Latgale.<sup>226</sup> This change was the result of Fircks' and Schiemann's influence who decided to support the aspiration of Latvians for their own state if it would guarantee the equality of rights. It happened not without reason argued Vockrodt that members of the *Landeswehr* were the medal of *Lāčplēsis* assigned. They were treated as the Latvian soldiers who fought in the war. Schiemann argued in his speech in the parliament that this new legislation affects the equal rights of the German citizens.<sup>227</sup> Vockrodt also evaluates this law as anti-German, which means a turning point in the Latvian-German cooperation. The intention of the Social Democrats was to prevent the emergence of the German nobles and reaction.<sup>228</sup> Since the Agrarian laws there was no legal act with such sing of intolerance, states Vockrodt. He argued that it attacks the lower strata of the Germans and not the nobility, so this legislation targets the whole German minority inside Latvia.

Latvia was treated as a standout student among the new states in Eastern Europe. The state of affairs reports published in the *Nation und Staat* end with phrases that the situation in Latvia is still much better than in other Eastern European Countries, although for example the Law on *Landeswehr* left a stigma on the reputation of Latvia as a state who handles their minorities fairly.<sup>229</sup>

### 3.2.3 *Problems of arithmetical nature*

The prestige fights actually poisoned inter-ethnic relations in interwar Latvia, mainly in the German-Latvian dimension. Chauvinist claims from the one side were answered with chauvinist claims from the other. Schiemann tried to emphasize that the Baltic Germans

<sup>226</sup> Vockrodt, "Die deutsche Fraktion aus der Regierungskoalition ausgetreten" 178.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid. 177.

<sup>228</sup> Vockrodt, "Das deutschfeindliche Volksbegehren in Lettland" *Nation und Staat*, October 1929, 41.

<sup>229</sup> Vockrodt, "Die deutsche Fraktion aus der Regierungskoalition ausgetreten," 181.

“always instinctually felt themselves to be the social elite,” and it is time to overcome it.<sup>230</sup> The German arguments for cultural-autonomy show, that Germans’ attitude towards the other minorities was characterized by the sense of exclusivity. The leading politician would be able to vote for a law on autonomy only for Germans. Fircks, the conservative leader spoke about the ‘odium’ of the inclusion of Russians and Jews into the project, Karl Keller, the head of the educational self-administration objected to the idea that Germans ‘could be tossed in the same barrel with the others.’<sup>231</sup> The situation was sharpened by the fact that the two ethnic groups had their own ‘complexes.’ The Germans lost their leading role and were numerically small compared to the Latvians. So they emphasized their cultural roles and economic power, whereas the Latvians were aware of the limits of their demographic advantage.

For the Latvian elite the permanent task was to justify the existence of the Latvian state not only on the international, but on the domestic level also. Through nation and state building tools they had to invent the culture which made them peculiar compared to other nations.<sup>232</sup> Still in the parliamentary period Latvian ethnologists and also anthropologists were eagerly looking for the roots and the early achievements of the Latvians.

In these parallel processes every group wanted at least to prevent or moreover to strengthen its positions and demography played a significant role in it. Vockrodt argued that not only Latvians but the minority groups were also „fighting for numbers.”<sup>233</sup> The numbers counted for the education self-administration and also for the municipality elections. In the following I reflect on some trends in the demographic changes.

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<sup>230</sup> Paul Schiemann “Baltische Demokratie” In *Rigasche Rundschau* July 21, 1919, vol. 2, booklet 1, in *Leitartikel, Reden und Aufsätze*, edited by Hans Donath, without page number. Frankfurt am Main: H. Donath, 1987.

<sup>231</sup> Smith & Hiden, *Ethnic Diversity and the Nation State* 44.

<sup>232</sup> Aija Priedīte, “National identity and cultural identity: the history of ideas in Latvia in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries,” in *National history and identity* edited by Michael Branch, (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 1999), 232.

<sup>233</sup> Vockrodt, “Das nationale Ergebnis der Volkszählung,” 45.

Table 2. Population of Latvia according to national belonging (census records)<sup>234</sup>

	<b>1920</b>	<b>1925</b>	<b>1930</b>
Latvians	1 161 400	1 354 100	1 395 000
Germans	58 100	71 000	69 900
Great Russians	124 700	193 600	201 800
White Russians	75 600	38 000	36 000
Jews	79 600	95 700	94 400
Poles	54 600	51 100	59 400
Lithuanians	25 600	23 200	25 900
Estonians	8 800	7 900	7 700
Others	3 800	7 600	8 600
Unknown	3 800	2 500	1 500
<b>Total population</b>	<b>1 596 100</b>	<b>1 844 800</b>	<b>1 900 000</b>

The drastic changes in numbers between 1920 and 1935 (see Table 2) can be explained by the return of war refugees from Russia and Germany and the emigrants who arrived from Russia. Between 1925 and 1930 these factors did not play a role, the changes resulted from births and deaths and also from the fact that people changed their national belongings.<sup>235</sup> The trends in changing national belonging were of special interest for politicians. According to the report of the State Statistical Government, between 1925 and 1930 altogether 6000 Russians changed their national belonging to Latvian. There lived 120,000 Germans on the territory of Latvia before the war, and thousands died in the war, were killed by the Bolsheviks, tens of thousands left the country after the foundation of the state or after the ratification of the Agrarian Laws. Despite these tendencies between 1925 and 1930 the number of Germans increased as a consequence of returns and “frank confessions” of Germandom.

Regarding the Great and White Russians the report notes that they lived in closed settlements mainly in the province of Latgale and their fertility rate was high, also the national consciousness of these groups was the less developed among the nationalities, therefore their denationalization was quite a common phenomenon. About ten thousand people lived in Latgalian province who spoke a mixture of Polish, Latvian and Russian and

<sup>234</sup> Vockrodt, “Das nationale Ergebnis der Volkszählung,” 46.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid.



to the question of their nationality they answered that they considered themselves as catholic.<sup>236</sup> It is worth mentioning also that in Latgale, the Polonization of the “nationally indifferent people” was very energetic and supported by the clergy. The number of Jews increased mainly because of their immigration from Russia, after 1925 despite the great number of births the Jewish community was smaller due to the emigration of approximately 4000 people.<sup>237</sup>

From the Vockrodt report it became clear that both on the Latvian and German side the national fault line was stable and that the strengthening of their demographic position was possible through Latvianization or Germanization of other minority groups. The main task for the Germans was not to convert people, but to prevent the degermanization of them, or help them to ‘activate’ their German identity.

However, the Latvian politicians considered the opportunity of converting people to Latvians seriously. The biggest scope for action was in Latgale, in the province where the percentage of the Latvians was the smallest, the number of Germans almost zero and the population, as I pointed out earlier, because of its diverse nature and constantly changing national influences were not conscious about its national identity. Aldis Purs, a Latvian historian published an article about the state approved policy of attracting children to Latvian schools and create Latvians from them through offering free lunches for schoolchildren.<sup>238</sup> Two main figures of this project were Zalīts, the vice-president of the school department, and Velkme, the deputy minister of the interior who had different opinions about the sense of national belonging, but they agreed on the tool in making Latvians. The former argued that national belonging is a matter of blood, but he was convinced that those people who speak Polish or White Russian in Latgale were Latvians

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<sup>236</sup> Vockrodt, “Das nationale Ergebnis der Volkszählung,” 47.

<sup>237</sup> Ibid. 48.

<sup>238</sup> Aldis Purs, “The Price of Free Lunches: Making the Frontier Latvian in the Interwar Years,” *The Global Review of Ethnopolitics*. 1, 4 (2002), 60-73.

originally, because their surnames sounded Latvian.<sup>239</sup> Velkme on the other hand thought that if people began to use Latvian for “practical purposes” they can be considered Latvians.<sup>240</sup> The intention behind this measurement was to undermine the minority schools which were in most cases better equipped and of higher quality than the Latvian ones. The program of free lunches took fifteen years and resulted in 27 000 new “mechanical” Latvians in Latgale.<sup>241</sup> After the coup d’état of Kārlis Ulmanis, Latvianization became an official part of the governmental program and the minority schools were not only undermined but closed by the new regime.<sup>242</sup>

### 3.3 The “possibility” of a Latvian nation state - the Ulmanis regime

Years before the coup, mostly as a reaction to the financial crisis the nationalist debates strengthened in Latvia. The Latvian parliamentary parties claimed that the state politics has to be revised because of its *anational* and traitorous nature.<sup>243</sup> Mārgers Skujenieks, a social democrat who was prime minister firstly between 1926 and 1928 claimed in 1927 that with Baltic Germans the Latvians feel like one nation, four years later during his second term he stated that only a nationally homogenous state can be strong.<sup>244</sup> Dribins emphasizes that these conflicts originated not from the state as such, but from the circles of Latvian nationalists who led the governments by that time. Dehken, another social democrat deputy, stated that the sense of school autonomy was to alienate the young generation of German pupils from the Latvians he also interpreted this practice as a sign of segregation. Also a social democrat referred to the international norms, according to which

<sup>239</sup> Purs, “The Price of Free Lunches,” 65-66.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid. 66.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid. 71.

<sup>242</sup> Ibid. 69.

<sup>243</sup> Dribins, “Die Deutschbalten,” 297.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid.

only those groups should utilize the minority rights who represent at least 20% of the states total population.<sup>245</sup>

About the reasons for Ulmanis' seizure of power there are several interpretations. Inesis Feldmanis argues that the emerging activity of different political extreme circles was the result of the growing economic instability. He also points out that the lack of political culture was the reason why the politicians were thinking in authoritarian and radical right categories.<sup>246</sup> "Extensive state machinery" and a strong leader with "overwhelming power" were among the public demand.<sup>247</sup>

More groups aspired to seize power with undemocratic tools, but only Ulmanis, the prime minister of the state had the support of the National Guard, the *Aizsargi*. A group of former officers, called the Legion, also planned a coup according to Feldmanis.<sup>248</sup> Obviously Ulmanis was aware of the intentions of that group. Feldmanis rejected the preventive nature as a possible explanation of Ulmanis' coup, arguing that he could defeat all attempts of other groups,<sup>249</sup> although he admits that Ulmanis was actually worried about the spread of National Socialist and Anti-Semitic ideas among the Baltic Germans. Actually these ideologies were popular not only among the Baltic Germans.

Roger Griffin claims that the authoritarian regime of Ulmanis reacted to genuine fascism as a threat. Under genuine fascism he means groups with ultra-nationalist goals, the most important of them was the *Pērkonkrusts* movement.<sup>250</sup> This movement wanted to seize power in a peaceful and democratic way; they were preparing intensively for the 5<sup>th</sup> *Saeima*

<sup>245</sup> Vockrodt, "Das deutschfeindliche Volksbegehren in Lettland," *Nation und Staat*, October 1929, 42.

<sup>246</sup> Inesis Feldmanis, "Umgestaltungsprozesse im Rahmen des Ulmanis-Regimes in Lettland 1934-1940" in *Autoritäre Regime in Ostmittel- und Südosteuropa 1919-1944*, edited by Erwin Oberländer, (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2001) 218.

<sup>247</sup> Deák István, "How to construct a productive, disciplined, monoethnic society" In *Landscaping the human garden*, edited by Amir Weiner, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003) 205-206.

<sup>248</sup> Feldmanis, "Umgestaltungsprozesse im Rahmen des Ulmanis-Regimes," 218-219.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid. 221.

<sup>250</sup> Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism*, (London: Pinter Publishers, 1991), 122.

elections, when the coup occurred. Considering that they were supposed to get 15 to 20 seats out of the 100 in the *Saeima*, the operation of this group was a real threat.<sup>251</sup>

Deniss Hanovs and Valdis Tēraudkalns interpreted the coup d'état as a salvation. They argue that the act of Ulmanis was not a real coup; he just announced the state of war for six months in order to finish the reform of the Constitution.<sup>252</sup> In contrast to this explanation, they claim that introducing an authoritarian type political system was not only a trend but more an expectation in contemporary Europe.

### 3.3.1 *The program of a Latvian Latvia*

Hanovs and Tēraudkalns argue that “instead of parliamentary democracy Ulmanis focused on the principle of national unity.”<sup>253</sup> The state just like a “complete organism” requires the “order and harmony of territory, power and ideology, under harmony in the case of the state the unquestionable hierarchical position, role of nationalities in Latvia’s society” should be understood.<sup>254</sup> Feldmanis claims that Ulmanis understood under Latvian Latvia a strengthened Latvianness, the strengthened position of Latvians in the society. In this strengthening process he did not want to oppress the nationalities. However, Andrew Ezergailis, an American Latvian historian interprets the era as hostile towards any minorities.<sup>255</sup> Among the measures of Ulmanis the proclamation of political parties and the arrest of their leaders, the introduction of censorship, and the proclamation of newspapers were opposed by minorities.<sup>256</sup>

Ieva Zaķe, a Canadian Latvian sociologist interprets the phenomenon as authoritarian nationalism which aimed to transform the individual internally instead of mass

<sup>251</sup> Feldmanis, “Umgestaltungsprozesse im Rahmen des Ulmanis-Regimes,” 219.

<sup>252</sup> Hanovs & Tēraudkalns, *Ultimate Freedom*, 26.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid. 25.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid. 86.

<sup>255</sup> Andrew Ezergailis, *The Holocaust in Latvia, 1941-1944: the missing center*. (Riga: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 1996) 68.

<sup>256</sup> Feldmanis, “Umgestaltungsprozesse des Ulmanis-Regimes,” 237.

mobilization.<sup>257</sup> His tool to achieve the internal transformation of the individuals and finally the new type of Latvians was the fundamental reform of the education system. Firstly in the history of Latvians, the basis for the national identity was the centralized state power.<sup>258</sup>

The strategy of the regime was to pretend the intention to preserve the status quo and give the “impression of a revolutionary transformation.”<sup>259</sup> One fundamental change was clear, namely, while the parliamentary period by its critics was evaluated as imperfect for the perfectly authentic community of the Latvian nation, the Ulmanis era was treated as the perfect leadership for imperfect people. The primer instruction of his authoritarian system was to think as a community instead of following the individual interest, which characterized the liberal democratic system. Secondly the content of “Latvianness” changed along with the transformation of the political system; the new Latvian people should become “super-humans, enlightened, brave, loyal and voluntary.”<sup>260</sup>

The biological definition of the nation and the ranking system of races were also part of the modifying content of the “Latvianness.” Felder argues that just like in other young states of East-Central Europe in Latvia the nation was also defined biologically. This means that those were considered as Latvians who were born Latvians. Felder admits that the thinking in racial categories was not imported first by the national socialists.<sup>261</sup>

Also during the dictatorship of Ulmanis a Eugenic Commission was erected next to the “Institution for Investigation of the Vital Force of the Folk.”<sup>262</sup> The former had the task to decide about sterilization and abortions in individual cases, the latter served one of the aims of the state, namely to reduce the number of inferior people as the leader of the

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<sup>257</sup> Ieva Zāķe. “Authoritarianism and political ideas of Latvian Nationalist intellectuals” *Journal of Baltic Studies* 38:3 (2007): 305, accessed October 31, 2013, doi: 10.1080/01629770701526722

<sup>258</sup> Ibid. 307.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid. 305.

<sup>261</sup> Björn M. Felder, *Lettland im zweiten Weltkrieg. Zwischen sowjetischen und deutschen Besatzern 1940-1946* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2009), 279.

<sup>262</sup> Felder translated the name of this institution from Latvian, he refers to it as „Institut zur Erforschung des Lebenskräfte des Volkes” (Felder, *Lettland im zweiten Weltkrieg*, 284.)

institute, Jēkabs Prīmanis phrased it.<sup>263</sup> One of the most successful projects of the Institute for Vital Force was the manipulation of the census data in 1935. The problem of the increasing number of ethnic Russians and the decreasing proportion of Latvians was solved by “assimilation” of non-Latvians mostly from the eastern region of the country, in Latgale.<sup>264</sup> The researchers of the Institute proved that these 50 000 people were biologically Latvian, although in recent years they were Germanized, Polonized or Russified.<sup>265</sup>

### 3.3.2 *The widespread of National Socialism among Baltic Germans- a “real Volksgemeinschaft*

Feldmanis admits that the situation for Germans changed from the 30s onwards as a result of the emerging Latvian nationalism.<sup>266</sup> On the other hand he refers to Jürgen von Hehn, who as a witness of the era suggested that it was the politics of Schiemann which the Germans accused for their situation. Germans were unsatisfied with his work. “His politics which aimed at the triumph of reconciliation and trust was not successful.” If Hehn, who himself was a Nazi considers the permanent opposition of nationalist ideas, the deep conviction of the difference between national sense and aggressive national assertivity which Schiemann propagated, he is right. Schiemann had less and less supporters, but it was not the fault of his ideology.

According to archival information, a group of NSDAP worked illegally in Latvia from 1931 onwards. In their rhetoric the Nazi and the national renewal agitation were linked with agitation against Latvia.<sup>267</sup> There were several other organizations, like the Baltic Brotherhood (*Baltische Brüderschaft*), the group of Treijs (Treijs’ Gruppe), and also a new

<sup>263</sup> Felder, *Lettland im zweiten Weltkrieg*, 284.

<sup>264</sup> Németh, “Ethnic diversity,” 416.

<sup>265</sup> Felder, *Lettland im zweiten Weltkrieg*, 285.

<sup>266</sup> Feldmanis, “Die Deutschbalten: Ihre Einstellung zum Nationalsozialismus,” 367.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid. 368.

party, the Baltische Landespartei which confessed a National Socialist ideology. The latter aimed at the renewal of the Baltic German life inside of Latvia.<sup>268</sup> The strongest group of National Socialists, the *Bewegung* was led by Erhard Kroeger. His claim for registering their party was refused by the authorities because of its possible subversive nature. The irony of the *Bewegung* issue is that it utilized the organizational infrastructure of the Baltic Germandom which was built up in the 1920s. Because of the rejection as a party the *Bewegung* hid itself behind the organization of German Cultural Association of Latvia (*Deutscher Bildungsverein Lettlands*) and the Baltic German Wander and Sports Association. The entire structure of the organization served the *völkisch* education of the community members. The main aim of the organization was to strengthen its influence on the Baltic Germandom.<sup>269</sup>

The *Bewegung* turned right away against Paul Schiemann, Kroeger said that in order to guarantee the healthy development of the *Volksgemeinschaft* Schiemann had to be released from his position as the chair of the German faction in the Saeima and also as the editor-in-chief of *Rigasche Rundschau*. Feldmanis points out that the tactic of the *Bewegung* was to attack the conservative wing of the German faction as well. As Garleff points out, the end of so-called “Schiemann era” in the Latvian politics was not the coup d’état of Ulmanis and the abolition of the parliamentary system. Schiemann’s contribution in Latvia ended already in 1933 as the result of massive and permanent attacks on him from the circles of Latvian Germans. He was accused of being a betrayer of the nation, a catholic separatist, a Marxist; obviously he was accused of being Jewish born as well.<sup>270</sup>

The Germans collected what they considered as anti-German measures of Ulmanis. The abolishment of the educational self government system on 12 July 1934 was mentioned in first place. Although the minority schools did not cease to exist, only those children could

<sup>268</sup> Feldmanis, “Die Deutschbalten: Ihre Einstellung zum Nationalsozialismus,” 369.

<sup>269</sup> Ibid. 372

<sup>270</sup> Garleff, “Zwischen Loyalität und Verweigerung” 299.

attend them whose parents also attended a minority school. Children from intermarriages were forced to attend Latvian schools. The administration of educational policy was centralized, which meant the end of the school autonomy in practice.<sup>271</sup> Ulmanis closed 71 schools during his presidency, among them 6 German.<sup>272</sup> On 5 January 1935 the official language was named (Latvian), later on restrictions were introduced for non-Latvian attorneys. Germans were excluded from the right to buy land properties.<sup>273</sup> Ulmanis sent the message to the Germans, first loyalty then little wishes. The disloyalty of Germans was proved by their permanent complaints to Berlin about their situation in Latvia and that they attempted to achieve the consideration of their little wishes through the German authorities.<sup>274</sup> In the Latvian historiography it is a widespread interpretation that the regime of Ulmanis was part of a European wide phenomenon. The anti-German measures were also part of a common European practice which, according to Feldmanis, demonstrates that the *Volksdeutsche* were guilty in many respects.<sup>275</sup>

Feldmanis points out that considering the anti-German measures of the Ulmanis regime after 1937 there was none of them, the Latvian politicians began to seek reconciliation, mainly after the Münchner Conference, but the moment for that had been already passed. After 1938 the agitation of the *Bewegung* was completed with the threat of the “invasion and rule of Germans in Latvia.”<sup>276</sup>

Kroeger and his followers welcomed the treaty of resettlement between Latvia and the Third Reich which officially put an end to the existence of the German minority in the Baltic State. From that points on there was no German minority group in Latvia. Germany expressed with this treaty that all Germans who stayed in the Latvian state should renounce

<sup>271</sup> Feldmanis, “Die Deutschbalten: Ihre Einstellung zum Nationalsozialismus,” 381

<sup>272</sup> Purs, “The Price of Free Lunches,” 69.

<sup>273</sup> Feldmanis, “Die Deutschbalten: Ihre Einstellung zum Nationalsozialismus,” 381.

<sup>274</sup> Ibid. 384.

<sup>275</sup> Ibid. 380.

<sup>276</sup> Ibid. 377.



their minority rights, their schools, and their confessional communities.<sup>277</sup> Schiemann, who went back to Riga from his ‘exile’ in Vienna just one year before the resettlement considered this measure as the “death sentence of the Baltic Germans.”<sup>278</sup> As Baltic Germans they could not exist in the territories from where Poles were removed, and also in Latvia there was no future for them if their minority rights are not acknowledged. About those who stayed Kroeger said: “they were German neither by indication nor by blood” and “those who decided not to leave can no longer call themselves German”<sup>279</sup> Ulmanis celebrated the triumph of losing 35,000 Germans due to repatriation, although it was a tragic moment in the history of the Latvian state.

The foundation of the Latvian state created a peculiar political milieu and a liberal constitutional framework in which the fruitful coexistence of the different nationalities became a reality. The school autonomy gave the opportunity for all minorities to cultivate their own culture. Based on this early legislation the German community built out its own network of educational, social, economic and political organizations, this establishment, however stood in contradiction with the Schiemannian principle of separation of cultural and political issues between ethno-national and state communities.

From the end of 1920s the Latvian political parties forced the acknowledgment of the state as Latvian nation state, and began a nationalizing program, which was finished during the authoritarian regime of Ulmanis. The German community on the other hand became influenced by the Nazi ideas, Schiemann had no place among them any more and he left to Vienna in 1933. Both Ulmanis and Hitler were satisfied by the fact that with the resettlement of most Baltic Germans there was ‘no German left in Latvia.’

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<sup>277</sup> Schiemann, “Die Umsiedlung 1939,” 84.

<sup>278</sup> Ibid. 85.

<sup>279</sup> Smith & Hiden, *Ethnic Diversity and the Nation State*, 104.

#### 4 Paul Schiemann and *the Congress of European Nationalities* – thinking in European dimensions

The Congress of European Nationalities in the framework of interwar minority politics is a well-researched topic with rich literature, and an enormous amount of secondary sources. The works focusing on the Baltic German initiatives questions the positive evaluation of these ambitions and approach the topic from different perspectives. The thesis of Bamberger-Stemmann, the author of the most comprehensive study about the Congress of European Nationalities<sup>280</sup> is that the solidarity between the nationalities was the fundamental principle for two years, from 1925 to 1927. Afterwards the Congress became a platform of revisionist claims, and a “secondary political battlefield” supported by several states.<sup>281</sup> Michael Garleff suggests that the national political efforts of Baltic German politicians can be treated as an attempt to provide the ‘disempowered and functionless’ Baltic Germans the role of being the ‘protagonist of national tolerance and counselor of the fundamental right for national-cultural self-determination.’<sup>282</sup> Jörg Hackmann, in relation to Werner Hasselblatt points out that there were “productive and destructive potential of minority politics” in interwar Europe.<sup>283</sup> It is also telling that John Hiden and David Smith, prominent representatives of Baltic Studies from the University of Glasgow named their research project “Ending nationalism? – The quest for cultural autonomy in inter-war Europe,” which they realized between 2003 and 2007 and which resulted in several

<sup>280</sup> Bamberger-Stemmann, *Der Europäische Nationalitätenkongress*,

<sup>281</sup> Bamberger-Stemmann, “Staatsbürgerliche Loyalität,” 221.

<sup>282</sup> Smith & Hiden, *Ethnic Diversity and the Nation State*, 76.

<sup>283</sup> Jörg Hackmann, “Werner Hasselblatt: Von der estländischen Kulturautonomie zur nazionalsozialistischen Bevölkerungspolitik“ in Michael Garleff (ed), *Deutschbalten, Weimarer Republik und drittes Reich* Band II, (Köln: Böhlau, 2008), 71.

publications.<sup>284</sup> Ferenc Eiler, a Hungarian historian observed the Hungarian expectations, aspirations and demands on the Congress, which were in contrast to the fundamentals of the Movement phrased by the Hungarian government, and should have served its revisionist visions.<sup>285</sup> Börries Kuzmany's approach also fits into this trend.<sup>286</sup> His project titled "Fighting nationalism with nationalism?" refers to cultural autonomy as a two-edged weapon. Schiemann also came to this conclusion by interpreting the Sudeten German Party's endeavor to expand the borders of cultural autonomy as a nationalist gesture against nationalism, in a strict declarative sense.<sup>287</sup>

There is a consensus in the scholarship about the doubtful judgment of the Nationalities Movement. Although the fundamental principles of this organization were characteristically liberal and progressive and also the League of Nation acted as a watcher of minorities, the actual legal practices in the (*Rechtswirklichkeit*) provided reasons to the minorities for marginalization, to support radical trends which were directed against the homelands.<sup>288</sup> This radicalization also influenced the discourse about Congress' aims. In this chapter I clarify the Schiemannian standpoints on the controversial issues.

#### 4.1 The mission and the basic principles of the Congress

The Baltic German minority leaders, among them Paul Schiemann, Werner Hasselblatt and Ewald Ammendem lobbied hard for the internationalization of the minority issues and for placing the question of cultural autonomy on the agenda of international organizations. Among their first visions was the foundation of an organization in which the

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<sup>284</sup> Most importantly they edited the volume *Neighbours or enemies? Germans, the Baltic and beyond* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2008) and *Ethnic diversity and the nation state: national cultural autonomy revisited* (New York: Routledge, 2012)

<sup>285</sup> Eiler Ferenc: *Kisebbségvédelem és revízió*.

<sup>286</sup> Börries Kuzmany, "A Laboratory of Nationality Policy: The Idea of National-Personal Autonomy from the Habsburg Empire to the Interwar Period" (lecture, CEU, Budapest, 19 March, 2014)

<sup>287</sup> Paul Schiemann, "Nationalismus gegen Nationalismus," in Paul Schiemann Veröffentlichungen 1933-1940 Helēna Šimkuva, Dietrich A. Loeber (ed) (Hamburg: Dietrich A. Loeber, 2000), 56.

<sup>288</sup> Bamberger-Stemann, "Staatsbürgerliche Loyalität," 221.

members are not the nation-states, but the minority groups as individual subjects of international law. With the foundation of the Congress of the European Nationalities in 1925 part of their plan became real with the creation of an international board for different minority groups in Europe. The real function of this movement (Schiemann referred to it as *Nationalitätenbewegung*, nationalities movement) was to try to find satisfactory solutions for the minority problems and difficulties even if only in the form of resolutions. More importantly, the annual meetings of the Congress were forums to elaborate solutions for the minority question on a purely theoretical level. The intentions of some theoreticians were very ambitious; Schiemann was thinking about creating new categories in international law to handle minority problems on a European level. “We want a legislation which is able to provide the possibility of free national development for every minority.”<sup>289</sup> The new “nationality rights that we are called to lead has no other aim than to destroy the enforced identity between belonging to a state and belonging to a nation in mankind’s consciousness.”<sup>290</sup>

The Congress of European Nationalities was supposed to operate as an alternative League of Nations, as a kind of Nationalities’ League which with its existence signaled deep satisfaction with the supranational organization. The League thought to handle minority conflicts through bilateral agreements, signed by the states as conditions for becoming members of the organizations. This practice was also of an asymmetric nature since only the Eastern European countries had to guarantee the equality of the minorities with the major national group. Although the League elaborated the process of complaints about minority affairs, only one state could have claims towards another. The tension originated from the

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<sup>289</sup> Paul Schiemann, “Die Spaltung im Nationalitätenkongreß,” *Nation und Staat*, November 1927, 167.

<sup>290</sup> Hiden, *Defender of Minorities*, 193.

fact that the minorities themselves were not subjects of the international law but were “objects of the stipulations between the single states and state communities.”<sup>291</sup>

Frank Neumann, a researcher of the Simon Dubnow Institute in Leipzig, summarizes the peculiarities of the Congress; firstly, the movement aimed to “create a positive legislation of nationhood,” secondly, it created an arena for non-state diplomacy. Importantly Neumann also highlights what other scholars did not emphasize enough, that the Congress was the product of a transition period from the empires to the nation states.<sup>292</sup> This fact thematized the entire mission of the Congress, although not every minority activist perceived this transitory situation as the source of conflicts. Schiemann consistently approached the minority conflicts from this aspect.

## 4.2 The idea of the *anational* state, a concept for the European future

As I reflected on it in the third chapter, the first claim for an *anational* confession of the state appeared in Schiemann’s argument during the debates about the Latvian constitution. He elaborated this idea at the second official meeting of the Nationalities Congress in Geneva, in 1926 in his speech, called “About a new Legislation” (*Um ein neues Recht*).<sup>293</sup> The ideas he phrased in his lecture were of a pioneering character. He stated that what he had in his mind refers to the distant future;<sup>294</sup> however this speech can be interpreted as the manifestation of his deep convictions related to his present. His aspiration to deprive the national ideas from any kind of territoriality and create a national community which exists over the states shocked his audience and the general public.

He admitted that minority rights already existed in the European states, which is a big achievement in his point of view. Schiemann saw the relevance of the League of Nations in

<sup>291</sup> Schiemann, “Um ein neues Recht,” 2921.

<sup>292</sup> Frank Neumann, “Minderheitendiplomatie: Leo Motzkin zwischen Imperien und Nationen,” in *Synchrone Welten: Zeitenräume Jüdischer Geschichte* (ed) Dan Diner, (Göttingen: Vadenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005), 149.

<sup>293</sup> The *Rigasche Rundschau* published the speech on 26 August, 1926.

<sup>294</sup> Schiemann, “Um ein neues Recht,” 2919.

the minority questions in two fields: in the right for self-determination and in the minority treaties.<sup>295</sup> He raised his objections to self-determination as a principle in the creation of the postwar order.

It has to be clarified, that the right to self-determination based on the state politics and comes from the antithesis of state belonging and ethno-national belonging, whereas we came here in order to find a constitutional maxim which creates the synthesis of these two matters of facts. The right for self-determination would be the solution for the nationalities question only if the existing state concept could be overthrown and its linkage to the territory could be released.<sup>296</sup>

Later he explained that an extraterritorially formed state, which manifests itself only in the association of people “should be expelled to the field of utopias because it is so far from the present-day understanding of the state’s functions.”<sup>297</sup>

Minority treaties are the second tool of the League of Nations to solve the existing problems. In this regard he repeats the common standpoint of the Congress, namely that “as long as the League of Nations consists of states and not of national communities, all efforts to create a positive minority legislation on the basis of the League seems to be illusory.”<sup>298</sup>

Following the logic of Karl Renner and Otto Bauer, Schiemann saw the essence of the solution in the separation of state interests from the interests of the nationalities. “I see no other way [...] than the separation of state and nationality as a suppression of the nation-state concept.”<sup>299</sup> He warned that the state by nature will have national claims. “We have to get used to it again, that the state as such is an *anational* notion”<sup>300</sup> Most importantly the *anational* character of the state appears in the elimination of the national state culture as such, instead the freedom of all national cultural cultivation should be introduced in order to achieve the separation of the state from cultural affairs completely. He emphasized that there is another condition, “the acknowledgement of the other community next to the state

<sup>295</sup> Schiemann, “Um ein neues Recht,” 2920.

<sup>296</sup> Ibid.

<sup>297</sup> Ibid.

<sup>298</sup> Ibid. 2921.

<sup>299</sup> Ibid. 2922.

<sup>300</sup> Ibid.

community, the national community of the culture.”<sup>301</sup> This community has a cross-border, transnational nature and could be the only bearer of national ideas. With these phrases he admitted that national ideas are equal with the claims to cultivate one’s own culture, which is either an intentional oversimplification or reflects Schiemann’s very broad understanding of culture.

He developed this idea further, and found out the institutionalization of the coexistence of these two communities. In an article which was published in the *Nation und Staat*.<sup>302</sup> Schiemann argued that spiritual issues should be handled by the “Great Council of Nations” (*Großer Rat der Nationen*), which should become subject of international law.<sup>303</sup> Whereas in the speech before congress he used the term national, and spoke about national community as opposed to state community, in the article from 1927 he referred to *Volksgemeinschaft*, as an “emotional and spiritual community with shared origins, history, language, customs, character and culture.”<sup>304</sup> The limits of the national culture widened.

The division of the European population into state and national communities presumes cooperation between the states, moreover integration. Schiemann stated that only a united Europe can solve national conflicts, in which framework the thoughts about national power could eliminate.<sup>305</sup>

As an author of a concept for a united Europe and as a responsible politician he criticized the mainstream ideas for the European future. By the evaluation of these projects the main aspect for Schiemann was how far they were able to handle the nationalities problem.

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<sup>301</sup> Schiemann, “Um ein neues Recht,” 2923.

<sup>302</sup> Schiemann, “Volksgemeinschaft und Staatsgemeinschaft,” *Nation und Staat*, September 1927, 21-42.

<sup>303</sup> Ibid. 35.

<sup>304</sup> Ibid. 28.

<sup>305</sup> Schiemann, “Um ein neues Recht,” 2924.

He accused Aristide Briand, the French foreign minister who proposed a plan for a federalist Europe in 1929, for not being aware of the nationality problem.<sup>306</sup> According to Schiemann the starting point of all “pacifist actions,” among them also Briand’s was to guarantee the Versailles system, which was unacceptable for Germany. For Schiemann the only possible way to strengthen European consciousness was to soften the autocracy of the statist thoughts, as I pointed out earlier. Aristide Briand’s plan strengthened the role and the power of the states by giving the opportunity of representation into the hand of the governments.<sup>307</sup> In Schiemann’s point of view the Memorandum of Briand “was an anxious conservation of conventional political mind-set” which demonstrates a diligent adaptation to the angers of a state defined by power politics.”<sup>308</sup>

Richard Coudenhove, the author of the Pan-European Manifesto in 1923, also failed to recognize that guaranteeing European peace without solving the minority problem was illusory. According to Schiemann, “that was a fateful mistake of the leader of the Pan European Movement.”<sup>309</sup> A Pan European forum would look like the assembly of the League of Nations which also considered the nation state as solely a community of interest.<sup>310</sup> However about the Paneuropean idea Schiemann remarked that “it was a revolution of the spirit, a negation of tradition.”

In contrast to Coudenhove, Karl Anton Rohan identified the unsolved nationalities problems. He called a meeting of titular nations and minority groups together, and Schiemann considered it as an absolutely positive sign.<sup>311</sup> Prinz Rohan forced a minority statute as a multilateral treaty. Even Schiemann admitted that by the evaluation of Rohan’s initiative the likelihood of such statute should not be taken into account. As the main

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<sup>306</sup> Paul Schiemann, “Briands Memorandum “Briands Memorandum,” In *Rigasche Rundschau* 24 May 1930, vol. 2, booklet 14, in *Leitartikel, Reden und Aufsätze*, edited by Hans Donath, 4093. Frankfurt am Main: H. Donath, 1992.

<sup>307</sup> Ibid.

<sup>308</sup> Ibid. 4092.

<sup>309</sup> Paul Schiemann, “Coudenhove und Rohan,” *Nation und Staat*, July-August 1930, 632.

<sup>310</sup> Ibid. 630.

<sup>311</sup> Ibid. 633.



problem of this concept Schiemann considered that only those minorities could profit from this solution which have a conational state as a protector behind them.<sup>312</sup> “The plan of Rohan proposed what the Congress attempted to prevent, namely the explicitly single regulations” of separate cases instead of universal solution.<sup>313</sup>

The idea to handle the minorities’ problem as a peculiar European issue on a common European platform was the motivation behind the Congress. The above mentioned figures of interwar Europe in their plans tried to overcome the limits of the new European system by certain degrees of integration however through the conservation of the nation states as main actors of the construction. Schiemann’s plan was revolutionary; in order to avoid revisionism it would reduce the relevance of state borders through a newly defined state. He was thinking in real integration, the reason for his negligence from the main thinkers of the European idea is not understandable. One explanation would be that the lack of the institutional background, and of the “manual” for a united Europe in Schiemannian terms. Also thinking in universal solutions and handle minorities problems as a whole issue and not as single situations was foreign for interwar Europe.

### **4.3 Congress as experimental field of minority solidarity**

The cooperation in the congress had to rely on the fact that the minority members due to their shared experiences sympathized with each other and had a sense of solidarity. The universal solution to the question would be possible only on this basis. The case which was supposed to bind them together was to overcome the League of Nations’ vision, according to which the nationalities problems would be solved by the assimilation of minorities into the majority society.<sup>314</sup> From the numerous conflicts which occurred at the Congresses and

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<sup>312</sup> Schiemann, “Coudenhove und Rohan,” 634.

<sup>313</sup> Ibid. 635.

<sup>314</sup> Hiden, *Defender of Minorities*, 120.

during the preparation periods I would focus on two main debates in which Paul Schiemann was also involved, and that demonstrate the solidarity between these groups was an illusion.

#### 4.3.1 *Cultural autonomy as best practice*

The debate which led to the withdrawal of the Association of Germany's National Minorities (*Verband der nationalen Minderheiten Deutschlands*) I would approach from the perspective of cultural autonomy as the sole solution under the given circumstances. Some groups did not want to accept this standpoint; therefore it had to be emphasized among the expectations from the side of the states that cultural autonomy could not be introduced against the will of the minority group.<sup>315</sup>

Schiemann expounded his problems with the attitude of the minorities of Germany in his article "The Split in the Nationalities Congress" (*Die Spaltung im Nationalitätenkongreß*). The groups from Germany objected to the German dominance in Congress, and that they created the agenda for the meetings. Schiemann considered the accusations of Jan Skala, the leader of the minorities in Germany as a fight against Germandom. Schiemann stated that the national sense could be negative as well, when it is manifested in hate towards the other.<sup>316</sup> "Such persons are not welcomed in our movement, which rests on real objectivity."<sup>317</sup> Personal insults were not rare in the movement but were restricted mainly in the publications and reports about the meetings.<sup>318</sup>

Germany's national minorities claimed that they could not grasp the opportunity to form their own cultural self governments, because they were "weak" and "proletarian" that they could not afford this solution.<sup>319</sup> Schiemann could not tolerate this excuse at all, he blamed the Polish agitation for these arguments. In the article Schiemann rejected the

<sup>315</sup> Eiler: *Kisebbségvédelem és revízió*, 120.

<sup>316</sup> Schiemann, "Die Spaltung im Nationalitätenkongreß," 159.

<sup>317</sup> Ibid.

<sup>318</sup> Once the Slovakian Hungarian deputy János Esterházy made Wilfan, the president so angry that he almost became unwell. Later in a Hungarian language newspaper Wilfan was accused that he stopped Esterházy's interpellation because of his „subconscious Slavic solidarity.” (Eiler, *Kisebbségvédelem és revízió*, 195.)

<sup>319</sup> Schiemann, "Die Spaltung im Nationalitätenkongreß," 163.

relation between the financial potential and the question of self-administration or state-administration, he referred to experiences: “It is not a theoretical statement an empirical observation instead based on experiences in Latvia and Estonia, that such a solution abolishes the contrasts between minorities and the state, that in the question of schools the national fight was terminated through this practice.”<sup>320</sup> In his argumentation the state should provide the money for the maintenance costs of a school, of the elaboration of the curriculum, of finding teachers. He cannot accept the excuse of being proletarian for doing these tasks. Schiemann also blamed the Prussian legal thinking for not understanding the minority right as such.<sup>321</sup>

It was not acknowledged by Schiemann and therefore not promoted by other minority groups that the Baltic German’s “longstanding organizational networks” made the establishment of the Cultural Council a successful endeavor.<sup>322</sup> Other minorities could not build on this kind of system of ‘civil society.’

The other tension came from the fact that the application of the Frisian minority group to joining the Congress was refused. Schiemann argued that the definition of minority has its own limits, the “state can not be atomized” for any reason. The “hundred Frisians” in Schleswig could not be acknowledged as a national minority.<sup>323</sup> Interestingly one year earlier in his famous speech he stated that the classification of minorities had to be avoided. Otherwise “the impossible situation can occur when a minority just because it represents only a small percentage in the population could not be protected.”<sup>324</sup>

Another reason for the lack of solidarity between the minority groups could be that most Germans were not considered as “simply members of a minority group” but as

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<sup>320</sup> Schiemann, “Die Spaltung im Nationalitätenkongreß,” 162.

<sup>321</sup> Ibid. 164-165.

<sup>322</sup> Smith & Hiden, “Looking beyond the nation-state: A Baltic vision for national minorities between the wars,” *Journal of Contemporary History*, 41,3 (2006): 393. accessed: 31 March 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/30036395?uid=3738216&uid=2134&uid=2&uid=70&uid=4&sid=21103873006913>

<sup>323</sup> Schiemann, “Die Spaltung im Nationalitätenkongreß,” 166.

<sup>324</sup> Schiemann, “Um ein neues Recht,” 2923.

representatives of ‘great nations.’<sup>325</sup> Co-national relations were crucial in this regard even if Schiemann never admitted it. Not even when he visited Stresemann and asked him to cover the membership fees and the travelling costs of the German deputies during the Congresses. Stresemann decided to support the organization financially, in secret, through the *Verband*.<sup>326</sup>

Germany’s minorities proved that minority solidarity exists since all members withdrew when the Frisians were refused. The loss of these minority groups weakened the movement, and should have been pointed out as ambiguities in the Congress. This case also demonstrated the German dominance in the Congress.

#### 4.3.2 *Minority sui generis- Jewish deputies at the Congress*

The congress was a political forum of minorities in a cultural and linguistic sense;<sup>327</sup> and also Jewish representatives were welcomed. The leader of the Jewish group was Leo Motzkin, one of the vice presidents of the movement.

Leo Motzkin, Zionist from the Russian empire, actively represented Jewish interests in his diplomatic activity after WWI. He was the founder of the democratic fraction inside of the Zionist Organization. He stated that a life without any kind of restrictions should be guaranteed for Jews not only in Palestine, but also in other places in Eastern Europe.<sup>328</sup> Similarly to Simon Dubnow, historian of Russian Jewish origins and theoretician of the *Bund*, Motzkin also elaborated a plan for national-cultural autonomy for Jewish communities.<sup>329</sup> According to Motzkin’s autonomy concept, not only ethno cultural issues, but also other spheres related to Jewishness should be governed by the own administrative bodies in the new nation-states. Motzkin also worked on the scheme of Jewish citizenship,

<sup>325</sup> Smith & Hiden, *Ethnic Diversity and the Nation State*, 34

<sup>326</sup> Eiler, *Kisebbségvédelem és revízió*, 127.

<sup>327</sup> Frank Neesemann, “Minderheitendiplomatie: Leo Motzkin zwischen Imperien und Nationen,” 147.

<sup>328</sup> Ibid. 152.

<sup>329</sup> Frank Neesemann, “Minderheitendiplomatie,” 156.

in order to grasp Jews as a nation, create a Jewish national identity and a united Jewish ethno-national community.<sup>330</sup>

Thanks to the same understanding of minority rights in the foundation period, around 1925, the mutual sympathy and the common aims of the Jewish and German minority politicians were obvious. Especially Leo Motzkin and Paul Schiemann understood each other well. In the early phase the German and Jewish deputies stood on the same platform in terms of refusing all assimilatory aspirations from the side of the majority.<sup>331</sup>

Dr. Josip Wilfan, the Italian Slovene president of the congress following the rules of the Congress introduced the dilemma caused by the anti-Jewish legislation in Germany in the following way:

The situation in this big state is featured, that a part of its population, which according to the majority differs from the major part in origins and in race, however it became connate through the development especially of the last century in the biggest measures with the majority of the population, immediately should be separated from the integrated ethno-national community (*Volksganz*) through a domestic changeover in this state.<sup>332</sup>

This ridiculous language Wilfan used made the entire mission of the Congress questionable. During the sessions the targets and the injured parties were not allowed to be named. Whereas in the scandalous statement of affairs reports (*Lageberichte*),<sup>333</sup> concrete minority situations in concrete countries were described and edited in a volume by Ammende himself.<sup>334</sup> The monthly published reports about the German minority groups in the *Nation und Staat* can be treated also as contradictory in this sense, especially when the journal became the medium of the Congress as well.

Motzkin clarified his expectations of the Congress, namely to distance itself from the German legislation. This legislation would disembodify the Jews from the German titular

<sup>330</sup> Frank Neemann, "Minderheitendiplomatie," 158.

<sup>331</sup> Ibid. 164-165.

<sup>332</sup> Ferdinand von Uexküll-Güldenband, "Der IX. Europäische Nationalitätenkongreß," *Nation und Staat*, October 1933, 41.

<sup>333</sup> The situation reports of the European national minorities were published in 1931. (Eiler, *Kisebbségvédelem és revízió*, 120.)

<sup>334</sup> Bamberger-Stemann, *Der Europäische Nationalitätenkongreß*, 217-218.

nation and create a minority from them without minority rights. Motzkin fought against this practice although he admitted that personally he was always convinced about the damaging effects of the unconditional confession to the German ethno-national community.<sup>335</sup> The German deputies argued that they were not able to disapprove legislation on dissimilation as such. In principle it should be possible according to them to “compose their own racial corpus (*Volkskörper*)” and define the minority groups as well.<sup>336</sup> The Jewish delegation did not go to the annual meeting of the Congress at Bern in 1933. Josip Wilfan announced in his opening speech that the question of dissimilation should have been discussed at the meeting on the basis of Paul Schiemann’s presentation. Since Schiemann could not join the session due to his illness the president suggested deleting that topic from the agenda. Paul Schiemann never visited the Congress again.

The mutual understanding of Motzkin and Schiemann was based on their same ideas about the sense of being in minority. They could not agree with the assimilatory aspirations of the nationalities, because that was considered by them as equal with giving up their peculiarities. For Schiemann the mission of the Congress was to think about possible scenarios for the existing European order. He had to face with the problem that almost he was the only one who visited the meetings with this intention. Most of the minority groups represented themselves in order to propagate their complaints and get into the focus of international interest. Although Schiemann himself emphasized on different platforms the importance of the minorities’ self-management without the co-national state, he negotiated with Gustav Stresemann about the financial support of the German delegation at the Congress. He did not admit that the German state was involved in the issues of the Germans

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<sup>335</sup> Neseemann, “Minderheitendiplomatie,” 167.

<sup>336</sup> Neseemann uses the term *Volkskörper* in quotation marks. The appearance of this Nazi term means their increasing influence to the members of the Congress. (Neseemann, “Minderheitendiplomatie,” 168.)

abroad until 1933.<sup>337</sup> After the so-called Jewish controversy it became obvious for him that the Congress serves the revisionist aspirations of the Third Reich.

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<sup>337</sup> Schiemann, "Die Umsiedlung 1939," 82.

## Conclusion

Paul Schiemann was only one person out of the 25 million people who lived in minority situation after the First World War in Europe, but stood out with his willingness to accommodate to the new circumstances and with his persist in the liberal values. Before the war he lived as a subject of the Russian Tsar in the Baltic Province of Courland, which, despite his German origin he never considered as a minority situation. After the war he was one of those few who supported the foundation of an independent Latvia based on the principle of a state of nationalities. In the system of New European East he forced the foundation of national-cultural autonomy which according to him would be able to create the legal framework to cultivate the minority culture. Schiemann saw the manifestation of the differences between the ethno-national communities in their culture, their common language and the spirit, which should be prevented. However, the ethno-national belonging of a person means only one layer of his identity, in many cases the state belonging does not coincide with the ethno-national belonging.

This dilemma which Michael Garleff calls as “double responsibility”<sup>338</sup> could be resolved by the division of the state and the cultural tasks which also means that the state should not acknowledge any culture as its own. The *anational* state requires the existence of the state communities next the ethno-national communities respectively and concludes therefore in double identity of each person. Schiemann elaborated and promoted his plan during the sessions of the Congress of European Nationalities and in his articles published in several newspapers and journals. His concept was far more progressive and bold than any other projects for the solution of the minorities’ problem. For Schiemann the main origin of

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<sup>338</sup> Michael Garleff, “Paul Schiemanns Minderheitentheorie als Beitrag zur Lösung der Nationalitätenfrage: Zum 100. Geburtstags Paul Schiemanns (1876-1944),” *Zeitschrift für Ostforschung*, 25, 3 (1976): 625.



any conflict was the nation-state as such and he attempted to overcome its limits, whereas all other plans treated the nation-state as given units and basis of the prospective order.

For almost a decade the political milieu in Latvia and also Estonia made it possible to try the experiment of the liberal minority politics in form of school autonomy and full national-cultural autonomy. The outcome of the experiment was that for the establishment of the autonomy the contribution of the community members in the form of extra taxation was needed, and that without the help of the co-national state and without the already existed network of private organizations the operation of the autonomy would be problematic. One reason of his failure was that he never actually confessed it.

Schiemann was a thinker, a theoretician and also a great idealist, who was not understood and therefore not truly cultivated by his environment. One of his ideas was Europe as a community of values in contrast to Asia, which was the manifestation of anarchy and the power of masses in his eyes.<sup>339</sup> In 1939 when the Baltic Germans were resettled to newly occupied German territories he promoted the diversity as European value in his article, “the elimination of the small nations from the European political life had to lead ultimately to stagnation and to deadness of the European cultural life.”<sup>340</sup> He refused all attempts of uniformization and unification which meant a threat for the peculiarity of the individual, the communist ideas as much as the National Socialism.

By evaluating the contribution of Schieman to the solution of minority question the interethnic relations in 21<sup>st</sup> century Latvia come into prominence, since from the standout student in minority issues became the ‘black sheep’ of the European Union. After the collapse of the Soviet Union the Latvian state restored its independence which meant also that the state acknowledged the ‘same’ national body, the same population as legal residents who were residents of the interwar Latvian state as well. Hundreds of thousands

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<sup>339</sup> Garleff, “Paul Schieman’s Minderheitentheorie,” 644.

<sup>340</sup> Schieman, “Die Umsiedlung 1939,” 88.

Russophone ‘migrants’ remained without Latvian citizenship and the possibility for naturalization was postponed for a long time. John Hiden claims that these people “have yet to pass Schiemann’s test for good citizenship,” because only those can be considered as “national minority” who accepts the existence of the state where they live and “who are bound to their homeland by the roots of their historical being.”<sup>341</sup>

The situation is more complicated than Hiden describes it. The Latvian state when restored its independence went back to the constitution accepted in 1922 but made some significant changes regarding the minorities. First of all because the Latvian state failed to distinct the historically bounded Russians from the Russian speaking migrants it does not acknowledge the Russians as minority group, so the minority protection is restricted to the tiny Livonian minority. Secondly those ‘migrants’ who undergo the naturalization process will be treated afterwards as ethnic Latvians, which does not demonstrate that the Latvian state consider the ethnic diversity of the state as a value, like Schiemann did. Additionally if the national belonging is a question of individual decision, as Schiemann stated, the biggest mistake from the side of the Latvian authorities was to handle the ‘migrants’ as a homogenous group, in which everybody was treated as ‘enemy’ of the restored statehood. On the other hand it should be admitted that although on the level of state politics Latvia is a state with one official language and with restricted minority rights, in reality the Latvian society is bilingual and the minorities have right to learn in their mother tongue on elementary and secondary level. However, today’s Latvian state seems to be more the restoration of the ideal nation-state promoted by Ulmanis than of the state of nationalities in the 1920s.

Although the state borders are losing their relevance in the European context I would argue that on the mental level of the European citizens they are still playing a significant

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<sup>341</sup> Hiden, *Defender of Minorities*, 225-226.

role. However, the states are the units of international cooperation which Schiemann opposed not without reason. On the international arena with more and more actors it is required from the states to acknowledge themselves as ‘ambassadors of national cultures’ and to identify their state communities with simple and explicit symbols, messages and clichés. This trend even though should serve the diversity kills it on the domestic level.

Reading and analyzing Paul Schiemann’s work is a long-time endeavor, his thoughts about the relation between the state and its population are fascinating readings even though for didactical reasons he repeated himself frequently. Uncovering all elements of his practice and thinking could not be the aim of this thesis; however, I included new sources into my analysis and attempted to demonstrate the peculiarities of Schiemann’s thinking in different contexts and compared it with different waves.

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