

ZINĀTNISKIE RAKSTI

THE ROLE OF DIASPORA LATVIANS AND LATVIAN COMMUNITIES
IN NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL POLITICS
SINCE THE MID-19TH CENTURY

EXPLORING THE LIBRARY OF LATVIAN SOCIALISTS IN SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA: ACTIVITIES OF THE EARLY LATVIAN POLITICAL EMIGRATION, 1905–1917*

Elga Zālīte

Doctor of history, Slavic and Eastern European Collections, International and Area Studies Group, Stanford University Libraries, United States.
E-mail: ezalite@stanford.edu

Using a unique collection of 380 books recently discovered in San Francisco, California, the article explores and highlights the political and cultural activities of Latvian socialists in Northern California around 1905. The article analyzes the structure and contents of the San Francisco socialist library and shows how, in a process of describing three different identifying marks or ownership stamps, it is possible to trace the development of three separate Latvian socialist libraries. The article provides an overview of the historical evolution of the three Latvian socialist groups to whom the libraries belonged: the Lettish Socialist Labor Section in San Francisco, the Lettish Social-Democratic Group of San Francisco and the Lettish Branch of the Socialist Party in San Francisco. As part of the historical overview, the most important aspects of the Latvian political emigration to the United States before and after the 1905 Revolution are described. Using novel data from the genealogy research website *Ancestry.com*, the article draws a concrete picture of individuals involved. The author has attempted to trace the attitudes of the Latvian immigrant groups in San Francisco and the decisions they made in relation to the wider socialist movement in the United States.

Key words: Latvia, Latvian political emigration, 1905 Revolution, San Francisco, California, socialist library, socialist groups, socialist movement in the United States.

* An earlier version of this article was presented as a paper at the 45th Annual Convention of the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies in Boston on 21 November 2013.

INTRODUCTION

In November 2012, the Hoover Institution Archives at Stanford University acquired a collection of 380 books, the lending library of a Latvian socialist group in San Francisco that had been established around 1905. In the Hoover Institution Archives, the collection can be found under the title *Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church collection, 1876–1976*. The title, which seems at variance with the content of the collection, is derived from the provenance of the library. From 1974 until 2012, the library was stored in the building of the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church of Northern California, commonly referred to as the Latvian Hall in San Francisco.

The library may have ended up somewhere else, or it even could have disappeared completely. The new wave of Latvian immigrants who arrived after World War II considered those who had come before as radical communists, which often, but not always, was the case. The earlier immigrants held on to the political values they had embraced at the beginning of the 20th century and that had largely gone unmodified in the intervening 40 or so years. In the main, they were not able to recognize the changes undergone in the world around them, both in the United States and elsewhere. They did not understand the political situation in the Soviet Union and the brutality of the Stalinist system. Additionally, they denied the importance of an independent Latvian state.¹ The differences between the earlier and post-World War II immigrants often led to heated arguments. The situation in the San Francisco Latvian community reflected this clash of generations. Some of the members of the parish were of the opinion that the church was not a proper place for keeping socialist literature. Only after the intervention of Latvian-American professor Edgars Andersons, who was able to explain the historical value of such a collection, did the library find a safe haven in the building of the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church of Northern California.² Before that, the library was kept in Forestville, Sonoma County, California, in the family house of Fricis Jergens (1886–1975) and Katrina Jergens (1886–1975) who arrived in the United States as political refugees in 1912, having left from Liverpool.³

The discovery of the library was noteworthy, since little has been known about the activities of early Latvian emigrants in Northern California, and no primary sources of any kind had survived. In the case of the earlier generation of Latvian immigrants it is already too late to recover information about many aspects of their lives, so historians should use every opportunity that arises to document and describe events in the history of the Latvian emigration.

Several books and articles have been published on the history of Latvians in Northern California. These studies have centered on subjects such as the formation of the first parishes in the Bay Area and the activities of the first Latvian pastors; the second wave of Latvian immigration after World War II; and the history of Latvian immigrants in certain localities.⁴

Some facts about the life of Latvian socialists in the United States after 1905 can be learned from studies devoted to the most important centers of Latvian immigration during the time period of 1888–1917: Boston, New York, Minneapolis, Cleveland, Lincoln (Illinois), and Chicago.⁵ The biggest problem in trying to recover the history of the early Latvian Socialists in the United States, including California, has been lack of sources such as the minutes of the meetings of various socialist groups. The records of only two (out of about twenty) branches of Latvian socialist organizations are known to have survived. The papers of the Lettish Workingmen's Association in Boston are kept in the State Archives of Latvia in Riga, and the papers of the Latvian Social Democrats in Chicago have been preserved in the Bruno Kalniņš Archive in the Labour Movement Archives in Stockholm.⁶

The purpose of this article is to use the contents of the San Francisco socialist library to trace the development of three separate Latvian socialist libraries.⁷ Three different identifying marks or ownership stamps were the first indication that several Socialist groups actually had existed in San Francisco area. The article discusses why and how the three groups eventually merged into one, the library collection of which ended up in the Hoover Institution Archives. The objective is to show that the library is a potent source that can disclose information about the individuals who made up the groups that created the library. This particular library provides

important information regarding the attitudes and activities of Latvian Socialists in San Francisco at the beginning of the last century and connections to their American counterparts.

The main source for this study is the Latvian socialist library found in San Francisco. Unfortunately no library cards or records of the lending library have survived. *The second source* is Latvian American socialist newspapers from the early 20th century: *Proletareets* (The Proletarian), *Strahdneeks* (The Worker), *Prometejs* (Prometheus), as well as *Amerikas Latvietis* (The American Latvian).⁸ *The third source* is *Ancestry.com* which is a subscription-based genealogy research website with about 5 billion records and thousands of searchable databases. The majority of the records are accessible only by paid subscription, and the most useful for this research have been data from four censuses (1910, 1920, 1930 and 1940) as well as obituaries, immigration documents, and military and employment records. It is possible to search these databases for specific people by name, dates, and other variables such as place.⁹ A helpful feature for this kind of research is that the digitized documents are available for viewing, which has provided the opportunity to locate a significant number of Latvian or Lettish (as they were referred to at the beginning of the 20th century) individuals. It is also possible to filter the search by the place of origin of immigrants, namely, Latvia.

Besides these three main categories of sources, a number of original documents were available for research.¹⁰ The author has also conducted several interviews with the descendants of early Latvian Socialists in Northern California.¹¹

THE LIBRARY

The books in the library are all in Latvian. Almost all were published in Latvia and Russia, and in the Gothic script.¹² About a half of the books are original Latvian titles, while the rest are translations, mostly from German, but also from Russian, English, and Dutch.

A selection of the books written by Latvian authors in the library reveals certain directions and undercurrents that shaped the development of literary life in Latvia in general from the 1870s to 1920.

For example, the library holds a rare example of an important book on the history of Latvia, by Mikus Skruzītis *Sēļi, Kurzemes augšgala senči*.¹³ Other early titles are from 1876 and 1879, two yearbooks published by the Latvian poet, educator and publisher Auseklis (the pen-name of Miķelis Krogzemis, 1850–1879). The library also contains an 1888 volume of his own writings.¹⁴ Auseklis was one of the leaders of the first Latvian National Awakening movement or New Latvians, the term applied to the group of intellectuals active from the 1850s to the 1880s.

Several books are by authors who started their activities during the New Current (*Jaunā strāva*) period, which followed the first Latvian National Awakening.¹⁵ The beginning of the New Current is usually given as 1886. Among the authors associated with this tendency are two Social Democrats, Jānis Rainis (the pseudonym of Jānis Pliekšāns, poet, playwright and translator, 1865–1929) and Janis Jansons-Brauns (publicist and literary critic, 1872–1917). The New Current was a broad leftist social and political movement connected to the political awakening of the Latvian working people, the propagandization of socialist ideas, and the first attempts of Latvian workers and peasants to organize themselves. It can be said that for many Latvians at that time socialism was the ideal of the future. Educated Latvian revolutionaries found their inspiration in the new socialist ideas of Western Europe.¹⁶

All the titles in the San Francisco socialist library can be divided into four groups: political publications, which constitute 17%; nature and science books 15%; literature and poetry 40%; and plays 28 per cent. We have to take into account that the composition of the library changed over the years. Books were borrowed and not returned. Some of the most radical ones may have been removed during the First Red Scare in San Francisco.¹⁷ Interestingly, plays were not supposed to be checked out by regular readers because they were meant to be used in theater performances.

Most of the books in the library date from 1905 to 1911. Twenty seven books date from 1905 and 1906, respectively; 30 books from 1907. 43 titles (the largest number) were published in 1908; 24 in 1909; 30 in 1910; 12 in 1911.

The library's political publications provide both details and a general picture of the publishing business in Latvia around the 1905 Revolution as well as the most popular authors among San Francisco's Latvian Socialists. The number of publications dedicated to political and economical issues was small before the 1905 Revolution. There is only one book of political nature from before 1905 in the library: *The Workers' Question in Russia*, published by the Latvian Social-Democratic Party in 1904, the year the party was founded.¹⁸ The limits to publishing were set by czarist censorship, which until 1905 was based on the 1865 press law. The list of prohibited topics included writings on inequality, criticism of the absolutist czarist regime and political system, and teachings of socialism. The 1905 Revolution brought an advance towards the establishment of freedom of press in Latvia. Pre-publication censorship of non-periodicals was abolished on 26 April 1906.¹⁹ The growth in new publishing houses was quite impressive, as can be seen from the items in the library. A lot of publications were printed by local presses in Riga, Liepāja, Jelgava, Valmiera, Cēsis, Limbaži etc.

The leading Latvian Social Democrats and publicists Janis Jansons-Brauns (who signed his works also under the names of Jansons and Brauns, 1872–1917) and Jānis Asars (1877–1908) were the two most popular original authors whose writings can be found in the library.²⁰ They wrote on the Baltic Revolution, art and revolution, as well essays in literary criticism.

Translations of writings by the German socialist theoretician Karl Kautsky (1854–1938) are the most numerous works among socialist translations in the library. The first translations of Kautsky in Latvian appeared in 1905: *A Question of Nationalities in Present Times; A Theoretical Part of Erfurt Program; Essays from the History of a Society; The Social Revolution and on the Day after the Social Revolution*.²¹ There are a few works by Paul Lafargue, Karl and Wilhelm Liebknecht, and the Dutch socialist, Henriette Roland Holst. Only a few examples of works by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels are represented in the library.²² They include a volume of Marx's economic studies in a popular version by Karl Kautsky, published in Latvia.

The library contains also several well-known works by August Bebel (1840–1913), for instance, *Women under Socialism* published

in 1879.²³ It is considered to be the most popular publication of socialist literature in Europe at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century.²⁴ The number of translations of the works by German Socialists suggests the influence that they may have had on Latvian Social Democrats. Their mutual contacts started in 1893 and continued up to 1905. In fact, Latvian Social Democrats personally knew and received support from August Bebel and Karl and Wilhelm Liebknecht.²⁵ It is interesting to note that Lenin's works were not published in Latvia, nor did his articles appear in the Latvian social democratic press during the period from 1898 to 1907.²⁶

Looking through the section of political literature in the library, we can observe quite a wide range of political ideas. The closest to the socialist writings are anarchist publications such as Peter Kropotkin's (1842–1921) *Memoirs of a Revolutionist*, Sergey Stepnyak-Kravchinsky's (1851–1895) *Secret Russia*, Anton Menger's (1841–1906) *The Future State, Anarchism, Communal State*.²⁷ Liberal views of the time are expressed in the works by Fedor Kokoshkin (one of the founders of the Russian Constitutional Democrat Party, 1871–1918), *State and Its Power: Historically Critical Essays*; Muskatblut, F. *Representation of the People*; and Nikolai Rozhkov (historian and political figure, 1868–1927), in *On the Forms of Popular Representation*.²⁸

Selection of political literature in the library suggests that Latvian Socialists arrived in the United States with a pre-formed national and social understanding. They were ideologically connected to the movement in Latvia and influenced by the ideas of German Social Democrats. But it also appears that the Latvian Socialists were willing to explore other ideas about a possible future society. They seemed to exhibit a kind of eclecticism in their readings, which may have been a sign that they were relatively non-dogmatic in their politics.

Still, the library operated within the framework of a workers' organization committed to socialism. So it reflects an ideology that the library's founders intended to propagate as the prime objective of the library was to provide means for political education. For instance, to begin one's studies and get acquainted with foreign

political terminology, the library provided *Politisku svešvārdu grāmata* (A Dictionary of Foreign Political Terms), published in Riga in 1906. The library served also as a source and means for universal education as some of its books offered help with self-education in motherhood, child rearing, minor health issues and fighting alcoholism.²⁹

The books concerned with nature, science and history comprise 15% of titles in the library. Almost all of these are translations, since there were not many Latvian authors writing popular science books at that time. The exception is literary criticism. The lawyer and publicist Kristaps Bahmanis (1867–1942) wrote *Grāmatu nozīme cilvēka dzīvē* (On the Significance of Books in the Life of an Individual) and the author and literary critic Augusts Bračs (1880–1967) wrote *Rakstniecības teorija* (A Theory of Writing).³⁰

Particularly interesting are the titles on popular science, although the names of the authors are mostly forgotten nowadays. Books on biology and natural history were very popular at the time in Europe. The German scientists and philosophers Ernst Haeckel (1834–1919), Ludwig Buchner (1824–1899), Max Wilhelm Meyer (1853–1910) and Wilhelm Bolsche (1861–1939) promoted and popularized Charles Darwin's work and gave a materialistic interpretation of the universe.³¹ The library contains also works by two famous Russian biologists – Ilya Mechnikov (1845–1916) and Kliment Timiriachev (1843–1920), who both promoted Darwinism in Russia.³²

Self-education was considered a cardinal attribute of the socialist movement in Europe. Unsurprisingly then, literature, poetry and popular fiction constitute 40% of books in the library. This indicates that the members of the Latvian socialist group in San Francisco must have combined a traditional love of reading, learning and education with the idea of the development of class consciousness. According to the principles of Social Democracy, the latter goal could be accomplished by providing scientific literature together with popular works of history and *belles lettres*. Popular fiction and poetry proved critical for the engagement of ordinary workers with Social Democracy and seem to have assumed a growing importance in the eyes of Party leaders.³³ Libraries also became the venues of

such intellectual pursuits as study circles, lectures, ideological and political discussions, as well as activities of an organizational and social nature. Theaters were also indispensable for the achievement of these objectives. A particular affinity for the theater definitely must have been the case in San Francisco as 28% of books in the library are plays.

Approximately six out of ten titles in the library are works of fiction. The greater number of books are by Latvian authors, but the library also contained translations of works by Russian, German and Scandinavian authors. Among these are translations of stories by Leonid Andreev (1871–1919). Several of his stories captured the spirit of the period of 1905 in the Russian Empire: *The Red Laugh*, *The Seven Who Were Hanged*, *Black Masks*, *The Life of a Man*.³⁴ Another popular Russian author whose works appear in the library is Maxim Gorky (1868–1936): *Enemies*, *The City of the Yellow Devil*, *Old Izergil*, and *The Lower Depths*.³⁵ The library also contains books by Heinrich Heine, Friedrich Schiller, William Shakespeare, Aleksandr Pushkin, Nikolai Nekrasov, Leo Tolstoy, Anton Chekhov, Emil Zola, Ludwig Thoma, Henrik Ibsen, Knut Hamsun and others.

In sum, the contents of this library suggests that it belonged to a specific, radically inclined community of early Latvian immigrants in Northern California. To better understand this population, it is necessary to situate them within the larger history of early Latvian emigration in the United States, the socio-economic composition of the San Francisco Latvian immigrant community, and relate it to specific individuals who were associated with the library and socialist activity.

HISTORY OF THE LATVIAN IMMIGRATION AND THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EARLY SOCIALISTS

First immigrants from Latvia arrived in the United States around 1888 and settled in big cities such as Boston, New York and Philadelphia.³⁶ Over the years, about two thirds of Latvian immigrants settled in the states on the Atlantic coast and the rest in the Mid-West and on the Pacific coast.³⁷ According to data from

Ancestry.com, 23 immigrants from Latvia lived in San Francisco area already before that. They were mostly seamen, but also representatives of other professions. For example, after his arrival in 1882, Carl Saulit³⁸ (born in 1863) worked on a pilot steamer and later became a master on a fire boat. Iron worker Jacob Pirag (1870–1925) and his family arrived in San Francisco in 1880. Ernest Wanag (born in 1868 in Courland) immigrated in 1883 and worked as a helper in a restaurant in San Francisco. Martin Stall (born in 1864) immigrated in 1881 and worked as a carpenter in San Francisco.³⁹

According to the American literary magazine *The Literary Digest*, there were two main impulses for the emigration of Latvians from their homeland: first, the economic domination and exploitation of Latvians by rich German landed proprietors; and, second, the political restrictions and religious persecution of czarist Russia.⁴⁰ Consequently, early immigrants could be divided into two sociopolitical groups: those who were religious and soon founded a number of Lutheran congregations, and those who were influenced by the anti-czarist and anticlerical intellectuals of the New Current, advocated for workers' rights and espoused early forms of socialist ideology.⁴¹

Besides sailors, who arrived on ships, most of the European immigrants in the Bay Area apparently came west overland, often after some years of residence on the East coast. While direct passage from Europe to California was possible at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, it was not practical until after the completion of the Panama Canal in 1914.⁴² According to data from U. S. censuses (1900 to 1930), about 80–90 people (males) from Latvia settled in Northern California (with or without families) before 1905. They may have been Latvians, Russians, Jews, or Germans.⁴³ Looking into the list of the names of people who were politically active (information from *Proletareets*) and comparing these names with the years of immigration of the same individuals as they appear in the *Ancestry.com* database, we can conclude that there were at least 21 Latvians who had come before the 1905 Revolution and became involved with the earliest socialist group. *Ancestry.com* census records can offer quite a comprehensive socio-economic account of this group of Latvians. Almost all of them had been employed as skilled workers. Eight of them had jobs as ironworkers,

molders, blacksmiths, machinists; five were carpenters and cabinet-makers; two were tailors; and two were sailors. They were people of different age groups: eight were 20 to 25 years old; four were 26 to 30 years old; and nine were in the age group from 31 to 46. Ten of them had families, with or without children.⁴⁴

Immigration from Latvia increased steadily around 1905. According to data in *Ancestry.com*, altogether 189 immigrants (with or without families) settled in Northern California from 1905 to 1915. It cannot be determined with certainty how many of these immigrants were political refugees. After matching the information of the year of immigration of a certain individual and his (or much less frequently, hers) political activity in either of San Francisco's socialist groups (based on information in the newspapers *Proletareets* and *Strahdneeks*), it is possible to deduce that about 50 to 60 of the Latvian immigrants became involved in the socialist groups. Of those active in the San Francisco socialist groups, nine had arrived in 1905; 17 in 1906; eight in 1907; three in 1908; five in 1909–1910; ten after 1910. It appears that most of the political refugees had reached San Francisco by 1906 or 1907.⁴⁵ Quite a few arrived later, even on the eve of World War I, after spending several years in Western European countries, mainly in Germany.

There were 76 Latvian immigrants living in Berlin, Hamburg, Bremen, Karlsruhe and Stuttgart in 1908; 89 in 1911.⁴⁶ Some of them eventually found their way to San Francisco. For instance, Paul Kauss (1879–?), an active participant of the 1905 Revolution, a teacher in Zemīte parish, Kandava county, came to San Francisco in 1912 after seven years spent in Berlin, Germany and Antwerp, Belgium. Veterans of 1905, Peter Winup (1877–1959) and his wife Olga Winup (1881–1963), entered the United States around 1910. They had left Riga in 1906 for Bremen, Germany.⁴⁷ Charles (Karl) Plaving (Plavinsh) (1875–1969), a cabinet-maker, who also was active in 1905, left Latvia when the repressions started and went to Berlin via Finland and East Prussia. In Berlin, he learned the trade of a mason and completed his general education. The limited opportunity for work in Germany made him emigrate to the United States. Charles Plavinsh reached California by way of Texas. He hoped to find work after the great earthquake of 1906.⁴⁸ Around 1909 Charles

Plavinsh became the Secretary of the Lettish Branch of San Francisco Socialist Party.

Quite a few Latvian political refugees found shelter in Helsinki before arriving in the United States.⁴⁹ Many came to California from Great Britain, mainly leaving from Liverpool, but also from London. The socialist newspaper *Strahdneeks* reported that in 1908–1909 London had been a transit point for further emigration to the United States.⁵⁰ Because of the continuing repressions against revolutionaries in Latvia, the number of potential immigrants remained steady, though emigration after 1905 was difficult. Political refugees were running for their lives and so some paid exorbitant sums or had to sneak aboard a liner to stay in the coal-hold. Once in America, many of them changed their names, along with their nationality and place of birth.⁵¹ This was done to protect themselves from czarist agents, and from possible extradition to the Russian empire for crimes committed during the revolution. All contact with family, friends and party members still in Europe or Russian Empire was maintained through intermediaries.

There was also a legal way to emigrate, although Russian Empire did not really have legislation regarding emigration.⁵² Permits could be obtained from the czarist government to visit relatives living abroad. In such cases, emigrants were able to start their voyage in Riga, Libau (Liepāja), or Ventspils. Sometimes, even for 1905 political refugees, we can find immigration records with Libau or Riga as the ports of departure. For instance, Gustav Podnieks (Podneck, Podnick, Podniek, Pudnich, 1887–1952), an active socialist in Northern California who later became a communist, arrived in New York with his family from Libau in 1912.

An interesting account of the emigration of 1905 revolutionaries can be found in the report of the Dillingham Commission, an entity established by the American government to study conditions leading to emigration from Europe. The following scene was described in Libau in May, 1908: “[..] a large force of Russian police was stationed at the dock pending the departure of the steamer, and a number of police officers remained on the steamer until the outer harbour was reached. On this occasion several hundred friends of the emigrants, who had come to witness the embarkation, were driven from the

dock, by mounted policemen before the ship sailed, while any attempt on the part of the emigrants on board the ship to shout or sing was promptly suppressed by the police on the board. It was explained that this is occasioned by the fact that many of the emigrants are revolutionists who feel that once on board a ship bound for America they have taken the first step toward freedom, and accordingly they have in the past given vent to their feelings by singing the Marseillaise and waving red flags. To prevent a repetition of such scenes, the police control mentioned was inaugurated.⁵³

A trip from Libau to Boston lasted about 20 days and the price for a ticket was \$25 (\$610 in 2013 dollars). During the period under discussion, immigrants actually did not need passports or entrance visas to come to the United States. Sometimes passengers were asked to report the amount of money they carried, precisely, whether they had \$50 with them. The only restrictions placed upon European immigration before World War I were based upon the health record of the individual immigrant. Contract laborers were excluded, too.⁵⁴

Latvian political refugees often chose Boston as their destination because there was a considerable Latvian community already there since the early 1890s. The local Latvian pastor in Boston Jakob Sieberg (Jēkabs Zibergs, 1863–1963) helped persecuted refugees, regardless of their political convictions.⁵⁵

In a few instances political refugees arrived in San Francisco from Australia. In 1905, John Friede (1874–1950) came from Sydney, and immediately became an active member of the Lettish Socialist Labor Party. In 1913, William Lever (1885–1941) arrived from Australia via Vancouver, Canada.⁵⁶ At the end of 1915 Lever was elected the Secretary of the Lettish Branch of San Francisco Socialist Party.

Of the 189 immigrants who arrived in California during the time period of 1905–1914, 38 were employed as sailors and fishermen; 12 as longshoremen; 35 were machinists and mechanics; 32 tailors and shoemakers; 26 carpenters and cabinet-makers; and 32 were unskilled workers. Others were painters, salesmen, chauffeurs, cooks, printers, lithographers, waiters, barbers, and building superintendents.⁵⁷

It is worth mentioning that during later decades many of Latvian sailors took up jobs as longshoremen in the port of San Francisco.

Latvian immigrants, who were skilled carpenters and cabinet-makers, set out for San Francisco after the 1906 earthquake. Around 1910, it turned out that there was a big surplus of carpenters and builders in San Francisco, and according to information published in *Strahdneeks*, 60% of the workers in the construction industry were unemployed in 1910.⁵⁸ There was a certain hope that the building industry would pick up before 1915 when San Francisco was getting ready for the World's Fair. Curiously, the secretary of the Lettish Socialist Party at the time, Otto Braun (1885–1976), published an article in *Strahdneeks* in 1914 warning Latvian workers not to come to San Francisco since there was still shortage of work in the city.⁵⁹ According to an account by another Secretary Carl Apsen (Fred, Fritz, Karl Apsan, Aspan, 1878–1932, a tailor, immigrated in 1906), tailors were the only category of workers in demand at the time.⁶⁰

As mentioned earlier, 32 of the post-1905 Latvian immigrants belonged to the category of unskilled workers, including farm laborers, fruit pickers, lumberjacks, etc. The importance of agriculture, lumbering, construction, fruit and vegetable canning, fisheries and associated seasonal industries in California was the critical factor in creating a large itinerant labor force, and some of the Latvian political immigrants were among them. They were impacted by the seasonal character of such work, which meant that during certain periods they flooded the city in hopes of finding odd jobs.⁶¹ This lack of stable work opportunities led to a situation where the membership in Latvian socialist groups in San Francisco was not very consistent. New immigrants moved all the time looking for work.⁶² Yet there were machinists and mechanics who had permanent work in the harbor or in factories, as well tailors and painters, carpenters and cabinet-makers who had steady employment. The most active members of the socialist groups had permanent employment, although there were some exceptions. John Strehle (1869–1945, immigrated in 1903), who was secretary of the Socialist Party in 1916, was a farmer and lived with his family of five children quite far from San Francisco, in Yolo county.

Many Latvian political immigrants chose to live in San Francisco, but a large Latvian community also formed in Oakland, about 13 km from San Francisco. Oakland's rise to industrial prominence

and its subsequent need for a seaport, led to the digging of a shipping and tidal channel in 1902, which created an “island” out of the nearby town of Alameda. In 1906, its population doubled with refugees who became homeless in San Francisco’s earthquake and fire of 1906. By 1920, Oakland was the home of numerous manufacturing industries, including metal works, canneries, bakeries, engine and automobile factories, and shipyards.⁶³

In comparison to those arriving in the earlier years, post-1905 Latvian immigrants had more difficulties in finding employment. Quite often they lived longer distances from San Francisco. Some Latvians who were involved in socialist activities lived in a redwood logging community in Big River, Mendocino. Even today it is a three to four hour drive from San Francisco, and it seems a fair question to ask how they managed to travel to group meetings and other events. Obviously, they had a great deal of commitment.

There were other reasons why the San Francisco socialist groups went through frequent membership changes. Some of the members fell ill and had to leave the Bay Area. Secretary Charles Plavinsh became ill with silicosis while working in a San Francisco factory. On his doctor’s advice, he left for rural Canada.⁶⁴ Frank Gross, a molder in an iron factory and the brother of Robert Gross and secretary of Lettish Socialist Labor Section in San Francisco fell ill with typhoid and died in 1913.⁶⁵

A few of San Francisco socialists got elected to the highest administrative bodies or Central Committee of the Lettish Socialist Party. For instance, Michael Tomin (1880–1951, immigrated in 1903, a painter) became a member of the Central Committee in 1911 and moved to Boston, as did William Lever (born in Riga, 1885–1941, immigrated in 1913, a machinist) who moved to New York.

THE FIRST LATVIAN SOCIALISTS: THE LETTISH SOCIALIST LABOR SECTION IN SAN FRANCISCO

Judging by the year on the stamp in the library books, the Lettish Socialist Labor Section in San Francisco was founded in 1905 (*Fig. 1*). The group was a part of the Lettish Federation of the Socialist Labor Party founded in New York in 1901 and aligned

with the American Socialist Labor Party.⁶⁶ The Lettish Federation of the Socialist Labor Party published a monthly literary and political journal *Proletareets* (The Proletarian), which began in 1902. Right away, *Proletareets* had a distributor in San Francisco, Jacob Wilkewsky.⁶⁷ Born in 1872, he was a carpenter who had immigrated in 1896, and a few years later became an active member of the Lettish Federation of the Socialist Labor Party. The presence of a distribution agent indicates that there must have been readers who lived in San Francisco and its vicinity.

The Socialist Labor Party of America was established in 1876 and it is the oldest socialist party in the United States. It had no more than 1000 members who were almost exclusively recent German, Polish, Jewish, Hungarian and Italian immigrants.⁶⁸ The Party's leader Daniel De Leon was a radical Marxist who argued for the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism. The Lettish Federation of the Socialist Labor Party found much of the American Socialist Labor Party's ideology too restrictive with its emphasis on "scientific socialism," which ignored many of the realities that a more pragmatic approach would have taken into account.⁶⁹



Fig. 1. The stamp of the Lettish Socialist Labor Section in San Francisco, 1905



Fig. 2. Robert Gross

The earliest information about the activities of individual members of the Lettish Socialist Labor Section in San Francisco dates from 1904. John Jurgis (born in 1882 in Jelgava) who had been a sailor since 1900 and politically active in Latvia and Europe, arrived in the United States in 1902 and in 1904 organized a group in San Francisco.⁷⁰ He had been a political exile in Siberia, but managed to escape and reached San Francisco by ship. For a short period of time, Jurgis was the editor of *Proletareets*.

Another well-known member of the Lettish Socialist Labor Section was Robert Gross (1881–1977), originally from Riga (*Fig. 2*).

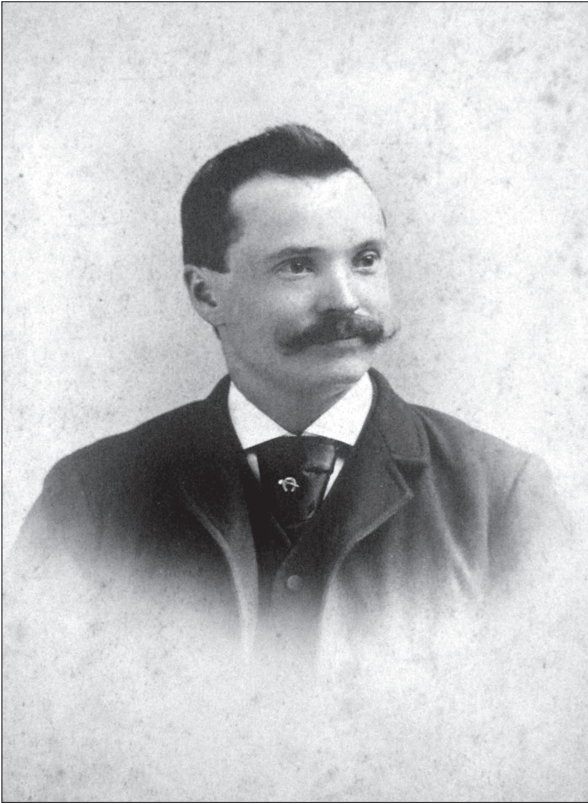


Fig. 3. Charles Greenberg

According to a family legend, he may have jumped ship in 1902 or earlier after having been a sailor. Robert Gross settled in San Francisco, and spent all his life working as an ironworker. He met his future wife Lucy Greenberg (1886–1966) from Auce, Latvia in San Francisco. Robert Gross served as the secretary and treasurer of the group on repeated occasions⁷¹ and stayed with the The Socialist Labor Party of America all his life. His brother, Frank Gross (1876–1913, immigrated in 1891, molder in iron foundry) and father-in-law, Charles Greenberg (born in 1863, immigrated in 1890, a blacksmith; *Fig. 3*) were active members, too.⁷² Altogether, the Lettish Socialist Labor Section of San Francisco consisted of 32 mem-

bers in 1906 and 35 in 1910,⁷³ including 21 individuals who came before 1905. To name a few more: Christian Arklis (born in Mitau (Jelgava), 1878–1954, immigrated in 1902, electrician); John Krinkel (1877–1957, immigrated in 1903, a sea master); Henry Greenhoff (1868–?, immigrated in 1890, horseshmith); Edward Milt (1881–1966, immigrated in 1902, iron worker); Albert Munken (1872–1948, immigrated in 1901, machinist); Peter Stein (1886–1967, immigrated 1894, tailor); John Uhdriš (1868–?, immigrated in 1901, laborer in oil refinery); John Wickman (1876–1953, immigrated in 1901, laborer in a rope factory).⁷⁴

A report of the Lettish Socialist Labor Section of San Francisco for 1906 gives insight into the activities and budget of the group. According to the report written by the audit committee, the group had organized 14 readings (lectures) and 15 evenings of questions and answers. Altogether, 233 persons had participated in these activities.⁷⁵ The total budget for 1906 was an impressive \$403.28.⁷⁶ One of the components in the group's revenue consisted of gifts given to the library. In 1906, they came from the secretary John Jurgis and John Kruhmin, a seaman who gave a total amount of \$6. Expenditures in turn show that \$12.50 was used for the needs of the library. The initial value of the library is given as \$10. A few years later, around 1909–1910, there were 133 books in the library. At the beginning of 1910, a decision was made to buy more books for \$30.⁷⁷

The group organized its first theater performance in 1906. Then in February of 1908 the play *Spiēgs slazdā* (A Spy in a Trap) was staged. Another play *Priekšvakarā* (On the Eve) was performed in October of 1908.⁷⁸ The director was Albert Munken, who later became famous in the New York Latvian theater community.⁷⁹ He left San Francisco for Boston around 1910. The Lettish Socialist Labor Section of San Francisco also had a popular men's choir.

The report of the audit committee ends with a note that parts of the group's property as well as its previous record books were lost in the earthquake of 18 April 1906. As a result, we cannot compare the figures of 1906 with the previous year.

As mentioned before, the Lettish Socialist Labor Party supported the program of the American Socialist Labor Party. One of the goals

of the American Socialist Labor Party was to prepare Latvians and all other immigrants to become an active part of the socialist movement in the United States. As is evident from the reports in *Proletareets*, political and social events of the Lettish Socialist Labor Party were organized together with Russian, German, Hungarian and American workers. For instance, there were yearly commemorations of the beginning of the 1905 Revolution, the so-called Bloody Sunday, with speeches made in many languages.⁸⁰

The groups of the Federation of the Lettish Socialist Labor Party on the East coast did not recognize the necessity of supporting the needs of revolutionaries in Latvia after 1905. However, the San Francisco group disagreed and the record of expenditures for 1906 shows that \$20 were given to support the revolutionary movement in Latvia, and \$26 were donated to help the political refugees.⁸¹

THE LETTISH SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC GROUP OF SAN FRANCISCO: THE CHOICES OF POLITICAL IMMIGRANTS

There is not much information about the initial activities of the Lettish Social-Democratic Group of San Francisco or its first members.⁸² There is evidence that around 1907–1908, the Lettish Social-Democratic Group of San Francisco was active in parallel to the Lettish Socialist Labor Section in San Francisco.⁸³ They had their own, very small library (*Fig. 4*) and their group served as a predecessor to the Lettish Branch of the San Francisco Socialist Party.

It has been argued that pre-1905 immigrants joined the Lettish Socialist Labor Party on the East coast, while the post-1905 immigrants were affiliated with the Lettish Social-Democratic Groups.⁸⁴ This seems to be only partially true in San Francisco.

Political immigrants who arrived from Latvia after the 1905 Revolution chose different ways of proceeding with their lives, including their political activities. Many joined the newly formed Lettish Social-Democratic Group of San Francisco. Most likely, these were individuals who had been active members of the Latvian So-

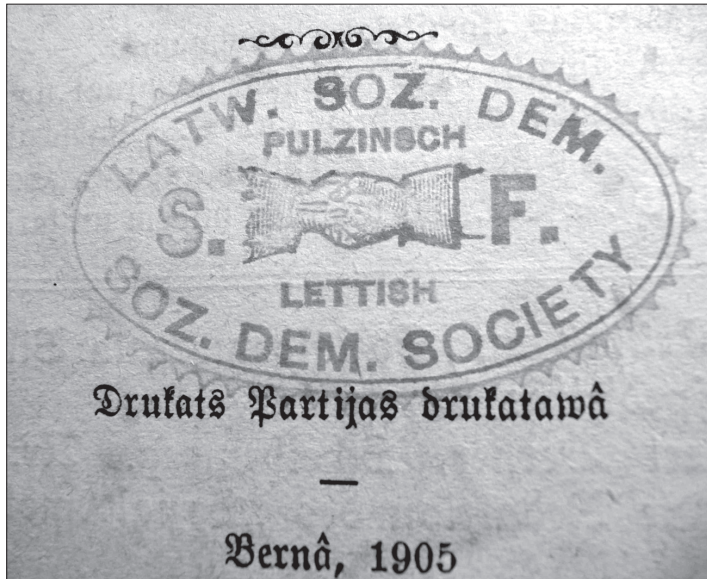


Fig. 4. The stamp of the Lettish Social-Democratic Group of San Francisco

cial Democratic Party in Latvia. Others, however, aligned with the Lettish Socialist Labor Section of San Francisco.⁸⁵ They were William Cerp (1884–1969, immigrated in 1906, a carpenter), Otto Braun (1885–1975, immigrated in 1908, a cabinet maker), William Beinert (1882–1942, immigrated in 1906, a mechanic), Peter Wickman (1880–1951, immigrated in 1906, a longshoreman), and John Siebert (1885–?, immigrated in 1906, a sailor). Later these individuals were among the leaders of the Lettish Branch of the Socialist Party in San Francisco.

In December 1905, a conference of Latvian social-democratic groups in New York agreed on the formation of a united national organization. A constitution was adopted, the Latvian newspaper *Strahdneeks* established, and an Executive Committee elected.⁸⁶ There is a possibility that the Lettish Branch of the Socialist Party in San Francisco was among them.⁸⁷ During 1907, there was a steady growth in the number and size of the local Latvian socialist groups in the United States. Consequently, there were 15 branches, and

the membership grew from 247 to 880.⁸⁸ There were 32 members in the Lettish Social-Democratic Group of San Francisco in 1906; 30, including three women, in 1908; and 29, including two women, in 1909.⁸⁹ In general, there were about 300 American socialists and also socialists of foreign language groups in San Francisco around 1909. The Latvian socialist groups on the East coast had bigger memberships: 324 members in Boston; 105 in New York; and 85 in Chicago.⁹⁰ There were smaller groups in Baltimore, Newark, Lawrence, Lincoln, Los Angeles, Portland and Seattle.

Not all political immigrants engaged in political activity in the United States. Probably the best known Latvian political immigrant after 1905 in Northern California was George Rosen (1870–1927). While in Latvia, he had been a well known pastor, journalist and the editor of a popular literary magazine *Apskats* (Review) (1903–1905).⁹¹ Rosen became involved in the 1905 Revolution and gained popularity as a speaker and political writer and was often referred to as the socialist pastor. When the wave of repression started, George Rosen was forced to flee. He and his family of four children moved to the East, into inner Russia. He first worked as a teacher in Perm, near the Ural Mountains and then moved even farther to Khabarovsk.⁹² Finally, having travelled via Nagasaki in Japan, the whole family arrived in San Francisco. But George Rosen never became a pastor in California, partly because the local community was not interested in religious services, and partly because another pastor (Jānis Balodis) had settled in Northern California. Nor did Rosen join either of the socialist groups which were active in San Francisco. Rosen instead became a businessman, bought a hotel in San Francisco and a few years later attended University of California at Berkeley. Rosen graduated in 1916 and worked as an attorney while living in Oakland.⁹³ However, he never lost his interest in politics, journalism and literature. During the years that Rosen owned a hotel, he maintained a reading-room under the guise of a club on the hotel premises. It was assumed that each attendee was a club member only for those few hours while he or she spent time reading Latvian books and Latvian-American newspapers of various political tendencies displayed on a big table, covered with a green

cloth.⁹⁴ In 1917, Rosen was also known to deliver lectures about the political situation in Russia.⁹⁵

Other life stories involved much more adversity. A participant of the 1905 Revolution, Peter Poreet, (1878–1961) emigrated through Finland, first arriving in Cleveland, Ohio.⁹⁶ His skill was carpentry, but he lacked knowledge of English and he had a recurring illness. As a result, Poreet was not able to find work in his profession. He chose to move to San Francisco because of better weather conditions. He found work as a fisherman on a boat, and later even acquired his own boat. As was the case with many other fishermen in San Francisco, he tried fishing in Alaska, with little success. Peter Poreet chose to change his name when he acquired American citizenship and became Peter Perry in 1912. Later, in search for better work prospects, he emigrated to Canada.

UNIFICATION PROCESS OF LATVIAN SOCIALISTS IN SAN FRANCISCO: THE FIRST STEP

In March of 1909, there came a change in the orientation of the Lettish Social-Democratic Group of San Francisco. During the first years of immigration Latvian socialists centered mainly upon social and political developments in Latvia. A few years later the organization began to direct its attention to the economic and social situation in the United States. On the basis of its conclusion that the Socialist Party of America was the best guardian of the interests of workers in the United States, the Lettish Social-Democratic Group of San Francisco proposed to join the Socialist Party of America.⁹⁷

The Socialist Party of America, the rival of the Socialist Labor Party, was formed in 1901 by a merger between the three-year-old Social-Democratic Party of America and disaffected elements of the Socialist Labor Party who had split from the main organization in 1899.⁹⁸ The Socialist Party of America was a democratically oriented party. Its early political perspectives ranged from radical socialism to social democracy. New York Party leader Morris Hillquit and Congressman Berger were on the more social-democratic or moderate wing, while members of the Industrial Workers of the

World (IWW) and the Party's frequent presidential candidate, Eugene V. Debs, formed the left wing.⁹⁹ From 1901 until the onset of World War I, the Socialist Party had a number of elected officials. Northern California became famous for Berkeley's socialist mayor, J. Stitt Wilson, elected on 1 April 1911 to a two-year term. Wilson managed to achieve quite a few reforms, including the creation of a municipal employment exchange that began operation in March 1913 and helped to find work for the unemployed. Not sharing the organization's strong anti-militarist perspective, Wilson withdrew from the Socialist Party at the outbreak of World War I.¹⁰⁰ Most of the Socialist Party's voters were recent Jewish, Finnish and German immigrants, coal miners, and former Populist farmers in the Midwest. From 1901 to 1910, the Socialist Party's candidate Eugene Debs ran for President at each election. In 1912 the Socialist Party reached its peak of public support when Debs gained 901,551 total votes, or 6% of the popular vote, a figure never again equalled by a socialist candidate.¹⁰¹

At first, Latvian groups opposed joining the Socialist Party of America due to language barrier as well as fear that participation in American activities will distract from giving support to the labor movement at their home country. It was also believed that involvement in the American organization will impose financial burdens and force Latvians to Americanize.¹⁰² In the end, the sentiment of "Workers of the World, Unite" prevailed and a fusion with the American organization took place when the office of the Lettish national language Secretary was established at the headquarters of the Socialist Party of America.¹⁰³

According to the official history of the Socialist Party of America, the Finnish and Lettish national language federations were the first to be admitted into the organization. The 1910 congress of the Party supplied the constitutional framework for foreign language federations stipulating that at least 500 members of a foreign language speaking group could organize a national federation and have a translator-secretary in the headquarters of the Party with salary paid by the Party. Federations existed as autonomous bodies, except insofar as they had a translator-secretary and paid 50% of their

regular dues to the state branches. They were allowed to have their own organizers, conventions, dues, and publications.¹⁰⁴

The Northern Californian labor movement was largely created by immigrants from many nations who showed a remarkable ability to cooperate and maintain solidarity. In California's society ethnic divisions among white immigrants seemed politically inconsequential. This relative lack of prejudice and discrimination was due in part to the newness of the region. Except for a few brief periods of severe depression, its economy was expanding and the success of one group did not necessarily come at the expense of another. In California, white workers bonded across religious lines, as well as those between immigrants and native born. A large portion of the Bay Area immigrants had previously lived in the East and so they already had considerable American experience and knowledge of English. Consequently, they were less willing than East coast immigrants to work for very low wages and break strikes.¹⁰⁵

One of the factors that fostered the merger was the need to protect Latvian political refugees against extradition demands of the Russian government. At that time, the United States were looked upon by the oppressed nationalities of Europe as an asylum for political refugees. American labor organizations provided protection to political refugees by providing legal defense and shaping public opinion, as in the case of Puren, Rudovitz and others where extradition attempts of the Russian government were defeated.¹⁰⁶

After the unification, the Lettish Social-Democratic Group of San Francisco changed its name to the Lettish Branch of the Socialist Party in San Francisco (*Fig. 5*). The San Francisco groups were characterized by the members of the Central Committee as politically amicable and more supportive of each other than their counterparts on the East coast. In May 1909, the East Coast Agitation Bureau organized a speaking trip, and the lecturer Jānis Kļava (editor of *Strahdneeks* 1906–1908; in 1912 left for Switzerland) spent three days in San Francisco. He observed that the members of the San Francisco groups seemed to get along and were able to overcome differences of opinion. Kļava noticed that San Francisco people were well-off and well-dressed. But he also learned that the



Fig. 5. The stamp of Lettish Branch of the Socialist Party in San Francisco

group was subject to frequent membership changes, since members were forced to leave San Francisco due to scarce employment.¹⁰⁷

Six months after the merger, in July of 1909, one of the organizers of the Lettish Branch of the Socialist Party in San Francisco Carl Aspen wrote that “the incorporation process has brought us into a closer contact with the life and struggle of the class-conscious workers of this locality. We do not feel any more strangers as we did before. Seven propaganda meetings were held and the following lectures were delivered: The Constitution of the United States, The Rise of Christianity, The Development of Capitalism and Labor organizations in the United States.”¹⁰⁸

UNIFICATION PROCESS OF LATVIAN SOCIALISTS IN SAN FRANCISCO: THE SECOND STEP

Unification process continued in January of 1912 when the Lettish Socialist Labor Section joined the Lettish Branch of the Socialist Party in San Francisco.¹⁰⁹ Discussions regarding possible unification had started already in May of 1908. More than 10 meetings were

held, and talks continued until September of 1909.¹¹⁰ At this time, the unity question was at the center of attention of the leaders of the Socialist Labor Party in general, including Daniel De Leon. It was clear that the Socialist Party had surpassed the Socialist Labor Party in popularity among workers.¹¹¹ This fact fueled a recurring movement within both parties for unity. As the example of San Francisco shows, the two parties occasionally explored this possibility at the local level.

Already in 1903, one of the founders of the American Socialist party Morris Hillquit¹¹² gave a critical evaluation of the Socialist Labor Party: “The Socialist Labor Party was founded at a time when socialism in this country was an academic idea rather than a popular movement. The socialists were few in number, and consisted largely of men who had formed their social views and philosophy in European countries, principally in Germany. They were but little in touch with the American population, and moved almost exclusively within their limited circle Party [...] Its highly centralized form of organization did not suit the political institutions and traditions of this country, and its dogmatic adherence to all canons of scientific socialism and strict enforcement of party discipline were not calculated to attract the masses of newly converted socialists.”¹¹³ Ultimately, Hillquit argued for the unification of the two parties, most likely in a way that the Socialist Labor Party would be folded into the American Socialist Party.

The unification process in San Francisco meant that only one Latvian socialist organization continued to exist. It also meant a consolidation of all financial resources and property, including libraries. Obviously not all members of both groups unanimously agreed with the unification process, especially those among the Lettish Socialist Labor Section. One of the main initiators of unification in the Lettish Socialist Labor Section in San Francisco, John Jurgis, was repeatedly and sharply criticized by his oponents in *Proletareets*.¹¹⁴ As a result, some members stayed with the Lettish Socialist Labor Section of San Francisco, but more than half chose to join the Lettish Branch of the Socialist Party in San Francisco. After unification, the number of members in the Lettish Branch of the Socialist Party in San Francisco grew from 29 in July 1909 to 30 in January 1910;

32 in 1912; and then 42 in 1914.¹¹⁵ The group was affiliated with both state and local organizations of the Party. The members paid regular national, state, and local dues.¹¹⁶

The spirit of openness of the San Francisco group revealed itself in the attitude and relationship of its members toward the Latvian Social-Democratic Party in Latvia. In July of 1907, a congress of Latvian social democratic groups decided to suspend regular transfers of membership fees to Latvia, limiting remittances to certain benefits and income from social events. It seems likely that the Latvian socialists in the United States underestimated the difficult situation of Latvian Social-Democratic Party during the period of reaction after 1905.¹¹⁷ The San Francisco group, however, decided to continue its payments. The decision of continuing to send funds to Latvia caught attention of the office of Russian foreign secret service (*Okhrana*) as it was actively gathering information on the activities of Latvian social-democratic groups abroad. In a report dated 9 October 1911, the official of special assignments for the *Okhrana* in Paris reported that Latvian socialists in San Francisco had expanded their activities and provided financial help to the Latvian Social-Democratic Party in Latvia.¹¹⁸ Another report from 29 December 1911 gave the total number of members in the San Francisco group as 80–90 people,¹¹⁹ which seems to be an exaggerated figure and one possibly taken from an article in *Strahdneeks*, which described the achievements of the group and envisaged a rapid growth in its membership in the coming years.¹²⁰

During the following years, the San Francisco group stood out for its ability to agree on contentious issues and to confront factionalism.¹²¹ In September 1913, when another speaking trip was organized by the Eastern Coast Agitation Bureau of the Socialist Party, the lecturer Milda Kļaviņa-Salnais observed that relations between people on the West coast were very open and warm. On the other hand, Kļaviņa-Salnais concluded that political activities of the San Francisco group were not as intense as on the East coast. Some West coast socialists joked that the year-round beautiful weather in California gave a chance to spend a lot of time outside, which could explain the relative lack of political activity.¹²²

A new phenomenon in the Lettish Branch of the Socialist Party in San Francisco, compared to the Lettish Socialist Labor Section in San Francisco, was the participation by women, whose number grew from two to six over the years. Importantly, other sections of the Socialist Labor Party did not allow for women's participation at all. In 1910, the National Lettish organization of the Socialist Party adopted a resolution specifying that the wives of members not engaged directly in industrial occupations should be exempted from membership fees. In January of 1911, this rule was reversed by another vote. The argument for the change was that all members of the organization should be considered equal regardless of gender.¹²³ The most active female member in San Francisco was Elizabeth Jurgis (born in Jelgava in 1884(89)–1975). Elizabeth Jurgis immigrated in 1910 and worked as a seamstress. In 1912, she was the librarian and curator in charge of obtaining literature for the San Francisco group. She took an active part in the 1905 Revolution, and was a secretary of the Social Democratic group in Latvia. She was one of the accused in a famous trial of 43 Social Democrats in March, 1909.¹²⁴ All 43 were sentenced to lifetime exile in Siberia. She had to endure her sentence in Eastern Siberia, in Yenisei Province. In March 1910, Elizabeth Jurgis was able to escape to San Francisco from Vladivostok via Nagasaki, Japan.¹²⁵ She was the only female member who gave presentations at meetings. For example, in October 1912 Elizabeth Jurgis gave a talk on questions of economic and political struggle.¹²⁶

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the monthly dues were 35 cents (\$10). The secretary of the group, Henry Schepte in 1912 described the utilization of those 35 cents. 15 cents were handed over to the American Socialist Party headquarters. 15 cents were sent to Boston to support the publication of the Latvian newspaper *Strahdneeks*, and the remaining 5 cents were meant for the support of the local group's activities. The same 35 cents a month entitled each member to check out books from the branch's library for free.¹²⁷

ACTIVITIES OF THE LETTISH BRANCH OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY IN SAN FRANCISCO

After a long and complicated unification process, the San Francisco group's library grew in size and value. According to the semi-annual reports of the National Lettish Organization of the Socialist Party, there were 109 books, with a value of \$25.65 in the San Francisco library in the middle of 1909. At the end of 1909, there were already 123 books and by the end of 1912, the library had grown to 132 books with a value of \$123.¹²⁸ As we can see from the stamps in the books, the individual libraries of the branches had merged. The stamp of the Lettish Branch of the Socialist Party in San Francisco was imprinted on top of the stamp of the Lettish Socialist Labor Section in San Francisco (*Fig. 6*).

Although the number and value of the books in the library grew, the group's overall budget was much smaller than that of the Lettish Socialist Labor Section in San Francisco. The income part of the budget of Lettish Branch of the Socialist Party in San Francisco for 1912 constituted \$325, and its expenditures amounted to \$295.¹²⁹ It is possible that the members of the Lettish Socialist Labor Section in San Francisco had higher paid jobs in the steel and machine industries, and so their contributions to the earlier group could have been bigger. Political émigrés who arrived after 1905 often were struggling to find employment.

We have only a general idea of how books were acquired for the San Francisco library. Immigrants could have brought books, especially non-political ones from Latvia and given them to the library as gifts. Since San Francisco was a port visited by Latvian sailors, they could have been smuggling in political literature. According to the group's librarian William Smith (born in 1890, immigrated in 1906, a carpenter), the librarian's responsibility was to maintain connections with the main bookstore of the National Lettish Organization of the Socialist Party in Fitchburg, Massachusetts.¹³⁰ The newspaper *Strahdneeks* was published there twice per week and every member in the group could have an individual subscription from one month to one year. The four page paper's circulation varied between 1200 to 1500 in 1909–1914.¹³¹ In addition, the librarian had connections

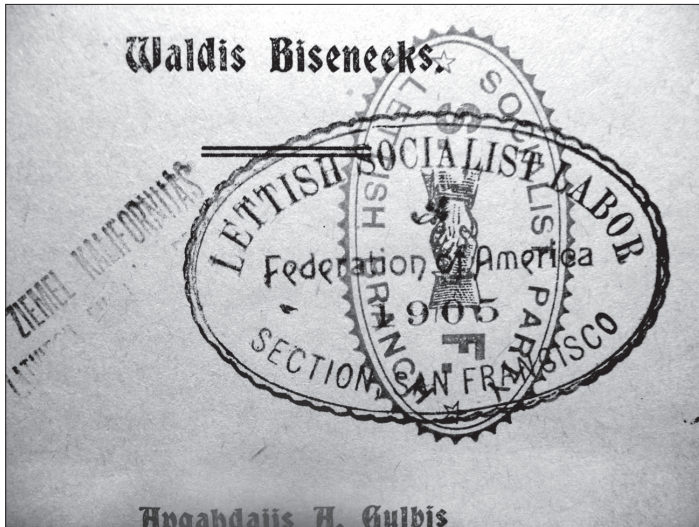


Fig. 6. Stamps confirming the unification of libraries

with bookstores in Latvia and some booksellers in San Francisco. The situation in the book market seemed so successful that William Smith hoped to make San Francisco into a major book supplier to the socialist groups throughout the West coast.

The year 1914 must have been special to the Lettish Branch of the Socialist Party in San Francisco and its library. The regulations governing use of the library came into force on 6 May 1914 (Fig. 7). A copy of the regulations was attached on the left inside cover of each book. It appears that careful bookbinding work was also done around this time. As a result, smaller publications were often bound together in a single volume, which helped to preserve them in an exceptionally good condition. In general, the books were well taken care of. For instance, the regulations stipulated that in case of any damage to a book, patron had to pay the library full value of the book.

We do not have information regarding amount of money spent on the library in the group's budget. There are indications that some additional money was acquired from proceeds raised in social gatherings and picnics.

.....

**Sozialistū Part. San Franziskas Latw. Kosares
Bibliotekas leetošanas noteikumi.**

- 1) Bibliotekas leetošanas tiesības bauda tā
daļi Kosares biedri, tā nebiedri.
- 2) Laikītajam nebedrim grāmatas top izdo-
tas un divu Kosares biedru galvošanai.
- 3) Katram laikītajam grāmatu ņemot jā-
nodod tā pilna adrese.
- 4) Katris bibliotekas laikītais var pabe-
rēt ne vairāk kā divus šķējumus un reizi.
- 5) Katris laikītais var grāmatu leetot ne
ilgāk par 30 dienām.
- 6) Pēc 30 dienām noteikšanas grāmatas
jānodod bibliotēkā, jeb laikīšanas termiņš jāat-
jauno.
- 7) Laikīšanas termiņu var atjaunot tikai
divas reizes.
- 8) Katram laikītajam ir tiesība no bibliotēka
pabe- „laikītaja karti”, un kuras ar tīni at-
ņemams, kādā datumā grāmata izdota un jā-
ņemta.
- 9) Laikītajam jābūt atbildīgam par katru
šķējumu, kas viņa leetošanā. Grāmatas jābo-
jašanas gadījumā tam jāsamaksā tā pilna
vērtība.
- 10) Šāiem noteikumiem jāatrodas katras
grāmatas eesīpusē un pirmā vahkā.

Šāie noteikumi peņemti un itahjas šķēfā ar
6. maiju, 1914. g.

.....

Fig. 7. Regulations of the use of the library

Strahdneeks published semi-annual reports that tell about the importance of the library in the life of the Lettish Branch of the Socialist Party in San Francisco. Until 1910, the reports contained a separate section entitled “Agitation” consisting of four entries: 1. Library; 2. Evenings of questions and answers; 3. Lectures; 4. Theater performances.¹³² This makes it clear that not only was the library first and foremost intended to help with the political education of the members, but it shared this role with lectures, social gatherings, and theater performances. After 1910, “Agitation” disappears from the reports probably because the term, which came from the terminology of the 1905 Revolution, did not seem suitable for American context.

One of the best primary sources on the variety of events in the life of the group are announcements in *Strahdneeks*. The most active years were 1912 to 1917. The group organized rallies and sometimes all foreign branches of the San Francisco Socialist Party came together. For instance, on 9 January 1912, a meeting of all nationalities was called to commemorate the Haymarket Affair in 1886 in Chicago. Speeches were made in English, Latvian (by Carl Apsen) and other languages and a Latvian male choir performed. In January of 1913 the group organized a memorial for the 1905 Revolution. In 1914, May Day was celebrated.¹³³

During its first years of activity, the Lettish Branch of the Socialist Party in San Francisco organized evenings of questions and answers (six such evenings took place in 1909), but later they were replaced with lectures and literary evenings. All of them were advertised in *Strahdneeks* as providing “free admission and free speech”. The lectures covered a broad range of subjects. For instance, the themes for 1913 were proletariat and art and new trade unionism. In 1914, they were family and socialdemocracy, morality, and the cause of the present European war. In 1915, Latvian socialists discussed the origins of the world and in 1916 – utopian and scientific socialism and why strikers lose and how to win the strikes. The lecturers were members of the group, usually secretaries, librarians and other active members.¹³⁴ They included Elizabeth Jurgis, Carl Apsen, Andrew Edward Murneek (born in Talsi, 1886–1972, immigrated in 1906, a labourer), William Cerp, Otto Braun, William Smith,

William Beinert, Frederick Semsirg (1882(4)–1972, immigrated in 1903, a carpenter) and Gustav Lerch (1882(8)–1957, immigrated in 1906, master mechanic).

Theater had a very special place in the life of Latvian communities in the United States. Socialist leaders approached theater as a medium for agitation and propaganda. The new environment of the host country created an additional need for Latvian immigrants to express themselves in their native language. Most of the Latvian immigrants were able to speak German and Russian besides their native Latvian, but the inability to communicate in English created an obstacle to acceptance into the “melting pot” in the United States. Performing in a play in Latvian or at least attending a performance helped fight loneliness and overcome feelings of inferiority.¹³⁵

There was no censorship of plays in the US, which had often been the case in Latvia under czarist rule. American government was not interested in plays that Latvian theater groups performed or ideology that was expressed in them. Latvian theater in the United States enjoyed complete freedom, and Latvians performed for themselves.¹³⁶

Although much has been written about theater in the first Latvian immigrant communities, the history of Latvian theater in San Francisco has been less studied by comparison to other Latvian centers.¹³⁷ It appears that considerable information about San Francisco theater can be found by studying activities of the Lettish Branch of the San Francisco Socialist Party. The extensive collection of plays in San Francisco Latvian socialist library is an additional source of information as occasionally copies of the plays provide names of actors who performed (*Fig. 8*).

As mentioned before, there are indications that the first Latvian theater performances in San Francisco were staged by the Lettish Socialist Labor Section in San Francisco around 1906. According to the available information, the Lettish Branch of the Socialist Party in San Francisco started to perform theater around 1909. In December of 1909, comedy *Zagli* (Thieves) by the famous Latvian realist writer Rūdolfs Blaumanis was performed, and notwithstanding the fact that its performers were amateurs, it received positive overall

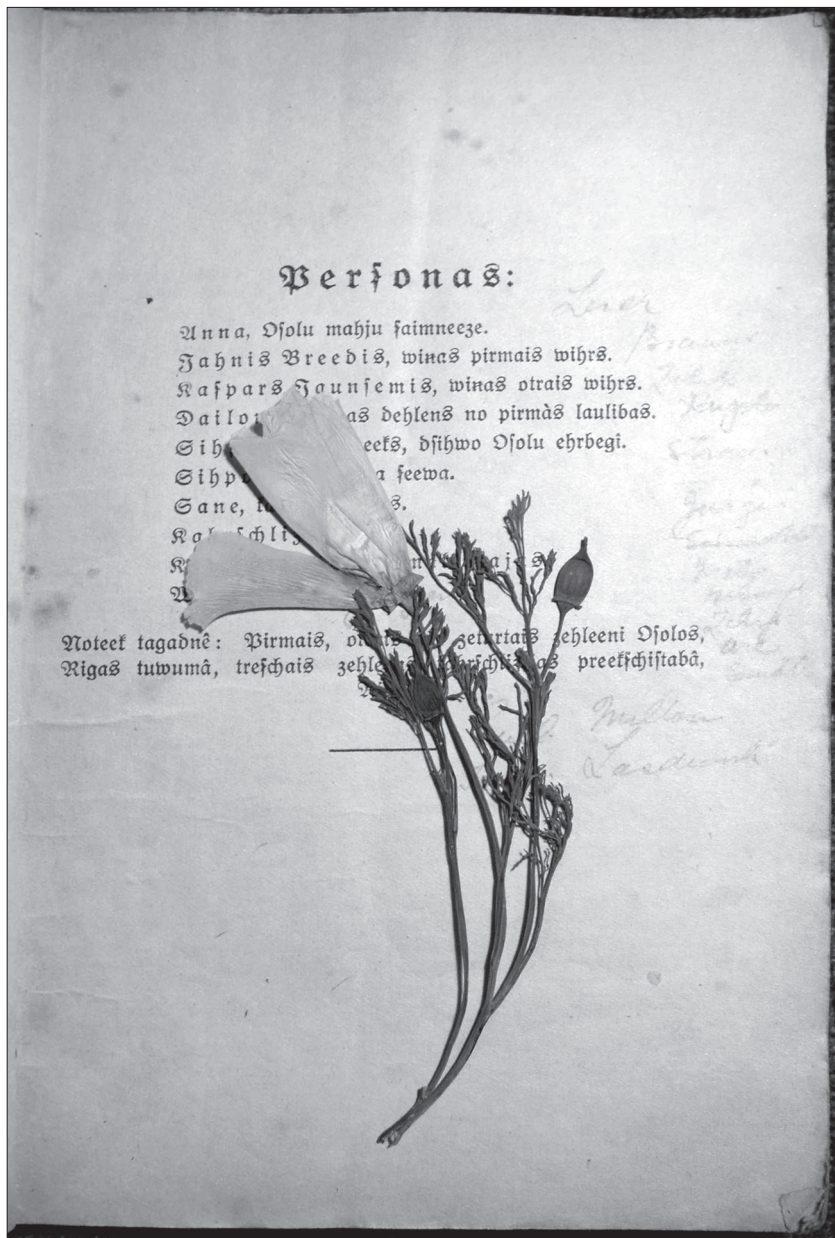


Fig. 8. A page from a book of plays belonging to the library

reviews.¹³⁸ A curious coincidence is that the review of this play was also published in *Proletareets*, claiming that the performance was organized by the Lettish Socialist Labor Section in San Francisco.¹³⁹ Latvian theater in San Francisco became much more active with the arrival of the 1905 revolutionaries, and the most intense period was between 1912 and 1917. In 1911, the Lettish Branch of the San Francisco Socialist Party staged one performance; in 1912 – two; in 1913 – one; in 1914 – three; in 1916 – four; and 1917 one performance. In the biggest Latvian centers such as, for instance, Boston, eight to ten plays were staged annually.¹⁴⁰ There were two kinds of plays that were performed: those with a socio-political character and comedies. Almost always, the performances were followed by a dance, which was a tradition brought from Latvia. In many instances, minor plays by lesser known playwrights were selected, most probably because they dealt with aspects of socialist ideology and could be adapted to fit the specific needs of a given group. Often they were one-act plays, comedies with 5–10 actors performing. For example, on 26 December 1912, the play *Zils* (Blue) by a German author Max Bernstein was staged in San Francisco. It was translated and published in Jelgava, Latvia in 1911. On 25 January 1914, the performance of the play *Sabiedrības atkritumi* (The Trash of Society) was dedicated to the commemoration of the 1905 Revolution and Bloody Sunday. On 8 March 1914, the play by the Italian feminist author Clarice Tartufari (1868–1933) *Dzīves lietuvēns* (Incubus) was performed.¹⁴¹ Classic plays also were produced as well. The two plays staged in 1916 were by famous Latvian playwrights Rūdolfs Blaumanis and Jānis Rainis.¹⁴² The biggest success was the play by Rūdolfs Blaumanis *Ugunī* (On Fire), which was performed on 24 December. The critic of the San Francisco literary magazine *Prometejs* praised the actors and the work done by a specially organized commission, whose task was a theoretical study of the material and acting methods.¹⁴³ The review also mentions that the production was actually put on by a new dramatic society created in the autumn of 1915. It is believed that the director of this more successful group was Jānis Ozoliņš-Burtņieks, who studied at the University of California in Berkeley from 1916–1917.¹⁴⁴ Around this time, a few better known

actors from the East coast had joined the San Francisco group. In 1916, Gustav Lerch (1882–1957) and his wife Greta moved from Chicago to San Francisco. Greta Lerch (1887–1958, immigrated in 1907) played the title role of Kristīne in the above mentioned play by Rūdolfš Blaumanis, *Ugunī*.¹⁴⁵

CONCLUSION

Analysis of the newly acquired San Francisco socialist library has led to discoveries about the activities of three Latvian socialist groups in Northern California: the Lettish Socialist Labor Section in San Francisco, the Lettish Social-Democratic group of San Francisco and the Lettish Branch of the Socialist Party in San Francisco. This material has enabled us to have a better understanding of the genesis and characteristics of the early political emigration from Latvia to the West coast. It appears that among those who became politically active in the above mentioned groups, 21 individuals arrived around 1900. 189 immigrants settled in Northern California after the 1905 Revolution, during the period of 1905–1915. The biggest number of arrivals, 47, were recorded in 1906; there were 42 in 1907.

The first group of immigrants were employed almost exclusively as skilled workers and they joined the Lettish Socialist Labor Section in San Francisco. In fact, the existence of the Lettish Socialist Labor Section in San Francisco is one of the most important discoveries of the present research, since no prior reference to this group had been found in the scholarly literature. We do not know the exact reasons for the arrival of these immigrants in San Francisco and whether they were economic, political or social in nature, but their political and cultural activities, including running a library, are well documented in the newspaper *Proletareets*.

Politically-driven emigration was a consequence of the 1905 Revolution in Latvia. 4000–5000 revolutionaries were forced to flee to Western Europe and the United States in its aftermath and about 200 of them settled in Northern California. These political refugees had less choices regarding employment, and consequently, there was a wide variety of occupations among this population. About a

sixth of these immigrants had to accept unskilled jobs and they were likely to be less well-off than the earlier immigrants from the Lettish Socialist Labor Section in San Francisco. The majority of the post-1905 political immigrants proceeded with the founding of the Lettish Social-Democratic group of San Francisco, following the organizational pattern they had developed in Latvia. A few years later, they created the Lettish Branch of the Socialist Party in San Francisco. Still, many of the 1905 political immigrants joined the Lettish Socialist Labor Section in San Francisco.

The membership of both these groups was never very large, with 40 people at most in each organization. This is largely due to the fact that not too many Latvian immigrants at the time chose to live on the West coast, usually due to relative lack of employment opportunities in Northern California.

Ultimately, what distinguished the post-1905 immigration from that of earlier years was a more heightened political awareness. Many of the Baltic emigrants after 1905 were active revolutionaries, who had experienced a certain level of political success in the first phase of the 1905 Revolution. They had felt a sense of liberation, and a return to the czarist regime for them was unthinkable. Upon their arrival to the New World, many immigrants immediately looked for ways to continue their political activities. It is also true that not all immigrants who arrived after 1905 thought alike. Quite a few of them chose to abandon political involvement completely.

It appears that the socialist groups in Northern California had fairly flexible political attitudes. This can be seen in their relationship with the Latvian Social Democratic Party. In contrast to their East coast counterparts, the San Francisco socialists provided their Latvian colleagues with continued financial support. The San Francisco groups seemed able to get along and overcome differences of opinion. Judging from the holdings of the library, one can conclude that they read on a fairly wide, non-dogmatic range of topics, too.

The publications found in the San Francisco socialist library are themselves testimony to one achievement of the 1905 Revolution: a relaxation of czarist censorship in publishing. The library also shows that the Latvian socialists in San Francisco were ideologically con-

nected to the movement in Latvia, and that they were influenced by the ideas of German social democrats.

Latvian political immigrants recovered from the nightmare of persecutions and executions after the 1905 Revolution, and finding themselves for the first time in conditions of political freedom, continued their education and self-enlightenment. They brought with them to the United States their cultural traditions, most distinctly, love of reading and theater. At the same time, Latvian political immigrants developed ties with socialists in other immigrant communities and among Americans.

While looking through the old library, one day the author stumbled upon a small wonder – a dried California poppy pressed between the pages of a book of poetry, placed there 100 or more years ago by an unknown reader, one of the early immigrants. It seemed like an appropriate and beautiful symbol for the story told here. The flower that had bloomed and then been preserved was like the early Latvian socialist groups in northern California that flourished for a relatively short period of time, and then seemingly disappeared. Nonetheless, they left a mark on history, even if, as the flower in-between the pages of the book, their traces are difficult to find.

REFERENCES AND NOTES

- ¹ Vecie un Jaunie. *Laiks*, 18.11.1949.
- ² Arnolds Ernstsons (1996). *No Cīravas līdz Sanfrancisko*. Sanfrancisko: A. Ernstsons, p. 90; Latvian-American historian Edgars Andersons was born in 1920 in Tukums, Latvia. Since 1957 Andersons worked at the San Jose State University, California, which had the largest history department on the West coast. In five years time he became a full professor. Prof. Edgars Andersons died in 1989.
- ³ *Ziemeļkalifornijas latviešu ev-lut. draudzes 1974. gada darbības pārskats un 1975. gada budžeta projekts* (1975). San Francisko: Ziemeļkalifornijas latviešu ev-lut. draudze, p. 8; Biedru jubileja San Franciskas tuvumā. *Amerikas Latvietis*, 30.09.1961.
- ⁴ Jānis Strads (1955). Mācītāja Baloža darbs: latviešu garīgā aprūpe ASV Rietumu krastā 20. gs. sākumā. *Zelta Vārtu Vēstis*, 5; Edgars Andersons (1968). Pa vēstures pēdām: pirmie latvieši Rietumos. *Ziemeļkalifornijas*

- Apskats*, 4; Arnolds Ernstsons (1970). Pirmie soļi. *Zelta Vārtu Vēstis*, 5; Ernstsons. *No Cīravas līdz Sanfrancisko*, pp. 89–93; Raimonds G. Slaidiņš (ed.) (2011). *Latvieši Sanfrancisko un tās apkārtnē = Latvians in San Francisco and Vicinity*. Sanfrancisko, Kalifornijā: Ziemeļkalifornijas latviešu biedrība, pp. 15–21; Felikss Krusa. Latviešu dzīve un centība Kalifornijā. *Laiks*, 23.07.1955.; Pa latviešu pēdām Rietumu piekrastē: kā dzīvo latvieši Ziemeļ Kalifornijā. *Laiks*, 11.10.1954.; Nicholas Kreišmanis (1956). *Latvian Immigrants in the Sacramento Area*. MA. Sacramento: Sacramento State University; *Latvijas revolucionāro cīnītāju piemiņas grāmata*. 1. sēj., 1905–1907. gada revolūcija (1980). Rīga: Avots, pp. 53–54; *Latvijas revolucionāro cīnītāju piemiņas grāmata*. 2. sēj., 1917. gada Februāra Revolūcija (1987). Rīga: Avots, pp. 111, 113, 119.
- ⁵ Christopher John Bitner (1924). *The Social Heritage of the Latvian Immigrants in the United States*. MA. Iowa: State University of Iowa; Liga Dūma, Dzidra Paeglīte (1976). *Revolucionārie latviešu emigranti ārzemēs, 1897–1919*. Rīga: Liesma; Maruta Karklis, Līga Streips, Laimonis Streips (1974). *The Latvians in America, 1640–1973: a Chronology and Fact Book*. Dobbs Ferry, N. Y., Oceana Publications; Osvalds Akmentiņš (1958). *Amerikas latvieši, 1888–1948: fakti un apceres*. Bostona-Dorcesters: Vaidava; Osvalds Akmentiņš (1976). *Latvians in Bicentennial America*. Waverly, Iowa: Latvju Grāmata; Osvalds Akmentiņš (1961). Veclatvieši un viņu laiks. *ALA Kultūras Biroja Biļetens*, 4, pp. 21–25; Modris Gulbis (1953). Sarkanie latvieši Amerikā. *Latvju Vārds*, 1/2–24; Vilberts Krasnais (1938). *Latviešu kolonijas*. Rīga: Latvju nacionālās jaunatnes savienības izdevums; Edgar Anderson (1987). The Latvian Press. In: Sally M. Miller (ed). *The Ethnic Press in the United States: a Historical Analysis and Handbook*. New York: Greenwood Press, pp. 229–236; Osvalds Akmentiņš (1986). *Latvians on Roxbury Hill: the Many Roxburys: the Documentation of the Latvians in Roxbury*. Dorchester, Ma.: O. Akmentiņš; Andris Straumanis (1994). *This Sudden Spasm of Newspaper Hostility: Stereotyping of Latvian Immigrants in Boston Newspapers, 1908*. Kent, Ohio: Center for the Study of Ethnic Publications and Cultural Institutions. Offprint series 4, pp. 1–27; Andris Straumanis (2013). Latvians and Latvian Americans. In: *Immigrants in American History: Arrival, Adaptation, and Integration*. San Bernadino: California State University; Arnie Lusiš (1983). *Conflicts of Politics and Purpose: Boston's Latvian Immigrants, 1888–1908*. A Fourth Year Honors Thesis. University of Virginia; Andris Straumanis (1987). Veclatviešu dzīve Mineapolē no 1900.–1940. gadam. *Akadēmiskā dzīve*, 29, pp. 53–56; Osvalds Akmentiņš (1968). Nepiepildītas cerības: latviešu pirmie ieceļotāji divu strāvu pretišķībās. *Tilts*, 4, pp. 60–68; Arturs Rubenis (2001). *Mūsu mājas un patvērums: darba grupa "Latviešu Simtgade Klīvlendē": stāsts par Klīvlendes Latviešiem*. Cleveland: Kliv-

landes Latviešu biedrība; *Ņujorkas latviešu evaņģeliski-luteriskā draudze, 1896–1998* (1996). Ņujorka: Ņujorkas latviešu evaņģeliski-luteriskā draudze, pp. 23–36.

- ⁶ LVA, PA-51. f. (Bostonas Latviešu Strādnieku Biedrība), 1. apr., 3. l. (protokoli); Arbetarorelsens Arkiv och Bibliotek (ARAB)/298; Aija Ventas-kraste (2000). *Zviedrijas arhīva dokumenti par latviešu sociāldemokrātiem Amerikā 20. gs. sākumā*. *Latvijas Arhīvi*, 3, pp. 54–74.
- ⁷ Altogether the author has found seven different kinds of impressions, only three of which refer to the period under review in this article.
- ⁸ *Proletareets* (The Proletarian), which began in 1902 and lasted until 1917, was a monthly literary and political journal published by the Lettish Federation of the Socialist Labor Party; *Strahdneeks* (The Worker) was published from 1905 to 1919 by the National Lettish Organization of the Socialist Party; *Amerikas Latvietis* (The American Latvian) was a communist paper published from 1940 to 1975. All were launched in the Boston area, in Roxbury, Massachusetts. The literary magazine *Prometejs* (Prometheus) was the only Latvian periodical which came out in San Francisco, California from 1915 to 1917.

The chronological parameters of the research were determined by the character and availability of sources. From the inscriptions and the labels in books, it is certain that the socialist library existed from 1905 through 1914. The issues of the newspaper *Proletareets* and *Strahdneeks* provided additional information about the library and the activities of Latvian socialists in San Francisco regarding the years 1915–1917. The Russian Revolution in 1917 brought to an end the modicum of unity of Latvian socialist movement in the United States. A significant part of socialists became communists. This was true also in the case of San Francisco.

- ⁹ California. 1910 U. S. census, population schedule. Digital images. Ancestry.com. <http://www.ancestry.com>: 2013; California. 1920 U. S. census, population schedule. Digital images. Ancestry.com. <http://www.ancestry.com>: 2013; California. 1930 U. S. census, population schedule. Digital images. Ancestry.com. <http://www.ancestry.com>: 2013; California. 1940 U. S. census, population schedule. Digital images. Ancestry.com. <http://www.ancestry.com>: 2013; “San Francisco, California, Directories, 1900–1940.” Database. Ancestry.com. <http://www.ancestry.com>: 2013; “World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917–1918.” Digital images. Ancestry.com. <http://www.ancestry.com>: 2013; “California Passenger and Crew Lists, 1893–1920.” Database and images. Ancestry.com. <http://www.ancestry.com>: 2013.
- ¹⁰ The lists of members of San Francisco Latvian Society (1923–1927). Courtesy of Gvido Augusts private collection (Corvallis, OR); Hoover Institution Archives. Departament politsii. Zagranichnaia agentura (Paris). Letts and Lithuanians. Box 210, Folder 1b.

- ¹¹ Edmond Ergut, grandson of Frīcis and Katrīna Jergens; Judy Simpson, granddaughter of John Marklin; John Everson, relative of George Kalnin; Victoria (Vicki) Chase, granddaughter of Robert Gross and great granddaughter of Charles Greenberg. Few members of San Francisco Latvian community were interviewed as well: Gvido Augusts, Māra Brandis, Gvido Bergmanis and Milda Grimma-Strauss.
- ¹² The Gothic orthography remained in use during the first decades of the 20th century, when it was replaced by a modernized writing system. A modified Latin alphabet was adopted in 1922.
- ¹³ Mikus Skruzītis (1889). *Sēļi, Kurzemes augšgala senči (On the Early History of Selonians in Courland)*. Rīga: R. L. B. Derīgu grāmatu apgādāšanas nodaļa.
- ¹⁴ Auseklis (ed.) (1877). *Paidagoģiska gada grāmata: 1876*; Auseklis (ed.) (1879). *Baltijas gruntnieku, saimnieku, pagasta valdību u.c. kalendārs 1879. gadam*; Auseklis (1888). *Ausekļa prozaiski raksti*. Rīga: J. E. Kapteinis.
- ¹⁵ Jānis Rainis (1907). *Uguns un nakts: Sena dziesma jaunās skaņās*. Rīga: Domas; Jānis Rainis (1911). *Indulis un Arija: Jaunības traģēdija piecos cēlienos*. Pēterburga: J. Gulbis; Jānis Rainis [s. a.]. *Spēlēju, dancoju: velnu nakts piecos cēlienos*. Rīga: Ansis Gulbis; Aspazija (1905). *Sidraba šķidrums: teiku drāma piecos cēlienos: notiek pagānu laikos*. Cēsis: J. Ozols; Jansons etc. (1892). *Populāri-zinātnisku rakstu krājums: "Dienas Lapas" izdevums*. Rīga: P. Bisenieks.
- ¹⁶ Arveds Švābe (1956). *Latvijas vēsture, 1800–1914*. Stockholm: Daugava, 1956, pp. 522–532.
- ¹⁷ The First Red Scare is the term used for the reaction which emerged against political radicalism in the United States in 1919–1920. It was marked by widespread fear of Communist and Anarchist activities, which eventually fueled a general sense of paranoia. This paranoia grew in the aftermath of the Russian Revolution of 1917. Raids and arrests occurred in November 1919 and January 1920 all over the United States under the leadership of Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer. On 28 January, the Lettish branch of the Communist Party was raided in San Francisco, and documents and literature were seized. J. B. Freeman, who lived in Palo Alto, was said to be a secretary of the Lettish branch: Reds' S. F. Haunts Raided. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 29.01.1920.
- ¹⁸ *Strādnieku jautājums Krievijā: pēc krievu valodas apstrādāts* (1904). Kurzeme: Izdots no Latviešu sociāldemokrātu grupas.
- ¹⁹ Lilija Limane, Aleksejs Apīnis (2004). *Cenzūra un cenzori latviešu grāmatniecībā līdz 1918. gadam*. Rīga: Latvijas Nacionālā bibliotēka, Reto grāmatu un rokrakstu nodaļa, pp. 40–41; Gennadii Zhirkov (2001). *Istoriia tsenzury v Rossii XIX–XX vv.* Moskva: Aspekt Press, pp. 145, 192.
- ²⁰ Janis Jansons (1908). *Fauni vai klauni?: Piezīmes par mūsu jaunāko rakstniecību*. Pēterburga: Dzirkstele; Janis Brauns (Jansons-Brauns) (1912). *Bal-*

- tijas revolūcija: atskats uz 1905. un 1906. gadu.* Brisele: Latvijas Sociāldemokrātija; Janis Jansons (1910). *Vēsturiskais materiālisms: apcerējumi iz vēstures un vēstures filozofijas.* Rīga: Puriņš; Jānis Asars (1909). *Kopoti raksti.* 2. sēj., 2. burtn. Rīga: E. Ēķis u. Ko.
- 21 Kārlis Kautskis (1905). *Jaunlaiku tautības jautājums.* Rīga: Progress; Kārlis Kautskis (1905). *Erfurtes Programmas teorētiskās daļas paskaidrojums.* Rīga: Progress; Kārlis Kautskis (1905). *Sociālā revolūcija un diena pēc tās.* Rīga: Progress; Kārlis Kautskis (1910). *Apcerējumi iz sabiedriskās vēstures.* Rīga: Kultūra.
- 22 Kārlis Markss (1906). *Pilsoņu karš Francijā.* Rīga: Mazā biblioteka; Friedrich Engels [s. a.]. *Tautsaimniecības kritika.* Sv. Pēterburga: Ansis Gulbis; Kārlis Markss (1910). *Ekonomikas mācības: vispār saprotami attēlojis un izskaidrojis Kārlis Kautskis.* Rīga: Latviešu Kultūras biedrība.
- 23 Augusts Bebels (1912). *Sieviete un sociālisms.* Rīga: Taurētājs; Augusts Bebels (1910). *Iz manas dzīves.* Rīga: H. Šulcs.
- 24 Hans-Josef Steinberg, Nicholas Jacobs (1976). Worker's Libraries in Germany before 1914. *History Workshop*, 1, p. 174; Andrew G. Bonnell (2002). Did They Read Marx? Marx Reception and Social Democratic Party Members in Imperial Germany, 1890–1914. *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 48 (1), p. 4.
- 25 Līga Dūma (1990). Latviešu sociāldemokrāti Vācijā. In: *Vācija un Baltija.* Rīga: Avots, pp. 69–75; Ilga Zelmene (1990). Rietumeiropas sociālistisko partiju atbalsts Latvijas sociāldemokrātijai 1905. gada revolūcijas laikā. In: *Vācija un Baltija.* Rīga: Avots, p. 85.
- 26 Dažas piezīmes par latviešu sociāldemokrātisko presi laika posmā no 1898. gada līdz 1907. gadam. *Komunāru Ciņa*, 20.06.1934.
- 27 Pēteris Kropotkins (1905). *Revolucionāra piedzīvojumi: memuāri.* Rīga: Gertu Jāņa apg.; Sergei Stepnjaks-Kravčinskis (1907). *Slepenā Krievija.* Rīga: J. Žubura grāmatu apgādniecība "Senatne un Dzīve"; Antons Mengers (1906). *Nākotnes valsts: Anarchisms; īpatnējā un komunālā valsts.* Rīga: Ed. Zirģelis.
- 28 Fedor Kokoshkin [s. a.]. *Valsts un viņas vara: vēsturiski kritisks apcerējums.* Rīga: E. Elks; F. Muskatblit (1905). *Tautas vietniecība.* Cēsis: J. Ozols; Nikolai Rozhkov (1908). *No patvaldības pie tautas pašvaldības: apcerējumi no Anglijas, Francijas un Vācijas vēstures.* Rīga: Ansis Gulbis.
- 29 *Politisku svešvārdu grāmata* (A Dictionary of Foreign Political Terms) (1906). Rīga: L. Rozentāls; H. Mener-Ruegg (1911). *Sieviete – māte.* Rīga: Jānis Pīpe; P. Kalniņš (1898). *Pamācība, kā mazus bērņus kopt.* Rīga: Rīgas Latviešu Biedrības Zinību komisijas Derīgu grāmatu apgādāšanas nodaļa; J. Dumstren (1911). *Kultūras cilvēka miesas kopšana veselības un slimības dienās.* Rīga: L. P. Vitols; Georg fon Bunge (1907). *Strādnieki un alkohols.* *Atturībnieku mazā biblioteka. Nr. 1.* Rīga: Jānis Pīpe.

- ³⁰ Kristaps Bahmanis (1908). *Grāmatu nozīme cilvēka dzīvē* (On the Significance of Books in the Life of an Individual). Liepāja: Brāļi K. un G. Bahmaņi; Augusts Bračš (1906). *Rakstniecības teorija* (The Theory of Literature). Rīga: K. I. Šimanis.
- ³¹ Woldemārs Kirhenšteins (1907). *Darvins un darvinisms*. Pēterburga: Ansis Gulbis; Ernst Haeckel (1908). *Monisms kā saite starp reliģiju un zinātni*. Rīga: A. Golts; Ernst Haeckel, Herbert Spenser (1908). *Attīstības mācība*. Rīga: J. B. Krūmiņš.; Ludwig Buchner (1908). *Spēks un viela: jeb dabiskās pasaules kārtības pamati līdz ar tai piemērotu tikumības mācību*. Rīga: P. Saulītis; Ludwig Buchner [s. a.]. *Dievs un Zinātne: ideja par dievību un viņas nozīmi tagadnē*. Rīga: W. Skribe; Wilhelm M. Meyer (1907). *Pasaules izcelšanās*. Rīga: E. Ēķis; Wilhelm Bolsche (1908). *Dzīvības uzvara: lekcija iz bioloģijas*. Rīga: Jānis Pipe; Jānis Jankavs (1908). *Dzīvības attīstība dabā: populārs apcerējums*. Rīga: Jānis Pipe.
- ³² Ilja Mechnikovs (1910). *Apcerējumi par cilvēka dabu*. Cēsis: O. Jēpe; Ilja Mechnikovs (1910). *Kas ir vecums: lekcija, lasīta iekš "Salle des Agriculteurs", Parīzē*. Rīga: Pie Darba.
- ³³ Jakub Beneš (2013). Socialist Popular Literature and the Czech-German Split in Austrian Social Democracy, 1890–1914. *Slavic Review*, 72 (2), p. 335.
- ³⁴ Leonid Andreev (1905). *Sarkanie smiekli*. Rīga: Ed. Zirģelis; Leonid Andreev (1908). *Stāsts par septiņiem pakārtiem*. Pēterburga: A. Jurjāns; Leonid Andreev (1909). *Melnās maskas*. Rīga: Jānis Pipe; Leonid Andreev [s. a.]. *Cilvēka dzīve*. Rīga: E. Ēķis.
- ³⁵ Maxim Gorky (1908). *Ienaidnieki: skati*. Rīga: L. Rozentāls; Maxim Gorky (1906). *Dzeltenā Satana pilsēta: M. Gorkijs Amerikā*. Cēsis: Arājs; Maxim Gorky [s. a.]. *Vecene Isergil*. Rīga: P. Zeltiņš; Maxim Gorky [s. a.]. *Dibenā: 4 skati no baskāju dzīves*. Bostona: Baltica Publishing Co.
- ³⁶ Straumanis. Latvians and Latvian Americans, p. 481.
- ³⁷ Christopher John Bitner (1924). *The Social Heritage of the Latvian Immigrants in the United States*, p. 132.
- ³⁸ The author uses the forms of names as they have been entered in Census records, where Latvian language diacritics have been omitted. Misspellings were not unusual. That was due to many factors, including educational levels and language differences. Many people did not care or may not have known how their names were spelled in English.
- ³⁹ California. 1900 U. S. census, population schedule. Digital images. Ancestry.com. <http://www.ancestry.com>: 2013; California. 1910 U. S. census, population schedule. Digital images. Ancestry.com. <http://www.ancestry.com>: 2013; Iz Amerikas. *Latviešu Avīzes*, 23.03.1888; Felikss Krusa. Pirmais rīdzinieks Kalifornijā. *Laiks*, 31.02.1967.
- ⁴⁰ Letts in the United States (1919). *The Literary Digest*, 61 (1), p. 36.

- ⁴¹ Akmentiņš. Veclatvieši un viņu laiks, p. 22; Bitner. *The Social Heritage of the Latvian Immigrants*, p. 132.
- ⁴² Charles Wollenberg (1986). San Francisco: A Heritage of Multi-Ethnic Immigration. In: *Freedom's Door: Immigrant Ports of Entry to the United States*. Philadelphia: The Balch Institute, p. 60.
- ⁴³ The author has counted those immigrants who have written in a census sheet either their place of birth: Latvia, or nationality: Lettish, or whose name is unmistakably Latvian (Ozolin, Eglit, Celms, Vilks etc.). By politically active the author considers those who had some political position in a group, such as secretary, treasurer, librarian or those whose names appear in *Proletareets* as supporters of this newspaper contributing some money.
- ⁴⁴ The figures were arrived at on the basis of the author's calculations from data found on Ancestry.com.: California. 1910 U. S. census, population schedule. Digital images. Ancestry.com. <http://www.ancestry.com:2013>; California. 1920 U. S. census, population schedule. Digital images. Ancestry.com. <http://www.ancestry.com:2013>; California. 1930 U. S. census, population schedule. Digital images. Ancestry.com. <http://www.ancestry.com:2013>; California. 1940 U. S. census, population schedule. Digital images. Ancestry.com. <http://www.ancestry.com:2013>
- ⁴⁵ The figures were arrived at on the basis of the author's calculations from the data found on Ancestry. com.
- ⁴⁶ Dūma. Latviešu sociāldemokrāti Vācijā, p. 69.
- ⁴⁷ *Amerikas Latvietis*, 16.06.1956. No. 12.
- ⁴⁸ Pauls Kundziņš (1979). *Latviešu imigrācijas sākumi Albertas provincē Kanādā un Kārļa Pļaviņa sēta*. Kanāda: Gauja, p. 119.
- ⁴⁹ Kārlis Čokke (1936). Emigrantu sapulces Helzingforsā 1906. gada februārī. In: *1905. gads*. Maskava: Prometejs, p. 290.
- ⁵⁰ *Strahdneeks*, 23.02.1909. No. 15.
- ⁵¹ Lūsis. *Conflicts of Politics and Purpose*, pp. 81, 82.
- ⁵² Filipov, IU. D. (1906). *Emigratsiia*. S.-Peterburg: Tipografii V. O. Kirshbauma, pp. 92–96.
- ⁵³ Emigration Conditions in Europe (1911). In: *United States. Immigration Commission. Reports of the U. S. Immigration Commission*. Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, Vol. 4, p. 105.
- ⁵⁴ Wesley Clair Mitchell (contr.) (1933). *Recent Social Trends in the United States: Report of the President's Research Committee on Social Trends*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, p. 57.
- ⁵⁵ Osvalds Akmentiņš. Kā agrāk latvieši nokļuva Amerikā: latviešu dzīve Amerikā pirms 50 gadiem. *Laiks*, 24.03.1951.
- ⁵⁶ Data from "California Passenger and Crew Lists, 1893–1920." Database and images. Ancestry.com. <http://www.ancestry.com:2013>.

- ⁵⁷ These figures were arrived at on the basis of the author's calculations from the data found on Ancestry.com: California. 1910 U. S. census, population schedule. Digital images. Ancestry.com. <http://www.ancestry.com>: 2013; California. 1920 U. S. census, population schedule. Digital images. Ancestry.com. <http://www.ancestry.com>: 2013; California. 1930 U. S. census, population schedule. Digital images. Ancestry.com. <http://www.ancestry.com>: 2013; California. 1940 U. S. census, population schedule. Digital images. Ancestry.com. <http://www.ancestry.com>: 2013.
- ⁵⁸ *Strahdneeks*, 28.10.1910. No. 82.
- ⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 03.02.1914. No. 10.
- ⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 28.10.1910. No. 82.
- ⁶¹ Gregory R. Woirol (1991). Men on the Road: Early Twentieth-Century Surveys of Itinerant Labor in California. *California History*, 70 (2), p. 192.
- ⁶² *Strahdneeks*, 14.05.1909. No. 38.
- ⁶³ Beth Bagwell (1982). *Oakland: the Story of a City*. Novato: Presidio, pp. 196, 197.
- ⁶⁴ Kundziņš. *Latviešu imigrācijas sākumi*, p. 199.
- ⁶⁵ *Proletareets*, 14.11.1913. No. 85.
- ⁶⁶ Modris Gulbis (1953). Sarkanie latvieši Amerikā. *Latvju Vārds*, 1/2, p. 4; The Lettish Federation of the Socialist Labor Party was an umbrella organization for all local Lettish Socialist Labor Sections in the United States.
- ⁶⁷ *Proletareets*, 1902. No. 8.
- ⁶⁸ Frank Girard, Ben Perry (1991). *The Socialist Labor Party 1876–1991: A Short History*. Philadelphia: Livra Books, pp. 3, 4, 26.
- ⁶⁹ Lūsis. *Conflicts of Politics and Purpose*, p. 90; Akmentiņš. *Amerikas latvieši*, p. 95.
- ⁷⁰ Mikhail Konstantinov (ed.) (1934). *Politicheskaia katorga i ssylka: biografičeskii spravočnik chlenov Obshchestva politkatorzhan i ssylno-posalentsev*. Moskva: Izd-vo Obshchestva, p. 875.
- ⁷¹ The Lettish Socialist Labor Section in San Francisco, as was the case with all other Latvian socialist groups, elected an organizing committee consisting of a secretary, treasurer, auditor and librarian. Reelections took place once or twice a year during the general meetings. As can be seen from the reports in *Proletareets*, there was a certain process of rotation. The secretary was elected to become a treasurer or librarian, and then could become a secretary again.
- ⁷² Interview with the granddaughter, Victoria Chase, 10 October 2013. Photographs courtesy of Victoria Chase.
- ⁷³ *Proletareets*, 30.02.1910. No. 4.
- ⁷⁴ All data from the databases of Ancestry.com.

- ⁷⁵ *Proletareets*, Janvāris–februāris. 1907. No. 1/2.
- ⁷⁶ 403 dollars in 1906 would be worth about 10,612 dollars in 2013. 10 dollars in 1910 had the same buying power as 78 current dollars.
- ⁷⁷ *Proletareets*, 30.02.1910. No. 4.
- ⁷⁸ The authors unknown.
- ⁷⁹ Nekrologs no Ņujorkas: Alberts Munkens. *Amerikas Latvietis*, 11.09.1948.; Ādolfs Šilde (1948). Stāsts par kāda ideālista mūžu. *Laiks*, 10.12.1948. The authors of the plays mentioned above are unknown.
- ⁸⁰ Jēkabs Ciemiņš. Skati no San Franciskas Strādnieku kustības. *Proletareets*. 03.03.1907. No. 5; *Proletareets*, 30.02.1910. No. 4; *Proletareets*, 15.02.1911. No. 3.
- ⁸¹ *Proletareets*, Janvāris–februāris. 1907. No. 1.
- ⁸² In Latvia small social democratic groups started to form around the 1890s. The Latvian Social Democratic Party was founded in 1904.
- ⁸³ *Proletareets*, 07.07.1908.
- ⁸⁴ Akmentiņš. *Amerikas latvieši*, pp. 95–97.
- ⁸⁵ *Proletareets*, Decembris–janvāris. 1907–1908. No. 12.
- ⁸⁶ Dūma, Paeglīte. *Revolucionārie latviešu emigranti*, p. 39; National Lettish Organization was an umbrella organization for all local Lettish Social-Democratic Groups.
- ⁸⁷ *Strahdneeks*, 01.01.1906. No. 1; M. Ozoliņš. 1905. gada iespaids Ziemeļu Amerikas Savienotās Valstīs. *Sociāldemokrāts*, 31.10.1925. No. 246.
- ⁸⁸ *The Sun* (New York), July, 1907.
- ⁸⁹ K. Apsens. Vietējo latviešu dzīve. *Strahdneeks*, 27.07.1909. No. 59.
- ⁹⁰ *Strahdneeks*, 07.12.1909. No. 97.
- ⁹¹ Mācītājs Juris Rozens. *Latvju Grāmata*, 01.03.1927. No. 2.
- ⁹² Osvalds Akmentiņš. Mācītājs, revolucionārs, viesniecnieks un jurists: kāds savdabīgs dzīves gājums. *Laiks*, 19.03.1962.
- ⁹³ *Oakland Tribune*, 16.05.1916.
- ⁹⁴ Vilis Z. (1915). Latviešu klubs San Franciskā. *Prometejs*, 4, p. 154.
- ⁹⁵ *Oakland Tribune*, 26.09.1917.
- ⁹⁶ *Amerikas Latvietis*, 04.03.1961.
- ⁹⁷ *Strahdneeks*, 23.02.1909. No. 15.
- ⁹⁸ Ira Kipnis (1952). *The Socialist Movement, 1897–1912*. New York: Columbia University Press, p. 105.
- ⁹⁹ James Weinstein (1967). *The Decline of Socialism in America, 1912–1925*. New York: Monthly Review Press, pp. 5–16.
- ¹⁰⁰ Stephen J. Barton (2011). Stitt Wilson, Berkeley's Socialist Mayor. *The Newsletter of the Berkeley Historical Society*, 29 (2).
- ¹⁰¹ Weinstein. *The Decline of Socialism in America*, p. 93.
- ¹⁰² Bitner. *The Social Heritage of the Latvian Immigrants*, p. 145.

- ¹⁰³ The affiliation meant establishing the National Secretary-Translator's office at the Socialist Party's national headquarters. The National Secretary-Translator served as executive secretary for the National Lettish Organization and as its liaison with the Socialist Party. Other foreign language branches were Finnish, South Slavic, Italian, Scandinavian, Bohemian, Polish, Jewish, also German and Hungarian: John Spargo (ed.) (1912). *National Convention of the Socialist Party, Held at Chicago, Illinois, May 12 to 18, 1912: Stenographic Report*. Chicago: Allied Print. Trades Council, 1912, pp. 237–248.
- ¹⁰⁴ Nathan Fine (1928). *Labor and Farmer Parties in the United States, 1828–1928*. New York: Russell and Russell, p. 325.
- ¹⁰⁵ Michael Kazin (1986). The Great Exception Revisited: Organized Labor and Politics in San Francisco and Los Angeles, 1870–1940. *Pacific Historical Review*, 55 (3), pp. 379, 380.
- ¹⁰⁶ Andris Straumanis (1991). Puren, Rudevics un Amerikas prese. *Akadēmiskā Dzīve*, 33, pp. 21–23; Frederick C. Giffin (1982). The Rudovitz extradition case. *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, pp. 63–72.
- ¹⁰⁷ *Strahdneeks*, 14.05.1909. No. 38.
- ¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 27.07.1909. No. 59.
- ¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 20.02.1912. No. 15.
- ¹¹⁰ *Proletareets*, 1908. No. 9–13.
- ¹¹¹ Girard, Perry. *The Socialist Labor Party 1876–1991*, pp. 30, 31.
- ¹¹² Morris Hillquit (1869–1933) was born Moishe Hillkowitz in Riga, Latvia, the second son of German-speaking ethnic Jewish factory owners. He immigrated to the United States in 1886.
- ¹¹³ Morris Hillquit (1906). *History of Socialism in the United States*. New York: Funk and Wagnalls, p. 322.
- ¹¹⁴ *Proletareets*, 01.04.1910; 31.12.1911.
- ¹¹⁵ *Strahdneeks*, 29.07.1910. No. 33; 16.07.1913. No. 37; 29.01.1915.
- ¹¹⁶ John Spargo (ed.) (1912). *National Convention of the Socialist Party, Held at Chicago, Illinois, May 12 to 18, 1912: Stenographic Report*. Chicago: Allied Print. Trades Council, 1912, p. 244.
- ¹¹⁷ Dūma, Paeglīte. *Revolucionārie latviešu emigranti*, pp. 77, 109.
- ¹¹⁸ Hoover Archives. Russia. Departament politsii. Zagrānichnaia agentura (Paris). Letts and Lithuanians. Box 210, Folder 1b.
- ¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*
- ¹²⁰ *Strahdneeks*, 27.08.1912. No. 65.
- ¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 18.12.1914. No. 91; 02.12.1915. No. 116.
- ¹²² Milda Kļaviņa-Salnais. Aģitācijas ceļojuma iespaidi. *Strahdneeks*, 17.10.1913. No. 77.
- ¹²³ J. Andersons. Sievietes un organizācija. *Strahdneeks*, 16.09.1910. No. 76.

- ¹²⁴ *Dzimtenes Vēstnesis*, 05.03.1909. No. 52.
- ¹²⁵ *Sveicieni Padomju Latvijai* (1948). Ņujorka: Amerikāņu Atbalsts Latvijai, Inc., p. 53.
- ¹²⁶ *Strahdneeks*, 11.10.1912. No. 77.
- ¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 27.08.1912. No. 65.
- ¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 07.12.1909. No. 97; 29.04.1919. No. 33; 16.05.1913. No. 36.
- ¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 16.05.1913. No. 37.
- ¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 10.02.1914. No. 12.
- ¹³¹ Dūma, Paeglīte. *Revolucionārie latviešu emigranti*, p. 137.
- ¹³² *Strahdneeks*, 07.12.1909. No. 97.
- ¹³³ *Ibid.*, 22.10.1912. No. 77; 17.04.1914. No. 49.
- ¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 1909–1916.
- ¹³⁵ Alfreds Straumanis (1983). Latvian-American theatre. In: *Ethnic Theater in the United States*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, pp. 286, 287.
- ¹³⁶ Osvalds Akmentiņš (1961). Pirms piecdesmit gadiem. *Tilts*, 42/43, p. 53.
- ¹³⁷ Pirmie pionieri Amerikā: latviešu teātra pasākumi Savienotās Valstīs un to liktenis, *Laiks*, 20.09.1958.; Osvalds Akmentiņš (1954). Veclatviešu teātris Amerikā 60 gadu atcerē. *Ceļa Zīmes*, 19, pp. 235, 236; Osvalds Akmentiņš (1964). Jaunajā zemē. *Tilts*, 64/65, pp. 68–71; Kaspars Strūga (1976). Piezīmes teātru dienās. *Tilts*, 154/155, pp. 70–72; Viktors Hausmanis (2008). *Latviešu teātris ASV un Kanādā*. Rīga: Zinātne, pp. 9–20.
- ¹³⁸ *Strahdneeks*, 07.01.1910. No. 2.
- ¹³⁹ *Proletareets*, 15.02.1910. No. 1.
- ¹⁴⁰ The figures were arrived at on the basis of the author's calculations from the number of the announcements in *Strahdneeks*, 1911–1917.
- ¹⁴¹ *Strahdneeks*, 16.01.1914. No. 5; 17.02.1914. No. 14.
- ¹⁴² Mūsu lauku teātru darbība. *Kultūras Vēstnesis*, 01.06.1921.
- ¹⁴³ Kronika: San Franciskas latviešu dramatiskais pulciņš (1917). *Prometejs*, 1, p. 16.
- ¹⁴⁴ Pirmie pionieri Amerikā: latviešu teātra pasākumi Savienotās Valstīs un to liktenis. *Laiks*, 20.09.1958.; *Blue and Gold, 1918: Being a Record of the College Year 1916–1917, University of California*. San Francisco: Sunset Publishing House, p. 335 [Ian Andrew Ozolin. Livonia, Baltic Province of Russia].
- ¹⁴⁵ Valdis Krāslavietis (1972). Cik līdzīgas gleznas. *Tilts*, 128/129, pp. 37–42; Kronika: San Franciskas latviešu dramatiskais pulciņš (1917). *Prometejs*, 1, p. 16.

SANFRANCISKO LATVIEŠU SOCIĀLISTU
BIBLIOTĒKAS IZPĒTE: LATVIEŠU AGRĪNĀS
POLITISKĀS EMIGRĀCIJAS AKTIVITĀTES
ZIEMEĻKALIFORNIJĀ, 1905–1917

Elga Zālīte

Vēstures doktore, Stenfordas universitātes bibliotēka, Starptautisko studiju grupa, Slāvu un Austrumeiropas nodaļa, ASV
E-mail: ezalite@stanford.edu

Rakstā, kura pamatā likta Sanfrancisko Kalifornijā nesēn atklātā unikāla 380 grāmatu liela kolekcija, pētītas un analizētas latviešu sociālistu politiskās un kultūras aktivitātes Ziemeļkalifornijā ap 1905. gadu. Rakstā aplūkota Sanfrancisko sociālistu bibliotēkas struktūra un saturs un parādīts, kā, aprakstot trīs dažādas identifikācijas zīmes jeb īpašumtiesību zīmogus, iespējams izsekot trīs dažādu latviešu sociālistiem piederošo bibliotēku attīstībai. Raksts sniedz pārskatu par to, kā attīstījušās trīs latviešu sociālistu grupas, kurām šīs bibliotēkas piederēja: Sociālistu darba partijas Sanfrancisko Latviešu nodaļa; Sanfrancisko Latviešu sociāldemokrātu pulciņš un Sociālistu partijas Sanfrancisko Latviešu nozare. Kā daļa no vēsturiskā pārskata aprakstīti svarīgākie latviešu politiskās emigrācijas aspekti uz Amerikas Savienotajām Valstīm pirms un pēc 1905. gada revolūcijas. Izmantojot jaunākos datus no ģeoloģisko pētījumu tīmekļa vietnes *Ancestry.com*, rakstā sniegts konkrēts notikumos iesaistīto cilvēku portretējums. Autore ir mēģinājusi izsekot nostājai, kādu ieņēma latviešu imigrantu grupas Sanfrancisko, un lēmumiem, kādus viņi pieņēmuši attiecībā uz plašāku sociālistu kustību Amerikas Savienotajās Valstīs.

Atslēgas vārdi: Latvija, latviešu politiskā emigrācija, 1905. gada revolūcija, Sanfrancisko, Kalifornija, sociālistu bibliotēka, sociālistu grupas, sociālistu kustība Amerikas Savienotajās Valstīs.

Kopsavilkums

2012. gada novembrī jaunās mājas Stenfordas Universitātes Hūvera institūta arhīvā atrada 19. gadsimta beigu – 20. gadsimta sākuma Sanfrancisko latviešu bibliotēka, kas ilgu laiku aizmirsta bija glabājusies Ziemeļkalifornijas ev. lut. draudzes namā draudzes bibliotēkas sastāvā. Gadu gaitā draudzes bibliotēka sarukusi, daudzi vērtīgi sējumi tika nosūtīti uz Latviju pirmajos gados pēc Latvijas neatkarības at-

jaunošanas. Bet plauktos sava likteņa lemšanu gaidīja gotiskajā drukā izdotas sīkas brošūras un pamatīgi, tumši sarkanos vākos iesieti sējumi, Sanfrancisko veclatviešu bibliotēka, pavisam 380 nosaukumu publikācijas.

Vecākie darbi datējami ar 1876.–1889. gadu. Vairums grāmatu iznākušas no 1905. līdz 1911. gadam (pa 27 grāmatām attiecīgi 1906. un 1907. gadā, 30 – 1907. gadā, 43 – 1908. gadā). Visas publikācijas var iedalīt četrās grupās: sabiedriski politiskā literatūra – 17%, populārzinātniski sacerējumi – 15%, daiļliteratūra un literatūrkritiski sacerējumi, gan oriģināldarbi, gan tulkojumi – 40%, lugas – 28%.

Jau grāmatu tematika ļauj nojaust, kas bijuši to īpašnieki: sabiedriski politiskie darbi ir pārsvarā sociālistu sacerējumi, kas izdoti Rīgā, Jelgavā, Cēsīs, Liepājā, Bernē, Pēterburgā. Autori – pazīstami latviešu sociāldemokrāti – Jānis Jansons-Brauns, Jānis Asars, Vilis Dermanis, Jānis Jankavs. Vairāk nekā oriģināldarbu ir tulkojumi no vācu valodas, sevišķi Karla Kautska un Augusta Bēbeļa sacerējumi.

Bibliotēkas otrreizējā “atklāšana” bija negaidīts un nozīmīgs notikums. Lai gan literatūrā pieminēti vairāki Sanfrancisko un Ziemeļkalifornijā 20. gadsimta sākumā dzīvojuši latvieši, kā mācītājs Jānis Balodis; uzņēmējs un advokāts, aktīvs 1905. gada dalībnieks Juris Rozēns; students, literāts un redaktors Jānis Andrejs Ozoliņš-Burtņieks, praktiski nekas līdz šim nav bijis zināms par latviešu sociāldemokrātu grupu eksistenci. Nav saglabājušies arī pirmavoti. Sanfrancisko veclatviešu bibliotēka piedāvāja unikālu iespēju uzsākt pētījumu vēl neskartas tēmas ietvaros – par latviešu pirmajiem imigrantiem sociālistiem un viņu politiskajām un kulturālajām aktivitātēm Ziemeļkalifornijā 20. gadsimta sākumā.

Līdzās veclatviešu bibliotēkai pētījumā izmantotas vairākas citas avotu grupas: 20. gadsimta pirmās puses Amerikas latviešu sociālistu laikraksti: *Proletareets*, *Strahdneeks*, *Amerikas Latvietis*, kā arī vienīgais Ziemeļkalifornijā iznākušais žurnāls mākslas un politikas jautājumos *Prometejs*. Kā sevišķi nozīmīgs avots, meklējot informāciju par atsevišķām personām gadu gaitā, atzīmējama ģenealoģijas pētniecības mājaslapa *Ancestry.com*, kas pagaidām pieejama tikai ar maksas abonementa palīdzību. Vērtīgi izrādījās dati no četrām tautas skaitīšanām Ziemeļkalifornijā (1910, 1920, 1930 un 1940), no imigrācijas, karaklausības un nodarbinātības dokumentiem, kā arī nekroloģiem. Pētījumā izmantoti arī arhīva dokumenti un autores intervijas ar Kalifornijas pirmo latviešu sociālistu pēcnācējiem: mazbērniem un mazmazbērniem.

Pievēršoties kolekcijas izpētei, autore konstatēja septiņus atšķirīgus organizāciju un biedrību piederības zīmogus, kas grāmatās iespiesti dažādos gados. Tas liecināja, ka veclatviešu bibliotēka nav bijusi tikai vienas grupas kopīpašums. Trīs no zīmogiem attiecas uz šajā pētījumā apskatīto periodu. Kā liecina zīmogs, pirmais īpašnieks, vismaz daļai grāmatu, bijusi Sociālistu darba partijas Sanfrancisko Latviešu nodaļa (*Lettish Socialist Labor Section, San Francisco*, 1905). Pirmās ziņas par iespējamām Sociālistu darba partijas Sanfrancisko Latviešu nodaļas aktivitātēm parādījās jau 1902. gadā partijas laikrakstā *Proletareets*. Agrīnais periods norāda uz to, ka, tāpat kā citur Amerikā, šajā grupā bija iekļāvušies pirmie iebrucēji, kas ieradās pirms 1905. gada revolūcijas notikumiem. Minētā grupa pamatos atbalstīja Amerikas Sociālistu darba partijas programmu.

Daļa bibliotēkas piederējusi citai grupai – Sanfrancisko Latviešu sociāldemokrātu pulciņam (*Lettish Social Democratic Society*), kas dibināts ap 1905. gadu. Pulciņa locekļi vairumā gadījumu bijuši politiskie bēgļi, kas Kalifornijā ieradās no Latvijas, vairādamies no smagajām represijām pēc 1905. gada revolūcijas. Daudz rakstīts par latviešu sociāldemokrātu darbību Bostonā, Ņujorkā, Filadelfijā, Čikāgā, Mineapolē un Klīvlendā. Pētījuma rezultāti rāda, ka Sanfrancisko veclatvieši, tāpat kā viņu Austrumu krasta biedri, sākotnēji bija nolēmuši turpināt uzstāšanos pret absolūtisma varu Krievijas impērijā, kuras sastāvdaļa bija Latvija. No politiski aktīvajiem imigrantiem, kas iesaistījās vienā vai otrā no minētajām grupām, 21 bija ieradies vēl pirms 1900. gada. 189 imigranti apmetās Ziemeļkalifornijā pēc 1905. gada revolūcijas, laika posmā no 1905. līdz 1915. gadam. Vairums 1905. gada politisko bēgļu ieradās 1906. gadā – 47 un 1907. gadā – 42.

Latvijas sociāldemokrāti, kas uz dzīvi bija apmetušies Sanfrancisko, atrada sakarus ar Amerikas sociālistu organizācijām. Amerikas Savienotajās Valstīs 20. gadsimta sākumā darbojās vairākas sociālistu partijas. 1905. gada politiskie bēgļi Amerikā biežāk pieslējās Amerikas Sociālistu partijai. Tieši šīs partijas piederības zīmogs veclatviešu grāmatās atrodams visbiežāk: Sociālistu Partijas SanFrancisco Latviešu Nozare / *Lettish Branch of San Francisco Socialist Party*.

Pētījumā izsekots trīs pieminēto grupu attīstības procesam, izvērtējot, kā pakāpeniski divos posmos norisinājās apvienošanās process, kura rezultātā bibliotēka nonāca viena īpašnieka – Sociālistu partijas Sanfrancisko Latviešu nozares – rokās. 1909. gada martā,

mainoties taktikas apsvērumiem, respektīvi, vairāk novirzot uzmanību uz ekonomisko un sociālo situāciju Amerikas Savienotajās Valstīs, Sanfrancisko Latviešu sociāldemokrātu pulciņš pievienojās Amerikas Sociālistu partijai, izveidojot Sociālistu partijas Sanfrancisko Latviešu nozari. Par Sanfrancisko grupas aktivitāti plaša informācija atrodama partijas laikrakstā *Strahdneeks*. Apvienošanās process turpinājās starp latviešu grupām. 1912. gada janvārī Sociālistu darba partijas Latviešu nodaļa pievienojās Sociālistu partijas Sanfrancisko Latviešu nozarei. Diskusijas par iespējamo pievienošanos sākās jau 1908. gada maijā, un tas bija sarežģīts process. Daļa Sociālistu darba partijas Latviešu nodaļas pārstāvju nolēma saglabāt savu grupu.

Dalībnieku skaits nevienā no grupām nav bijis liels, apmēram 40 cilvēki katrā organizācijā. Tas galvenokārt skaidrojams ar to, ka vairums imigrantu no Latvijas izvēlējās dzīvot Austrumu krastā gan lielo attālumu dēļ līdz Rietumu krastam, gan tāpēc, ka Ziemeļkalfornijā nodarbinātības iespējas bija ierobežotas. Pētījumā sniegts latviešu iebraucēju sociāli ekonomiskais raksturojums, koncentrējoties tieši uz dažādiem ar nodarbinātību saistītiem faktoriem vairāku gadu garumā.

Latvijas politiskie emigranti, atguvušies no vājašanām un represiju draudiem pēc 1905. gada revolūcijas, pirmo reizi nonāca politiskās brīvības apstākļos. Pētījumā raksturots trīs latviešu sociālistu grupu pašizglītības darbs un politiskās aktivitātes. Bibliotēka ir pierādījums, ka latviešu politiskie imigranti uz Amerikas Savienotajām Valstīm atveda līdzīgu savas kultūras tradīcijas, pirmām kārtām mīlestību uz grāmatām un teātri. Pirmajos darbības gados populārāki bija jautājumi un atbilžu vakari, bet vēlāk paši dalībnieki organizēja lekcijas par aktuālām tēmām un literāros vakarus, teātra izrādes. Bibliotēkas mērķis bija ne vien veicināt individuālu politisko izglītību. Bibliotēka bija neatsverams avots lekciju un teātra izrāžu sagatavošanā.

Grupas organizēja mītiņus, pieminot 1905. gada revolūcijā kritušos, svinēja 1. Maija svētkus, 1886. gada Čikāgas *Haymarket* notikumus. Nereti vairāku tautību nodaļas vienojās kopīgos pasākumos. Tad uzrunas notika gan angļu, gan latviešu, gan citās valodās.

Īpaša vieta sociālistu grupu aktivitātēs bija ierādīta teātrim. Teātris grupu aktivitātēs tika uzskatīts par aģitācijas un propagandas līdzekli. Tā kā izrādes nebija pakļautas cenzūrai, latviešu ieceļotāji baudīja pilnīgu radošu brīvību un iespēju uzturēt dzīvu latviešu valodu.

Pirmais pasaules karš un 1917. gada Krievijas revolūcija pārtrauca Sanfrancisko sociālistu aktivitātes. Vienotības periodam, kas īsti pat nebija iesācies, pienāca gals. Daļa Sanfrancisko latviešu sociālistu, tāpat kā viņu līdzgaitnieki Amerikas Austrumu krastā, kļuva komunisti. Tomēr sociālistu grupu aktivitātes periods ir atstājis savas pēdas vēsturē, lai gan tās ir grūti, dažkārt vairs neiespējami atrast.

Iesniegts 30.12.2013.