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Latvieši un Latvija (Latvians and Latvia), chief
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In 2013 in Riga the monumental study was published, entitled *Latvieši un Latvija* (Latvia and Latvians). It consists of the four volumes: *Latvieši* (Latvians), *Valstiskums Latvijā un latvijas valsts – izcīnīta un zaudētā* (Statehood in Latvia and the Latvian State – established and lost), *Atjaunota Latvijas valsts* (The restored Latvian state), and *Latvijas kultūra, izglītība, zinātne* (Culture, education and science in Latvia). The chief editor of all the four volumes is Jānis Stradiņš, the former president of Latvian Academy of Sciences (in the years 1998–2004), and he is currently the President of Senate of Latvian Academy of Sciences (since 2004), the eminent scientist, chemist and social activist.

The publication was issued on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the existence of the Latvian state (since the restoration of its independence after the dissolution of the Soviet Union) so as to present in a detailed yet condensed way – at the academic level, and taking into account the latest scientific research – the history of the Latvian nation and the Latvian statehood. The study is a result of the multi-annual scientific programme *Letonika: pētījumi par valodu, vēsturi un kultūru* („Letonika: Research on the language, history and culture”), which was carried out in the years 2005–2009,

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and of the programme *Nacionālā identitāte: valoda, Latvijas vēsture, kultūra un cilvēkdrošība* („The national identity: the language, history of Latvia, culture and safety of people”) – carried out in the years 2010–2013.

By means of the form and content of the publication, the authors referred to the previous studies, in particular, to the renown and highly appreciated earlier publication *Latvieši* (Latvians), issued in 1930 (and subsequent editions) by Francis Balodis and Pēters Šmits¹, and to other studies².

The starting point for the selection of the subject matter was the term *Letonika*, understood by the authors of the publication as the comprehensive research on the ethnic composition of the people of Latvia, the issues in the field of anthropology, the functioning of the oldest statehoods on the Latvian territory, the formation of the Latvian statehood and nation, the ethno-demographic issues formerly and today, the language and dialects, the Baltic folklore and mythology, the material and spiritual culture, the traditions, the education and art of the Latvian nation, etc.

The authors of the study *Latvians and Latvia* are dozens of scientists, who represent various disciplines and often are eminent specialists in their field. We can mention for instance: O. Bušs, I. Jansone and A. StafECKA (the linguistics); V. Bērziņš, Ē. Jēkabsons and D. Bleiere (the history); I. Kalniņa and P. Daija (the literary studies) and many others.

The first volume of the publication, edited by Ilga Jansone (linguist, Director of Latvian Language Institute and full member of LAS) and Andrejs Vasks (historian, archaeologist, professor of the University of Latvia, full member of LAS), consists of 17 articles, which show the history from the early times until today. There have been presented the following issues: the language of Latvians, the oldest history, the Baltic folklore and mythology, the traditions and folk costume, the folk and national symbolism as well as the Latvia position among other Baltic nations.

The series starts with the article by O. Bušs, who explains the origin of the ethnonyms *Latvia*, *Latvians* and *Latgaliens* on the basis of the written historical sources (such as Nestor's chronicle), associating them with, inter alia, the hydronyms – names of the rivers Mālupe and Latupe. Ē. Mugarēvičs in the article on the earliest written sources mentioning the Balts (in the geographical and geopolitical aspects) analyses, among other, the names included in the Tacitus and Ptolemy studies. Another text, written by archaeologists V. Bērziņš and A. Vasks, presents the oldest history of the

¹ First edition: *Latvieši*, ed. F. Balodis and P. Šmits, Riga 1930: Valters un Rapa, no. of pages: 357 (Balodis & Šmits, 1930); second edition: *Latvieši II*, ed. F. Balodis, P. Šmits and A. Tentel, Riga 1932: Valters un Rapa, no. of pages: 511 (Balodis, Šmits, & Tentel, 1932); next edition (revised): *Latvieši*, ed. F. Balodis, P. Šmits and A. Tentel, Riga 1936: Valters un Rapa, no. of pages: 369 (Balodis, Šmits, & Tentel, 1936).

² The list of the studies used while preparing the publication is included in the first volume of the study on the following pages: 9–11.

Latvian lands from the 11th century B.C. to the 9th century A.D. – the first people grazing reindeer, their everyday life, the agricultural economy of that time (hunting and fishery) of the period of the Stone Age, the Bronze Age and the Iron Age. This article is supplemented with the article by A. Vilcāne who describes the history of the Baltic tribes (Latgalian, Selonians, Semigallians, Couronians) and the Baltic Finns (Livs and Vends) from the end of the late Iron Age (the IX century A.D.) to the year 1200, i.e. the founding of Riga by bishop Albert von Buxhövden: the spiritual and material culture of the Balts, the economy, the socio-political and cultural life. The further history of the Latvian lands (the Livonian period, the 13th–14th centuries) is described by M. Auns, who, in addition, shows the assimilation processes of Livs.

The description of Latvian history in the first volume ends at the 14th century – and that period is recognised as the time of freedom and liberty of the Latvian nation, therefore no separate articles are devoted to the Polish and tzar authority periods. The next articles deal with the demographic situation in the Latvian territory, starting from the Stone Age till the 18th century (text by G. Zariņa); the position of Latvians and the Latvian language among other Baltic nations and their languages as well as the history of the earlier Latvian language (O. Bušs); forming of the Latvian literary language from the early literature on the Latvian lands till today (P. Vanags); evolution of the Latvian literature and its spelling (I. Jansone, A. Stafecka), history of dialects of the Latvian language (A. Stafecka).

Other articles refer only to the material culture of Latvians and their ancestors. In his text G. Zemītis analysed the ethnic and religious symbolism from the ancient times before Christ (associated with the solar deity) till today, which is placed on folk costumes or distinctions and orders. L. Drumpe showed in her article the culinary traditions of the Latvian nation – the impact of historical, geographical, cultural and social conditions on the cuisine (meat, milk, fish dishes, beverages, etc.). L. Vanaga, in turn, looks into the Latvian term *novads* (a municipality – the administrative division), how it has been changing throughout the history, how the Latvian regions have been formed and how the existence of administrative divisions influenced the socio-cultural and economical specificity of these regions. I. Žeiere in her publication focused on the ancient costumes description – which is an element of paramount importance for Latvians as regards their cultural heritage. B. Reidzāne and M. Vīksna presented the Latvian folklore, concentrating on, inter alia, songs, collected and described formerly by Krišjānis Barons – the eminent Latvian folklorist and writer. From the article by S. Laime and A. Pūtelis we learn about the Latvian mythology. The first volume of the publication ends with the text by A. Veisbergs “Portrayal of Latvia and Latvians in English sources”.

The second volume of the publication, *Statehood in Latvia and the Latvian State – established and lost*, consists of 21 articles demonstrating evolution of the Latvian statehood from the 9th century until today – medieval Livonia, old Riga city, the

Duchy of Courland and Semigallia, the emergence of the Latvian elites, the Latvian social organisations, the times of German and Soviet occupation. A considerably large space was devoted to the Latvian statehood during the interwar period, which is fully understandable. The second volume of the publication was edited by Tālav Jundzis (political scientist, social activist, former minister of national defence and vice-President of LAS) and Guntis Zemītis (historian, archaeologist – Director of the Institute of the Latvian History, corresponding member of LAS).

The first articles concern the earlier history, and the following issues are raised there: the medieval state formations on the Latvian lands (Couronians, Livs, Latgallians, Selonians, Semigallians) from the pre-Christian times until the 13th century (text: G. Zemītis); A. Levāns shows the models of political organisations in medieval Livonia (period from the 13th to 14th centuries) – to a large extent shaped by two processes – Christianisation of the eastern Balts and the migrations of population. The text by I. Ose is worth mentioning, she described the fortified castles used as centres of authority in the 13th–14th centuries. The state of the Livonian Brothers of the Sword (later merged with the Teutonic Knights) built on the Latvian territory approximately 100 stone castles, which established and strengthened the administrative, military and economic authority of the order of knights in this area. The separate article is devoted to the Hanseatic City Riga (A. Caune), which beginnings date in the year 1201. Riga played an extremely important role, not only in the history of the Latvian nation, but also of the Polish people and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and, in general, of the nations living by the Baltic Sea. The text of the researcher M. Jakovļeva presents the history of the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia, poorly known to the European and Polish researchers, and it is worth mentioning that it was in the times of Duke Jacob Kettler, when the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth became a colonialist country, with overseas lands in Africa and Latin America.

The next four articles refer in chronological order to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Russian Empire (M. Barzdeviča, J. Lazdiņš, A. Priedīte-Kleinhofa, V. Blūzma) – the Polish-Swedish-Russian wars, the agricultural reforms of the 19th century, the formation of the Latvian society and the processes associated with it, namely creating of pro-Latvian political ideas or the Latvian lands during the October Revolution.

In respect of the 20th century the authors again chose these issues and events that had the greatest impact on the fortunes of the Latvian nation: the military actions in the period 1918–20, which brought the independence to Latvia (text Ē. Jēkabsons), the formation of parliamentary authority (article: U. Krēsliņš) – Latvia in the years 1920s of the 20th century was one of the most democratic and tolerant countries in Europe; the government policy toward the national minorities in Latvia during the interwar period and currently (L. Drybins); the evolution of pro-Latvian ideas of the young country and creating of the national myth (I. Lipša). A. Stranga described the authori-

tarian rule of K. Ulmanis (the years 1934–1940), one of the best-known figure in the political life of Latvia, who held all of the key positions in the country. His rule was remembered by the people as a noticeable restriction of freedom on one hand, and the period of very good economical growth of the country on the other hand (the agrarian reform). As in other East-Central Europe countries, the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact played a key role for their existence – in relation to Latvia it is described in the article of I. Feldmanis. The Soviet invasion of Latvia and the other Baltic countries resulted in great repression, which concerned not only the ordinary people, but above all the elites (text: Viksne), which were exchanged in 1941 for the German occupation (article: Dz. Ērglis).

Other articles refer to the post-war period. Historians A. Bergmanis and I. Zālite show in their text the Soviet times, the Soviet repression against the Latvian population in the Stalinist times and the authorities policy to keep as much power and control as possible with the use of the administration, secret service and ideology. The supplement to this article is the text of the researcher D. Bleiere, who analysed the Sovietisation process and its impact on the society and the economy of the Republic. The effects of the authorities' Russification policy on the society are visible even today, in the language, the mentality or the economy. Not everyone, however, was so eager to surrender to "Big Brother". Just after the Second World War the well-developed anti-soviet guerilla warfare was acting in the Latvian territory (consisting of even 11,000 partisans). This essential aspect of the Latvian struggle for their country in the years 1944–56 was discussed in the article by R. Jansons. The second volume of the publication closes chronologically the existence of the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic.

The third volume of the publication, *The restored Latvian state*, is entirely devoted to the contemporary history of Latvia and consists of 15 articles edited by Tālavš Jundzis and Guntis Zemītis. The first text, written by E. Levits, is a kind of discussion on the three most important concepts for Latvia and the Latvians – the Latvian nation, the people of Latvia and the Latvian state. The author emphasises the right of the Latvian nation to the autonomy and decision-making about their fortunes in their own state, which reflects in, inter alia, the language policy of the country and the formed national identity of Latvians. Another text (T. Jundzis) shows in detail the restoration of independence process by Latvia during the following events – perestroika of Gorbachov, social and international movements and actions – "Helsinki-86" the Baltic Chain of hands from Tallinn through Riga to Vilnius, etc. The third text (E. B. Deksnis and K. Beķere) presents the role of the Latvian emigration in lobbying of other countries of America and Western Europe to restore the independence of Latvia.

The subsequent articles present thematically the main aspects of the functioning of the renewed state (J. Pleps); the processes of democratisation in Latvia (I. Ījabs); the Latvian legal culture and understanding of legality (S. Osipova); the development of press and mass-media from the 18th century to the 21st century (J. Dreifelds); the for-

mation of the administration and local authorities (I. Vilka); the role of the Latvian language after the restoration of independence and the language policy (I. Druvietē); the symbolism of the Latvian statehood (K. Ducmane); the demographic change (P. Zvidriņš); the Latvian economy before and after the restoration of independence (R. Karnīte), the Latvian foreign policy (A. Lerhis); Latvia as a member of the European Union (Ž. Ozoliņa). The third volume ends with the article by Z. Skujiņš entitled *Along the road leading to the ocean future, or survival of the Latvian State and nation*. These are the reflections the Latvian writer and free-thinker over the future fortune of his homeland.

The fourth volume, the most spacious, consisting of over 800 pages, is composed of 26 articles on the Latvian culture, education and science in the territory of contemporary Latvia from the earliest times till the 21st century. It was edited by Viktors Hausmanis (specialist in literature and theatre, full member of LAS) and Maija Kūle (Director of the Institute of the Philosophy and Sociology, full member of LAS). The series begins with the text written by E. Buceniece, who describes the formation of intellectual identity of Latvians. In this volume we can find extensive articles focusing on the Latvian literature (texts: Daija, E. Eglāja-Kristsons, I. Kalniņa); the theatre (V. Hausmanis), the Latvian music and musicians (A. Klotiņš, D. Mazvērsīte); the choral singing and song festivals (I. Grauzdiņa); the national book publishing (V. Zanders); the history of visual arts in Latvia (E. Grosmane and E. Kļaviņš), the cinema (J. Straičis, I. Pērkone); the development of education and the idea of pedagogy (A. Krūze and A. Zigmunde); the higher education and science in Latvia (J. Stradiņš); the architecture (J. Krastiņš) and the sport (I. Ošiņš). There are also articles regarding the religious and spiritual aspects of the Latvian nation (S. Krūmiņa-Koņkova and A. Misāne); the European values in Latvia (M. Kūle), the Baltic Germans and their impact on the culture of the Latvian nation (M. Grudule); the national minorities and their functioning within the Latvian state (L. Drybins and J. Goldmanis). The last three articles concern the cultural life of the Latvian emigration (I. Daukste-Silasproģe), the transformation of the sexuality category in the context of nationalisation and Latvianising during the interwar period in Latvia (I. Lipša) and the integration of the youth in the society (R. Rungule and I. Koroļeva).

The four volume publication is undoubtedly the most spacious (including nearly 2,400 pages) and the most detailed study of such nature, showing the history of the Latvian statehood and the Latvian nation, published in independent Latvia. The articles included in it are based on not only the extensive subject literature, taking into account the latest state of research, but also abundantly illustrated (maps, diagrams, charts). It is an excellent and thoroughly prepared compendium of knowledge about Latvia and Latvians, presenting all the paramount events of the history of the state, the nation and its spiritual and material heritage. It is worth mentioning that the authors of the book selected the subjects of the particular articles and arranged the structure of the publication in such

a way that everything is very well organised at the chronological level. Because of the turbulent history of the Latvian lands it was not a simple task. Each volume contains the extensive index of persons with the short note of their profession, dates of life and the number of page/pages, where the name is mentioned.

There is a certain unsatisfied feeling about the Latvian emigration – although there is the article entitled *Ēmigré Latvian cultural life (literature, music, theatre)*, but little space is devoted to this issue elsewhere, though the merits of Latvians, living abroad in Russia, Scandinavia, the United Kingdom, Germany, Canada, etc., to their homeland are enormous. Because of the volume of the subject matter undertaken, the authors assumed that they would geographically limit their study to the territory of contemporary Latvia, which is fully understandable.

Latvieši un Latvija, above all, is the study of paramount importance for Latvians and the people of Latvia themselves, and thus they are the prospective readers of the study in the Latvian language. Presenting what is the most important for the nation, the national identity and the state, the publication is going to constitute the specific kind of a bible, which each Latvian and each person identifying themselves with the Latvian state should have and wants to have at home. There was a great demand for such a study, which has been proven by the fact that the whole impression of 1,000 copies has been sold within a few months and a reimpression is being prepared.

The authors have also planned for the years 2014–2017 preparing and publishing this study in one volume in English, which will slightly differ thematically from the Latvian version. The stronger emphasis will be put on the regional and pan-European issues – the national and European identity, the Latvia's place in the Baltic Sea region, in Europe and in the world, the coexistence with the closest neighbours – Lithuanians and Estonians, regarding various historical periods. This publication will be of great importance for the European audience. The knowledge of Latvia, the Latvian nation and its culture is negligible, which also is due to the lack of available publications in a language other than Latvian. The readers will not be forced to read the obsolete and outdated publications (the German, Polish and English ones), or unreliable and often full of ideology ones (like many texts in the Russian language). This will undoubtedly be a publication, which any person dealing with this country and the Baltic states should possess. The content and the beautiful graphic design, with numerous photographs and illustrations supporting the discussed issues causes that *Latvieši un Latvija* will become a substantial bibliophile's item.

There cannot exist a modern nation without formed national identity, fostering and preserving its homeland culture, mother tongue, tradition and not leaving the legacy of it for their descendants. The authors of the pre-war publication entitled *Latvieši*, F. Balodis, P. Šmits and others, were perfectly aware of it, therefore they published their study, of such importance for the restored young state. Today, 80 years later, and 25 years after dissolution of the Soviet Union and the restoration of independence

by Latvia, the Latvian scientists have referred by means of their publication to the good, pre-war tradition, with a view to carrying out a thorough and objective work for descendants, and leaving for them this what is of utmost importance as regards the Latvian heritage. Therefore the four volume study *Latvieši un Latvija* is so important.

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***Latvieši un Latvija* (Latvians and Latvia), chief editor: Jānis Stradiņš**

Summary

In 2013 in Riga the monumental study entitled *Latvieši un Latvija* (Latvians and Latvia) was published. The book under review consists of four volumes: Latvians; Statehood in Latvia and the Latvian State – established and lost; The restored Latvian state; and Culture, education and science in Latvia. In the publication its authors presented articles showing the most important aspects for the Latvian nation, connected with history, national identity, language, culture and other aspects of the functioning of the Latvian statehood.

Keywords: Latvia; Latvians; Latvian history; culture; language