

Latvian Nationalist Intellectuals and the Crisis of Democracy in the Inter-war Period

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Introduction

The development of new states in Central and Eastern Europe during the inter-war period was an enthusiastic attempt to build free and democratic societies, which unfortunately was soon followed by a sense of disappointment among both the public and political elites. This eventually led to the replacement of the young democracies with authoritarian regimes in Estonia, Lithuania, Poland and other countries. I explore this growth of anti-democratic tendencies through the case of Latvian democracy and its opponents in the 1920s and early 1930s. I particularly focus on the role of the nationalist intelligentsia as the author of anti-democratic and pro-authoritarian political ideas.¹

During the 1920s, the nationalist intellectuals believed in creating a perfect statehood of national culture that would be focused on protection of Latvian ethnic difference (language, traditions, life-style, history, *etc.*). At first, they were convinced that a democratic political system would be the best political instrument for achieving this unique type of state; however, in a few years they came to a conclusion that real-world democracy was failing these expectations. Within about a decade, the nationalist intellectuals grew dissatisfied and resentful toward the political system of parliamentary representation. They published an increasing number of anti-democratic political articles, which contributed to a sense of crisis of democracy among the public and political elites. Unsurprisingly, many of them greeted with enthusiasm the arrival of Karlis Ulmanis's authoritarian regime in 1934. To them, the onset of one-man rule was the answer to the political disappointments of the previous decade. It appeared to offer renewed promise of creating a cultural nation-state.

A variety of factors have been suggested as explanations of the crisis of democracy in Central and Eastern Europe during the inter-war period. Among them are the lack of democratic experience, the inability of political parties to reach compromise, the legacy of empire, the growth of nationalist and religious sentiments, a weak state-building tradition, economic depression and spreading Nazi and Bolshevik extremism (see, for example, Manning, 1952; Berglund and Aarebrot, 1997; Berg-Schlösser and Mitchell, 2000). All of these factors were important; however, I suggest adding yet another one. Specifically, I argue that the fate of the new democracies in Eastern

and Central Europe was influenced by the ideas of their nationalist intellectuals. Thus, with this article I intend to add further evidence to the claim that, contrary to the situation in the West, where “there has been no widespread acceptance of the legitimacy of the central political role of the writer/intellectual in society” (Jennings and Kemp-Welch, 1997, p. 4), in Eastern and Central Europe “the political engagement of intellectuals has been the rule rather than the exception” (Kennedy, 1991, p. 94).

As was suggested by Joseph Schumpeter (1942), although intellectuals seldom enter powerful political positions or become professional politicians, they still have tremendous say in the production of political ideas. Some of them may work in party offices, write political speeches and programs or act as political advisors, while most of them either promote or criticize politicians and ideologies in widely read publications. All of this can have a deep effect on the political atmosphere as well as on the public’s attitudes, as will be shown in the case of Latvian nationalism.

Similarly, Liah Greenfeld’s (2001) recent work on nationalism makes an extensive use of the writings of intellectuals. She believes that intelligentsia’s views represent the dominant understandings about human nature, nation, state and economy in a particular setting. Her well-respected research proves that intellectuals’ contribution is wider and stronger than just through their being politicians or politicians’ advisors. They originate influential political ideas that can shape a whole society’s aspirations and decisions.

Schumpeter’s and Greenfeld’s approaches to political ideas and their authors are helpful in understanding the impact of nationalist intellectuals in Eastern Europe and in Latvia in particular. Many Latvian nationalist intellectuals had political positions during the early years of the new state and only a few remained directly involved in politics later on. Nevertheless, most of them were active as political journalists and ideologues or what Raymond Aron calls “experts in the art of speech,” in which “the theorist” meets “the propagandist” (1957, p. 208). And, as I suggest in this article, their loud and persistent anti-democratic rhetoric could be one of the factors explaining why the public received Ulmanis’s coup with acceptance.

In emphasizing the power of the nationalist intellectuals and their ideas, I disagree with those who view them as mere instruments reflecting the sentiments of the masses or political elites. I also do not think that they are “unattached” groups of the educated in the Manheimian sense or an ideological avant-garde (or lackeys) of certain classes in the Gramscian sense. I argue that both intellectuals in general and the nationalist intellectuals in particular have autonomous will and interests (material and intellectual), which guide their engagement in politics. However, they may not be satisfied with their position. Often the more active they are or try to be, the more marginalized and isolated they feel. Sometimes this persistent sense of alienation is rooted in prolonged periods of exile. In other cases, intellectuals simply feel unappreciated, misunderstood and excluded from power by the business people and politicians. Nevertheless, the perception of distance from their own society usually does not stop intellectuals (including the nationalist ones) from producing political rhetoric.

Often, as the alienation leads intellectuals to reject the existing institutions, they search for a more perfect political model (utopia) in other, often over-glorified and not too well understood contexts.² Overall, as I will show in the case of Latvian nationalist intellectuals, as much as most intellectuals tend to speak in the name of some particular social groups, they are usually promoting their own idealist fantasies.³ In other words, the contribution of intellectuals is hard to measure, but impossible to ignore.

Historical Overview

Latvia existed as an independent state for 20 years. It was a democracy for an even shorter period of 14 years. Latvia's independence from the Russian empire was declared in 1918 by a national council consisting of eight political parties: Agrarian Union, Social Democratic Workers' Party and Democratic, Radical Democratic, Revolutionary Socialist, National Democratic, Republican and Independence Parties. At the time, Latvia was still occupied by German military forces, so the national council met in secret to proclaim Latvia's Republic and create the Provisional Government (Bilmanis, 1951; Silde, 1976; Plakans, 1995; Lacis, 2002; Matisa, 2002). After considerable turmoil caused by the war with Germany as well as the activities of Latvian Bolsheviks, finally by the summer of 1920 Latvian territory was liberated from all foreign armies. The first national elections took place on 17 and 18 April 1920, and the National Constitutional Convention convened on 1 May 1920. The Convention had to work on agrarian reform, the creation of a national currency and other reconstruction measures; however, its main legislative task was writing the constitution and establishing an electoral system for the future parliament. This goal was completed on 15 February 1922 when, after extensive debates on every single article, the new constitution (Satversme) was adopted. The first parliamentary elections took place on 7 and 8 October 1922. During the next 12 years until 1934, three other parliamentary elections took place (in 1925, 1928 and 1931). In all of them the voter turnout was high (74%, 79% and 80%, respectively). Although the number of submitted lists of candidates remained high (141, 120 and 103), the number of lists receiving voter support remained somewhat stable (27, 24 and 21).

All historical accounts of the parliamentary period in Latvia describe it as filled with political fragmentation and a breakdown into continuously smaller and more numerous organizations, lack of political compromise, petty quarrels, extreme political speeches and opinions, corruption and too many minority parties with only one representative manipulating coalition governments. Overall, this political instability resulted in 13 governments replacing one another in a period of just 12 years. However, it would be inaccurate to deny a certain level of continuity and established political trends during the period of parliamentary democracy. For example, throughout this period there remained two dominant parties representing the left and the right: the Social Democrats versus the Agrarian Union. An undeniable trend also was a

gradual move of voter support away from this main left–right cleavage toward a supposed “center” position (Balodis, 1991, p. 217), which itself was shifting toward a more radical Latvian nationalist, anti-democratic and anti-minorities orientation.⁴ The new nationalist center incorporated some of the nationalist ideas (Bilmanis, 1951; Nagle, 2002) that originated from an extremist movement of “the active nationalists,” which promoted an unprecedented type of militant and chauvinistic Latvian nationalism (Kreslins, 2000; 2001; Mednis and Antonevics, 2001). Although these political trends might be disconcerting, they were incremental and non-coincidental, which suggests that although Latvian democracy certainly had lots of problems it was not as chaotic as it often gets represented.

The last parliamentary elections of 1931, as usual, resulted in a fragmented parliament, which forced the coalition leaders—the Agrarian Union—to offer political positions and economic concessions to numerous minority parties. Many politicians, intellectuals and the general public perceived this situation as a parliamentary crisis (Balodis, 1991). Increasingly many well-respected politicians and intellectuals voiced loud protests against so-called economic and political “privileges” and the domination of non-Latvians. Others criticized the parliamentary system and multi-party government as ultimately flawed and ineffective.⁵ By 1933 Latvian democracy had almost no supporters left (Kliver, 1987).

Consequently, the Agrarian Union prepared a project of constitutional reform that would limit the power of parliament, while expanding the authority of a directly elected president and his government (Spekke, 1957). The Social Democrats and the small parties actively opposed the project and blocked its adoption. After the failure to get the reform adopted in the spring of 1934, the Agrarian Union granted its leader Karlis Ulmanis, who was the prime minister at the time, the power to implement the constitutional change regardless of anything or anybody. However, it is highly unlikely that the party members actually intended Ulmanis to overthrow the whole parliamentary system, which he did on the morning of 15 May 1934.

On that day, a military organization Aizsargi (Home Guards), which was faithful to Ulmanis personally, started gathering in the capital. With their and the police’s help, Ulmanis and his followers took over all strategically important points of the capital city, Riga, including the parliament. In order to prevent any organized opposition, the leading figures of the parliament, the Social Democratic deputies as well as leaders of workers’ unions were arrested. The next day Ulmanis addressed the citizens on the radio, announcing that he had seized power without bloodshed. He justified the coup with the need to develop a new constitution and to protect the country from growing threats of both left- and right-wing extremism. He also assured the population that it was not his intention to endanger democracy. Instead his was an attempt to create a foundation for a true “people’s rule” (Silde, 1976). Regardless of these promises, in the period between 1934 and 1940, Ulmanis carefully eliminated any possibility for voicing even the slightest critique of his regime. He gradually decreased the authority of his government and absorbed all power into his own hands. Ulmanis

instituted increasing state control over the economy and all other spheres of social life. He made sure there was careful control over the media, while glorification of the national Leader became the favorite pastime for most journalists, writers and academics. After six years of authoritarian rule, by 1940 Latvian democracy had been effectively destroyed.

Latvian Nationalist Intellectuals: A General Portrait

In order to represent Latvian nationalist intellectuals of the 1920s and 1930s, I reviewed an extensive list of nationalist publications in widely distributed newspapers and magazines. From this list, I selected the most prominent poets, writers, academics and journalists. Among them, I focused on those who published at least ten nationalist-oriented articles per year. The resulting group of 38 intellectuals,⁶ I suggest, provides a good representation of the nationalist-oriented section of the Latvian intelligentsia of the inter-war period.

As I collected information about these nationalist intellectuals (from the secondary studies as well as from their memoirs), significant similarities among them emerged. All of them (with the sole exception of the poet Leonids Breikss) were born in Latvia and a majority of them came from the rural and urban middle class; that is, their fathers were either teachers, clerks, lawyers or farm-owners, smiths, artisans and merchants. About a third of the reviewed intellectuals had pedagogical education from the local teachers' seminaries and courses. About half of them had gone beyond the teachers' seminaries and pursued doctoral and other degrees in Moscow, St Petersburg, Tartu or foreign universities. Most had studied history, philosophy, philology, classical languages or jurisprudence.

After their studies, most of them were involved in educational work. They had worked at some point in their lives as teachers in different levels of the educational system of both Russia and independent Latvia. While some were directors of high schools, lecturers or professors in universities, others served as clerks in the Ministry of Education and its various institutions (such as the municipal library or national archives) prior to or throughout their intellectual careers. Also at least half of them published textbooks for high schools and universities on a variety of topics. For example, the academic Aleksandrs Dauge published numerous books and pamphlets about pedagogy; law professor and writer Karlis Dislers and philosopher Teodors Celms wrote introductions to law and philosophy for university students. Writer Peteris Dreimanis, writer Aleksandrs Grins, writer Ligoņģu Jekabs, journalist Eduards Calitis, publicist and writer Brastinu Ernests and writers Janis Ezerins and Janis Grins wrote textbooks on math, Latvian and world history, national identity and Latvian language and literature for different levels of high-school students. Importantly, more than half of them were active journalists and were employed as either editors or members of editorial boards on a variety of publications during the 1920s

and early 1930s (Treijs, 1996; 2001; Egle, 1924; Zeltins, 1965; Smilktina, 1996; Latviesu Biografiska Vardnica, 1975; Sterns, 1998).

Most intellectuals in this group were either party members, founders of political parties or elected representatives at least during the early years of Latvia's statehood. Although a very few of them continued these political careers, all of them actively published on such nationalist issues as the prospects of nationalist politics and ideology, the meaning of Latvianness and the political history of the Latvian nation, the goals of national education and the tasks of the state and government.⁷ Most of them were so politically involved that writer Janis Akuraters even called it "the tragedy of Latvian writers" when politics took away time from "their true vocation—writing." But most of them believed that "the struggle for the state is also the struggle for the national art" (Egle, 1924, p. 185).

I suggest that many of the nationalist intellectuals' political convictions were influenced by two major schisms among the Latvian intelligentsia as a whole—conflicts between socialists vs. nationalists and "locals" vs. exiles.

First, although many of the nationalist intellectuals originally had been socialists,⁸ they became subsequently interested in the idea of a nationalist form of socialism. They declared that national liberation must be a higher goal than a worldwide socialist revolution.⁹ This position forced them into a complex conflict with the rest (even the majority) of the Latvian intelligentsia. Social Democratic oriented intellectuals rejected nationalist ideas as reactionary, leaving the nationalists in a perpetual condition of marginality. While the nationalists nurtured their dreams of independence, the Social Democratic intellectuals envisioned "a free Latvia in a free Russia" where the socialist revolution was expected to resolve both class and ethnic problems.

Socialist ideas had a considerable influence among the Latvian intelligentsia. As observed by the socialist turned nationalist writer Janis Akuraters, the intellectual atmosphere among the Latvian intelligentsia before World War I was completely dominated by Marxist dogmas: "If only a poet adopts the slogan: 'the proletariat of all lands. . . ' he immediately becomes the greatest genius" (Lams, 2003, p. 40). Socialism was also popular among the emerging working class in the cities and the rural class of the landless. Since the nationalist socialists were effectively marginalized within the socialist circles, their ideas had a hard time reaching broader audiences and had limited political impact up until World War I (Kreslins, 2000). Once the Latvian state was established, the Social Democrats continued to have great influence among the intelligentsia (Stranga, 1992). Among the active socialists were numerous popular and highly respected writers and poets who insisted on maintaining an oppositional, even alienated attitude toward the Latvian state and hoped for the arrival of a general socialist strike.

The socialist intellectuals had a say among educated circles, where the nationalists sensed rejection and suspicion. Some of the nationalist intellectuals even feared a socialist conspiracy deliberately pushing them out of the best teaching jobs and administrative positions in education (see, for example, the memoirs of professor Arnolds

Spekke [2000, p. 116]). The nationalist intellectuals tried to counter the Social Democrats' struggle for workers' rights with the cult of the hard-working peasantry and the concept of a unified and spiritual nation. Nevertheless, they lacked political consensus, which fueled further their resentment toward the parliamentary system as failing the nationalist goals and giving too much endorsement to the Social Democrats.¹⁰

Second, another layer of marginalization of the nationalist intellectuals was shaped by the years that many of them spent in Russia as refugees running away from the German occupation of the Baltic provinces during World War I. Sharing an exile's fate, feeling nostalgic for their lost home and becoming increasingly disappointed with the failing imperial administration, educated Latvians in Russia became so radicalized that they started to formulate ideas of national autonomy (Egle, 1924; Germanis, 1992; 1993; Lams, 2003). They created numerous organizations and published newspapers, magazines and books. The refugees also discussed and wrote projects for various future Latvian institutions, especially educational ones. They established political parties and drew plans of Latvia's political structure (Egle, 1924, p. 147). Latvian intellectuals in Russia even created courses in higher education with an intention to educate "the new statesmen of the autonomous Latvia" (Germanis, 1992, p. 145). Eventually, these exiles became convinced that they were going to be the natural leaders of the potential Latvian state.

Meanwhile, Latvians who had not left for Russia during World War I did not share the radical nationalist political visions of the exiles. Many of the locals were oriented toward coexistence with non-Latvian minorities, while the refugees saw political compromises as hurting the interests of Latvians. These differences that had been largely constructed by the years of war and exile now surfaced in the political and intellectual environment of the new state. During the early process of building the new institutions, the nationalist refugees expected respect and high-ranking positions, while the locals felt that having endured war and German occupation entitled them to leadership of the new state. In the end, none of the former refugees was placed in a significant political position in the first Latvian government (Kreslins, 2001), and Moscow intellectuals did not secure the post of the Minister of Education which they had been so eagerly preparing for (Egle, 1924, p. 147).

The returning exiles were obviously disappointed and the sense of being unappreciated did not leave them throughout the next decade. Consequently, the nationalists started to blame the democratic system for failing to make use of their true nationalism and thus betraying the nation itself.

Overall, the nationalist intellectuals discussed here shared social origins, had similar education and employment, were oriented toward the same political ideas and experienced the same multi-layered perceptions of exclusion. What makes them particularly interesting is the abundant critique of the democratic beginnings which they produced during the 1920s and 1930s. As I will show, their anti-democratic rhetoric became increasingly unified, which justifies my claim that the political

ideas discussed here represent not the opinions of just a few “outcasts” but a larger and powerful political orientation that took hold of the Latvian nationalist intelligentsia.

From Disappointment to Crisis

Expectations

The nationalist intellectuals’ rejection of the democratic political system in the 1920s and 1930s was not sudden, unexpected or arbitrary. In fact, it was rooted in the notions of democracy that they had already been developing before World War I. During the early years of national independence, most nationalist intellectuals expected the new state to focus on strengthening Latvians’ cultural uniqueness, thus enabling them to join the old nations on (culturally) equal terms. Also, they wanted the democratic system to unify all Latvians, in order to create a perfect national existence.

In other words, the nationalist intellectuals’ understanding of the workings and nature of democracy was quite vague and misleading. For example, according to writer Karlis Skalbe’s description of the founding of the Democrats’ Union in 1919, this one political party was about to become by itself an embodiment of democracy. No diverse and opposing parties were necessary because “democracy cannot be a notion of narrow political groups: democracy is an organized nation” (Skalbe, 1999, p. 28).¹¹ Professor Aleksandrs Dauge described “true democracy” as a consolidated system that could not be “manipulated” by either personal or group needs. Such a system would reflect the “deepest foundations in the life of a nation.”¹² Democracy was supposed to preserve the Latvian state as “absolutely and eternally valuable and sacred,”¹³ and therefore it had to be based on homogeneous national will as opposed to conflicts and compromises.¹⁴ Journalist Ernests Blanks also asserted that only solidarity among people could produce a nation and a state. This unity was supposed to be cultural, while the state was to embody the nation’s spirit.¹⁵ As summarized by writer and journalist Haralds Eldgasts,¹⁶ democracy was not a type of government; it was an almost mystic way to unite and express the eternal nature of the Volk.

Obviously, to these nationalist intellectuals political differences were not part of democracy, but an impediment to it. They believed that politics in general was not supposed to be about individual choices or group interests, but about a well-managed and integrated national collectivity. In short, the nationalist intellectuals shared a particular hierarchy of political values. At the top was the cultural (ethnic) distinctiveness of the nation, which distinguished it from others and made it equal to them. Then followed statehood, which was supposed to embody and protect this national distinctiveness and unify the people. At the bottom of the list were political system, party politics and group interests. These were allowed to exist only as long as they did not run into conflict with cultural needs of the Volk. Notably, individual interests were pushed off

the list completely as too egoistic, materialist and threatening to the nation's future. In the minds of the nationalist intellectuals this hierarchy *was* democracy.

In this respect, Latvian nationalist intellectuals had produced what Andras Korosenyi (1999) calls "the myth of ideal democracy," which was also typical of the post-Soviet nationalist intellectuals in Eastern Europe. It turned out to be unattainable by any real democratic institutions, which often led the nationalist intellectuals both during the inter-war period and in the 1990s to turn against democracy as utterly anti-national and even as some sort of a foreign conspiracy.

The Inadequacy of Democracy

One of the main elements of nationalist rhetoric during the parliamentary period was its focus on the crisis in politics, culture and economy. For example, writer Aleksandrs Grins suffered in this era of lost ideals, "gray exhaustion and shallow contentment, filled with the spirit of materialism, petty quarrels and political merchants."¹⁷ Others felt that nobody was interested anymore in fulfilling the ideals of the nation, culture and independence.¹⁸ Political parties had kidnapped the meaning of the nation and presented themselves as "the people," while hypnotizing "real" Latvians into apathy.¹⁹ A sense of shared direction had disappeared and "mutual mud" from the political battles had covered up everything important, especially the need for unity and common goals.²⁰ Overall, the nationalist intellectuals felt disgusted by "the shallowness and selfishness of political life, complete lack of at least some noble acts, and absolute absence of heroism."²¹

What was the source of this crisis? The sense of a looming catastrophe among intellectuals was simply a reflection of true problems of Latvian democratic institutions at the time. The nationalist intellectuals' disappointment was determined by their inability to create realistic visions of Latvia's future. Their visions were caught in the webs of past trauma, a never-ending sense of injustice, cultural exclusionism and distrust of non-Latvians. Instead of rethinking their utopia of a perfectly unified national existence, the nationalist intellectuals chose to blame democracy as utterly inadequate.

One of the most widely shared reasons for hating democracy was the disgust that the nationalist intellectuals could not help but feel for the selfish and utilitarian interests that surfaced in a parliamentary system. As early as 1921, journalist Arturs Kroders asserted that the priority of the new state must be the prevention of political egoism,²² while writer Janis Akuraters insisted that any personal interests should be put aside.²³ Unfortunately, the political reality was far from such perfection. As noted by Professor Aleksandrs Dauge, Latvia was undergoing an era of "tremendous egoism and social indifference,"²⁴ while poet Ivande Kaija labeled political parties "a curse."²⁵ Writer Edvarts Virza described Latvian democracy as an "uneducated child" that could eventually destroy the state itself.²⁶ Journalist Eduards Calitis said that politicians had turned the parties into sources for personal satisfaction.²⁷

All the disunity and conflicts had made the nationalist intellectuals grow tired and angry. Writer Karlis Skalbe described this as exhaustion from “eternal fights, the lies of the political parties, mutual suing,”²⁸ and writer Ernests Brastins exclaimed, “we have been ruled by everything low and selfish.”²⁹ The democratic politicians had failed to be strong enough, while the true national heroes were excluded from politics and “withered away as trees in a swamp.”³⁰

Eventually, this disappointment with democracy became linked to the growing dislike for capitalism. To the idealist-oriented nationalist intellectuals, any business-like relations seemed an especially low form of social interaction. Writer Karlis Skalbe concluded that the dominant political “egoism” was due to the rule of “a businessman who had openly set himself outside good and evil” and was “guided merely by his greed.”³¹ Similarly, writer Janis Akuraters blamed the politicians for turning parties into “shops.” He felt that nation’s politics had been taken over by only one devastating goal: “Get rich!”³² The devastating cult of personal and material interests seemed to have destroyed Latvian society³³ by replacing its former idealism and patriotism with the rule of “shamelessness and business.”³⁴ In general, parliament worked as some sort of “house of trading.”³⁵ To the nationalist intellectuals, only ethnic culture could be the foundation for a nation and a state, while business and politics were the enemy.³⁶

The nationalist intellectuals’ dislike for democracy and capitalism was related to their anger about the economic power possessed by non-Latvians such as Jews, Germans and Russians during the years of the parliamentary system. The nationalists had expected that gaining national independence would also mean gaining complete control over the country’s economic life (Balabkins and Aizsilnieks, 1975, p. 57). However, Latvians did not prove to be particularly successful in business (p. 63). To explain this, the nationalist intellectuals suggested that the democratic system was failing to protect the economic interests of Latvians and instead promoted individualistic or class-based ambitions that supposedly played right into the hands of non-Latvians.³⁷ The only solution that the nationalist intellectuals agreed on was to ensure the role of Latvians in economics, which could be achieved by greatly enhancing state regulation.

In other words, the nationalist intellectuals predicted the end of democracy because democracy encouraged a disturbing identification with a class or specific group, rather than the state or nation. The nationalist intellectuals opposed class-based politics, arguing that ethnic belonging was an absolute priority.³⁸ The so-called “class fanatics”³⁹ had no connection to the “healthy forces of the nation, but were created by the dark instincts of the crowd.”⁴⁰ This heightened aversion to any political identity except the ethnic was rooted in the nationalist intellectuals’ belief that national politics was a higher form of politics and existed above the everyday political practice. National politics was a noble and sacred act that preserved “the nation’s inner force.”⁴¹ This conviction led the nationalist intellectuals to conclude that democracy had been forced upon Latvians by foreigners,⁴² and that it had simply made the Latvian people tired.⁴³

In sum, like the intellectuals in other post-imperial contexts (see, for example, Bozoki, 1999), the Latvian nationalist intelligentsia idealized and simplified democracy. Often as the hated empire disintegrates, democratic ideas are in fashion among rebelling intellectuals, but once the new state is formed the same intellectuals are unwilling to accept political compromises. The system they have in mind usually is built not on pragmatic, rational and individual interests, but on irrational, cultural and collective goals such as asserting the moral superiority of their people. As a result, anything short of perfectly harmonious coexistence in the name of high national ideals dissatisfies such intellectuals.⁴⁴ However, contrary to the nationalist intellectuals in Central and Eastern Europe in the post-Soviet period, who claimed that none of the existing democracies were the “real ones” (Korosenyi, 1999), Latvian nationalist intellectuals of the inter-war period openly opposed the democratic parliamentary state as unable to make the people into a distinct and heroic collectivity. Thus, the inter-war nationalist intellectuals did not have an ambiguous attitude towards democracy, as did the post-Communist intelligentsia. The nationalist intellectuals in the 1920s and 1930s were more convinced that democracy simply had outlived itself and had to be replaced with a more “progressive” nationalist system.

Could the democratic system be salvaged if better people were put into leadership? By the late 1920s the nationalist intellectuals had reached the conclusion that this would not help. Democracy itself had “exiled” Latvians⁴⁵ and failed to provide them with a sense of “living and working for history.”⁴⁶ Therefore in the late 1920s the writer Edvarts Virza went as far as to write that democracy per se was a dangerous “plague” that needed to be stopped,⁴⁷ thus echoing earlier statements made by journalist Arturs Korders, who concluded that the period of parliamentarism was obviously facing its end.⁴⁸ And no one among other nationalist intellectuals objected to these conclusions.

Solutions

What could be done in this situation? The nationalist intellectuals’ restless minds embarked on envisioning a new kind of political system. They observed that the reality of parliamentarism was unable to live up to the utopian visions,⁴⁹ therefore this political system had to be radically transformed.⁵⁰ From the mid-1920s nationalist intellectuals became obsessed with elaborating the model of nationalist utopia and suggesting strategies for its realization. In fact, they were convinced that it was their intellectual obligation to construct such visions and propagate them. They felt entitled to pose and answer this crucial question: “How to create a just Latvian state?”⁵¹

While some nationalist intellectuals talked vaguely about the burning need to unify the nation and give peace to “the Latvian soil,”⁵² others promoted the idea of a single-party rule. Another set of proposals suggested a nobler form of democracy with more ethnic orientation and cultural content. It would be built on a principle of sacrificing oneself for the Latvian nation, on “a European style sensitivity and

noble-mindedness” and on clarity in politics, ethics, spiritual values and Latvian cultural conceptions.⁵³ This new kind of democratic politics would focus on promoting “cultural education and the natural process of the nation’s self-expression.”⁵⁴

One of the loudest proponents of reconciling democracy and nationalist utopia was the writer Karlis Skalbe. He argued that the Latvian idea of the state was inherently democratic and national at the same time.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, he was undecided upon how this could be achieved in practice. Usually he suggested following Scandinavian models⁵⁶ and prioritizing complete national unity, with no class-based interests allowed.⁵⁷

Others proposed a simpler and more honest solution: “Latvia for Latvians.”⁵⁸ They believed that only purely nationalist politics could make Latvia into a stable and successful state. It would “reorient people’s minds”⁵⁹ as well as establish the rule of “one freedom and one justice—the Latvian.”⁶⁰ These nationalist intellectuals admitted that the new politics would require a “rethinking of the meaning of freedom,”⁶¹ which now would concentrate around “one center—the master,”⁶² by which they meant the farmer. This principle of oneness would be extended to the whole society, including the state and its leadership, thus making freedom and political choice a property of the ethnic collective, not of individuals.⁶³

As the nationalist intellectuals became more disappointed with democracy and concerned about creating a cultural nation-state, they produced increasingly elaborate visions. For example, writer and journalist Ernests Brastins developed his project of so-called “Latviocracy,”⁶⁴ in which only Latvians would have power. Moreover, not all Latvians but only the “most responsible, the smartest and the most honest ones” would participate in decision making. Unsurprisingly, Brastins concluded that such leaders would be the nationalist intellectuals.⁶⁵ Other similar conceptions suggested completely centralized political decision making⁶⁶ and power that was based on unquestionable dogmas.⁶⁷

It is possible that only a few of the nationalist intellectuals had actually thought out what these “perfect” political system would actually look like in reality and what would be their consequences. It seems that utopian perfection as an ideal was more important to them. These Latvian nationalist intellectuals were similar to intelligentsias in other political contexts and times (see, for example, Hollander’s [1981] study of Western intellectuals’ search for superior social models in dictatorships) when their passion for a harmonious and well-organized society ended up impairing their political sense. As a result, they became vulnerable to the political projects of “heroic” leaders who promised to turn Latvians into a spiritually mobilized social collectivity.

Politics of Idealism

It should be clear from the previous sections that the nationalist intellectuals were not interested in ending democracy merely because they despised some political parties

and politicians. Their understanding of what “real” politics was supposed to be about completely differed from the reality of the democratic process.⁶⁸ They rejected democracy in the name of “the people, who are more idealist than most of their current ‘leaders,’”⁶⁹ and declared the need for politics that is guided by an absolute idea.⁷⁰ Moreover, they seemed to believe that the nation could be created as a work of art.⁷¹

The new cultural state required politicians who were idealists—national heroes—able to access the nation’s spiritual source and make it “cleaner.”⁷² Writer Atis Kenins described them as “citizens who rise above the gray everyday existence with a fiery flag of social idealism.”⁷³ Professor Aleksandrs Dauge argued that the true national politics could be realized only by cultural, not political force.⁷⁴ The new politician would follow “the principles of the higher justice,”⁷⁵ possess a heroic “clarity of ideas and assertiveness . . . [and] a strong, noble spirit that could unify and liberate us.”⁷⁶ The idealist politician would follow his sacred sense of responsibility⁷⁷ and his “moral education,”⁷⁸ and strengthen the Latvian language and culture.⁷⁹

The nationalist intellectuals agreed on the need for a politics of higher ideals and culture. This would make Latvians into a heroic nation that could participate in “humanity’s sacred march to perfection”⁸⁰ and realize the highest cultural goals of all humanity.⁸¹ Such an agenda would provide Latvians with a sense of a worldwide cultural mission⁸² because the power of Latvians was to be found in not the economic, military or political, but the spiritual field:

Our mission is in pure science, art and literature . . . Fate gave to us national independence, economic autonomy and awakening in all spheres, our social and national liberation so that we could express in the spiritual world the purity of the soul of the Latvian people . . . In the spiritual field we can be greater and more powerful than all the big and old cultural nations.⁸³

Thus, the nationalist intellectuals posited the concept of an alternative, non-political source of national greatness. Essentially, they refused to outline a political (non-cultural, non-ethnic) definition of the nation and focused on the nation as an artistic creation accomplished by an exclusive group of idealist individuals. And the goals of this exclusive community were expressed in increasingly revolutionary terms, as in, for example, Blanks’s exclamations: “We want to live the life of a culture-nation! We want to establish a state of culture!”⁸⁴

Unsurprisingly, the nationalist intellectuals’ interest in such an elitist notion of politics led to the intensification of their infatuation with authoritarian leadership. For example, during the early 1930s Virza described the perfect politician as someone

in whom both God and Satan are united . . . His head is above the clouds, in the world of pure inspiration. Here he is thinking, covered with the air of height and his thoughts form without any trickery or self-interest in them. . . . He is the owner of God’s ideas . . . He would occasionally hypnotize people in order to carry out his plans.⁸⁵

The authority of such a ruler was not determined solely by his personal charisma or intellect. The super-leader was able to embody and symbolize the new cultural nation and ensure that the nation reached its glorious future. In painting a portrait of such a leader, the nationalist intellectuals noted that all small nations need an authoritarian leader to effectively utilize their limited cultural and social resources.⁸⁶

In sum, Latvian nationalist intellectuals, like most East and Central European intellectuals, thought of themselves as fathers of the nations (see, for example, Mungiu-Pippidi, 1999; Kasekamp, 2000) and therefore felt obligated to contribute to the creation of the perfect nation regardless of their perceived marginalization and conflicts with other intellectuals. This was their spiritual and artistic mission, which might even turn Latvia into a forge of new philosophical ideas and models for the rest of Europe.⁸⁷ The nationalist intellectuals felt that both politicians and voters under democracy were failing to realize the importance of these tasks. In other words, democracy was sabotaging the nationalist intellectuals' idealist goals, which led them to publish numerous articles rejecting democracy and calling for either a greatly modified "democracy" or an utterly anti-democratic political system. Otherwise, the nationalist intellectuals led the public to believe, Latvians could never have a true nation-state.

Conclusion

Motivated by their disappointment with the parliamentary system and infatuation with ethnic and cultural utopias Latvian nationalist intellectuals engaged in vociferous and persistent rhetoric presenting the downfall of democracy as inevitable and even necessary. Even if not all of the discussed intellectuals actually believed in the salvaging powers of authoritarianism, their vehement critique of democratic politics was not innocent or inconsequential. It was aimed at convincing the public that only a dramatic political transformation and an utterly different kind of leadership could save Latvians as a nation.⁸⁸

Latvian nationalist intellectuals' vision of democracy throughout the 1920s never encompassed well-defined ideas of political equality and individual rights. It was a vision of a predominantly cultural utopia of a unified nation. However, liberal democracy as it was instituted in the Latvian state required equal treatment of all social and ethnic groups, views and interests, which undermined the nationalist intellectuals' project of a perfectly national existence. This conflict between what they wanted to have and what existed in reality did not lead the nationalist intellectuals to reconsider their political ideas. Instead their passion for building a cultural utopia intensified even further. They declared that the sole purpose of the existence of the Latvian state was to embody the cultural uniqueness of Latvians⁸⁹ and to realize the highest ethnic values,⁹⁰ instead of building a political nation. I suggest that at this point Latvian nationalism became explicitly anti-democratic, which eventually led to its support

of Karlis Ulmanis's authoritarianism after 1934. During the 1920s and 1930s the nationalist intellectuals tried to convince the public that the nation was an artistic creation, which possibly intensified a sense of vulnerability, isolation and alienation of Latvians from other ethnic groups and from the parliamentary system.

This is a telling example of nationalist intellectuals' disappointment with mundane yet practical solutions to the grandiose political challenges they had hoped to deal with. The case of the Latvian nationalist intellectuals also shows how infatuation with perfect idealist utopias is directly linked to dislike for democratic political systems as overly pragmatic, individualistic and imperfect. The Latvian nationalists felt that parliamentary democracy had betrayed its mission to create the ideal state of culture for Latvians. They came to believe that this system had to be replaced with a new and preferably non-democratic set of structures. Importantly, the nationalist intellectuals created and disseminated these ideas through the pages of widely read newspapers and magazines. They not only advertised their opinions, but also developed a certain level of acceptance of authoritarianism as an element of Latvian nationalism, which might explain why Ulmanis's destruction of the parliamentary system met no opposition. The job of convincing the people of the need to end the "futile" party fights had already been accomplished by the nationalist intellectuals.

NOTES

1. In this article, by "intellectuals" I mean the group of people who are involved in the creation, elaboration and dissemination of ideas and symbols (following Lipset's [1960] definition). This group includes writers, poets, journalists and academics (mainly in the humanities and social sciences), and excludes technocrats, professionals and bureaucrats.
2. This has been presented in Paul Hollander's (1981) work on radical intellectuals in the West.
3. The complicated dynamic of intellectuals' "spokespersonship," that is, the difficult relation between the groups on whose behalf intellectuals are supposedly speaking and the constructed nature of these represented "subjects," has received detailed analysis in the recent book by Dick Pels (2000).
4. The strengthening of Latvian nationalism happened in the period when the number of Latvians was actually increasing. Thus, in 1920 Latvians constituted 72.7%, Germans 3.6%, Russians 7.8%, Belorussians 4.7% and Jews 5% of the population. In 1935 Latvians were 75.7%, Germans 3.2%, Russians 10.6%, Belorussians 1.4% and Jews 4.8% (Plakans, 1995, p. 132).
5. For example, writer Karlis Skalbe, in his address to parliament on 27 June 1933, said, "Returning to the Parliament after six years, I noticed, that it is absolutely impossible to realize any kind of consistent state policy. This place is ruled by mutual political servicing: you give to me—I will give to you" (quoted in Klive, 1987, p. 148).
6. The group consists of (in alphabetical order): writer Janis Akuraters (1976–1937); teacher and writer Longins Ausejs (1885–?); publicist and historian Alfreds Bilmanis (1887–1948); journalist Ernests Blanks (1894–1972); painter, publicist and teacher Ernests Brastins (1892–1940); poet Leonids Breikss (1908–1942); writer and journalist Eduards Calitis (1881–1947); philosopher and professor Teodors Celms (1893–1989); teacher and professor of pedagogy Aleksandrs Dauge (1868–1937); writer and professor

- Karlis Dislers (1878–1954); journalist and editor Julijs Druva (1882–1950); writer Viktors Eglitis (1877–1945); writer and editor Haralds Eldgasts (1882–1926); writer and journalist Karlis Eliass (1899–1985); writer Janis Ezerins (1891–1924); writer, editor and publicist Aleksandrs Grins (1895–1941); writer Janis Grins (1890–1966); philosopher and professor Pauls Jurevics (1891–1981); writer and publicist Ivande Kaija (1876–1942); poet and lawyer Atis Kenins (1874–1961); writer Janis Klidzejs (1914–); journalist and editor Arturs Kroders (1892–1973); poet and writer Aida Niedra (1899–1972); editor and publicist Aleksandrs Plensners (1892–1984); writer Ligotnu Jekabs (Jekabs Roze) (1847–1942); writer and publicist Karlis Skalbe (1879–1945); historian and professor Arnolds Spekke (1887–1978); historian and journalist Adolfs Silde (1907–1990); writer, historian and professor Arveds Svabe (1888–1959); publicist and editor Zanis Unams (1902–1989); editor and publicist Karlis Upitis (1894–?); poet and writer Edvarts Virza (1883–1940).
7. Articles that were signed with pseudonyms were excluded, since in many cases the authorship of these articles is doubtful to this day. It must be noted that patriotic poems, literary essays and critiques of books and theatre, fiction writing and news items that in one or another way touched upon the theme of patriotism and “Latvianness” were not analyzed. The reason for this choice was the goal of the study, namely, revealing specifically *political* not artistic or any other type of contribution of the Latvian intelligentsia to nationalist politics. Intellectuals’ political writing was abundant and regular, providing sufficient evidence for the arguments made in this article.
 8. For example, writer Janis Akuraters, who later was a well-known nationalist, was hiding with Russian socialist terrorists in Finland in 1907. In his memoirs, Akuraters described them as “the most beautiful people both spiritually and physically,” dedicated to “destroying the hated czarist Russia” (Egle, 1924, p. 176). Akuraters was also among the founders of the Latvian Social Democratic Party (Lams 2003). Vehement nationalist, ethnographer, Minister of Education of independent Latvia and a supporter of Ulmanis’s regime in the 1930s, Karlis Straubergs as a student was an enthusiastic Marxist (Plensners, 1978).
 9. Historian Uldis Germanis (1992) believes that intellectuals such as M. Valters, E. Rolavs and E. Skubikis were greatly influenced by the demands of the Austrian Social Democrats, the ideas of Otto Bauer and the federalism of the Swiss constitution. They demanded a kind of socialist revolution that would destroy not only the monarchy but also Russian nationalist domination over the native populations.
 10. This conflict could be explained by what James Billington (1986) describes as a struggle between romanticism and rationalism in nineteenth-century Europe or between what Edward Shils (1958) calls the intellectual traditions of romanticism and scientism. In this opposition, nationalist emotional attachment to the particularity and unity of the nation became questioned by “socialists’ intellectual focus on general laws and mechanistic analysis” (Billington, 1986, p. 147). Both nationalists and socialists were interested in a revolutionary change. However, nationalists focused on the revolutionary nature of the nation and proposed a world consisting of free nations, while socialists promoted a revolution that came out of the Enlightenment’s scientific universalism and rationalism superimposed on the messianic conception of the liberating working class.
 11. Here and throughout the article all translations from the Latvian are mine.
 12. Aleksandrs Dauge, “Ar ko valsts ir stipra,” *Latvis*, 1 May 1929, p. 2.
 13. Aleksandrs Dauge, “Politiki un jaunatne,” *Latvis*, 14 September 1930, pp. 1–2.
 14. Aleksandrs Dauge, “Valsts un kultura,” *Burtnieks*, Vol. 1, 1928, pp. 38–50. Similar ideas were expressed a few years later in his “Kulturas politika,” *Latvis*, 7 November 1930, p. 1–2.

15. Aleksandrs Dauge, "Nacija un valsts," *Nacionalais darbs*, 6 January 1930, p. 3. Continued on 10 January 1930, p. 2.
16. Haralds Eldgasts, "Partejisma posts," *Kurzemes Vards*, 21 December 1922, pp. 1–2. Eldgasts expressed similar ideas in "Kadiem idealiem mus vajadzētu apvienot?" *Kurzemes Vards*, 8 June 1924, pp. 1–2.
17. Aleksandrs Grins, "Varonu svetkos," *Rigas Zinas*, 11 November 1925, p. 2.
18. Janis Akuraters, "Mums vajadzīga nacionalisma atdzimsana un pareiza izpratne," *Jaunakas Zinas*, 7 March 1927, p. 1. Very similar statements were made by the much more radical nationalist Haralds Eldgasts just a year earlier in his article "Politika apok idealismu," *Kurzemes Vards*, 18 July 1926, pp. 1–2.
19. Haralds Eldgasts, "Lielākais launums," *Kurzemes Vards*, 14 January 1923, pp. 1–2.
20. Aleksandrs Plensners, "Nacionāla ideoloģija," *Rigas Zinas*, 7 September 1925, p. 2. Edvarts Virza, "Latviesu zemnieks Latvijas veidotājs," *Brīva Zeme*, 23 September 1933, p. 8. Leonīds Breikss, "Latviesu svetku diena," *Latvis*, 17 June 1933, p. 2. Numerous other articles displayed similar sentiments.
21. Leonīds Breikss, "Vinu laiks ir klat!" *Universitāte*, 15 March 1933, pp. 71–72.
22. Arturs Kroders, "Editorial," *Jaunakas Zinas*, 5 September 1921, p. 1.
23. Janis Akuraters, "Vairāk garīga speka," *Jaunakas Zinas*, 22 March 1921, p. 3.
24. Aleksandrs Dauge, "Socialā kultūra," *Latvis*, 20 February 1930, pp. 1–2.
25. Ivande Kaija, "Musu pedejājs krusts," *Latvijas Sargs*, 5 August 1921, p. 1.
26. Edvarts Virza, "Valsts un demokrātija," *Brīva Zeme*, 27 May 1924, p. 1.
27. Eduards Calitis, "Klike," *Latvijas Sargs*, 30 November 1921, p. 1.
28. Karlis Skalbe, "Mazas piezīmes," *Jaunakas Zinas*, 20 January 1923, pp. 1–2.
29. Ernests Brastins, "Latviesu varasvīrs," *Brīva Zeme*, 9 December 1933, p. 12.
30. Atis Kenins, "Vienotās tautas griba un kultūra parvares visu," *Jaunakas Zinas*, 2 October 1931, p. 6. Similar ideas were expressed in Janis Akuraters, "Ir vajadzīga politiska atmoda," *Pirmdiena*, 9 March 1925, p. 4.
31. Karlis Skalbe, "Saimniecības vīrs," *Jaunakas Zinas*, 4 May 1928, p. 1.
32. Janis Akuraters, "Vienas dienas cilvēki," *Jaunakas Zinas*, 12 November 1925, p. 1.
33. Janis Akuraters, "Valstiskas politikas pagrimšana," *Pirmdiena*, 9 February 1925, p. 3. This article received a positive response from other nationalist intellectuals. For example, Haralds Eldgasts very approvingly quoted it in his own article on a similar theme (*Kurzemes Vards*, 15 March 1925, p. 1). Edvarts Virza expressed similar ideas a few years later in "Latviesu zemnieks Latvijas veidotājs," *Brīva Zeme*, 23 September 1933, p. 8.
34. Janis Akuraters, "Sabiedriskā doma un veiklānieki," *Jaunakas Zinas*, 4 August 1925, p. 1.
35. Viktors Eglītis, "Iespāids no disputa liela Gilde," *Jauna Diena*, 15 December 1932, p. 1.
36. It has to be noted that although often in nationalist doctrines the dislike for capitalism and modernity is closely related to anti-Westernism, I did not find much dislike towards the West in Latvian nationalism. Although at certain moments nationalists celebrated the decline of "old Europe," by which they meant liberalism and democracy, they also talked about the onset of a new kind of Europe led by the new nationalist nations (especially Italy). Occasionally, nationalist intellectuals described democracy as a destructive "foreign import;" however, in general nationalist intellectuals were greatly interested in asserting Latvians as equals among the world's nations and they did not turn against the West in a way that characterized, for example, Russian nationalism.
37. In 1933 the well-known politician-diplomat and intellectual Mikelis Valters wrote a programmatic volume *From Collapse to Planned Economy: Problems of Latvia's Rejuvenation: The Future of Latvia* in which he argued that individual initiative in economics should be subordinated to national considerations. Instead of "unfettered egoism" he promoted

- “co-operation of all citizens and the corporative structure of economy” (quoted in Balabkins and Aizsilnieks, 1975, p. 75). A profit-oriented economy needed to be replaced with national cooperation controlled by the state and aimed at eventual removal of all non-Latvian elements from the economy. Latvia, he suggested, had to be made Latvian both politically and economically.
38. Jekabs Ligoņģu, “Runa Latvijas Lauksaimnieku kongresa,” *Brīva Zeme*, 20 January 1921, p. 2. See also Arturs Kroders, “Par nacionālo politiku,” *Latvijas Vestnesis*, 26 July 1923, pp. 1–2.
 39. Janis Akuraters, “Latvjiem vajadzīga jauna nacionālā atmoda,” *Jaunakas Zinas*, 1 October 1931, p. 2.
 40. Ernests Blanks, “Latviešu demokrātijai ir naidīga vadonības ideja,” *Latvijas Sargs*, 29 August 1932, p. 2.
 41. Aleksandrs Dauge, “Socialā kultūra,” *Latvis*, 20 February 1930, pp. 1–2.
 42. Leonīds Breikss, “Latviešu svētku diena,” *Brīva Zeme*, 17 June 1933, p. 2. Ernests Brastins, “Latviešu varasvīrs,” *Brīva Zeme*, 9 December 1933, p. 12.
 43. Atis Kenīns, “Demokrātiskā pilsonība un tautas vienība,” *Centra Balss*, 11 April 1930, p. 6.
 44. At some point, writer Janis Akuraters even suggested that if the people do not realize their cultural values and future potential, the state must discipline and guide them—if necessary, by force (“Vai mums ir nacionālā skola?” *Latvijas Vestnesis*, 14 July 1924, p. 5.)
 45. Leonīds Breikss, “Tīcības atjaunošana,” *Latvis*, 31 October 1933, p. 1.
 46. Karlis Upiķis, “Kultūra un politika,” *Latvijas Sargs*, 13 and 17 October 1921, p. 1.
 47. Edvarts Virza, “Dzadzadi noveroģumi,” *Brīva Zeme*, 14 May 1927, p. 5; “Pienākumi un izredzes,” *Brīva Zeme*, 18 July 1928, p. 3.
 48. Arturs Kroders, “Tas celiens nobeidģies,” *Pīrmdiena*, 7 June 1926, p. 2.
 49. As Ernests Brastins wrote, “The theory of nationalism contradicts its execution and practice today . . . The world of the facts is at odds with our spiritual and Latvian world . . . Politics separates us from ourselves . . . Politics has become too clumsy and rough for our delicate cultural and national problems” (“Latviskā utopija,” *Brīva Zeme*, 31 January 1931, p. 6).
 50. It is known that only the writer Edvarts Virza had suggested dictatorship as early as 1918 (Bluzma, 1991). Other intellectuals gradually moved from striving for the prefect nation, to critique of democracy and calls for radical transformation to authoritarianism.
 51. Ernests Brastins, “Latviskā utopija,” *Brīva Zeme*, 31 January 1931, p. 6
 52. Janis Akuraters, “Tautas vienība,” *Jaunakas Zinas*, 6 February 1932, p. 1; “Latvjiem vajadzīga jauna nacionālā atmoda,” *Jaunakas Zinas*, 1 October 1933, p. 2; Eduards Calītis, “Ko teiks musu nacionālisti?,” *Pedeģa Briedi*, 9 September 1931, p. 1; Leonīds Breikss, “Tīcības atjaunošana,” *Latvis*, 31 October 1933, p. 1; Aleksandrs Dauge, “Atklātā vēstule L.N.J.S. pulcīniem,” *Nacionālais Trissturis*, Vol. 1, Nos 1–2, 1931, pp. 1–3.
 53. Karlis Upiķis, “Kultūra un politika,” *Latvijas Sargs*, 13 and 17 October 1921, pp. 2–3; “Nacionālisma problēmi,” *Latvijas Kareivis*, 5 January 1923, pp. 1–2.
 54. Aleksandrs Dauge, “Par valstisku kultūru,” *Balss*, 1 January 1925, p. 1.
 55. See, for example, Karlis Skalbe, “Valsts doma,” *Jaunakas Zinas*, 30 April 1932, p. 1.
 56. Karlis Skalbe, “Mums ēģams savs cels,” *Jaunakas Zinas*, 30 December 1933, p. 2.
 57. Karlis Skalbe, “Latviešu koalģcija,” *Jaunakas Zinas*, 30 April 1932, p. 1.
 58. Janis Akuraters, “Latvjiem vajadzīga jauna nacionālā atmoda,” *Jaunakas Zinas*, 1 October 1931, p. 2; Eduards Calītis, “Ko teiks musu nacionālisti?” *Pedeģa Briedi*, 9 September 1931, p. 1.
 59. Eduards Calītis, “Jauna zvaigģzne,” *Pedeģa Briedi*, 10 March 1931, p. 1.
 60. Ernests Brastins, “Tautas gars un laika gars,” *Brīva Zeme*, 12 March 1932, p. 6.
 61. Edvarts Virza, “Latvijas atjaunoģana,” *Brīva Zeme*, 17 December 1932, p. 8.
 62. Edvarts Virza, “Gadģm beidģoties,” *Brīva Zeme*, 31 December 1932, p. 1.

63. Leonids Breikss, "Ticibas atjaunosana," *Latvis*, 31 October 1933, p. 1.
64. Ernests Brastins, "Demokratija un naciokratija," *Briva Zeme*, 27 June 1931, p. 5.
65. *Ibid.* Importantly, Brastins's statements were not just a representation of some extremist fringe. A well-known academic and not a political radical at all, Aleksandrs Dauge recommended creating a state that would not be led by elected and self-interested politicians or "masses" as in democracy, but by "the best natural leaders" ("Par valstisku kulturu," *Balss*, 1 January 1925, p. 1).
66. As Zanis Unams wrote, "Let's search for the most honest, true, deep: let's find great persons and glorify them, then we ourselves and our nation will become great" ("Diletantisms," *Briva Tevija*, 6 October 1926, pp. 1–2).
67. Edvarts Virza, "Cela uz jauno dogmu," *Briva Zeme*, 1 April 1933, p. 8. He also wrote in 1931 that in order to protect the Latvian state it was necessary to continuously struggle against any ideas that could potentially pose a threat to it ("Valsts un zeme," *Aizsargs*, 4 January 1931, p. 3).
68. See, for example, Aleksandrs Plensners, "Ernests Blanks—latviesu tautas kustiba," *Latvijas Sargs*, 19 September 1921, p. 5.
69. Atis Kenins, "Vienotas tautas griba un kultura parvares visu," *Jaunakas Zinas*, 2 October 1933, p. 6.
70. Edvarts Virza wrote, "The rule of one conviction is our savior . . . It has been shown that in all times, people have obediently served the higher idea" ("Ziemassvetku pardomas," *Briva Zeme*, 23 December 1933, p. 8).
71. As early as 1921 Ivande Kaija described the new state as "the ideal state of culture. The flow of creative evolution carries us towards this ideal . . . Could not we all, who belong to the Latvian people, unite around this ideal? . . . To work in order to achieve this ideal is the responsibility of every one of us now" ("Jauna 1921. gada," *Latvijas Sargs*, 1 January 1921, p. 1).
72. Aleksandrs Plensners, "Politika un kultura," *Rigas Zinas*, 12 March 1925, p. 2.
73. Atis Kenins, "Ar valsts karogu par naciju un kulturu" *Centra Balss*, 31 December 1930, p. 1.
74. Aleksandrs Plensners, "Macaties tapt!," *Latvijas Sargs*, 19 September 1921, p. 5.
75. Aleksandrs Plensners, "Par godigu politiku," *Kurzemes Vards*, 8 September 1931, p. 2.
76. Haralds Eldgasts, "Personiba un demokratija," *Kurzemes Vards*, 10 June 1923, p. 1.
77. Haralds Eldgasts, "Tautas atmodu gaidot," *Kurzemes Vards*, 15 March 1925, pp. 1–2.
78. Edvarts Virza, "Partiju pienakumi un politiska audzinassana," *Briva Zeme*, 19 October 1928, p. 3.
79. Karlis Skalbe, "Latviesu koalicija," *Jaunakas Zinas*, 30 January 1932, p. 1.
80. Janis Akuraters, "Musu jaunatnes ideali," *Latvijas Vestnesis*, 19 December 1923, p. 1.
81. Karlis Upitis, "Kultura un politika," *Latvijas Sargs*, 17 October 1921, p. 2.
82. Janis Akuraters, "Par nacionalam cinam," *Jaunakas Zinas*, 10 October 1921, p. 9. See also Edvarts Virza, "Latviesu misija," *Briva Zeme*, 6 June 1931, p. 6. A similar argument was expressed by Haralds Eldgasts in "Haralda Eldgasta domas par musu tagadnes svarigakiem sabiedriski-kulturaliem uzdevumiem," *Kurzemes Vards*, 20 December 1922, p. 2.
83. Ernests Blanks, "Latvju tautas galvenais uzdevums," *Liepajas Atbalss*, 23 April 1930, p. 1.
84. Ernests Blanks, "No lielam kulturas certibam lidz galigam apskumam," *Latvijas Sargs*, 8 August 1932, p. 2; "Latviesu demokratija ir naidiga vadonibas idejai," *Latvijas Sargs*, 29 August 1932, p. 2.
85. Edvarts Virza, "Dazadas pardomas," *Briva Zeme*, 7 May 1932, p. 6.
86. Ernests Blanks, "Latviesu varasvirs," *Briva Zeme*, 9 December 1933, p. 12.

87. Viktors Eglitis, "Vai var nakotni paredzet?" *Labietis*, Vol. 3, 1933, pp. 39–40.
88. For example, Ernests Blanks wrote, "We have to replace the vices of democracy with completely new virtues" ("Kustiba un vadonis," *Latvijas Sargs*, 6 November 1933, p. 2). Leonids Breikss felt that "proudly and bravely grows in the people the flow of new spirit and new will to work. It will destroy the mills of today's politicians" ("Ticibas atjaunosana," *Latvis*, 31 October 1933, p. 1.) Edvarts Virza wrote, "Everything in this country needs to be changed in order to save the national dignity and the statehood itself" ("Zie-massvetku pardomas," *Briva Zeme*, 23 December 1933, p. 8.)
89. Aleksandrs Dauge, "Par valstisku kulturu," *Balss*, 1 January 1925, p. 1.
90. Karlis Upitis, "Kultura un politika," *Latvijas Sargs*, 17 October 1921, p. 2.

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