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Media Use and Social Influence Among the Moravian Brethren in the Baltic Region with a Focus on Modern-Day Latvia

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ABSTRACT The Herrnhut Brethren (Moravians) expanded to the Baltic region in the early eighteenth century and quickly became a substantial religious force, especially among the local Estonian and Latvian peasant population. Instead of following a top-down institutional approach to Christianity, the Moravians approached the peasants as equals. The resulting religious contact between the Moravians and the Baltic Lutheran Church entrenched Christianity in the Baltic countryside more than had previously been the case and empowered the local population, largely through the innovative use of media and access to education.

KEYWORDS Pietism, Herrnhut, Moravian Church, Livland, national awakening, peasant education

Introduction

Christianity was brought to the eastern shores of the Baltic Sea as early as the High Middle Ages, but the Christianity that blossomed here remained very much a Baltic German phenomenon, even well into the confessionalisation processes set in motion in the wake of the Reformation in the sixteenth century. In the case of the Baltic region, these processes often started to take expression only in the seventeenth century. Many developments began only at the end of the century and continued even into the nineteenth century. Pietism played a special role in this regard. In the last quarter of the seventeenth century, thanks to Sweden's specific religious policy, it reached the Baltic provinces only in very few cases. However, in the eighteenth century, after the Great Northern War (1700–1721) when these territories came under Russian rule, most obstacles were taken down, and new ambassadors of pietism, the Moravian Brethren from Herrnhut (Oberlausitz), chose this region as one of the special destinations of their mission. They launched rather long-running and efficient activities among [1]

the local populations, especially among the Latvian and Estonian peasants (Straube and Laur 2009, 97–114).

[2] The first ambassadors from Herrnhut arrived in the Latvian part of the Governorate of Livland[1] (the region called Vidzeme in present-day Latvia) in the autumn of 1729. Among them was the Moravian Brother Christian David, who more directly than anyone else represented the continuation of the old Czech Brotherhood of Jan Hus in the new Moravian Church, also called the Herrnhut Brethren, which had been re-established by count Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf. The statutes of the Brethren defined the commitment to facilitate the spread of Christianity and, wherever Christians faced obstacles in enjoying the fruits of the Christian faith, to help them overcome these (Hahn and Reichel 1977, 70, 350–51, 374, 376). The Baltic provinces of the Russian Empire presented a perfectly suitable arena for this kind of mission. Although the indigenous populations of these territories had been Christian since the thirteenth century, they lived under conditions that the Brethren regarded as obstructive. By this, they primarily meant that the Lutheran Church was controlled by the German-speaking elite, but also that a new political reality had taken shape after 1721—with the Baltic provinces of Estland and Livland under Russian rule, the dominating faith of which was Orthodoxy.

[3] As Heinz Schilling has aptly characterised it, the changes brought by the Moravian Brethren in religious life triggered changes in other social spheres as well (1999, 16). Conceptualising the arrival of the Herrnhut Brethren in the Baltic region from 1729 onwards as a case of religious contact between the 'traditional' Baltic German Lutheran Church and the new Pietist current, one can see how the use of non-traditional media and the integration of previously marginalised voices vastly impacted the religious landscape and the social realities of this region. This paper aims to shed light on the religious contact in terms of the Moravian introduction of new media for religious communication among the local inhabitants, primarily the Latvians. It does so in three steps. The first section investigates the concrete history of the contact between representatives of the Herrnhut brotherhoods and those of the mainstream Baltic German Church. In the second section, the focus is on the impact of the Moravians on language and education among the indigenous population, whereas the third section looks at later social consequences, such as on the economy, emancipation, and national movements.

Pietism and Other Lutheran Christians

[4] When the Herrnhut Moravians started their mission in the Baltic region, they were welcomed in the Governorates of Livland and Estland only by those Lutheran pastors and landlords who already sympathised with Pietism. The indigenous population regarded them as an evil brought from the West and boding only trouble for them. The situation started to change in the second half of the 1730s, when contact with the local peasants intensified. The Moravian Brothers, especially Christian David himself, whose activities were imbued with devotion and Christian love for the surrounding area, boosted their trust and aroused an interest in the Christianity preached by the Herrnhutians. Through these contacts, the farmers became more and more convinced that the German-speaking Brothers had come to help and support them, that they accepted the farmers in Livland as similar to themselves and did not view them from

1 In order to avoid confusion, this entity will be called "Livland," to distinguish it from the broader meaning of the medieval region "Livonia," which stretched all across the Baltic region. The Governorate of Livland only encompassed the southern half of today's Estonia and the northern half of Latvia. The Governorate of Estland covered the northern half of current Estonia.

above. This encouraged the peasants to open up to the Moravians and develop an interest in what they were doing and preaching. More and more farmers started attending gatherings organised by the German Brothers. But these meetings had an immense added value due to a new way of using media. If, in the past, the peasants literally just attended worship while their thoughts were more preoccupied with other things, Herrnhut worship began to demand their active participation. The sermons were much closer to their experiences, and the organisation of the service required the peasants to participate in it with their own activities. The way the Moravians organised the whole of spiritual life and congregational organisation into choirs at different levels, from very local to district-wide, also demanded more intensive participation of peasants in religious life.

[5] Consequently, these contacts between the Moravian Brothers and the peasants of Livland were decisive in changing the attitude of the indigenous people of this region towards Christianity. One can imply that the Moravian Church served as a 'Reformation' for the Latvian peasants who, in a relatively short time under the impact of Herrnhutianism, started to reject the principles of their ancestral faith and evolved into typical Christians who practised their religion 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. Before that, they had been a sort of 'Sunday Christians' who went to church only on Sundays for mass, and even then partially unwillingly. Apart from that, they had visited church only for baptisms, marriages, and funerals, partly because they risked being punished if they failed to meet these requirements. Nevertheless, sometimes even these requirements had been ignored; burying their dead outside the ground consecrated by the church had been rather broadly practiced. At all other times, peasants had made offerings to their gods and holy sites, left offerings on holy stones and in groves, and visited diviners and healers. Such syncretism was partially facilitated by the peasants' protest against the rule and faith that had been brought from outside and forced upon them.

[6] At the same time, the rapid increase of adherents and the popularity of the Moravian Church alerted the opponents of Pietism. There was also concern about a possible decline in church revenues as peasants had begun to prefer baptising their children and marrying in Herrnhut meeting houses rather than in Lutheran churches. Negative rumours and stories about plots reached St. Petersburg and found attentive ears with the religiously suspicious Empress Elisabeth Petrovna (1738–1742). She banned the Moravian Brethren from the Russian Empire in 1742. The government of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Livland conducted investigations for one whole year so that the order was fully carried out only in 1743, and the Brethren were forced to cease their activities. Several Herrnhut Moravians left Livland. However, the Russian Empire could not enforce the ban, and peasants quickly realised that. Already a decade after the issuing of the ban, the Brethren gradually resumed their expansion, both in geographical and quantitative terms, as the Moravian Church spread its influence in an increasing number of districts across Livland. The Brethren themselves described the period between 1743 and 1817 when there was formally a ban in place as "the silent march." At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Moravian Brethren already included approximately 10,000 Latvian peasants (Straube 2000, 156).

[7] Already in the 1740s, Lutheran pastors observed that peasants from their parishes had started to attend all prayer times in increasing numbers, and their knowledge of Scripture was becoming better. Furthermore, a growing number of peasants were able not only to recite the commandments and other religious texts but also to explicate them. A particular achievement was the fact that while at the beginning male peasants had been more successful in this regard, soon peasant wives, too, started to demonstrate increasingly better knowledge. Shortly before

"the silent march," members of the visitation commissions discovered that in several parishes peasants had become better at singing church hymns, and in others the pastors had even managed to train them to perform hymns not only in monophonic but also in polyphonic manner.

[8] Among those who had become Herrnhut Brethren between the 1730s and the early nineteenth century, there were numerous Latvians who rose to fame in later years, indicating the success of the Herrnhut way of practicing Christianity. Significantly, it was in the Herrnhut environment that one of the first Lutheran pastors of ethnic Latvian origin, Georgs Neikens, was raised. His parents were not only members of the Moravian Church but also held important positions in it. Jānis Cimze, the head of the first officially state-founded Teachers' Seminary in Valmiera (German: Wolmar, founded 1839) for the training of peasant school teachers, likewise came from a family of Moravian Brethren. Many of the early Latvian nationalists, the most active figures of the national awakening in the second half of the nineteenth century, have similar origins. A pertinent formulation about this aspect comes from Ludvigs Adamovičs, one of the first Latvian church historians, who characterised the activities of the Livland Brethren as "the growth of Latvians into Christianity." This was even the title of one of his articles (1939).

[9] In the first decades of the nineteenth century, the successful war with Napoleonic France brought Emperor Alexander I glory and raised hope for liberal reforms in Russia. Although the hope remained unfulfilled on a large scale, some steps were taken in this direction: In the Governorates of Courland and Livland, serfdom was abolished in 1817 and 1819, respectively, and peasants acquired personal freedom. Furthermore, in 1817 the emperor signed a Letter of Grace to the Moravian Brethren, again allowing them to work freely in the Russian Empire and granting them several privileges. It put an end to "the silent march," and the Moravian Church flourished for a few decades; it continued to spread in the Baltic, and the number of its adherents reached 20,000 (LVVA, 237.1.11b, 32). In many parishes in Livland, more than half of the peasants belonged to the Moravian Brethren; in some parishes, the proportion reached 90%. Thus, the Brethren yielded comprehensive and fruitful influence. The total number of Estonian and Latvian peasants who had joined the ranks of the Moravian Brethren is estimated at around 100,000 (ABU, R.19.G.a., 3.27.1.b.).

[10] In the 1830s, the domestic policy course of the Russian Empire became increasingly reactionary, and the tsars viewed Russification as one of their goals. In late 1832, a new Imperial Church Law was adopted which considerably restricted the activities of non-Orthodox Churches while increasing the role of the dominant Orthodox Church. This law hit the Baltic Lutheran and Roman Catholic Churches hard and especially the Moravian Church in the governorates of Livland and Estland. In a short time, a range of enforced restrictions practically turned it into a sect with very limited opportunities for physical revival and continued functioning in compliance with its internal principles. Thus, in the second half of the century the representatives of the Moravian Church retreated from active agitation and the movement lost its impact in Livland. This process was also affected by the national awakening that gained force in the middle of the century. It had largely grown out of the Moravian Church, which can thus also be regarded as one of the main contributors to the awakening movement in the Latvian part of the Governorate of Livland.

[11] As such, the Moravian Brethren were relatively successful in the Governorate of Livland during the timespan from the 1730s/1740s to the middle of the nineteenth century. The years of "the silent march," although initially signalling a recession, should in principle be seen as

a period of continued development and maturing of the Brethren. Thus, it is important to understand how the Latvian (and to the same extent also Estonian) peasants benefitted from their contacts with the Moravian Brethren and to see how their former daily life, religious precepts, education, culture, economic life, and worldview were affected.

Pietism, Public Education, Language, and Literature

In a little over a decade, between 1730 and 1743, approximately 3,000 Latvian peasants were accepted into the fold of the Moravian Church (Straube 2000, 239–87). They relatively quickly gave up their ancestral beliefs and turned into Christians who respected all the religious prescriptions: they celebrated Sunday worship and regularly recited their prayers in the mornings, at mealtimes, and in the evenings. Those who were literate read the Bible, and they learned church hymns while gradually giving up the tradition of burying their dead elsewhere than in churchyards, instead marrying and baptising their children according to church rites. [12]

The Herrnhutian Teachers' Seminary, which was opened in Valmiermuiža (German: Wolmarshof) in August 1738, played an essential role in this regard. It trained the local peasant youth as rural school teachers, thus contributing to the flourishing of peasant schools in the countryside of Livland and to the gradual decrease of illiteracy there. These schools significantly changed the level of education by the end of the century, rapidly increasing the number of readers, even though the seminary had to close already in 1744. [13]

The contribution of the Moravian Brethren to the education of the ethnic Latvians in Livland is also invaluable. Although sometimes historiography has noted that it was the Swedes with their peasant school policy who achieved the first positive breakthrough in this field in the seventeenth century, the reality is considerably different. It was in the eighteenth century that the education level among the Latvian peasants began to consistently increase. One of the first developments that set this process in motion was the foundation of the already mentioned Teachers' Seminary in 1738. It was headed by a former theology student from Jena, Magnus Buntebart (ABU, R.19.a.3.6.a., 7). He came to Livland in 1737 and mingled among the peasants for a year. He learned Latvian and subsequently was appointed head of the seminary, working there as a teacher. Among the first seminary students were peasants from the nearby manors. The graduates of the training course of one year, which taught them to read and write, religious education, and singing from a score, became teachers in peasant schools. Approximately 120 young men are estimated to have graduated from the seminary until the ban issued by Empress Elisabeth, and the majority of them subsequently worked in schools. During church visitations, in most cases they were described in a positive light as good teachers and skilled supporters of the pastors in the spiritual care of the parish. The greatest praise was given to the teacher of Āraiši (Arrasch) School, Gavēņu Andžs: When he died in 1782, the parish pastor noted that "this man was outstanding and deserves praise in many aspects" (Vičs 1923, 127). [14]

As Buntebart told the representatives of the Lutheran Church, his methods of training peasant youth to read were particularly progressive and better than the ones practiced earlier (LVVA 233.4.1105, 2). The head of the Seminary personally assured the visitation commission that he taught his students Christianity using Martin Luther's Catechism, writing, singing from a score, reading, and spelling out letters and syllables (LVVA 234.1.14, 373). [15]

At the same time, the Moravian Brethren knew how to incite peasants to learn to read and to use this skill for daily readings of the Bible. Special lessons in the Brethren's meeting [16]

houses were organised for this purpose. The most original method was applied by Johann Barlach, deacon (assistant pastor) of the St. Simeon parish in Valmiera and a member of the Moravian Church: During the Lutheran mass, as he was reading something from the Bible, he used to stop his reading suddenly, pointing a finger at a worshipper shouting: "Now you!," and the respective person then had to continue reading out loud from the place where the pastor had stopped. After a while, he chose another "victim." This way, the reading skills of several peasants were tested during the divine service. This clearly gave a special stimulus to every parish member to practice reading (LVVA 4038.2.737, 34).

[17] Very well attended were the so-called children's lessons: special divine services for the children of the adherents of the Moravian Church. Apart from prayers, they contained instructions for reading and explication of the Holy Scriptures. Not only children but also adults, i.e., the mothers and fathers who accompanied their offspring, benefitted from these lessons. According to the Herrnhut Brethren from Germany, the meeting room was often packed to the extent that some parents could not get in and had to stand outside next to open windows to be able to follow what was going on in the room.

[18] Such events organised by the Moravian Brethren contributed to a considerable increase in literacy among the Latvian peasants in Livland. In the second half of the eighteenth century, already more than half of them could read. Since this process continued in the nineteenth century, the proportion of literate peasants kept growing, and in the nineteenth century, literacy among the Estonian and Latvian peasants reached the highest level in the entire Russian Empire (Census 1897).

[19] Naturally, literacy allowed the peasants to read the Bible and other religious texts independently, enabling them to better understand Christianity and helping them become stauncher Christians. But it also gave them an opportunity to become acquainted with other kinds of literature and expanded their knowledge in various fields.

[20] Music and singing were of special importance in the Moravian Brethren's religious rites and daily life, both as part of work and recreation. In the Teachers' Seminary mentioned above, Buntebart taught the would-be teachers singing "from tune" and soon, in many parishes, there appeared peasants who understood the essence of a correct singing technique. It is known that earlier pastors complained that peasants were each singing a different tune and at a different pace, and during singing, the church resembled a 'cattle shed': Everybody was singing in whatever manner they could, and while some had already completed the song, others were still only halfway through. Many peasants believed that if they shouted louder and tried to stretch the song longer, going on with it after some others had already finished singing, they would have a better chance that God would hear them. Thanks to the Moravian Brethren's efforts, peasants started singing in unison and following a score, whereby their singing skills gradually improved. The Moravian Church also held singing lessons during which only church hymns were sung. This was done in a special Herrnhutian manner: singing only the first and the last verse of each song, allowing the performance of a rather large number of songs in one hour. The Herrnhut Brethren from Germany declared that they had translated and printed approximately 60 hymns for the Latvian peasants (LVVA 237.1.8, 14).

[21] This activity of the Moravian Brethren yielded specific fruit. Pastor Georgs Neikens, who came from a Herrnhutian environment, was the organiser of the first Song Festival in the Latvian part of the Governorate of Livland that took place in his parish of Dikļi (German: Dickeln), in 1864. In 1873, with the support of the Latvian national movement, this initiative resulted in the All-Latvian Song Festival that brought together singers from all over present-

day Latvia, similar to the Estonian song festival that had been arranged four years earlier. As is well-known, this early initiative has grown into an extraordinary phenomenon: Song and Dance Festivals are now held in Latvia on a regular basis and are listed as a unique UNESCO heritage.

[22] The education facilitated by the Moravian Church and the musical training that was closely associated with it gave the Latvian nation its first professional specialist of music, Jānis Cimze, who, like the other personalities mentioned before, had close ties with the Livland Moravian Brethren. His abilities were noticed by the then General Superintendent of the Lutheran Church in the Governorate of Livland, Ferdinand Walter, who procured from the Livland diet (Landtag) the allocation of special funds for sending him to Weissenfels in Germany to study pedagogics. One of the subjects he studied there was music, and upon returning home, he collected folksongs, adapted them, and composed his own music. In 1839, Cimze became the head of the newly founded Teachers' Seminary at Valmiera, which under his leadership laid a great emphasis on musical education. As a result, many graduates later became outstanding choir conductors, composers, and collectors of folksongs.

[23] The movement of the Moravian Brethren in the Latvian part of the Governorate of Livland left an impact on the development of Latvian national literature as well. In fact, it can be concluded with certainty that the beginnings of the Latvian national literature are entirely Herrnhutian. The first known Latvian poet, whose writings have survived and thus are known to us, was Ķikuļu Jēkabs (1740–1777). In 1777, he wrote "Dziesmas" (Songs). While not his only poetic composition, it is his most famous work (Ķikuļu Jēkabs 1982, 100-120). The neighborhood in which he lived was saturated with typical Herrnhutian activity, and several of his relatives are known to have been members of the Brethren, among them his brother Andžs, younger by eight years, who was well-known and highly regarded in the vicinity (Ķikuļu Jēkabs 1982, 103). Significantly, in his birth village of Blome, the Moravian Brethren's meeting house has been restored today and serves as a place where Herrnhutian traditions are remembered and cultivated. The premature end of Ķikuļu Jēkabs' short life is related to his involvement in writing a complaint to Russian Empress Catherine II the Great. Although the initiators of the complaint were other peasants, he was the one who wrote it, and for this, he was arrested and died in prison (Ķikuļu Jēkabs 1982, 118).

[24] Jānis Ruģēns (1817–1876) is celebrated as the second representative of Latvian national literature. While Ķikuļu Jēkabs' works were printed only in the twentieth century, Ruģēns' poems were published already during his lifetime. His most famous verse, where he expresses the hope to see the Latvians standing on the same level with other peoples, was quoted both in the nineteenth century and in the young state of Latvia in the twentieth century as well as under the Soviet regime:

[25] Kad atnāks latviešiem tie laiki,
Ko citas tautas tagad redz?
Kad aizies tumsība kā tvaiki,
Kas ļaužu acis cieti sedz?

[26] When will the times come to Latvians
that other peoples are seeing now?
When will the darkness fade like smoke
that firmly covers people's eyes?

[27] The Ruģēns family had special ties with the Moravian Brethren: The members of the fam-

ily were among the first to join the movement in Livland and were active in it both in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Straube 2000, 53, 65).

[28] 1879 saw the publication of the first original novel written in the Latvian language—"The Time of the Land Surveyors"[2]; the authors were the brothers Reinis (1839–1920) and Matīss (1848–1926) Kaudzītes (Kaudzīte and Kaudzīte 1923). The novel is set in a significant period, the 1870s, when the resurveying of land was taking place in many rural settlements. As a result, peasants were allocated plots, which they were then allowed to cultivate freely. The action takes place in Piebalga, which is one of the regions where the Moravian Brethren were the most active in the nineteenth century. In many Lutheran parishes in this district, the majority of peasants joined the Herrnhutian groups. The authors of the novel themselves had been active members of the Brethren since childhood, under the influence of their parents. Significantly, Matīss Kaudzīte, in 1877, wrote one of the first studies of the history of the Moravian Brethren in the Latvian part of the Governorate of Livland (Kaudzīte 1877).

[29] The Kaudzīte brothers had skilfully integrated several situations into their novel (Kaudzīte and Kaudzīte 1923) in which particular features of the Moravian Church and its impact can be clearly recognised. Thus, one of the main characters, a farm-mistress named Oliņiete, is depicted as a pious woman, at times excessively pious, who mentions God extremely often and threatens everyone with God's anger and retaliation. Another man, Tenis, relies very much on fate, believing that God takes care of him and looks after him. In naïve meekness, relying on the good Saviour, he lets himself be arrested although he has not done anything wrong. One of the most colorful scenes in the novel is when peasant Ķencis rides to the manor by carriage early in the morning to fetch a land surveyor. His intentions are not completely pure and holy, though: He is bringing gifts to the surveyor, including a live piglet, as he has been told that gifts will incline the surveyors to measure out and map better land plot borders for him. About halfway, Ķencis stops in a birch grove and, in a typically Herrnhutian manner, starts a discussion/prayer with God. This includes both complaints of his destiny and of his neighbor and a confession of his intent to move the surveyors to pity with gifts. Thus, he is trying to strike a deal with the Almighty and get his support. He does not need any medium, such as a church or a pastor, for this; in the Moravian Church, anyone can talk to God, and the Almighty is believed to be able to talk to the faithful through anyone and in any place. Even the squealing of the piglet in a sack in the carriage is not a disturbance for such a discussion.

Pietism and Social Aspects

[30] The examples mentioned so far are from the fields of mental and spiritual life. However, the impact of the Moravian Brethren's activities was effective in other aspects of daily life as well. One such impact was the emergence of a well-off peasantry. The Moravian Brethren urged the Livonian peasants to work hard and diligently, bringing it home to them that only those who did decent work would enter paradise. All the Moravian Brethren from Germany who had come from Herrnhut also practiced some craft alongside with their preaching duties. Christian David, mentioned above, was a skilful carpenter who helped construct houses. Other Herrnhut Brothers were weavers. Soviet historian Jānis Zutis analysed the social structure of the peasant adherents of the Moravian Church in Latvia and reached the conclusion that the majority of them had been farm owners and their sons, while the proportion of farm hands had been relatively small (Zutis 1956, 193–94). After the abolition of serfdom in 1819,

2 A German translation of this novel was published as Kaudzīte and Kaudzīte (2012).

when peasants were allowed to buy the farmsteads that they had previously been renting from landlords, a part of them was unwilling to do so. It was the peasant adherents of the Moravian Brethren who, spurred on by the German Herrnhut Brethren, were among the first to use this opportunity and become farm owners relatively early. In the second half of the nineteenth century, they constituted a group of well-off peasants of the Latvian part of the Governorate of Livland who competed with the manors with increasing success. After the foundation of the independent state of Latvia, they were the foundation for agricultural production.

[31] Another important aspect is the specific contribution to the development of rural architecture in Latvia. There are two sides to this aspect. The first one is related to the Moravian Brethren's meeting houses that appeared in the Latvian part of the Governorate of Livland already in the first years of the Brethren's presence there, in the late 1730s and early 1740s. Gradually their number grew to approximately 130 buildings. These structures were built by the peasant adherents of the Moravian Church using their personal funds. The early meeting houses were a special phenomenon: from an architectural perspective, they were primitive and lacked a uniform style; often, a building had different windows as the peasants simply brought whatever building elements they had at home, eager to make a contribution to the construction of their meeting house. These rural structures that served the adherents of the movement as venues for divine service, training, singing lessons, and meetings acquired a more 'civilised' appearance with time. They were decorated with elements that were accessible and understandable to the people. As a result, they became what Roberts Legzdiņš, historian of Latvian architecture, has described as the highest expression of national architecture (Legzdiņš 1930, 22).

[32] The other side is related to the dwelling house of the Livland peasant, called "rija" in Latvian (German: Riege). Until the mid-eighteenth century, these were one-room structures that housed the entire peasant's family (husband, wife, and children), as well as the married farm hands with their families and the unmarried farm hands and cattle-herds. So many people living in one room created a favorable environment for the spread of various diseases. Moreover, such living conditions also contributed to the frequent involvement of minors in sexual relations. Throughout the eighteenth century, sources document complaints by the Lutheran Church about the frequent occasions of babies born to minor and/or unmarried girls. This was often a tragedy for young single mothers. Some of them even tried to hide their newborn and let it die. Although the Lutheran pastors issued regular warnings against such sins from the pulpit, the frequency of these occurrences did not decrease. The Moravian Brethren discovered the root of the problem and urged peasants to build several rooms in their houses and allocate separate premises for young girls and unmarried women. The first such peasant dwelling houses with several rooms appeared in the last quarter of the eighteenth century in the Valmiera district, which had a high proportion of adherents of the Moravian Church (Krastiņa 1959). Thus, the Herrnhut Brethren facilitated the improvement of the peasants' living conditions, helping them make their home environment healthier and achieve greater privacy as well as protection of minors from premature sexual relationships, which in most cases would have done them harm. It is important to keep in mind that for the Livland peasants of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, large households, including farm-hands and their families, played an important role. They were signs of a high economic and social status and prosperity, as well as commanding respect from the surroundings, but could also lead to condemnation and even contempt (Metsvahi 2019; Straube 2007, 2013). Single mothers found it difficult, often even impossible, to marry; the conservative rural society held a nega-

tive attitude towards such women, and the preservation of virginity until the wedding night was almost a compulsory requirement on the part of a potential bridegroom and his family.

[33] A third aspect is linked to women's emancipation and Enlightenment values. Although the Moravian Church was not really a part of this phenomenon, it contributed to the emancipation processes in the rural society of Livland. The specific tradition of dividing the adherents of the Moravian Brethren into choirs or communities enabled a relatively high number of peasants to climb some rungs of the hierarchy ladder accessible to them. It is known that the members of each meeting house were grouped as follows: two adult choirs (for men and for women) and two youth choirs (for boys and for girls), one children's choir, and one choir for widows. The most popular and charismatic member of each group was appointed choir leader. It was the first time that peasant women were given a chance to be in charge of their sisters in faith, to organise the necessary events, and chair them. The indigenous women of the Baltic region had never before been trusted with such responsibilities. Thus, the conclusion can be drawn that some degree of women's emancipation took place within the framework of the Moravian Church that raised their self-confidence.

[34] The analysis of historical events shows that the Moravian Brethren even played a role in several peasant riots that transpired in the Latvian part of the Governorate of Livland in the last third of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, evoking a fourth aspect of Moravian social influence. It was in the areas under the Brethren's influence that several peasant rebellions against their landlords took place in the eighteenth century. They were usually caused by peasants' discontent with the amount of corvée labour and other duties imposed on them, and there is a reason to think that it was the peasants' activity in the Moravian Church that gave them the courage to express their frustration and demand a fairer attitude from the manor administration.

[35] The loudest peasants' riots were triggered by the imposition of a poll tax in the Governorate of Livland in 1784. The riots spread rather widely, but it was in those parishes where the Moravian Brethren were active that they were the most resounding. Often the peasants discussed their campaigns in the Herrnhutian meetinghouses. As a result, the governmental investigation commission accused the Moravian Brethren of being one of the facilitators of the riot.

[36] Another peasant riot, which took place in the Kauguri Manor in the vicinity of Valmiera in 1802, had a great effect. It, too, was triggered by demands from the manor, and troops were sent to pacify the peasants. The riotous area was markedly Herrnhutian, and a large part of the rioters were members of the Moravian Church. Several peasants were killed, and the riot was put down. However, the government of the Russian Empire was forced to establish a commission which in 1804 adopted the Livland Peasant Law, the first of a long series of attempts to reframe the relations between peasants, landlords, and the state. Although some of the provisions of 1804 were soon abolished after landlord agitation, the path towards the abolition of serfdom was laid.

[37] Finally, the education of peasants encouraged by the Moravian Brethren in the Latvian part of the Governorate of Livland, the development of a group of specially trained rural schoolteachers, the emergence of the first men of letters, and the coming of the first academically educated ethnic Latvians onto the stage of history led to a fifth important aspect: the rise and growth of a national intelligentsia. According to the Czech researcher of national awakenings, Miroslav Hroch, the existence of a national intelligentsia is a necessary precondition for national awakening (Hroch and Schmidt-Hartmann 1994, 42–43). From the Christianisation of

the Baltic until the mid-nineteenth century, no presence of a national intelligentsia can be discerned either in the territory of present-day Estonia or Latvia. The absolute majority of the population were peasants; a small proportion lived in towns and were craftsmen but in no way represented the intellectual circles. The movement of the Moravian Church gave the first impetus for the development of conditions for the emergence of such a social group.

[38] Thus, a small religious movement had an essential impact on various processes and even facilitated the awakening of the Latvian and Estonian nations, which, in the twentieth century when favourable preconditions emerged, resulted in the birth of new nation-states.

Conclusion

[39] The arrival of the Moravian Brethren from Herrnhut on the eastern shores of the Baltic Sea in 1729 led to a religious contact situation within Protestant Christianity which challenged the existing hegemony of the Baltic Germans. The Moravian Brethren wanted to bring a new kind of Christianity to the region, one that was less prone to the Baltic German control mechanisms that had characterised the local Lutheran Church since the Christianisation from the twelfth century. The results of this contact situation were twofold—both related to the Moravians' concept and use of media. For one, the traditional religious media for Latvian (and Estonian) peasants had been the Baltic German pastors and landlords, which the Herrnhutians sought to bypass. This angered the Baltic Germans, who petitioned the political authorities to ban the Moravian Church all over the Russian Empire. This happened in 1743 after a decade of continuous expansion.

[40] However, because of the other result of the contact situation, this ban was not able to extinguish the movement but only had a dampening effect, which was later called "the silent march." This result was the way the Moravians used novel media to emotionally and intellectually bind the peasants to the movement. Instead of treating the Church as something external, imposed upon the locals by the essentially non-native Baltic Germans, the Moravians employed various media to give them the feeling of being in charge and having an impact on the movement. The media used were, on the one hand, linguistic—by translating church hymns and teaching reading and writing. On the other, they were of an organizational nature, by dividing the meeting house attendants into self-organised choirs and introducing new architectural concepts and ideas.

[41] With time, especially after Tsar Alexander I allowed the Moravians again in 1817, the Moravian Church increasingly merged into a part of the official Lutheran Church of the region, putting a stop to the conceptualisation as a contact situation. Nevertheless, the long-term effects of the initial clash and its innovative potential lived on in later periods, as the descendants of these first Latvian (and Estonian) Moravians went on to become important figures of national history. The Herrnhutians in Livland undoubtedly helped stir up the religious—and social—initiative of the indigenous population.

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