

## Alternative Religiosities in the Soviet Union and the Communist East-Central Europe: Formations, Resistances and Manifestations

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# Transformations of Neopaganism in Latvia: From Survival to Revival

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**Abstract:** Neopaganism (*Dievturība*) in Latvia has undergone phenomenal transformations which have been driven by socio-political conditions. The history of the *Dievturi* movement makes it possible to outline the historical change in the movement due to differing political circumstances. In the first period of its development (1925–1940), Neopaganism displayed itself as a form of politicised phenomenon; it became part of prevailing policies of nationalism by offering a Latvian national religion. With Latvia's occupation by the Soviet forces (1940) Latvian Neopagans, *Dievturi*, became a disadvantaged group. Persecution and repression faced by *Dievturi* (1940–1953) were due to the imposition of Communist ideology and restrictions on freedom. Later during the Soviet regime (1953–1986), the *Dievturi* were not part of an organised religious movement, their teaching and ritual practice were not further developed during this time period. However, it was while in exile that the *Dievturi* had the opportunity to develop and expand the movement, but they had to address an urgent problem of preservation of ethnic identity. In the 1980s the *Dievturi* movement gradually resumed its activity, and it was officially registered as a religious organisation (1990). Today the *Dievturi* movement in Latvia includes controversial aspects: opposition to globalisation trends and its New Age trajectory.

**Keywords:** new religious movements, reconstructionist movement, neopagan, Latvian traditional religion, *Dievturi*

## 1 Introduction

With the collapse of the Communist regime, the search for new structures, new meaning systems, and new forms of community increased in Latvia just as it did in the rest of the former USSR republics. Alongside other social systems, the new religious movements tried to satisfy the demand aimed towards a complete change of the social order. Against this background, the activity of Neopagans<sup>1</sup> grew in the middle of the 1980s. The aim of this article is to view Neopaganism in Latvia not as a religious phenomenon but

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<sup>1</sup> Individuals calling themselves pagans and acting in Latvia state that the Latvian traditional religion has been maintained to the present day. While “Paganism” is increasingly used by researchers in keeping with the preferred term of followers of these movements, authors prefer to make a clear distinction between the old traditional forms of religion and its modern forms, using the term “Neopaganism” as a general term which “covers all those modern movements which are, firstly, based on the conviction that what Christianity has traditionally denounced as idolatry and superstition actually represents/represented a profound and meaningful religious worldview and, secondly, that a religious practice based on this worldview can and should be revitalized in our modern world.” Hanegraaff, “New Age Religion”, 77.

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as a religious movement, i.e. as one of the types of social movements<sup>2</sup> characterised by several common features, first of all, social conditions which are the determining factors in the process of formation and activity of movements.

Over time, Neopaganism in Latvia has undergone phenomenal transformations which, first and foremost, have been driven by changes in socio-political conditions. Therefore, the history of Neopaganism in Latvia can be divided into several stages: (1) the stage of formation from the middle of the 1920s to Latvia's occupation by the Soviet forces in 1940; (2) the stage of persecution and repression from 1940 to Stalin's death in 1953; (3) the stage of survival from 1953 to the beginning of awakening in 1986; (4) the stage of revival from 1986 to the official renewal of the Neopagan movement in 1990; and (5) the stage of an active role resumed after 1990. A strong external factor, i.e. the political order of the state affected activity of Neopagans in each of the above stages.

If we look for general characteristics of Neopaganism in Latvia, we should point out that *Dievturība*<sup>3</sup> strove to reconstruct the traditional religion of ancient Latvians based on study of Latvian folk songs *dainas*, folk beliefs and practices. Researchers have identified two types of Neopagan movements.<sup>4</sup> First, a revivalist movement is understood to utilise history simply as a starting point of the development of religious practices. Thus, revivalist movements incorporate traditions and practices of other pagan religions since many indigene practices are unrecoverable. Revivalist movements are typically labelled “Neopagan” since they add something new to their historical understanding. Second, a reconstructionist movement places greater import on history and believes that ancient practices can be discovered and reconstructed by studying folk traditions, archaeology, history etc. Latvian Neopaganism can be considered a reconstructionist movement.

Latvian folklore is the major or even the only source of *Dievturi* religious practice. They emphasise the religious aspects of Latvian folk songs and treat Latvian folklore as the source of the authentic Latvian traditional religion, instead of regarding it as the source of traditional culture. *Dievturi* consider God the only and highest being who determines cosmic order, laws and destinies, who helps people by providing wise advice. Deities *Māra* (the material world, nature) and *Laima* (a shaper of destiny and overseer of the order established by God in space) are subordinate to God.

*Daudzinājums* (exaltation) is the main ritual of *Dievturi* groups, usually dedicated to a significant religious figure, social or historical event, e.g. *Dievs* (God), *Pērkons* (Thunder), deities *Māra* and *Laima*, annual festivities, the National Independence Day, etc. The idea of exaltation multiplies the good: by their action, participants of the ritual contribute to the existence of the good in the world. It acquires axiological value, as only the good, wholesome and positive have to be exalted, considering the alien, borrowed, and global as negative. Sometimes exaltations are organised in cooperation by two or more *Dievturi* groups. In some cases, they are part of events related to family celebrations or anniversaries. Relatives, friends and neighbours, who have been invited for “baptism”, wedding or funeral ceremonies, can be among participants of exaltation. Hence, exaltations are both closed events, when only group members are informed about their time and place, and open ones entailing family celebrations and anniversaries. Rather often, participants of exaltation are people who are not *Dievturi* but who are interested in the Latvian traditional culture. The most active *Dievturi* groups organise exaltation once a month, and it usually takes place indoors. Locations of exaltation should be ancient Baltic hillforts, trees, springs, heaps of stones, great stones, etc. Exaltations are performed at a particular time: they are associated with the days dedicated to deities (*Ūsiņš*, *Mārtiņš*, *Māra*, etc.), annual festivities and solstices, as well as with the agricultural season, e.g. haymaking, rye harvesting, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Eller, “Introducing Anthropology”, 169.

<sup>3</sup> *Dievturība* – a form of Neopaganism in Latvia. An adherent of the movement is *Dievturis* (Latvian) – ‘God keeper’, plural *Dievturi*.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Davy, “Introduction to Pagan Studies”, 139. Hubbes, “Romanian Ethno-Paganism”, 215. Rountree, “The Circle is Open”, 26. Cooper, “Pathways to Druidy”, 42–43.

## 2 The stage of formation (1925–1940)

Unlike many other new religious movements which entered Latvia during the period of *perestroika* and following the collapse of the USSR, Neopaganism can be ranked among the new religious movements that were not a new phenomenon in Latvia. Neopaganism in Latvia, as elsewhere in Europe, is rooted in National Romanticism. The origins of the idea regarding reconstruction of the Latvian traditional religion date back to the middle of the 19th century when representatives of Latvian National Romanticism constructed the first pantheon of the ancient Latvian gods, drawing on a number of local and non-local historical and imaginary sources. In 1858 a newspaper *Mājas Viesis* published an article by Juris Alunāns (1832–1864) “Gods and Spirits Respected by Ancient Latvians in the Past”<sup>5</sup> in which the author listed about 20 names of deities attributed to ancient Latvians. The invented *Anšlavs* and *Pramšāns*, as well as *Potrimps* and *Pakuls* borrowed from ancient Prussian sources were mentioned together with ancient Latvian deities *Saule*, *Laima*, *Mēness* and *Pērkons*. Poet Auseklis (1850–1879) extended this list and arranged the deities in a hierarchical table.<sup>6</sup> These attempts to create the Latvian pantheon can be described as “a cultural and national game or a clumsy attempt at research, encouraged by the intellectual atmosphere<sup>7</sup> of the epoch.”<sup>8</sup>

The history of *Dievturi* dates back to the 1920s when artist Ernests Brastiņš (1892–1942) and engineer Kārlis Marovskis-Bregžis (1885–1958) published their book “Revival of Latvian *Dievturi* Religion: Narrow Description of History, Wisdom and the Way of Praise”<sup>9</sup> (1925). *Dievturība* occupied a special place in the political and religious life of Latvia, as its origins are connected with the search for national identity that followed the formal founding of the Republic of Latvia in 1918. The new national state had emerged from the ruins of the collapsed alien powers (Russian tsarism and German estate owners). These alien powers were supported by the clergy of the *Evangelical Lutheran Church*, mainly Germans. Consequently, for part of the national intelligentsia “the religion of the foreign lords was no longer acceptable as a way to maintain our own self-respect.”<sup>10</sup> In the first part of the 20th century, *Dievturība* tried to supply a religious response to the uncertainty of the place of ethnic Latvians in the newly-created Latvian state. The fact that the question of the religious identity of Latvians was an important issue is illustrated also by other spiritual quests of the time, for example, the so-called Latvian Christianity Model, “adherents of which proposed that the Old Testament of the Bible be replaced with the Latvian folk songs called *dainas*.”<sup>11</sup>

The emergence of the Neopagan movement in Latvia in the 1920s was based on efforts to create an alternative religion to Christianity, facilitated by a very significant factor: the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia was against the 1905 Revolution. Therefore, Lutheran pastors gained an image of being the nation's enemy, and Christianity was interpreted as a religion imposed on Latvians “with fire and sword.”<sup>12</sup> That is why Neopaganism in the first half of the 20th century was a foreign phenomenon in Latgale – the territory of Latvia where Catholicism prevailed. The most active fighters against Neopagans were representatives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia who were drastically opposed to the strategic goal of *Dievturi*, i.e. to attain recognition of the Latvian traditional religion as the state religion. Misāne has pointed out that the impact of Protestantism on the teaching of *Dievturi* is greater than *Dievturi* themselves would like to acknowledge: all leaders of *Dievturi* have come from Lutheran families, and their Catechism *Dievturu*

5 Alunāns, “Deewi un garri”, 394–396, 403–404.

6 See Auseklis, “Kopoti raksti”, 547–550.

7 Since publication of Friedrich von Schlegel's work *Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier* (On the Indian Language and Knowledge of It) in 1808, many intellectuals in Europe were carried away by the search for Indo-European roots. Latvian national romanticists were inspired by the attempt to reconstruct Germanic mythology. *Deutsche Mythologie* (German Mythology, 1835) by Jacob Grimm and other works of similar nature deserve a special mention in this regard.

8 Misāne, “Dievturības priekšteči”, 4. Here, and throughout this article, translations are by authors.

9 See Brastiņš, Bregžis, “Latviešu dievturības atjaunojums”.

10 Biezais, “Dievturi – nacionālie romantiķi”, 54.

11 Misāne, “The traditional Latvian religion”, 33.

12 Grīns, “Latvijas vēsture”, 55.

*Cerokslis* (The Intentions of *Dievturi*, 1931) created by Brastiņš was undoubtedly modelled after Martin Luther's *Small Catechism*.<sup>13</sup>

Furthermore, it is notable that Neopaganism in Latvia in its infancy was not a homogenous and consolidated phenomenon. The certificate of the Latvian *Dievturi* Congregation registered in 1926 was issued to Kārlis Marovskis-Bregžis,<sup>14</sup> but division within the group soon occurred which resulted in registration of another *Dievturi* organisation in 1927 led by Ernests Brastiņš. Each group had its own publication: Marovskis-Bregžis was the editor of *Dievturu Vēstnesis* (1928–1929), but the group of Brastiņš published a magazine *Labietis* (1931–1940). The groups distanced themselves from each other as Marovskis-Bregžis did not nurture any hopes that *Dievturība* could become the religion of the Latvian nation. He believed that ancestors' faith had to be practised in a family and small communities; he was also consistently against involvement of *Dievturi* in politics. Conversely, Brastiņš, who was a graduate of the Emperor Pavel Military School of St Petersburg, had high ambitions, including in politics, i.e. he also looked for opportunities to strengthen *Dievturība* by political activities. Since Brastiņš' group was more active than Marovskis-Bregžis' group, and Brastiņš had an ability to attract public figures including painters, writers and intellectuals<sup>15</sup> to the group, it is usually considered that it was Brastiņš who established the *Dievturi* movement in Latvia.

When comparing these first two Neopagan groups, a substantial difference should be highlighted, i.e. the group of Marovskis-Bregžis focused on individual religious experience, but that of Brastiņš tended to implement extensive social and cultural changes. Brastiņš and his co-thinkers looked for allies in the political arena and engaged in the controversial nationalist movement in Latvia to make these changes. *Dievturi* leaders established contacts with the *Pērkonkrusts* (Thunder Cross) organisation. It was a radical right movement established in (1932) with the name *Ugunskrusts* (Fire Cross) and renamed *Pērkonkrusts* (Thunder Cross) after its closure (1932). The cooperation between *Dievturi* and *Pērkonkrusts* clearly illustrates the attempts of religious nationalism to gain political influence in pre-war Latvia. The idea pursued by Brastiņš was *naciokrātisms* – “natiocracy”<sup>16</sup>, i. e., a theocracy with political power concentrated solely in the hands of the religious leader of the state<sup>17</sup>. His political programme featured a plan to enfranchise ethnic Latvians while erasing the influence of other national minorities<sup>18</sup>. Thus, the political programme of *Dievturi* fully coincided with the founding principles of the right-wing political organisation *Pērkonkrusts*. Moreover, the ideologues of both organisations were unified not only by the slogan “Latvia for Latvians!”, expressing hostility to ethnic minorities in the state, especially Jews and Baltic-Germans, and dissatisfaction with the authoritarian regime of Kārlis Ulmanis (1934–1940), but also by firm opposition to leftist political ideas. Thus, in the first period of its development, Neopaganism in Latvia displayed itself as a form of a politicised phenomenon,<sup>19</sup> and *Dievturi* became part of the nationalist policy in Europe in the first half of the 20th century by offering a Latvian national religion.<sup>20</sup>

### 3 The period of persecution and repression (1940–1953)

A wide range of factors may cause marginalisation of a group in society: defeat in war, a natural disaster or economic collapse.<sup>21</sup> In the middle of the 20th century, *Dievturi* became a disadvantaged group due to socio-political circumstances: Latvia's occupation by the Soviet forces (1940), the deportations carried out by

<sup>13</sup> Misāne, “Dievturības priekšteči”, 4.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Misāne, Agita. “Dievturība Latvijas reliģisko un politisko ideju vēsturē.” *Reliģiski filozofiski raksti*, 10 (2005), 106–107.

<sup>15</sup> In the 1920s and 1930s the most active representatives of *Dievturi* were painter Jēkabs Bīne (1895–1955), writers Voldemārs Dambergis (1886–1960), Viktors Eglītis (1877–1945), and Juris Kosa (1878–1967), literature historian and critic Alfrēds Goba (1889–1972), composers Jānis Norvilis (1906–1994) and Artūrs Salaks (1891–1984). For Latvian painters related to Neopaganism see Ogle, “Representation”, 47–68.

<sup>16</sup> Brastiņš, “Tautas mācība”, 248.

<sup>17</sup> Brastiņš, “Latvju tikumu”, 11.

<sup>18</sup> Brastiņš, “Latviskas Latvijas”, 92.

<sup>19</sup> For details see Stasulane, “The Dievturi Movement”, 31–46.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Beitnere, “Lettische”, 42–50.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Wilson, “Religious Sects”.

Stalin's regime (1941), World War II in the territory of Latvia (1941–1945), the return of the Communist regime (1944) and repeated deportations (1949). The drastic turns of history caused a severe social crisis during which *Dievturi*, experienced, in the terminology of religious anthropology, deprivation – “deprivation of independence, of meaning, of wealth, of control, of life itself.”<sup>22</sup> This was the most disruptive period in the history of Neopaganism of Latvia about which there is extremely little historical evidence. Actually, biographies of *Dievturi* represent the only source that makes it possible to understand the situation with regard to Neopaganism in this period.

After the official annexation of Latvia into the USSR on 5 August 1940, all religious, political, cultural, etc. associations, including the *Dievturu Sadraudze* (*Dievturi* Fellowship), were closed down. Thus, activity of Neopagans in Latvia was officially discontinued, but this was not the first episode in the chain of events in relation to *Dievturi*. Brastiņš was arrested already on 6 July 1940. He was sentenced to eight years in a correctional labour camp on 24 May 1941 for founding and heading the association *Dievturu Sadraudze*. During his imprisonment in Russia, he was tried again. On 27 December 1941, the USSR Military Tribunal delivered his death sentence - Brastiņš was to be shot. The execution was carried out.<sup>23</sup>

Writer and poet Viktors Eglītis (1877–1945) was among the founders of the *Dievturi* group and one of its most active members. He hoped to build a theoretical basis of Latvian Neopaganism and renew the belief of ancient Latvians as a religious system. He was a contentious figure throughout his lifetime: “The last five years of Eglītis' creative life were the most controversial ones, and his activities during this period were damaging to both his own fate and to the perpetuation of his memory.”<sup>24</sup> Eglītis tried to integrate into Soviet society (1940–1941), but supervisors of literary life appointed by the Soviet power ranked him among “bourgeois writers”, thus his endeavours to adapt to the new power were rejected. In the wake of the German occupation (1941), Eglītis not only condemned the terror implemented by communists in Latvia but also openly advocated anti-Semitism and national socialism; he praised Hitler as the great leader of a United Europe. Eglītis dreamt of creating the Latvian national religion, but this dream was destroyed by the radical socio-political changes; however, his activity in the *Dievturi* group did not determine his tragic fate. Eglītis was arrested (1944) by representatives of the Soviet power and accused of being a spy for Germany. Actually, it was a crackdown on one of the many “anti-Soviet elements”. He was tried in a closed session of the USSR Military Tribunal (1945) and found guilty of all charges. Eglītis was sentenced to 10 years in a correctional labour camp. There is no information about his eventual fate, e.g. whether he died during his imprisonment in Riga or was taken to Russia.<sup>25</sup>

Although other most-visible *Dievturi* were not accused and tried for their activity in *Dievturi Sadraudze*, it does not mean that their membership in the organisation was forgotten. In the 1920s and 1930s, works by Alfrēds Goba (1889–1972), an extremely productive historian of literature and editor (1936–1940) of the *Dievturi* magazine *Labietis*, were no longer published. It is notable that he had not managed to adjust to the authoritarian regime of Kārlis Ulmanis, and he left his position as an official in the Ministry of Public Affairs in 1937. Possibly, it is this act that saved Goba in 1945 when he was arrested on the basis of a report saying that he had defamed the Soviet Union – he was subsequently released. Until 1956, Goba did not have any possibility of publishing his works, and he was not able to find employment that corresponded to his educational background; he later published a few articles about Latvian painters. The pages containing his essays were torn out of a collection of the complete works of various writers, compiled in the 1920s and 1930s: “At that time, it was considered good taste to malign and denigrate all of his achievements. Without really getting into it in a professional business-like manner. There wasn't a dispute, or analysis of particular individual mistakes, just violence.”<sup>26</sup> Although Goba was not repressed physically but he was slandered and his works were either stored in a special non-public library or destroyed.

Until 1940, artist Jēkabs Bīne (1895–1955), who was the closest associate of the *Dievturi* group

<sup>22</sup> Eller, “Introducing Anthropology”, 172.

<sup>23</sup> Pussars, “Par Ernestu Brastiņu”, 10.

<sup>24</sup> Vāvere, “Viktors Eglītis”, 335.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Ibid., 337–404.

<sup>26</sup> Zanders, “Piemirsta darba”, 3.

leader Brastiņš, studied symbols of Latvian ornamentation. When assessing his activities, it should be acknowledged that Jēkabs Bīne was not an original researcher since his ideas did not exceed the limits of the “canon” set by Brastiņš. However, Jēkabs Bīne contributed to promotion of *Dievturi* ideas and the introduction of Latvian ornamentation into applied arts. Today we can only imagine what the course of development of his views might have been in the absence of the war and social changes which, according to Konstants, “engulfed him in the wave of the post-war era repression under Stalin’s cult of personality when everything was inspected on a voluntary basis.”<sup>27</sup> The division of art into proletarian art and bourgeois art, their dramatic juxtaposition and the rejection of the so-called bourgeois art had a direct impact on Bīne. Although the pages of his diary suggest that he was disappointed with vulgarisation of art in such a way,<sup>28</sup> the system eventually broke him. In 1951, Bīne took up his duties as chief stained-glass specialist at an integrated establishment “Māksla”. This post required demonstration of his commitment to the Communist ideology. In 1952, Bīne wrote a paper entitled “Ornaments” (Ornament) containing denial of his previous views in relation to the Latvian traditional decorative symbols.<sup>29</sup> He was not a freethinker anymore, he had become a very obedient servant of the Soviet power which awarded him the honorary title Merited Art Employee of the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic.

Teacher and writer Juris Kosa (1878–1967) was also a member of the *Dievturi* group. In 1905, he was an active revolutionary, but after the defeat of the revolution Kosa was exiled to Siberia; he did not return to Latvia until in 1917. In the 1920s, Kosa was a civil servant in the Ministry of Education and a teacher; later he lived in the countryside in Birzgale parish where he devoted himself to agriculture and writing. Shortly before the Soviet power reached Latvia, Kosa had published a brochure<sup>30</sup> in which he formulated the fundamental ideas<sup>31</sup> of *Dievturi*, but eventually did no literary work.<sup>32</sup> His membership in the *Dievturi* organisation did not adversely affect his life. Possibly, his revolutionary activity against tsarist Russia saved him from persecution.

The composer and teacher of music Artūrs Salaks (1891–1984) became the musical leader of *Dievturi* (1936) and attempted to create an orchestra of folk music instruments. He established a *Dievturi* “parish” *Tālava* in Valmiera, dreamt of building a special house in Valmiera where *Dievturi* could celebrate their weddings and get together at their funerals. Salaks promoted a Latvian folk musical instrument *kokle*. “In his opinion, the sources for Latvian music, including patterns for new music, were to be found in folk music, especially in its most archaic strata. Thus, he developed his own arrangement style, which he named “the Latvian style.” In addition, he had his own style for original compositions, characterized by four-part choral arrangements, with or without soloists, and frequent use of drones and antiphonal singing. The sentimentality and sweetness of singing in thirds and sixths and the quite primitive use of three basic harmonic functions dominate his compositions.”<sup>33</sup> His activities were interrupted by the Soviet occupation in 1940. However, one could see Salaks dressed in a Latvian national costume with *kokle* under his arm in Valmiera well beyond World War II. It was impossible to make his ideas a reality after 1940, yet he had the privilege of working in his field of specialisation. Although Salaks did not give up his dream of the Latvian national religion, neither he nor his relatives were repressed. Salaks started writing an opera “Blow, Wind!” in 1944 and devoted 30 years of his life to this work. Its libretto was based on a story about a long-passed era of Latvians.<sup>34</sup>

Biographies of Latvian Neopagans suggest that the Soviet power did not consider *Dievturi* significant political opponents and limited itself to repression of the group leader Ernests Brastiņš. Meanwhile, Viktors Eglītis was among the many thousands who were accused of anti-Soviet activity after World War II, but his activity in the *Dievturi* group was not a key factor in determining his tragic fate. The lives of other first Latvian Neopagans were diverse, but none of them was repressed exactly for Neopagan views and activity in the *Dievturi* group. During the years of the Soviet power, each of them tried to find their place in

<sup>27</sup> Konstants, “Jēkabs Bīne”, 174.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 174–175.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 175–176.

<sup>30</sup> Kosa, “Latviskā”, 8.

<sup>31</sup> For details on the doctrine of *Dievturi* see Ozoliņš, “The Dievturi Movement”, 99–108.

<sup>32</sup> A selection of stories dedicated to his commemoration was published only in 1969, see Kosa, “Dienas”.

<sup>33</sup> Muktupāvels, “On some relations”, 394.

<sup>34</sup> Gerškoviča, “Artūra Salaka”, 153–158.

the new socio-political circumstances just as did all the other inhabitants of Latvia who had not fled the country. Persecution and repression faced by first Latvian Neopagans could rather be described as violent imposition of Communist ideology, the requirement to praise the Soviet power, restrictions on freedom of expression and unilateral assessment and denial of the previous cultural traditions. The Soviet power ruled out freedom of expression and assembly; therefore, organised activity of Neopagans was impossible. Since the majority of the most active *Dievturi* was not repressed, it can be concluded that they did not seek to continue activity of the *Dievturi* group. Thus, the repressive Soviet regime suppressed attempts of *Dievturi* to reconstruct the religion of ancient Latvians and assign functions of national religion to it.

## 4 The stage of survival (1953–1986)

During the Cold War, Latvian Neopagans found themselves in two socio-political systems warring with each other. Legal activity of *Dievturi* was possible only in exile where several *Dievturi* of the 1920s and 1930s resumed their activity. Various other exiled Latvians, who wanted to find a way to retain their ethnic identity outside of their ethnic home country, joined them. Undoubtedly, activities of Latvian emigrants proposed by *Dievturi* enhanced preservation of Latvian culture in exile.<sup>35</sup>

After World War II, *Dievturi* had resumed their activity by the late 1940s in refugee camps of Germany where several works by Brastiņš set the foundations of the Neopagan teaching, e.g. an introduction to *Dievturība* in a question-and-answer form “Dievturu cerokslis”<sup>36</sup> (The Intentions of *Dievturi*), were republished. However, with the exodus of Latvian refugees to the USA, Canada, Australia, etc. activity of *Dievturi* decelerated, except in the United Kingdom where *Dievturi* under the leadership of Jānis Kūlis (1901–1983) established a Viesturs “parish”<sup>37</sup> in 1949. In contrast, the *Dievturi* movement did not resume its activity in Denmark where the writer and teacher Valdemārs Dambergs (1886–1960), who was an active participant of the *Dievturi* movement in the 1920s and in the 1930s, established his residence.

From the 1950s to the 1980s the most active *Dievturi* groups were in the USA (Chicago), Canada (Toronto), individual enthusiasts were active in the United Kingdom, Germany, and Australia. *Dievturi* in emigration restarted to publish the magazine *Labietis* (1956) and sent it to different countries, including Latvia. Artist Arvīds Brastiņš (1893–1984), who was “the spiritual soul of *Dievturība* in exile”,<sup>38</sup> continued the work started by his brother Ernests. Arvīds Brastiņš led the *Dievturi* movement outside Latvia and was the editor of the magazine *Labietis*.<sup>39</sup> The magazine published both the chronicle of *Dievturi* life in exile, topical articles about Latvian culture, language, traditions and works of fiction, as well as republished works of the most visible *Dievturi* of the inter-war period. In 1971, *Dievturība* was officially registered as a religious organization in the USA.<sup>40</sup> In 1979, *Dievsēta* (God’s Yard) was built near the town of Tomah, Wisconsin (USA).<sup>41</sup> It is the property of *Dievturi* outside Latvia where American Latvians celebrate the traditional Latvian festivals eight times a year. A member of US *Dievturi* “parish” described *Dievsēta* as follows: “The territory is not large, just a couple of hectares, far away in the countryside on the side of a sand road. It is surrounded by forests and there are no other houses there. There are two buildings in the territory: the first one is a popular gathering house and the second one is a building consisting of a living room, kitchen and bedrooms. It also houses the Merķelis library; some rooms are equipped as a flat where people can live, but nobody inhabits them. A small school has also been built for summer camps, but the Latvian community is decreasing, hardly anyone comes here.”<sup>42</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Jātniece, “Dievturu iespaids”, 345–352.

<sup>36</sup> See Brastiņš, “Dievturu cerokslis”.

<sup>37</sup> Kļaviņš, “Dievturība”, 9.

<sup>38</sup> Jātniece, “Dievturu iespaids”, 350.

<sup>39</sup> The magazine *Labietis* is still published, its editorial board now consists of Māra Grīna, a daughter of Arvīds Brastiņš, and her spouse Mārgers Grīns.

<sup>40</sup> Kļaviņš, “Dievturība”, 9.

<sup>41</sup> See *Dievsēta*.

<sup>42</sup> Quoted in: Kursīte, “Dievturība un mītiskais”, 5.

The number of *Dievturi* was not large in exile, as it was in Latvia before World War II. Moreover, the long distances to be covered to participate in group activities, e.g. those organised at *Dievsēta*, constituted an obstacle to becoming a group member. However, the most active *Dievturi* did not consider long distances an obstacle since “Latvianness and *Dievestība* [Latvian religion] are realities of everyday life, a necessary need and conviction of every *Dievturis*, irrespective of the part of the world he finds himself in.”<sup>43</sup> Exiles used their free time and financial resources for their activity in *Dievturi* groups. *Dievturība* was and still is one of the exile movements dealing with the preservation of Latvian culture and traditions. It does not have an extensive religious and political programme; however, it implements a programme for the preservation of ethnic identity.

In contrast, the re-establishment of the *Dievturi* movement was impossible in Soviet Latvia after Stalin’s death since any deviations from the Soviet ideology were considered mischief and were avoided. Although communists changed the nature of repression, i.e. it became “softer”, religious and other freedoms existed only in words in the USSR. The Soviet regime required submission to the ruling ideology, offering a person an opportunity to fulfil his capabilities only in the framework of the communist ideology. Any individual who did not accept this system was ousted and isolated from political and social life. The former *Dievturi* were not alone, as other representatives of Latvian cultural and academic milieu found themselves in exactly the same situation.

There is extremely little evidence of this period and the body of memoir literature is not large as people were afraid to document their bad experiences due to possible persecution since written texts could be interpreted as anti-Soviet sentiment. The former *Dievturi* also chose to keep silent. They did not tell anything to their children and grandchildren who could accidentally tell something to somebody, e.g. at school or to their friends, and these words could be interpreted as anti-government sentiment. Thus, the Soviet totalitarian regime succeeded in breaking the continuity of historical memory by using fear.

When carrying out field work (in 2006–2008 and in a fragmented way during the following years) in contemporary groups, *Dievturi* of the inter-war period were interviewed by authors. *Dievturi* mentioned a couple of episodes demonstrating how individuals even remained faithful to their ideas during the Soviet era. One of the interviewees<sup>44</sup> said that his fellow students at the university had warned him not to mention the fact that he was *Dievturis*. A professor had invited him to write a research paper about *Dievturi*, obviously with the aim of identifying people who were at some time associated with the *Dievturi* movement; however, no sanctions followed. The interviewee shared stories about rituals practised during the Soviet time: some *Dievturi* carried out the ritual of “baptising”<sup>45</sup> children and grandchildren at home in the company of the closest and most trusted friends, but the concept *Dievturi* was never mentioned.<sup>46</sup>

During the Soviet period, *Dievturi* could engage in a cultural movement organised and financed by the state. The objective of the movement was to preserve the traditional culture and skills of ancient crafts. The so-called clubs or cultural centres organised free-time activities for people of all age groups. They could engage in folk dance and folklore groups, choirs, small groups of weavers, needlewomen, etc. There is no doubt that the Latvian spirit prevailed in various cultural activities; however, the cultural centres did not contribute to the revival of the *Dievturi* movement since these centres were attended by people who wanted to take full advantage of their free time, get positive emotions, in a word, socialise. It was only at the end of the 1980s when some individuals, who got involved in the re-establishment of the *Dievturi* movement, came from this environment but most of active folklorists and cultural players strongly rejected Neopaganism.

During the Soviet regime in Latvia, *Dievturi* were not part of an organised religious movement, its teaching and ritual practice were not further developed.<sup>47</sup> It is difficult to imagine what sacrifices *Dievturi*

<sup>43</sup> Kļaviņš, “*Dievturība*”, 9

<sup>44</sup> Interview with Goldffinch, man, 84-year-old, January 11, 2007, Riga, Latvia.

<sup>45</sup> The “baptising” or name-giving ceremony is celebrated nine days after the birth of a child. In the ritual, the main role belongs to godparents who give a name to the child. A traditional dance called *pādītes dīdīšana* is performed: the godparents hold the child in their hands and express good wishes to him/her.

<sup>46</sup> Interview with Goldffinch, man, 84-year-old, January 11, 2007, Riga, Latvia. In order to guarantee anonymity of the interviewees, pseudonyms are used instead of real names.

<sup>47</sup> For description of the religious celebrations performed by *Dievturi* in 1939, see Stasulane, “The *Dievturi* Movement”, 40–41.



would have had to make if they had tried to resume their activities publicly since even the large Christian denominations were closely monitored and their activity was geared towards narrowing down their scope of action and reducing their impact on society. Activity of religious organisations could take place only in religious buildings, i.e. churches, and only for the purpose of practising religious ritual.<sup>48</sup> Meanwhile, *Dievturi* in exile, whose activity was not restricted by the ideology of the state and who supposedly had every opportunity to develop and expand the movement, first had to address an urgent problem of the community of Latvian exiles, i.e. how to preserve the Latvian identity in a foreign country.

## 5 The period of revival (1986–1990)

The *Dievturi* movement in Latvia gradually resumed its activity at the end of the 1980s on the basis of the folklore movement, but it was officially registered as a religious organisation *Dievturu Sadraudze* in 1990, under guidance of ceramist Eduards Detlavs (1919–1992). A wide range of sources is available about this period, but this article is based on the data obtained through field work carried out in modern *Dievturi* groups. During in-depth semi-structured interviews the interviewees who talked about their involvement in *Dievturi* groups in the 1980s revealed unique details about the movement between 1986 and 1990.

Answers to the question about the way they had got involved in the *Dievturi* group were surprisingly similar. A significant impetus for one interviewee were the events in Prague in 1968 when the military forces of the Warsaw Pact led by the USSR suppressed the liberalisation process of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. Later interest in the history which was not talked or written about in Soviet Latvia developed into “completely unintentional interest in folklore”<sup>49</sup> and the interviewee joined a folklore group that provided understanding not only about folk songs and the singing of them, but also about Latvian traditions and religion. In the second half of the 1980s, the interviewee joined various informal groups where he gained knowledge about Latvian history and folklore. The interviewee remembered various events and mentioned that they were attended by 100 people – or maybe even more. The first events were dedicated to Latvian riflemen whose commemoration was permitted in Soviet Latvia. However, eventually ideas directly or indirectly inviting people to restore Latvia’s independence were gradually voiced during these events: poetry of forbidden authors was recited, there was talk about different interpretations of history, etc. The group in which the interviewee was involved was one of the first ones that publicly raised the flag of Latvia during their events. The involvement in the *Dievturi* movement and participation in their events were among activities and interests of the interviewee. He emphasised that *Dievturība*, by its nature, is not an organisation but a set of ritual practices. The interviewee has created a sacred place on a hill which can be reached by walking through a maze barefoot. The most significant annual festivity, i.e. solstice is celebrated there, and it is believed that this is the place where one can communicate with deities and other spiritual beings, as well as absorb Earth’s and solar energy. The interviewee mentioned that he had continuously made a bonfire near his house for several months in winter to enhance spirituality and goodness in the world. Although the interviewee has officially registered his membership with one of *Dievturi* groups, he practises the reconstructed Latvian traditional religion on an individual basis, i.e. in his yard and on his sacred hill, and he asks everyone interested in Latvian traditions to join him there.<sup>50</sup>

Another interviewee also took an interest in the national culture through his interest in the history of Latvia, battles of Semigallians with crusaders in the 13th century, riflemen in World War I, etc. Insights into history have helped him to guess the strength of a Latvian soldier, pride and self-confidence of the nation. Playing an active role in the organisation of the “Days of Birds”, the interviewee has always included folk songs and other ethnographic elements in his stories told to pupils about the nature, animals and birds of Latvia, thus contributing to children’s interest in Latvian folk traditions. In the 1990s, the interviewee led the *Dievturi* movement which was an unfortunate experience for him since his fellow *Dievturi* disappointed

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Krūmiņa-Kopņkova, “Sadarbība”.

<sup>49</sup> Interview with Linnet, man, 63-year-old, July 15, 2006, Zosēni, Latvia.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

his expectations. However, this failure has not given rise to the interviewee's disappointment with the ideas of *Dievturība*; they are still a significant element of his world view and lifestyle.<sup>51</sup>

One more interviewee, a jewelsmith, who was committed to experimental archaeology and was interested in ancient Baltic jewellery, moved closer to *Dievturība* through insights into history. During the interview he explained that he was interested in history, but he did not have sufficient understanding of folklore, therefore, he joined the folklore movement (approx. in 1986). Singing in a folklore group and involvement in the national revival movement *Atmoda* (Awakening) constituted the decisive factor which facilitated development of the interviewee's artistic style, deeper understanding of the significance of a jewelsmith in the ancient economic and cultural life, as well as of ancient symbols they bear. It is notable that the interviewee had read works by Ernests Brastiņš already at the end of the 1970s, but only 10 years later he met *Dievturi* and joined their movement; he participated in rituals and wrote articles about the reconstructed Latvian traditional religion for the regional press.<sup>52</sup>

Between 1986 and 1990 several folklore groups also participated in events organised by *Dievturi*. Sometimes participants of a folklore group were formally considered as belonging to the *Dievturi* family, although only a few of them took a deeper interest in the religious aspect of *Dievturi*. One of the female interviewees explained that she had been *Dievture* since her childhood, i.e. she had been interested in everything that was Latvian; however she had not been familiar with the word "*Dievturība*" and had not used it. According to the interviewee, the reconstruction of the Latvian traditional religion has not taken place, and *Dievturība* is one of the types of the ancient Indo-European religions whose elements are still present in Latvian folklore. She pointed out that bringing all *Dievturi* together into one organisation is formal and artificial; it has been done just to obey national laws.<sup>53</sup> The interviewee is still a member of a folklore group which is an active participant of folklore festivals, performs concerts, celebrates Latvian traditional and other festivities among the participants of the group. It must be recognised that this folklore group, which has been formally considered as belonging to the *Dievturi* movement, actually functions as an interest group and not as a religious organization.

Many interviewees mentioned disillusionment with the Christian Church as a significant reason for joining the movement. Another female interviewee, who had been punished by the Soviet power for supporting the national resistance movement after World War II, was tried and spent eight years in Soviet punitive camps, has always been interested in religion. She went to a Catholic parish in her childhood with her parents and constantly read the Bible; however, she did not receive answers to essential questions. Later she found the answers in the books by Ernests Brastiņš, Māra and Mārgers Grīni: "Everything was understandable for me here, [...] and I had no contradictions."<sup>54</sup> The interviewee expressed her disappointment in the Catholic Church and said she did not want a Catholic priest to preach at her funeral, she wanted to be paid the last respects by the singing of folk songs accompanied by *kokle*.

The return of *Dievturi* from exile to Latvia was a significant impetus for the reconstruction of *Dievturība*. Some of them regained their properties that had been nationalised after World War II and established small groups of *Dievturi*. Their financial support was also important, it was provided not only to their groups but also to schools for celebrating, e.g. public holidays and Latvian traditional festivities. One more example is *Dižozols* (Great Oak) "parish" (1996–2003) in Ranka where *Dievturis* Kārlis Grencions (1912–2000), who had returned from exile, implemented his plan. He wanted to create a place in Latvia similar to *Dievsēta* located in Wisconsin, USA. The main activities of the group were celebration of Latvian traditional festivities in which pupils also took part from time to time, drawing competitions, egg dyeing at Easter, etc. After Grencions' death, activity of the group contracted and it ceased to exist.

*Dievturi* living in exile, especially the older generation, held strong to the views of the period of Ernests Brastiņš. They did not notice that the ideas preserved in exile could not function in modern democratic Latvia. People in Latvia had changed – both generations and thinking. Many interviewees emphasised

51 Interview with Tern, man, 67-year-old, July 19, 2006, Sigulda, Latvia.

52 Interview with Nutcracker, man, 634-year-old, July 10, 2006, Cēsis, Latvia.

53 Interview with Goldeneye, woman, 50-year-old, July 26, 2006, Jelgava, Latvia.

54 Interview with Pipit, woman, 79-year-old, August 8, 2006, Valmiera, Latvia.

that their path to *Dievturība* in Latvia was individual, mainly through history and the folklore movement. Therefore, the ambition of *Dievturi* who had returned from exile to lead the movement and impose their views on “local” Latvian groups was not acceptable to everyone. It is precisely for this reason that many outstanding leaders and participants of Latvian folk groups refused to cooperate with *Dievturi*. They were unable to accept requirements of *Dievturi* in exile with regard to granting the status of religion to *Dievturība* and their wish to be the only ones who really and truly understood the national traditional culture. Latvian Neopagans were looking for religious experience, but the offer by *Dievturi* not always satisfied them. In the 1990s, the leading *Dievturi* were unable to change themselves and develop the teaching to capture the interest of young people and the media. The “conservative” branch, which closely followed everything Ernests Brastiņš had written and said, prevailed among *Dievturi*. Lip service was paid to the need for changes, their introduction was slow. Such conservatism discouraged people, and many of those who had become members of the *Dievturi* movement at the end of the 1980s turned away from it.

## 6 Contemporary trends

At the beginning of the new millennium, 16 Neopagan groups<sup>55</sup> were already active in Latvia most of which have united in *Latvijas Dievturu Sadraudze* (Community of Latvia's *Dievturi*)<sup>56</sup>, but some of them are the so-called independent *Dievturi* groups whose activity has not been registered: *Viesturs*, *Sidrabene*, *Austra* and *Māras loks*. The active involvement of the members of these groups in promotion and interpretation of *Dievturība* is strongly condemned by the leaders of *Latvijas Dievturu Sadraudze*.<sup>57</sup> The picture that emerged during the field study includes sufficiently wide and diversified range of opinions which does not make it possible to speak about *Dievturība* as a strong and uniform manifestation of Latvian religious experience and lifestyle.<sup>58</sup> When describing modern *Dievturi* groups, their heterogeneous composition was emphasised by Kursīte: “There are people in one commune who believe virtually everything Brastiņš had written and created throughout his life. There are also people who were keen Christians and who now want to be Christians belonging to *Dievturi*. There are free thinking artists who do not want to register anywhere but who like traditional values, and there are also community members who enjoy singing.”<sup>59</sup> However, *Dievturi* also have another common feature which can be considered a universal Neopagan characteristic – they are “mainly urbanized literate people who have long ago lost their links with traditional peasant culture, commonly considered the last fortress of pre-Christian beliefs.”<sup>60</sup> Since *Dievturība* was shaped as an alternative to Christianity, today *Dievturi* also say that Christianity has to abandon the status of the only true religion in Latvia, and it has to be replaced by *Dievturība*. Latvian Neopagans emphasise that the impact of the Christian Church on politics ensures its dominant position in the social domain from government and municipal authorities to the media, schools, and medical institutions.

The age of Latvian Neopagans is mostly 50 and older. Celebrations are attended also by young people, yet their influence in the group is insignificant. Neopaganism in Latvia is female-dominated (about 70%). Nevertheless, group leaders are usually males. The exaltation on the hill of Peka (near Valmiera) was organised by Valmiera Beverīna group with participation of Rāmava group (Riga) and folklore group “Laiva” on 5 August 2007. There were 25 participants – 20% males and 80% females. 25% of the participants were under 20; 10% – up to 35; 25% – up to 50; 40% – over 50.

Members of the contemporary *Dievturi* movement emphasise that *Dievturība* is the renewal of the Latvian worldview contained in folk songs as the key source of Neopagan theoretical interpretations is Latvian folklore, especially folk songs (*dainas*), while religious practice is shaped on the basis of Latvian

<sup>55</sup> Auseklis, Rāmava, Burtnieks, Dainu Līga, Daugava, Tālava, Beverīna, Namejs, Madaras, Rūsiņš, Dižozols, Bramāņi, Viesturs, Sidrabene, Austra, Māras loks.

<sup>56</sup> See *Latvijas Dievturu sadraudze*.

<sup>57</sup> See *Dievsēta*.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Ozoliņš, “Mūsdienu”, 186–202.

<sup>59</sup> Kursīte, “Dievturība un mītiskais”, 5.

<sup>60</sup> Shnirelman, “Christians”, 197.

traditional lifestyle evidence, mainly ethnographic descriptions. Despite the reference to Latvian folklore and ethnography, leaders of the movement offer creative interpretations. However, contemporary Neopagans take over the ideas generated by *Dievturi* in the 1920s and 1930s uncritically when seeking new and more modern manifestations and derive their tradition from assumptions of the movement's founding fathers.

Currently, a tendency to look for new ideas, mainly from the New Age sources, to develop and promote Neopagan notions has emerged, therefore, new creative ideas penetrate into the movement and manifest themselves as rediscovery of "culturally and historically significant objects, including 'Pagan' cultic places."<sup>61</sup> The phenomenon of the new sacred places flourished in Latvia in the first half of the 1990s, i.e. at the moment when Latvia regained its independence which promoted the search for the Latvian identity and when the official atheism was rapidly replaced by religious pluralism.

The new commonly known holy place of Latvia is Pokaiņi located in Zemgale region not far from the city of Dobeles. The Pokaiņi forest became famous for its stacks of stones, i.e. concentration of stones of different sizes and shapes in one place make many people feel specific currents of energy. Some people see visions, while others perceive a flow of information.<sup>62</sup> Pokaiņi was widely talked about already in the 1930s, although a full-fledged discovery of the place did not occur until the 1990s. In 1996, Ivars Viks<sup>63</sup> told journalists about strange anomalies and mysterious features of stones; this information brought up multiple discussions and the Pokaiņi forest became a place of pilgrimage for many tourists attracted by rumours about the healing power of this place.<sup>64</sup> A number of implausible explanations and bizarre assumptions<sup>65</sup> emerged about the stones of Pokaiņi, guides also tell about anomalous natural phenomena observed in the forest, but the New Age type spiritual mentors and healers consider Pokaiņi to be "the holy centre of civilisation of ancient Latvians."<sup>66</sup> The Valley of Spirits of the Pokaiņi forest is visited by strange lit-up balls invisible to a naked eye but appearing on photographs. Enthusiasts from a Latvian centre *Ufolats* named the balls "globous objects of unknown genesis." The holy place of Pokaiņi has even gained international prominence: "It is said that according to Jim Hurlock, an American professor who visited this place in the mid-1970s, NASA sputniks found a strange illumination in the area. Its diameter was 350 kilometres and the epicentre was located in Pokaiņi. There is no other place in the world with the energy field of this size."<sup>67</sup>

The modern Neopagan movement in Latvia is characterised by contradictory aspects: on the one hand, activity of Neopagans expresses a desire to present themselves and their national views in opposition to globalisation trends, which is not in line with the slow and contemplating lifestyle of the traditional culture. In this respect, Neopagans in Latvia just as in the rest of Europe highlight the retention of ethnic identity<sup>68</sup>, i.e. today *Dievturība* also has a strong ethnic dimension, however, it does not emphasise predestination of Latvians as it is believed that each nation has its own country, language, and traditions. Participants of *Dievturi* groups express views significant to Latvian society by stressing tolerance towards cultural values of all nations and peaceful coexistence of different peoples. However, being Latvian is an important concept, and all activities of *Dievturi* are subordinated to it, i.e. rituals, cultural and historical excursions, joint work to clean up the sacred sites, publications in the press, media interviews, thematic summer camps, as well as celebration of public holidays of Latvia and the most significant remembrance days.

<sup>61</sup> Muktupāvela, "The Mythology", 69.

<sup>62</sup> Jānis Graudonis, a local historian, believes that the stones were brought by peasants who removed them from their fields. Another theory says that the stones were brought to Pokaiņi for construction of a castle that was never built.

<sup>63</sup> Ivars Viks (1933–2002), an engineer and metalworking specialist published articles and books about fortune telling, esoteric features of water, and the holy place of the Baltic tribes in Pokaiņi. He cooperated with the New Age orientation group 'The White Circle'.

<sup>64</sup> Healing power has been attributed to the stones: some cure joint diseases, some cure osteochondrosis, and some others – gynecological diseases. There are also 'dangerous' stones that cause negative consequences if touched.

<sup>65</sup> It is voiced that Pokaiņi was a meeting place of thirty druids, where each druid controlled the weather from his own hill. Another legend says that some strange object is hidden under one of the rocks. Some say it is a radioactive meteorite; some are convinced it is an ancient tomb. The rocks on the hill called Zikkurat face the four parts of the world. It looks like the rocks used to serve as a compass. See Troitsina, "World's".

<sup>66</sup> See *Kas ir Pokaiņi*.

<sup>67</sup> See Troitsina, "World's".

<sup>68</sup> Strmiska, "Modern Paganism", 13.

On the other hand, the latest trends show that Neopaganism also follows “a similar trajectory to that of Anglo-American Neopaganism”<sup>69</sup>, i.e. it acquires characteristics of the New Age: scientific terminology and the self-reflexive character enter the *Dievturi* discourse. The near future of Neopaganism in Latvia depends on its ability to respond to the challenges of the epoch, but when forecasting the distant future one has to express doubts regarding the existence of the “traditional” *Dievturība* as a viable phenomenon since currently *Dievturi* in Latvia are in the periphery of social life and provide vitally important answers only to participants of the movement whose number has never exceeded 1000 people.<sup>70</sup> Actually, as it was observed during the field work, we can speak of just a few hundreds of *Dievturi*.

Today in Latvia public controversy over new religious movements is waning, the number of adherents of groups is shrinking, and new religious movements are losing their cultural novelty, i.e. the dynamics of defection and disengagement is observed. It is impossible to predict what changes can be expected, but it seems defection from a religious movement may also involve radical reorganisation and the adoption of new social networks.

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<sup>69</sup> Ivakhiv, “In Search”, 29.

<sup>70</sup> For details on *Dievturi* membership numbers in the 1930s see Stasulane, “The Dievturi Movement”, 38–39.

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