

diese Konstruktion nicht mehr mit dem Geschichtsbild der Gesellschaft zu korrelieren. Das heutige historische Bewusstsein der Letten stützt sich auf den Verlust der Unabhängigkeit im Jahre 1940, den sowjetischen Terror, die Deportationen, das Leben unter dem Sowjetregime und die Wiedererlangung der Unabhängigkeit. Die 90 Jahre zurückliegenden Ereignisse sind zu guter Letzt apolitisch geworden. Sie haben sich in eine Geschichte für die Historiker verwandelt. Damit sind wir aufgerufen, diese für die Vergangenheit der Letten, Esten und Deutschbalten so wichtigen Ereignisse in möglichst objektiver Weise und ohne gegenseitige Vorwürfe und Schuldzuweisungen zu betrachten.

SUMMARY

The Battle at Cēsis, the Estonians and the Historical Consciousness of Latvians

The article analyses the importance of the battles at Cēsis in the historical consciousness of Latvians. These battles between German units, the *Baltische Landeswehr* supporting the government of Andrievs Niedra, and the Northern Latvian units as part of the Estonian army that recognized the government of Kārlis Ulmanis took place in June 1919. The analysis is based on the assumption that historical consciousness can be perpetuated through research of history, writing of school textbooks, commemorations, monuments and the creation of new toponyms. The article describes how the events at Cēsis were perceived and how this perception was transformed in the 1920s and 1930s.

Particular attention is paid to the representation of the role of Estonians in the historical memory of Latvians, which became a source of disagreement between both sides in the 1920s. Although the Latvians sometimes tended to exaggerate their own military merits during the particular battles, the assistance of the Estonians during the Liberation war was never denied and their role was honoured.

During the 1920s the battles at Cēsis were incorporated into the national interpretation of history. This interpretation has changed in the past 90 years. Initially it was portrayed as the apogee of the long fight of Latvians against the Baltic Germans which finally gave the people "real freedom". In recent scholarship these battles mean simply an episode during the Liberation war 1919–1920. Thus, it can be stated that the consequences of World War II and the Soviet regime definitively transformed the composition of the national myth about "700 years of slavery" under the Germans. As a

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consequence, the perception that prevailed in the 1920s, being focused on the defeat of the Germans, has no place in the current understanding of the notion “historical enemy of the nation.” Nowadays Latvian historical consciousness is focused on events related to the loss of independence in 1940, the Soviet terror, the deportations, life under the Soviet regime and the process of regaining statehood since the late 1980s.