

ABHANDLUNGEN

Concepts of Ethnic Separation in North-East Europe to World War I

by Theodore R. Weeks

It is generally acknowledged that during the 19th century concepts of modern nationalism developed not just in East-Central Europe, but throughout the European continent. Like so many other “-isms” of that century, nationalism derived in great part from the French Revolution and reactions to that event and the ensuing Napoleonic wars throughout Europe. But nationalism and “ethnicity” are not the same thing, though the two concepts certainly go together. In its most basic definition, ethnicity designates a group that is linked by common ancestry, coming from the Greek word “ethnos.” To be sure, 19th century nationalists used the terms “nation,” “tribe,” “race,” and “people” in rather imprecise and overlapping ways. The actual word “ethnicity” seldom crops up in their writings, though the concept of shared past and ancestors was seldom absent from their understanding of “nation” and “people.”

In this short essay I would like to examine the concept of ethnicity in the context of the late Russian Empire, in particular in its western regions from the Baltic provinces to present-day Ukraine. Obviously an exhaustive – or even adequate – portrait of the various national movements in this diverse region cannot be presented here. My goal here is far more modest: to provide a background to the forcible “un-mixing of peoples” that occurred in East-Central Europe beginning in the First World War and culminating (though not ending) in the mid-1940s. The basic question here will be: how did concepts of ethnicity/nation (the two terms cannot, I think, be differentiated in the national rhetoric of the time) develop in the pre-1914 period, how exclusive (or inclusive) were these terms, and what precursors, so to speak, of later forcible exiles and so-called “repatriations” to achieve ethnic/national homogeneity can we discern in the earlier period.

The concept of ethnicity and tribe is hardly a new one in world history. When the Sumerians referred to themselves as the “black-headed people,” they were thinking in ethnic terms. The Hebrew Bible is imbued with the Hebrew people’s self-perception as special and dis-

tinct from the other ethnicities living around them. Similar, Tacitus's *Germania* praises the German tribe for manly virtues, an explicit "turning around" of the normal Roman contempt for "barbarians." African slavery and rationales for its justification were also grounded on ethnic concepts. Thus the development of ethnic/national pride in the 19th century was not so much a new phenomenon as a building on earlier – some would say primeval – emotions and identities. There were, however, some significant changes in the definition of ethnicity/nation in this period. Whereas earlier concepts of ethnicity stressed one's lineage and birth (most famous perhaps the definition of a Jew as a person born of a Jewish mother), now ethnicity – or more properly the nation – tended to delineated in cultural and linguistic concepts. To be sure, in practice the two definitions often coincide – an Estonian's daughter generally speaks Estonian. Still, one may choose a culture or language while one can hardly choose one's own parents. In this way ethnicity – at least as understood and developed by many national patriots of the 19th century – could be an inclusive concept.

When considering the abstract category of ethnicity in the context of 19th century Central and Eastern Europe it should be born in mind that on the practical level ethnic/linguistic categories were often difficult to differentiate from estate (*Stand, soslovie*) or class. With the exception of Russians, Jews, and Poles, most ethnic groups in the region between (ethnic) "Germany" and "Russia" were peasant peoples in the year 1800. One of the most burning tasks of these national movements was to break down the equivalence of, say, Lithuanian or Ukrainian and "peasant." On a somewhat different level, national movements throughout the region wrestled with the presence of large numbers of Jews living in towns and dominating commercial and certain other middle-class professions. Thus national movements inevitably took on a social dimension: Estonian and Latvian peasants – as the events of the 1905 revolution were to show – often saw their German landlords not only as ethnically different, but as social exploiters.

The glorification of ethnic and linguistic difference found its most eloquent spokesman in the figure of Johann Gottfried Herder. Reacting against the hegemonic position of French culture in the late 18th century, Herder wrote enthusiastically not only about his own German language, but also explicitly emphasized the value and dignity of the Baltic and Slavic peoples living in the proximity of his native East Prussia. To be sure, Herder was a polymath and wrote

on subjects as diverse as world history, the “nature” of African and American peoples, and on the influence of climate on ethnic character, but his words on the Slavs could be – and were – applied to all nations as yet lacking a development, written high culture: “you, once diligent and happy peoples who have sunk so low, will at last awaken from your long and heavy slumber, will be freed from your enslaving chains.”¹ Herder’s works thus both introduced Baltic ethnicities to the German public and encouraged the development of their own culture as intrinsically valuable, representing a significant contribution to world culture as a whole.

Before we continue on to look at some specifics of the late Russian Empire, we need to pause and consider in the abstract different ways for governments to deal with ethnic difference. Fundamentally there are four possible directions for national policy: segregation, assimilation, integration, and expulsion.² Segregation would involve keeping different ethnicities apart. The Russian government’s Jewish policy which restricted most Jews’ residence in the empire to the so-called “Pale of Settlement” is one version of segregation; South Africa’s former policy of apartheid would be another. A policy of assimilation expects minority national groups to take on the culture and language of the dominant group with the loss of their original ethnicity and culture, at least over two or three generations. The predominant American attitude toward immigrants up to very recently was based on assimilation; another variety would be the experience of most western- and central-European Jews before World War I (it should be noted in this context that “assimilation” does not necessarily mean the total effacing of all difference). Integration is the most liberal – and probably rarest – policy toward ethnic minorities and aims to foster a feeling of shared loyalty to the state while retaining significant diversity in culture, language, and customs. One may argue – though this is a controversial topic – that integration has been the goal of American policy-makers in the last generation or two.

Finally, the most radical attitude toward ethnic difference is expulsion. Before the 20th century this policy was rarely adopted, probably more from practical than humanitarian reasons. As the papers

¹ Johann Gottfried Herder, *On World History: An Anthology*, ed. by Hans Adler and Ernest A. Menze. Armonk, NY 1997, p. 301.

² One further possibility by the early 20th century, in particular in light of contemporary colonial policies (e.g., the massacre of the Herero people in German Southwest Africa), would be physical extermination. However, in the context of the Russian Empire this kind of genocidal policy (the word “genocide” did not yet, of course, exist) was never considered.

in this volume will demonstrate, the forcible “unmixing of peoples” by deliberate government policy was a frequent event in 20th-century Europe.³ One possible exception to this rule would be the expulsion of participants in the 1831 and 1863 uprisings – usually Polish by culture – into Siberian exile. However, such an argument suffers from serious weaknesses. First of all, exile to Siberia was used as a practical measure against all enemies of the tsarist regime, regardless of ethnicity. Secondly, expulsions from the western provinces to Siberia after the 1831 and 1863 uprisings affected almost exclusively the elite of that regime: peasants of Polish (or Lithuanian) ethnicity were almost totally untouched. Finally, many of the exiles were allowed to return after a decade or two. In the long run, a more serious threat to the Polish ethnicity in the western provinces was presented by the post-1863 laws forbidding the purchase of land there by Poles.⁴

The Context of the Russian Empire

The development of the Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Ukrainian, and even to a great extent Polish and Jewish national movements cannot be adequately understood without reference to the political realities of the Russian Empire.⁵ It needs to be emphasized that the Russian Empire did not see itself as a Russian nation state, in particular before the Polish uprising of 1863. The distinction between Russian as a cultural-ethnic group and as a political-geographical entity is easily made with the two words “russkii” and “rossiiskii.” The Russian Empire was, of course, “Rossiiskaia” – not “Russkaia.” However, as always realities and consciousness were much more complicated. While these two terms did exist, very often – probably more often than not – Russian officials and writers preferred to use “russkii” (designating ethnic-cultural Russian-ness) except in specific phrases (such as “Rossiiskaia Imperiia”). This points to a contradiction within the

³ On population transfers in the 20th century, see Michael Marrus, *The Unwanted: European Refugees in the 20th Century*. New York 1985; and Norman M. Naimark, *Fires of Hatred: Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth-Century Europe*. Cambridge 2001.

⁴ On the restrictive laws aimed at Poles in the western provinces (*Zapadniy krai*), see Theodore R. Weeks, *Nation and State in Late Imperial Russia: Nationalism and Russification on the Western Frontier, 1863–1914*. DeKalb 1996, esp. chapters 3 and 5; and Witold Rodkiewicz, *Russian Nationality Policy in the Western Provinces of the Empire (1863–1905)*. Lublin 1998.

⁵ The best single work on the Russian Empire as multinational state is Andreas Kappeler, *Rußland als Vielvölkerreich: Entstehung. Geschichte. Zerfall*. München 1992.

empire – while it was not a nation-state and could not be one with its huge diversity of ethnic groups, at times it seemed to act like one. To take just one example, the great Russian historians of the late 19th century, Sergei Solov'ev and Vasilii Kliuchevskii, constructed their narrative as a national Russian history with little reference to the multinational nature of the Empire.⁶

Until at least the second half of the 19th century, St. Petersburg's attitude toward its non-Russian subjects can generally be termed traditional and passive. As long as local elites acknowledged Russian hegemony, they continued to occupy positions of power at the local level. So, for example, Baltic Germans continued to dominate the administration in Estland, Livland, and Kurland provinces. It mattered less at this point to Petersburg that non-Russians dominated in the local bureaucracy than that public order and a relatively efficient administration was maintained. The situation in the Baltic region was thus quite different from that in the western provinces (roughly present-day Ukraine, Belarus, Lithuania) and Kingdom of Poland, where after the November 1830 Insurrection – when the Poles demonstrated their untrustworthiness vis-à-vis the Russian center – St. Petersburg adopted a different policy, trying to limit the number of Poles in the bureaucracy, especially at its higher levels. Still, on the whole Polish social and economic dominance was not significantly lessened – especially in the Lithuanian and Belarusian areas – and the Polish presence even in the local bureaucracy remained strong until 1863.⁷

When we talk about “nationality policy” in the Russian Empire before the final decades of the 19th century, we are mainly referring to policies that affected elites directly and the broad masses only indirectly. After all, most Belarusian and Ukrainian peasants (who from the point of view of official Russia belonged to the Russian nation) were serfs before 1861. Like Lithuanian peasants, their landlords were often Polish by culture and Catholic by religion. Despite the extreme mistrust felt by St. Petersburg toward this group (especially after 1831), their continued domination of “Russian peasants” in

⁶ On these two important historians, see Edward C. Thaden, *The Rise of Historicism in Russia*. New York 1999; and Robert F. Byrnes, V.O. Kliuchevskii, *Historian of Russia*. Bloomington 1995.

⁷ On the insurrection of 1830-1831 see Robert F. Leslie, *Polish Politics and the Insurrection of November 1830*. London 1956; and *Powstanie listopadowe 1830-31. Geneza, uwarunkowania, bilans, porównania* [November Uprising 1830-31. Genesis, Conditions, Result, Comparisons], ed. by Jerzy Skowronek and Maria Żmigrodzka. Wrocław 1983.

the region was not significantly affected. As for Latvians and Estonians, while serfdom had officially been abolished in the provinces where they lived in the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars, very often they continued to live in economic dependence to the German estate owners. The mixing of ethnic and social categories is reflected in the Estonian word *saks* which came to mean landowner or even “bourgeois,” but originally designated a German (Saxon). While some Russian nationalists (Yurii Samarin among them) found the domination of Germans the Baltic administration intolerable, they did not have significant influence in official circles – indeed, Nicholas I had Samarin imprisoned for circulating his *Letters from Riga* in the late 1840s.⁸

In national policy, as in many other areas of life in the Russian Empire, the 1860s were a watershed. The trauma of the 1863 Polish Insurrection, which occurred during a turbulent period of reform, including the emancipation of serfs, electrified both Russian society and the Russian government. After 1863 a more activist policy – often described as “russification” – was adopted toward non-Russians, both at the elite and popular levels.⁹ One may point to three main reasons (at least) for this new policy direction: domestic order, international insecurity, and efforts toward centralization and “regularization” of the Russian state.¹⁰ The 1863 uprising had frightened officials and the tsar himself, showing that non-Russian elites could pose a significant internal danger for the Russian state. For Russian officialdom, the lesson of 1863 was that Poles must be kept away from the levers of state power, in particular on the western borderlands. During the reign of Alexander III (1881–1894) this “lesson” was extended to the Baltic Germans, that is, Russian policy began to see the German dominance in local politics as a potential threat, and took measures to reduce it.

The international situation of the late 19th century further encouraged the Russian state in its “russifying” efforts. The unification of Germany in 1871 – on the heels of Prussia’s humiliating defeat of

⁸ Peter K. Christoff, *An Introduction to Nineteenth-Century Russian Slavophilism*: Iu.F. Samarin. Boulder 1991, pp. 139-144.

⁹ For a discussion of this term, see Theodore R. Weeks, *Russification: Word and Practice 1863–1914*, in: *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 148 (December 2004), no. 4, pp. 471-489; and *Russification in the Baltic Provinces and Finland, 1855–1914*, ed. by Edward C. Thaden. Princeton 1981.

¹⁰ On the latter factor (in broad perspective), see the stimulating and neglected work by George Yaney, *The Systemization of Russian Government. Social Evolution in the Domestic Administration of Imperial Russia, 1711–1905*. Urbana 1973.

France – upset the European balance of power that had existed since the Congress of Vienna. While some Russian statesmen (e.g., Sergei Witte) wished to continue the traditional Russian-German (or Prussian) friendship, geopolitics and economic rivalries increased tensions between the two powers. Thus German subjects of the Russian tsar – while still very prominent in the army, diplomatic corps, and elsewhere – fell under a shadow of suspicion: how would they act in case of war with Germany? At the same time, we should not forget that the period after 1871 to the beginning of World War I saw the extension of European empires overseas and a great increase in aggressive nationalist rhetoric and ideology. Russia (and non-Russian nationalities) was certainly not immune to the wave of chauvinism that swept the continent in this period.

Both domestic and international concerns also pushed the Russian Empire toward policies of greater centralization which to non-Russian elites often appeared as direct challenges to long-cherished practices and privileges. Such was the case with measures to diminish German power in the Baltic provinces and – less successfully – to lessen Finnish autonomy.¹¹ Besides these egregious examples, there was the more pervasive insistence on use of Russian as the *lingua franca* – at least – of communication throughout the empire. While local languages could be tolerated, scarce state resources should be concentrated, it was felt, on education in Russian, in particular at the secondary level and in universities. Given the suspicion felt by Russian bureaucrats toward any kind of private initiative in education (including in Russian), such policies could easily appear to non-Russians as an effort to assimilate them entirely.

This was not, however, the view from St. Petersburg. Except for the special cases of Belarusians and Ukrainians who were regarded as Russians speaking particular dialects (rather like Bavarians in Germany or Sicilians in Italy), the Russian government did not aim for total cultural assimilation, at least not in the foreseeable future. Rather, St. Petersburg hoped at best to produce loyal subjects who would use Russian in the shared economic and bureaucratic (administrative) spheres of the empire. If these non-Russians ended up, over generations, losing their original ethno-cultural identity, then so much the better (from St. Petersburg's point of view). But there were many far more pressing and immediate tasks facing the Russian government.

¹¹ See, for example, Tuomo Polvinen, *Imperial Borderland: Bobrikov and the Attempted Russification of Finland 1898–1904*. Durham 1995.

Looking back at our four theoretical categories of policy toward ethnic minorities (segregation, assimilation, integration, expulsion), we find some measure of all four in Russian policy. Segregation was the traditional approach: each ethnic group had its own place (both in the social order and geographically) and should be left there, indeed, should be discouraged from attempting significant social or geographical changes themselves. In the final decades of the 19th century, however, we witness a rather muddled mixture of assimilationist and integrationalist policies. For example, non-Russians were certainly encouraged to learn Russian and adopt Russian culture – probably the single most successful example of this kind of assimilation would be the Jews. While the vast majority of Russia’s Jews remained traditional and Yiddish-speaking, a very significant and growing percentage had by 1914 adopted the Russian language – the names of Vladimir Zhabotinskii and Lev Davidovich Bronstein (Trotsky) may suffice as examples.¹² At the same time, the distrust and disdain (to put it mildly) of tsarist officialdom toward the Jews – and especially those speaking good Russian – is very well known.¹³ Certainly tsarist officials rarely felt comfortable with the idea of “Russian Jews,” but it would be a mistake to see in the mass emigration of Jews after 1881 a covert expulsion policy: often officials expressed misgivings about these departures and put obstacles in the way of would-be Jewish emigrants.

In the context of the Russian Empire, expulsion did not figure as a state policy. In the two significant instances of ethnic groups leaving the Empire in mass numbers (before the emigration wave of the late 19th century), Kalmyks to China and Muslims to the Ottoman Empire, official policy attempted to limit, not encourage, the exodus.¹⁴ As for the Muslims, during the 19th century, as Russian power was extended south across the Caucasus and finally including Armenia and the region we know as Azerbaijan, many tens of thousands left their homes and fled across the border into the Ottoman Empire. While it seems certain that this exodus was at least in part caused

¹² See Benjamin Nathans, *Beyond the Pale: The Jewish Encounter with Late Imperial Russia*. Berkeley 2002. I do not mean to imply that Nathans sees the Jews of his study as specifically “assimilated.”

¹³ See, for example, Irvin Michael Aronson, *The Attitudes of Russian Officials in the 1880s toward Jewish Assimilation and Emigration*, in: *Slavic Review* 34 (1975), no. 1, pp. 1-18; and Erich Haberer, *Jews and Revolution in Nineteenth Century Russia*. Cambridge 1995.

¹⁴ On the Kalmyk encounter with the Russian Empire, see Michael Khodarkovsky, *Where Two Worlds Meet: The Russian State and the Kalmyk Nomads, 1600–1771*. Ithaca 1992.

by the hostile actions of Russian military and civil administrators, attacks on the part of Christian neighbors and a general reluctance to live under Christian rule seem also to have encouraged the Muslim departure. On the other hand, Russian officials did attempt to stymie the exodus for practical reasons. Thus one cannot designate this mass emigration of Muslims from the Russian Empire as a specific policy of expulsion.¹⁵

While the Muslim exodus can only with reservations be termed “expulsion” and Jewish mass emigration was more often hindered than actively encouraged by Russian officialdom, no other instances of Russian national policy in the late imperial period can reasonably be categorized as expulsion. Both practical issues and ideology explain this fact. The Russian government – unlike its Soviet successor – lacked the resources and will to round up and expel significant numbers of its subjects. Furthermore, the fundamentally conservative nature of the Russian Empire, combined with humanitarian considerations founded on Christian principles, militated against any such drastic policy.

Nationalist Movements

The second half of the 19th century, as is well known, was a period of “national awakening” – to use a loaded and imprecise term – among many ethnic groups of East-Central Europe. From Czechs to Estonians, Ukrainians to Latvians, the consciousness of belonging to a separate cultural and ethnic entity – and the pride in this belonging – spread through the region and took on political (or, at the very least, proto-political) forms. While no national group on the western borderlands of the Russian Empire seriously demanded national independence before World War I – aside from the Poles who form in many ways the exception to the rule – by 1905 cultural-ethnic difference had been defined and institutions to spread national consciousness (press, publishing, clubs, organizations) were in place. The level of national consciousness varied greatly, and was almost certainly

¹⁵ On the impact of the Russian Empire on Muslims, see *Muslim communities reemerge: historical perspectives on nationality, politics, and opposition in the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia*, ed. by Andreas Kappeler, Gerhard Simon and Georg Brunner. Durham 1994; and *Moshe Gammer, Muslim Resistance to the Tsar: Shamil and the Conquest of Chechnia and Dagestan*. London 1994; and *Russia's Orient: Imperial Borderlands and Peoples, 1700–1917*, ed. by Daniel R. Brower and Edward J. Lazzarini. Bloomington 1997.

lower among the Lithuanians than Estonians, Poles, and Latvians.¹⁶ In no case, however, do we see serious arguments for the creation of an ethnically homogeneous nation-state. Rather, patriots in each case defined their nation primarily in linguistic-cultural terms; their relations with neighboring ethnicities were cast in terms of assimilation or segregation.¹⁷ The following brief discussion of the main influences and lines of development among the Baltic peoples and Poles aims to show the mainly defensive and “self-consolidating” nature of these nationalisms in the pre-1914 period.

Starting from the north, the Estonians were the smallest but in the early 20th century most nationally aware and organized of the three Baltic ethnicities.¹⁸ Like Lithuanians and Latvians, they were a mainly peasant people before the 20th century; indeed the word “Estonian” came into broad usage in the 1860s and 1870s – previously these peasants had called themselves “country folk” (*maarahvas*).¹⁹ One large influence on the development of Estonian ethnic-cultural identity was the Christian church, though less from the “official” Lutheran pastors (who tended to be German in culture) and more from the smaller but dynamic pietistic Herrnhuter movement. The Herrnhuter fraternities, while never enrolling more than ten percent of the rural population, were influential in spreading the idea of enlightenment ideas, especially that of human dignity of the peasantry, among Estonians.²⁰ This concept of peasant dignity was easily translated into a desire to uphold and develop the dignity of Estonian cultural-ethnic identity which in turn demanded that Estonians shed their hitherto exclusively peasant identity.²¹ Estonian patriotic thinkers were also

¹⁶ For a good synthesis and comparison of these national movements, see Edward C. Thaden, *Traditions Elites, Religion and Nation-Building in Finland, the Baltic Provinces and Lithuania, 1700–1914*, in: *Finland and Poland in the Russian Empire: A Comparative Study*, ed. by Michael Branch (et al.). London 1995, pp. 1-15.

¹⁷ For a general treatment of the development of Baltic nationalisms and national identity, see Aleksander Loit, *Die nationalen Bewegungen im Baltikum*, and *Der Nationsbildungsprozess im Baltikum 1850–1914*, in: *Die Entstehung der Nationalbewegungen in Europa 1750–1918*, ed. by Heiner Timmermann. Berlin 1998, pp. 213-227 and 333-364.

¹⁸ The Lithuanians do not, strictly speaking, belong with Latvians and Estonians as “Baltic” before 1914, but I follow her present-day designation for the sake of simplicity.

¹⁹ Juhan Kahk, *Aufklärung und nationale Identität. Der Einfluß der progressiven Ideen auf die mentale Selbstfindung der Esten*, in *Aufklärung in den baltischen Provinzen Russlands*, ed. by Otto-Heinrich Elias. Köln 1996 (*Quellen und Studien zur baltischen Geschichte*. 15), pp. 43-56, here p. 43.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 50-55.

²¹ On the importance of estate (*Stand*) identity in the development of Baltic national identity, see Reinhard Wittram, *Das ständische Gefüge und die Nationalität*, in: *Idem, Das Nationale als europäisches Problem*. Göttingen 1954, pp. 149-160.

directly affected by Herder's ideas, like Jakob Hurt who wrote in 1874 to a German colleague that "Die Nation ist für mich nicht ein politischer, sondern ein ethnographischer Begriff."²² For Hurt and other Estonian nationalists, their most important task was to defend the national language and culture from Germanization.

By the early twentieth century, helped in part by a relatively benevolent attitude on the part of the Russian authorities (at least compared to policy toward Poles or Lithuanians), Estonians had created sophisticated cultural institutions ranging from schools and newspapers to singing clubs and institutions for economic self-help.²³ As the Estonian movement gained in strength and confidence, the cultural and economic hegemony of local Germans came increasingly under threat. However, to quote a contemporary Estonian nationalist, Estonians sought to achieve "die nationale, wirtschaftliche und politische Gleichberechtigung" and "eine freundliche Koexistenz in der gemeinsamen Heimat" and not "die endgültige Vernichtung der Deutschen."²⁴ To be sure, one can understand German feelings to the contrary, given the considerable level of anti-German violence (usually against property) during the 1905 revolution, but these attacks can be explained on economic rather than purely national grounds.²⁵ In any case, it is clear that after 1905 Estonians were able to work together with Russians and Germans – and not just in opposition to them – for example in the Tallinn city government.²⁶

Latvians, while more numerous than Estonians, developed a national movement somewhat later.²⁷ As with Estonians, Latvians defined themselves mainly in opposition to German townspeople and estate owners. The linguistic-cultural program of the Young Latvian move-

²² Quoted in: Ea Jansen, *Aufklärung und estnische nationale Bewegung in der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts*, in: *Aufklärung* (see note 19), pp. 64 f.

²³ See, for example, Toivo U. Raun, *Estonia and the Estonians*. 2nd ed., Stanford 2001.

²⁴ Anton Jürgenstein, quoted in: Toomas Karjahärm, *Das estnisch-deutsche Verhältnis und die Russische Revolution von 1905*, in: *Nordost-Archiv N.F. IV* (1995), H. 2, p. 436.

²⁵ See, for example, Gerd von Pistohlkors, *Ritterschaftliche Reformpolitik zwischen Russifizierung und Revolution: historische Studien zum Problem der politischen Einschätzung der deutschen Oberschicht in den Ostseeprovinzen Rußlands im Krisenjahr 1905*. Göttingen 1978.

²⁶ This is one of the conclusions of Bradley Woodworth, *Civil Society and Nationality in the Multiethnic Russian Empire: Tallinn/Reval, 1860–1914*. Ph.D. diss., Indiana University at Bloomington, 2003.

²⁷ For a general account, see Andrejs Plakans, *The Latvians: A Short History*. Stanford 1995. An interesting contemporary description is R. Peterson, *Latyshi [Latvians]*, in: A.I. Kastelianskii, ed., *Formy natsional'nago dvizheniia v sovremennykh gosudarstvakh: Avstro-Vengriia. Rossiia. Germaniia [Forms of National Movements in the Contemporary States: Austria-Hungary, Russia, Germany]*. St. Petersburg 1910, pp. 445-468.

ment, published in 1882, called for the use of Latvian in local schools including at the secondary level and in teachers' training institutes, the teaching of Latvian (as a second language) in Russian and German *Gymnasien*, and the right to use Latvian in correspondence with local officials. Another central goal of the Latvian movement was the creation and spread of Latvian literature – including translations of poems by Goethe, Heine, and Schiller, as well as the writing of Latvian songs, poetry, prose, and journalism.²⁸ Thus before 1905 the main element around which Latvian nationalism coalesced was culture. As to the north, the Latvian movement's conception of ethnic difference and the goal of the national movement were primarily defensive and aimed at the transformation of their hitherto primarily oral culture into a fully-fledged written literary culture.

The Lithuanian national movement took shape in very different circumstances than those of the Latvians and Estonians.²⁹ Indeed, the identity of Lithuanians as “Baltic” is a post-World War I construction. Before 1914 relatively few Lithuanians lived in the Baltic's immediate vicinity; their present and past was linked with Poland rather than the Baltic world of Sweden, Finland, and northern Germany. Lithuanians were also Catholic, which had distinct political connotations (because of the Polish connection) in the Russian Empire. Lithuanian peasants had participated actively in the 1863 anti-Russian uprising and though this was interpreted by the Russian officials as the work of fanatical (Polish) priests, one post-1863 measure aiming to cut Lithuanians off from Poles had a very significant dampening effect on the development of Lithuanian national culture.³⁰ This was, of course, the so-called “press prohibition” (*spaudos draudimas*) that forbade publishing in the Lithuanian language using Latin letters. Because literate Lithuanians refused to accept the Cyrillic alphabet, in effect Lithuanian publishing in the Russian Empire shut down

²⁸ Beata Johansone, Kultur als Grundlage der junglettischen Bewegung in der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts, in: Entstehung der Nationalbewegungen (see note 17), pp. 483-496.

²⁹ A. Bulat, Litovtsy [Lithuanians], in: Formy (see note 27), pp. 425-444; Manfred Hellmann, Die litauische Nationalbewegung im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert, in: Zeitschrift für Ostforschung, 2 (1953), pp. 66-106; and Jerzy Ochmański, Litewski ruch narodowo-kulturalny w XIX wieku [The Lithuanian National-Cultural Movement in the 19th Century]. Białystok 1965.

³⁰ Theodore R. Weeks, Lithuanians, Poles and the Russian Imperial Government at the Turn of the Century, in: Journal of Baltic Studies 25 (Winter 1994), No. 4, pp. 289-304; idem, Russification and the Lithuanians, 1863-1905, in: Slavic Review 60 (Spring 2001), no. 1, pp. 96-114.

for two generations.³¹ When the prohibition was rescinded in 1904, however, Lithuanian print culture rapidly developed, with dozens of periodicals, books, and brochures published in the next decade.

If Latvians and Estonians had as their main “ethnic competitor” the Germans, the Lithuanians defined themselves in opposition to the Poles. While Polish peasants did live in significant numbers in the region, for the Lithuanian national movement more important was the hegemonic Polish high culture in churches, on noble estates, and in cities such as Wilno (for Lithuanians, Vilnius).³² Thus the major goal for Lithuanian nationalism before 1914 was to challenge this hegemony, obtain rights for Lithuanian in churches, and demand a place for Lithuanian in local schools (it should be remembered that Polish was also not allowed in education; in any case the number of schools was small). Lithuanian nationalists certainly exhibited more anti-Jewish rhetoric than their Latvian and Estonians, but this phenomenon simply reflects the far greater numbers and importance of Jews in provinces where ethnic Lithuanians resided.³³ In any case, Lithuanian national rhetoric concentrated far more on consolidating their own culture than in attacking any other ethnicity. Lithuanians, like Latvians and Estonian patriots, seemed to consider inevitable a long-term cohabitation with other national groups (in particular Poles and Jews) and directed their efforts towards strengthening their own culture, national identity, and social position.

Besides the “native” national movements in the region, one must consider the presence of strong Russian-national elements here. As is well known, during the reign of Alexander III a concerted policy of reducing German cultural and political privileges (or, to see matters from the German point of view, “rights”) was followed. The shutting down of Dorpat (now Tartu) university and its replacement by a Russian institution (complete with the use of a Russian name for the town, Jur’ev) may serve as emblematic of this policy. But few Russian nationalists claimed the Baltic provinces (as opposed to the Belarusian-Lithuanian western territory) as “eternal Russian lands.”

³¹ *Raidžių draudimo metai* [Years of Banning Latin Characters], ed. by Darius Staliūnas. Vilnius 2004.

³² For an example of this anti-Polish attitude, see Jonas Basanavičius, *Lenkai Lietuvoje* [The Poles in Lithuania]. Chicago 1903; and idem, *Apie lenkų kalbą Lietuvos bažnyčiose* [Polish Language in Lithuanian Churches]. Kaunas 1906.

³³ See the essays and documents collected in Liudas Truska and Vyngantas Vareikis, *Holokausto prielaidos: antisemitizmas Lietuvoje / The Preconditions for the Holocaust: Anti-Semitism in Lithuania*. Vilnius 2004.

Rather, they saw proper imperial (read: Russian nationalist) policy in the Baltic as drawing this region closer to the imperial center, but not – at least in the short run – carrying out a thorough-going program of cultural russification.

The situation in the Belarusian-Lithuanian (“northwest”) provinces, was quite different. The rhetoric of Russian nationalism insisted that this was “native Russian soil” that had been torn away violently from mother Russia by perfidious Poles. While nationalists such as Ivan Aksakov and Mikhail Katkov (not to mention local Russian administrators) never denied the presence of “aliens” such as Poles, Lithuanians, and Jews in these provinces, their rhetoric dismissed this population as “latecomers” whose presence did not undermine the essential Russian-ness of the land.³⁴ This rhetoric is also reflected in the inscription on the monument to Catherine II unveiled in Vilna/Vilnius/Wilno in 1902: “That which was torn away [i.e., this land] – Returned [to the Russian Empire by the Partitions of Poland].”³⁵

There is a curious paradox in the rhetoric of Russian nationalists regarding the population of this region: on the one hand, they insisted on the fundamentally Russian character of the land but on the other they failed to articulate specific programs to expel non-Russians.³⁶ To be sure, the Russian nationalists (who, it should be remembered, dominated the Duma representation from this region after 1907) were vociferously in favor of restrictions on both Poles and Jews on the one hand, and for privileges to encourage Russian settlement here. No doubt in the long run they hoped that such policies would induce a steady strengthening of the Russian ethnicity in Vilna, Grodno (etc.) provinces (Kovno/Kaunas province, with its over 90% ethnic Lithuanian and Jewish population, was usually

³⁴ Aksakov’s and Katkov’s views on the western provinces are connected inextricably with their concepts of Polish-Russian relations. See, for example, Ivan Aksakov, *Pol’skii vopros i zapadno-russkoe delo* [The Polish Question and the West-Russian Situation]. Moscow 1886; and M.N. Katkov, 1863 god. *Sobranie statei po polskomu voprosu* [Collection of Articles about the Polish Question]. Moscow 1887.

³⁵ A. Vinogradov, *Pamiatnik imperatritse Ekateriny II v g. Vil’ne* [The Monument of Empress Catherine II in Wilna]. Vil’na 1902, p. 9. On the unveiling of the monument and the ensuing controversy, see Dariusz Szpoper, *Sukcesorzy Wielkiego Księstwa. Myśl polityczna i działalność konserwatystów polskich na ziemiach litewsko-białoruskich w latach 1904–1939* [The Heirs of the Grand Duchy. The Political Idea and Polish Conservative Activity in the Lithuanian and Belorussian Regions 1904–1939]. Gdańsk 1999, pp. 10-18.

³⁶ An example of such rhetoric is P.N. Batiushkov, *Belorussia i Litva* [Belorussia and Lithuania]. St. Petersburg 1890. While Polish influence is denounced, it seems to be taken for granted that a strong and consistent pro-Russian policy – but not specific expulsions or the like – will return to the region its “eternal Russian character”.

passed over in silence). Still, their failure to formulate an explicitly expulsionary rhetoric reflects, I think, a fundamental taboo of that time: forcible resettlement, like pressure to affect religious conversion, was seen as essentially immoral and unacceptable. Russian nationalists consistently argued that they aimed only to defend the down-trodden Russian nation from stronger and better-organized Polish (and Jewish) competitors.³⁷ However hypocritical such rhetoric was, the fact remains that Russian chauvinists of the pre-1914 shied away from an open call for ethnic-based expulsion.

Probably the most aggressive rhetoric among national movements in the region would be found among the Polish National Democrats (*Endecja*). Influenced by Herbert Spencer and often using pseudo-Darwinist rhetoric, the *Endeks* are best known for their uncompromisingly negative stance on the Jewish question. Indeed, they explicitly called for Poles to segregate themselves from Jews and hoped that Jews, thus deprived of their income, would be forced to emigrate. While not explicitly calling for the expulsion of Jews (there was, after all, no Polish state which could carry out such a program), such an expulsion was implicit in their rhetoric and program. As Brian Porter recently pointed out, the *Endeks* defined *naród* in terms of “patriotic rhetoric to enforce social discipline, the construction of high walls of inclusion and exclusion around the national community, and the insistence that international relations were based on conflict.”³⁸ In other words, rather than being based on cooperation and mutual respect, relations between different ethnicities – here “international” must be understood as “inter-ethnic” and not just referring to relations between states – were seen as necessarily antagonistic, with the stronger (or “fitter”) nation winning.

It is certainly not by chance the only rhetoric of expulsion exhibited by the nationalist groups we have considered came from the most antisemitic among them, the Polish *Endeks*. From the 1870s at latest, European antisemitism had taken on a racial tinge quite alien to the

³⁷ Russian nationalism remains an under-researched topic. Meanwhile, see: Robert Edelman, *Gentry Politics on the Eve of the Russian Revolution: The Nationalist Party 1907–1917*. New Brunswick 1980; Don C. Rawson, *Russian Rightists and the Revolution of 1905*. New York 1995; and the essays collected in Hans Rogger, *Jewish Policies and Right-Wing Politics in Imperial Russia*. Berkeley 1986). Two major journals of the Russian rightist / nationalist camp in the early 20th century are “*Mirnyi trud*” and “*Okrainy Rossii*”, both of which merit closer study and historical analysis.

³⁸ Brian Porter, *When Nationalism Began to Hate: Imagining Modern Politics in Nineteenth-Century Poland*. Oxford 2000, p. 200.

culturally-oriented national movements we have considered.³⁹ While the *Endeks* never fully embraced a racist arguments of western and central European antisemites, the Polish nationalists' constant emphasis on the harm Jews had done to Poland and the Polish nation certainly hampered any efforts for Polish-Jewish cooperation.

The Poles were numerically the largest "national minority" in the western borderlands of the Russian Empire and unlike the Baltic peoples, Belarusians and Ukrainians, also had a well-developed nobility and – to a lesser extent – middle classes. Andrzej Walicki has argued that already in the late 18th century Poles had developed a form of civic nationalism closer to the French than eastern European model.⁴⁰ Whether or not one accepts this argument, it cannot be denied that Poles – unlike the smaller Estonian, Latvian, or Lithuanian nations – already possessed a well developed and codified language, printed literary culture, historical tradition, and national identity before 1800. Thus the tasks of Polish nationalism in the 19th century were quite different from those of the Baltic nations. Where Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians needed to actually produce an agreed-upon common standard language, this was far less of an issue for Poles. Similarly, for all the persecutions of Poles under Russian and Prussian domination, rationally one could not truly fear an extinction of Polish culture – such an extinction seemed much more possible for Estonians or Lithuanians.

Why, then, did the most developed forms of aggressive nationalism and antisemitism develop among Poles and not in the Baltic? This question cannot be answered in a few words, but possibly the very fact that the Polish nation was more developed than its Baltic neighbors allowed Polish nationalists to take the next step towards formulating ideas (though of course not policies) of expulsion (more specifically, of advocating Jewish emigration).⁴¹ As the essays here will show, ideas and policies of expulsion were developed and carried out in many parts of Europe in the generations after World War II.

³⁹ Leon Poliakov, *A History of Antisemitism*. Vol. 4: *Suicidal Europe, 1870–1903*. New York 1965; Robert Wistrich, *Antisemitism: The Longest Hatred*. New York 1992.

⁴⁰ Andrzej Walicki, *The Enlightenment and the Birth of Modern Nationhood: Polish Political Thought from Noble Republicanism to Tadeusz Kosciuszko*. South Bend, Ind. 1989. On this topic see also *Idee i koncepcje narodu w polskiej myśli politycznej czasów porozbiorowych* [Ideas and Concepts of People in Polish Political Thinking after the Era of Partition], ed. by Andrzej Walicki and Janusz Gockowski. Warsaw 1977.

⁴¹ For a more detailed consideration of Polish-Jewish relations and "what went wrong" in the 19th century, see Theodore R. Weeks, *From Assimilation to Antisemitism: The "Jewish Question" in Poland, 1850–1914* DeKalb 2006.

As we have seen, expulsion as one “solution” to difficult relations with another national-ethnic group was rarely advocated – or even formulated – before 1914. So where did these policies come from? I do not think it too fanciful to suggest that the ideas of antisemites for Jewish expulsion in order to achieve more ethnic homogeneity played some role here. To be sure, ideas and policies do not develop in an orderly, straight-line fashion. At best, I think, we can note similarities and possible influences. The terrible blood-letting of the First World War as well as the radical measures of expulsion, expropriation, and arrest employed by various powers (but especially the Russians) also provided models for future measures of ethnic cleansing.⁴² An attempt, however, to seek a long genealogy for these measures in the nationalist ideologies of the 19th century is to my mind quite fruitless. In particular among the nationalities of the Russian Empire – with the partial exception of Poles and Russians – the existence of various distinct ethnic groups living together in one territory continued to be accepted as the norm and as an inevitable future reality all the way to 1914. It was only after the terrible events of 1914–1918 that individuals and governments began more seriously to advocate the forcible unmixing of peoples. In this way, too, World War I deprived Europe of its innocence.

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⁴² On this topic see, for example, Eric Lohr, *Nationalizing the Russian Empire: The Campaign against Enemy Aliens during World War I*. Cambridge, Mass. 2003; Peter Gattrell, *A Whole Empire Walking: Refugees in Russia during World War I*. Bloomington 1999; and Peter Holquist, *Making War, Forging Revolution: Russia's Continuum of Crisis 1914–1921*. Cambridge, Mass. 2002.