

DARIUS STALIŪNAS: *Making Russians: Meaning and Practice of Russification in Lithuania and Belarus after 1863* (On the Boundary of Two Worlds: Identity, Freedom, and Moral Imagination in the Baltics, 11). Verlag Rodopi. Amsterdam 2007. 465 S. ISBN 978904202267.

This monograph is a work of model scholarship and an outstanding example of the new international school of the study of the practice and lived experience of tsarist rule in the empire's borderlands. Much of the work of this school has focused on the last third of the nineteenth century and early years of the twentieth century – the period commonly called the Era of Russification. As Andreas Kappeler has recently pointed out, the practitioners of this school “have all been working in the archives, have excellent language skills, and are engaged in a fascinating discussion about the nature, aims, and implementation of Russification.”¹ These scholars tend to find situational approaches to understanding tsarist policy and its implementation (or often, failure of implementation) to be more persuasive than an application of a monolithic, one-size-fits-all paradigm of “Russification,” commonly perceived as efforts by the tsarist state to turn non-Russians into Russians. They also avoid ethnocentrism, arguing that life in the late tsarist empire cannot be understood from the vantage point of only one particular ethnic or linguistic group.

In this book Darius Staliūnas plumbs both tsarist policy and practice toward “non-dominant national groups” in the Northwestern Region (*Северо-западный край*) from the early 1860s to early 1870s. This area included the provinces of Vil'na, Kovno, Grodno, Minsk, Mogilev, Vitebsk and corresponds to contemporary Lithuania and Belarus. The population of this area was diverse in terms of native language, religious confession, and ethnicity. The concept of national identity understood as a universal characteristic was as yet inchoate in the nineteenth-century Russian empire, but with this caveat in mind, we can say that the Northwestern Region was home, primarily, to Russians, Lithuanians, Poles, Jews (widely perceived in tsarist Russia in ethnic terms), and Belarusians.

Staliūnas has firmly grounded his study in sources from archives in Russia, Lithuania, and Poland, and he also engages with the secondary literatures and on-going scholarly discussions among Lithuanian, Polish and Russian traditional historians, and, most intensely, with the debates within the new international school of historians of the multiethnic tsarist empire referred to above.

Staliūnas identifies the Polish-Lithuanian Uprising of 1863–1864 as the point at which the previously dominant ruling strategy of emphasizing loyalty to the empire on the part of minority groups gave way to a new, interventionist approach that sought to ensure more seamless integration with a

¹ ANDREAS KAPPELER: The Ambiguities of Russification, in: *Kritika. Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 5 (2004), pp. 291-297, here p. 292.

national Russian empire, and, where possible, assimilation to Russianness. A consistent thread was the Russian state's drive to limit Polish influence and Polish identity itself in all its possible manifestations. This was especially after the Uprising, but the approach actually predated it. Overall, the primary concern of the state was not to make Russians out of non-Russians, but to limit the influence of Poles and prevent the Polonization of non-Poles.

The book begins with three relatively brief chapters that lay the groundwork for three longer chapters that form the book's core. The shorter initial chapters address administrative boundaries, the central government's search for a nationalities policy in the Northwestern Region from the mid-nineteenth century until the Uprising, and definitions of Russification. The heart of the book is contained in Chapter 4 "Separating 'Them' from 'Us'. Definitions of Nationality in Political Practice," which examines land ownership policies, the replacement of teachers and lower officials, restrictions on who could enroll at the university based on ethnicity, the collection of statistics on nationality, and the ways in which Jews were identified; Chapter 5 "Confessional Experiments," which examines efforts to manage who was a Catholic; and Chapter 6 "Metamorphoses in Language Policy," which focuses on measures to encourage the use of Russian among the region's Jewish population and on the ban on Lithuanian books published in the Latin alphabet beginning in 1865.

There were several competing overall approaches to ruling the Northwestern Region, which, Staliūnas emphasizes, the tsarist state saw as fundamentally Russian in character. On the one hand, there were the more conservative state officials – conservative in the sense of preserving previous government practice – who valued loyalty to the state and the overall unity of the empire over the abstractions of nationality and concomitant efforts to mold it to the state's liking. These included state officials such as Interior Minister Petr A. Valuev, who "sought not so much to homogenise the borderlands culturally as to ensure the loyalty of the gentry above all to the tsar" (p.75). But the growing trend was toward a conscious championing of Russian national identity. Widely influential among state officials was journalist Mikhail N. Katkov, who advocated a move toward a more self-consciously Russian national state. If central state officials were often moderate, many local tsarist officials in the Northwestern Region (throughout the book Staliūnas refers to it as "NWP," an abbreviation for "North Western Province") were suspicious of Poles and any aspect of Polish influence, or perceived Polish influence, especially Catholicism.

In the eyes of officials with extreme Russian nationalist views, partial assimilation by non-Russians was insufficient. Governor General of Vil'na Konstanin P. Kaufman (in office 1865-1866) allowed only those individuals to remain in tsarist state service who, he said

"joined Orthodoxy together with their whole family and if in their manner of thought, life and language they and their whole family were

completely Russian, sympathizing with the government's measures to restore and strengthen Orthodoxy and the original Russian character of this province" (cited on p. 99).

Peasants and individuals of peasant background, however, were often exempt from these restrictions, and there was no consistent Russification or discriminatory policy regulating contact between the tsarist state and Lithuanians *qua* Lithuanians. A Lithuanian with the surname Ovchinkairuk was allowed to work as a physician in a school in Švenčionys as he was the "son of a simple peasant and through his origin presents a *sui generis* guarantee of his political reliability" (cited on p. 99). And yet, policies were put in place intended to ward off the Polonization of Lithuanians that certainly produced discriminatory results. For instance, Lithuanians were not permitted to become teachers in primary schools in Kovno gubernia.

"Nation" and "nationality" were not concepts that officials generally saw as the prime aspect of an individual's identity. Some officials saw loyalty to regime as most important; others tended to see religion as being the key to identity and most reliable predictor of behaviour. In the case of the region's Jewish population, the very terms used to refer to them was influenced by the state's own perception of their outlook toward the state and the likelihood they could be subject to Polonization. After the Uprising, some officials used the term *evrei* to refer to Jews who evinced a pro-tsarist orientation, while Jews who were seen as pro-Polish were labelled with the anti-Semitic pejorative *zbid* (120-121).

It emerges from this study that tsarist officials did not view nationality as categories of identity that each could, even potentially, have the same stature and bear the same weight. "Russian" and "Polish" were seen as different qualitatively, not just in terms of content, than "Lithuanian" or "Belarusian." Underlying the ban against Lithuanian publications in Latin script, for instance, was the conviction held by local tsarist officials that the Lithuanian language could not be suitable for the public sphere. The perceived available options were Polish and Russian, and for tsarist officials this was a choice whose outcome was for political reasons moot. The father of the idea for the ban, Alexander Hilferding, a Slavophile scholar and advisor to N. A. Miliutin (state secretary in Poland), commented, "it is necessary for Lithuanians to become educated without becoming Poles" (cited on p. 241). The policy was aimed at acculturating Lithuanians to public life in a Russian empire, not making them Russians. Kaufman asserted that the ban would "release the ordinary [Lithuanian] masses from Polonisation, enlighten them, make them completely literate, and teach them to write in their own ethnic dialects and the Russian language" (cited on p. 242). For one influential inspector of the Vil'na Educational District, "Lithuanian written in 'the Polish alphabet' was tantamount to being written in Polish" (pp. 261-262). Similarly, severe limitations on the use of Belarusian in schools, Catholic worship, and in publications in Belarusian showed

that “Belarusianness was permitted in public discourse only as a regional variation of Russianness” (p. 296).

Staliūnas concludes, “[b]eing Catholic, Lithuanians could also be treated as Poles or at least ‘potential Poles’ and thus also deserved special discriminatory treatment” (p. 297). The discriminatory policies developed in the 1860s continued, essentially, up to the 1905 Revolution.

One final note: this book is a translation of a Lithuanian-language manuscript. While the text is in idiomatic English, there are innumerable errors in syntax and grammar; in places these are serious enough to obscure what the author is trying to communicate. Either the author’s translators or the editors at Rodopi have thus done the author a significant disservice in the book’s production.

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Vene imperium ja Baltikum: venestus, rahvuslus ja moderniseerimine 19. sajandi teisel poolel ja 20. sajandi alguses [Das Russische Reich und das Baltikum: Russifizierung, Nationalisierung und Modernisierung in der zweiten Hälfte des 19. und zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts]. Bd. 2 (Eesti Ajalooarhiivi toimetised. Acta et Commentationes Archivi Historici Estoniae 18 [25]). Hrsg. von Tõnu Tannberg und Bradley Woodworth. Verlag Eesti Ajalooarhiiv. Tartu 2010. 377 S. ISBN 9789985858677.

Nicht erst seit den Forschungen von Edward C. Thaden zu Fragen der „Russifizierung“¹ am Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts in den russischen Ostseeprovinzen haben sich immer wieder Historiker daran versucht, anhand von Einzeluntersuchungen und Fallstudien die wesentlichen Ereignisse, Charakteristika und Perspektiven der vor allem in der deutschbaltischen Historiografie als „Russifizierung“ bezeichneten Periode zu bearbeiten.²

¹ U.a. nachzulesen in dem Sammelband *Russification in the Baltic Provinces and Finland, 1855–1914*, hrsg. von Edward C. Thaden, Princeton (N.J.) 1983.

² Erwähnt werden können hier (ohne Anspruch auf Vollständigkeit): Michael H. Haltzel: *Der Abbau der deutschen ständischen Selbstverwaltung in den Ostseeprovinzen Rußlands. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der russischen Unifizierungspolitik 1855–1905*, Marburg 1977 (Marburger Ostforschungen, 37); Gerhard Brandt: *Der estländische Gouverneur Fürst Šachovskoj und die behördlichen Maßnahmen zur Russifizierung Estlands (1881–1894)*. Diss., Göttingen 1956; Gert von PistoHLKors: „Russifizierung“ und die Grundlagen der deutsch-baltischen Russophobie, in: *Zeitschrift für Ostforschung* 25 (1976), S. 618–641; Ders.: