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Latvian Folklorists in Late Socialism: Within the Workplace

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Introduction

In the USSR, a serious share of the late socialism years passed while Leonid Brezhnev performed his duties of General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (1964–1982). This period was praised by the regime itself as *developed socialism* (see Evans 1977, Thompson 2019); however, later it was labelled as the "Era of Stagnation".[1] There have been many studies on the fallacies of his leadership, policy-making, foreign policy, stunning bureaucracy, and the senseless centrally-planned economics. The Soviet system's crisis combined with the leader's longevity in the position (seemingly personally demonstrating his idea of "stability of cadres" of Party nomenclature in the State apparatus) has been pictured as *Brezhnev's twilight* (Cherkasov 2005, Tompson 2014: 111).

The Soviet period in Latvian folkloristics started right after World War II ended.[2] It lived with the times of the Soviet leaders: first, Joseph Stalin's totalitarian period (1945–1953), the Thaw and de-Stalinization during Nikita Khrushchev's rule (1953–1964), then two decades under Leonid Brezhnev which were followed by short reigns of Yuri Andropov (1982–1984) and Konstantin Chernenko (1984–1985). Mikhail Gorbachev's time (1985–1991) and his *perestroika* ended the Soviet period. The late socialism period, the years after Stalin and before Gorbachev's restructuring policy, have so far been little studied.

From the perspective of everyday life of people conditioned to be Soviet citizens, the sense of time and geopolitics in late socialism is probably best characterized by Alexei Yurchak in his influential work, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation*: "[...] the period that spanned approximately thirty years, between the mid-1950s and the mid-1980s, before the changes of perestroika began, when the system was still being experienced as eternal." (Yurchak 2005: 4) Nonetheless, despite the lack of a reasonable future perspective and the stoppage of time felt by the

1 *Stagnation* is primarily a term of economy, designating the severe socioeconomic downturn of the USSR under Brezhnev. (Bialer 1984: 160–162) The coinage of the term era of stagnation (*zastoi*) is attributed to the critical expressions of Mikhail Gorbachev and his fellows of the "new thinking" towards the previous decades. (Sandle 2002)

2 During the first Soviet occupation (1940–1941), institutional changes did not affect the Archives of Latvian Folklore (1924) yet, neither the ideology of the Soviet regime could be induced in folklore research.

citizens, there is some nostalgia in memories of the past Soviet socialist times and the enjoyed limited personal freedoms. Thus, the Brezhnev period is remembered also "as a time when citizens could lead a secure and predictable life, where living standards were rising every year, and where their children could receive a good education and expect stable careers. [...] Ideology was a deadening presence—but it was alleviated through cynicism and humor" (Rutland, Smolkin-Rothrock 2014: 300).

For scholars and other intellectuals, the Brezhnev era was a complicated and contradictory period. Despite the initial continuation of the Khrushchev Thaw's course and détente between 1969 and 1974 which expanded Soviet-Western ties and eased the tense atmosphere of the Cold War, Leonid Brezhnev quite early, namely, at the crushing of the Prague Spring in 1968, demonstrated that near-term liberalization of the Soviet system would not be tolerated.

> From the outset, ideological controls remained much tighter. The media and culture were never so openly bold or experimental as they had been a decade before. Outwardly, at least, the Party enforced stricter orthodoxy in intellectual life. Dissidence was harshly repressed and periodic conservative attacks kept reformist-Westernizing thought on the defensive. (English 2000: 118)

The brief period of Brezhnev's "flirtation with intellectuals" from 1964–1967 was notable for an increasing role of professional competence instead of political loyalty when selecting intellectuals for scientific work (Shlapentokh 1990: 172). The Prague events in May of 1968 still changed the attitudes towards the intellectual community—they were seen now as a principal threat to power. A long-term ideological campaign against Soviet intellectuals downgrading the image of the intelligentsia was launched, at the same time, and the glorification of the working class was reinforced. Brezhnev's policy intended to eliminate any serious political dissent among intellectuals. The plan included: (1) direct Party control over intellectuals; (2) political criteria applied for possible intellectual careers (even in high schools, political loyalty was checked openly); (3) inclusion of leading intellectuals in the Party; (4) involvement in direct cooperation with the KGB; (5) pressure for active participation of intellectuals in the ideological work and ideological education of academics. (Shlapentokh 1990: 173–180). Along with all of that, there was also financial pressure on to people with higher education as intellectual work was markedly less well paid than that of the workers in industry (Baras 1974: 174, BR_3). There are studies concluding that these suppressive mechanisms led to a demoralization and mediocratization of Soviet intellectuals and also facilitated their pessimistic self-view during Brezhnev's time (Shlapentokh 1990: 183–184).

In this study, I would like to demonstrate the opportunities of a close-up examination of one particular workplace of the so-called Soviet intelligentsia during late socialism, respectively, its various modes and connections, as presented by their internal do-it-yourself magazine, *Vārds un Darbs* (Word and Work) (VuD). In terms of time, the focus of the study is mainly on Brezhnev's era. The organization examined is the Folklore Sector (since 1980, "Folklore Department") of the Institute of Language and Literature at the Latvian SSR Academy of

Sciences.[3] This magazine is both exciting to read and a valuable source for the disciplinary history of Latvian folkloristics as well as other branches of humanities, such as literary studies, linguistics, and art, that were developed at the Institute during the late socialist period. The basic research question of my study is: how was the everyday life of Latvian folklorists arranged in late Soviet socialism? Some supplementary questions are: how was the power of the State manifested through the institutional practices? What hierarchies did folklorists form or were involved in at their workplace? What were the junction points between work life and leisure time?

To answer these questions, the methodology of institutional ethnography seems reasonably applicable. Having started in the late 20th century within the theoretical field of feminist sociology (Smith 1987), it is ever thriving and evolving. By exploring the textually-mediated social relations within a duty-centred organization ("ruling relations", power relations), the institutional ethnography always illuminates work experiences in a broader context, respectively, it strives to bring the observations done at microlevel, typically, the level of an individual, to meso- and macrolevels (Devault 2006: 294–296, Holstein 2006: 293, Lundberg, Sataøen 2019, Russell 2018: xiii–xv). In other words, it studies "an issue that might be felt or experienced by an individual but the focus is not on the individual's experience of an issue. The focus is on explicating the social relations shaping the issue as experienced by multiple stakeholders and observers of the issue" (Wright et al. 2018: 116). Keeping in mind the importance of "zooming out a camera lens" (Miley 2017: 104), consequently, in this article, I will dissect daily work routines of the socialist era folklorists from the perspectives of multiple players. Although many names and microhistories will be given, my intention is to give an overall picture how it was to be a folklore researcher or, more broadly, a performer of the intellectual work, during the long Brezhnev era and beyond the end of his rule.

The textual units produced and circulated within the organizations, may they be public announcements, minutes of meetings, e-mails, academic works, or, as in this case, an internal magazine of an academic institution, are seen by the researchers of institutional ethnography as crucial sources to be investigated:

> Texts are critical sources of information in IE research because they reveal how power, in its many forms, is embedded within social institutions and structures. [...] Symbolically, texts function to organize and dictate social and cultural space for individuals and groups because they rely on shared beliefs and ways of expressing those beliefs. Texts transport power in ideologies and practices across sites and among people. (Wright et al. 2018: 120)

In addition to textual studies of *Vārds un Darbs*, semi-structured quality interviews with the employees of the Institute will be analysed and integrated into the interpretation. These

3 For a more concise expression, further in this article, I will use just 'Institute' when referring to the whole research institution and, in many cases, just 'Department' when referring to the Department of Folklore in particular.

interviews were conducted over the past few years and form a collection of oral history of Latvian folkloristics (LFK [2250]). They reveal a variety of personal experience stories related to the workplace; however, memories on the Institute's magazine *Vārds un Darbs* appear only in some of them.[4]

The aspects of Soviet ideology will be analysed with the help of Soviet postcolonial studies (Annus 2014, 2018, et al.). Understanding scholars' professional lives in certain political conditionality is one of my far-reaching intentions. An additional objective is to introduce a new and specific source, magazine *Vārds un Darbs*, to the historiography of Latvian folkloristics.

I will first introduce to the institution under study, its structure, prime functional mechanisms and premises. Thereafter, *Vārds un Darbs*, the internal magazine of the Institute of Language and Literature, will be viewed from in terms of form and trends in content. Next, colonial layers of Soviet ideology, as manifested in the magazine, will be detected and analysed. Finally, I will focus on the particular workplace, the Folklore Department. Interrelationships of folklorists, highlights of their collective work, and other activities, noticed by the magazine or underscored in the interviews with contemporaries, will be explored.

The Institute of Language and Literature at the Latvian SSR Academy of Sciences: The Workplace and its Communities

The Institute of Language and Literature was established in 1946 at the Latvian SSR Academy of Sciences which was founded in the same year. It started as a research institution for linguistic and literature studies, and the basis for the Latvian Language Sector was the former Archives of Latvian Language (1935; previously developed under the auspices of the Archives of Latvian Folklore). In 1956, the Folklore Sector was added to the Institute. It was a successor of the Archives of Latvian Folklore (1924) which had already undergone several institutional changes after World War II. In 1945, renamed as the Institute of Folklore, it came under the authority of the Latvian State University. In 1946, the Institute of Folklore was included into the Latvian SSR Academy of Sciences. In 1950, it became a part of the Institute of Ethnography and Folklore the Latvian SSR Academy of Sciences which split in 1956.[5]

4 The collection LFK [2250] consists mainly of life story interviews with folklorists. The topics cover family histories, personal developments in education and research, experiences in the working life at the Institute of Language and Literature at the Latvian SSR Academy of Sciences.

5 In 1992, the Institute was reorganized into the Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art of the University of Latvia. That was also the year when the historical name of the Archives of Latvian Folklore (Latviešu folkloras krātuve) was retrieved back.

From 1971 to 1990, the Institute of Language and Literature was named after its first Director (1946–1951), literary scholar, critic, and a renowned writer of socialist realism, Andrejs Upīts. Directors who took office after him were: Ēvalds Sokols (1951–1962), Jānis Kalniņš (1962–1983), and Viktors Hausmanis (1983–1999). The long-term Head of the Folklore Sector was Elza Kokare (1953–1985) whose role was later handed to Jadviga Darbiniece (1985–1993). The Institute constantly evolved, increasing the number of the research areas and creating new institutional units, respectively, departments. Shortly before the collapse of the Soviet Union, the structure of the Institute comprised several specialized departments of around 200 employees altogether: history of literature; theory of literature; folklore studies; dialectology and Latvian literary language; scientific dictionaries; fine arts; theatrical and musical arts, and the art of the cinema. The Department of Mathematical Linguistics was also a structural unit for many years. Alongside the directorate, administration and departments, the crucial functional structures were the academic council, the council for hearing the defense of doctoral and candidate dissertations, several task groups (on speech culture, terminology, musical art, etc.), committees of the Trade Union, and, at the late stage of the socialism period, also a group of young scholars (See Martirosyan et al. 2019).

The Institute's scientific development, its methodological and research organizational work, was supervised by the Department of Social Sciences of the Latvian SSR Academy of Sciences. This department of the Academy was responsible for approving Institute's research directions, the five-year plans, and the main tasks for each year (LVA 2370. f., 1. apr., 508.a l., 1. lp.). The Statutes, even approved as late as in 1988, on the eve of Latvia's independence, summed up the research and ideological practice of the Institute during the long period of socialism:

> The main tasks of the Institute are: to concentrate its efforts on the research of priority directions, to carry out fundamental research, which is of particular importance in ideological work and the development of Latvian culture; to work actively to put research results into practice; to follow the achievements of world science in the fields of philology and arts; to promote their use in building of communism in the USSR; to set the basic directions of the development of philology and arts for a longer period of time; to prepare the research cadres of the highest qualification; to improve the forms of research work. A. Upīts' Institute of Language and Literature is responsible for the high quality of research as well as for creating conditions for the maximum use of the creative abilities of the researchers' collective. (LVA 2370. f., 1. apr., 508.a l., 1. lp.)

There were several practical mechanisms introduced to maintain and raise the set research quality standards. The staff was encouraged to engage in the Institute's methodological seminars. The ones focusing on folkloristics were chaired by Elza Kokare and sometimes by Jadviga Darbiniece. These seminars provided insight into methodological history and actualities in the discipline, including Finno-Ugric comparative folklore studies, Freud's psychoanalysis, current research trends in American folkloristics, and novelties in Soviet scholarship. Lectures were given not only by the chairs, but also by other folklorists, like Kārlis Arājs, Alma Ancelāne, Ojārs Ambainis, Rita Drīzule, Elga Melne, Māra Vīksna (VuD

1970/3: 19–21; 1976/2: 71–73; 1978/2: 2–7; 1980/2: 2–5). The manuscripts prepared by the researchers were very carefully discussed among the colleagues at the departments—page by page. "After the work was discussed, the author was very confident because he had received all the possible criticism he could" (JD). Another training mechanism provided by the Institute to the achievers was the opportunity to go on academic trips to other republics of the Soviet Union to do research in libraries or archives. Moscow, with its rich collections of books at the scientific libraries, was a particularly popular destination. (AR, JD)

The Internal Work Regulations of the Institute followed a "communist attitude towards work" recognizing, as necessary, strict daily discipline and careful supervision of employees' individual work done as well as the execution of institutional overall plans. The work ethic necessitated full-time on-site presence on the Institute's premises and well-defined working hours. Employees had to arrive at work no later than 8:15 in the morning and leave no earlier than 17:15 in the afternoon. There was a half-hour break at noon (at 13:00–13:30). Staff arrivals and departures from the office were accounted in a special journal. The administration, heads of departments and sometimes the director himself were involved in monitoring the discipline of attendance (LVA 2370. f., 1. apr., 486. l., cf. AR, EO, JD).

Sharing all the working days, seeing one's colleagues on daily basis, having an opportunity of communication, exchanging intellectual views and recent cultural experiences were remembered by the Institute's employees of that time as a factor contributing to a sense of community and belonging (AR, VH, EM). The exclusively intellectual atmosphere has been described as very tempting and, to some degree, even as elitist:

> If you were lucky enough to work at the Institute, it was like big bingo. [...] It was almost a dream level. Not the status that he will be a scientist. If a person wanted to work in science, then it was almost the only option. The University was somewhat less likely to do so, because there were still lectures to be given there. [...] Its elitist tone. If you have been accepted at that Institute, you have been admitted, you are willing to work really as it was used on board in the old days, from a boy rubbing a deck, then a sailor, then a boatman, maybe, and so on. [...] You have wanted to work in science, and you are willing to work in science, from the first degree upwards, as far as your head will allow. (AR)

However, the elitism was, for the most part, intellectual. The researchers had some privileges, like access to so-called "special funds" in libraries. These were allowed only within the scope of their study topic though (AR). The special funds were secret and inaccessible to the general audience. They were formed by almost entirely printed matter from interwar period and the time of Nazi occupation, also by unwanted works of Latvian and foreign authors who had expressed criticism towards Soviet rule. Private libraries of many intellectuals, like university staff, who emigrated to the West, were also included into special funds. So were books and newspapers printed by the exile Latvian communities (confiscated by the censorship from citizens' private correspondences). The lists of the "harmful" literature were made by the Latvian SSR Glavlit office (Laukgale 2002: 189–190, Strods 2007: 434–438, Treide 2007: 124–125, 149–152). Representing the intelligentsia stratum, the staff of the Institute did not experience many

practical life privileges (BR_3, AR, VH). In the Soviet Union, the privileged life-style and special elite benefits covering a whole series of goods and services were made available to very few occupational groups (see Matthews 2011). Among Soviet scholars, only some scientists could enjoy the super-elite privileges, such as preferential access to housing and shopping at special stores unavailable to the ordinary consumer (Baras 1974: 174).

The location of the Institute of Language and Literature during the most part of Soviet socialism period was quite significant. Previously residing at various addresses in Riga, in 1963, the Institute eventually was deployed in the newly built (1958) skyscraper, the building of the Latvian SSR Academy of Sciences, which is located near the city center, at *Turgeņeva iela* 19.[6] Planned as a Collective Farm House (*Kolhoznieku nams*), after the construction work was fully completed, the skyscraper was put at the Latvian SSR scientific bodies' disposal and was even referred to as "the Palace of Science".

The building embodied not only the leading architectural style in the Soviet Union (Socialist Classicism, Stalinist Empire style), but also ideological currents. The project itself was an act of Stalinist propaganda. The building was a Soviet version of early American skyscrapers. The architects were Osvalds Tīlmanis, Vaidelotis Apsītis, and Kārlis Plūksne. Without criticism, obeying the demands of totalitarian power, they adapted the prototype of Soviet architecture created in Moscow.[7] In the interior decoration, Latvian national ornaments were twisted together with symbols of Soviet ideology. The peak of the building was decorated with a five-pointed star (Apsītis 1997, Stradiņš 2009: 109–112). This Stalinist architecture high-rise was uncharacteristic for Riga skyline. In popular use, it received names like "Stalin's Cake", "Stalin's Tooth", and "Kremlin".

The Institute inhabited the 3rd, 9th, 13th, 14th, and 15th floors of this ideologically marked building, the Latvian SSR Academy of Sciences. The premises of the Folklore Sector were on the 3rd floor where archival holdings were stored and on the 15th floor where the offices of researchers and typewriters were located. The site was convenient for the research institutes inhabiting the Academy for several reasons. First, they were close to the representatives of Soviet science policy in the Latvian SSR, namely, management and administration of the Latvian SSR Academy of Sciences. Second, the building housed a variety of support structures, like the branch of the Fundamental Library and the science publishing house *Zinātne*. The environment provided not only scheduled but also accidental meetings and conversations with people from other departments and institutions. Often small talk took place while on daily routines, like taking the elevator or standing in line at the canteen during the lunch break.

Part of the occupants of the building represented directly the ruling Soviet regime and its oppressive policies. Still in the 1960s, all the supervisors and administrators of the building

6 Present day, Akadēmijas laukums 1.

7 The architectural prototype in Moscow was the group of skyscrapers, Seven Sisters, its main building being the Moscow State University. Similar high-rise buildings were built in Warsaw, Prague and Bucharest as a gift from the Soviet government. (Stradiņš 2009: 109)

were veterans of the so-called Great Patriotic War (World War II, according the Soviet ideological designation). However, the ideological flashpoint was the Second Department located on the 2nd floor. "This Department II cabinet was closely linked to the KGB and executed the instructions given from above. Vigilant people were in all editorial offices to prevent anything unauthorized from reaching the public" (Vīksna 2021).

The presence of the representatives of the Committee for State Security of the Latvian SSR, or the KGB (from Russian *Komitet gosudarstvennoj bezopasnosti*, in Latvian colloquially, *čeka*), in the building of the Academy of Sciences was a well-known fact. The Institute of Language and Literature and other institutes, too, were under the supervision of its cadres. Certain issues, such as contacts with foreign scientists and trips abroad, definitely had to be agreed with the Second Department. However, the Department's mechanisms and purposes of action were cryptic both to the Director of the Institute and the staff. The Second Department acted discreetly and secretly. Thus, for example, when they had to collect information about an employee of the institute, they took ten personal files instead of one file, so that the secretary or the Director, or anybody else would not know in which individual the KGB was interested this time (VH).

Awareness of being watched created background of constant precautionary and an atmosphere of suspicion. It was general knowledge that, in the Soviet Union, there were the KGB informants from within every organization. As later confirmed also in personal memories, the KGB made offers to the staff of the institute to cooperate by informing from within (Eversone 2019: 303). People had to live in suspicion: "Which of our colleagues is the informant?" A psychological habit developed of silencing one's own expressions, especially on ideological sensitivities, because one could never be certain that these statements would not be referred to the KGB (VH, MV).

There were some cases when folklorists came into confrontation with the KGB and had to reckon with the consequences. In 1972, an "unauthorized amateur activity" ("Midsummer case", as designated by folklorists themselves) was found among the employees of the Institute. The reason was the celebration of unauthorized summer and winter solstice celebrations, also thematic educational evenings together with Lithuanian colleagues, respectively, potentially national gatherings which took place in Riga, Lielvircava, Garkalne and Vecpiebalga. As an anti-Soviet initiative it was denounced as was the learning of old choreographies and songs "of nationalistic contents" in the premises of the Academy of Sciences. Punishment and consequences were especially felt by Beatrise Reidzāne whose employment at the Folklore Department was terminated. In her home, the KGB conducted a search for the storage of prohibited literature. Another consequence of the incident was the cancellation of a planned academic trip to Helsinki by the Head of the Department, Elza Kokare. She was invited to give a lecture course in comparative proverb research at the University of Helsinki in the academic year 1973/1974, to which she already was seriously preparing (BR_1, BR_2, MV, Reidzāne 2011: 133–136). Musicologist Vilis Bendorfs, in his turn, was interrogated by the KGB due to the activities of the folklore movement in Latvia. (VB)

Vārds un Darbs: Community Communications

A communication platform which unified Institute structures and employees of the various departments for several decades was the institution's internal magazine, *Vārds un Darbs*. Its title (Word and Work), most probably, manifested the ethos of keeping promises, one's words being followed by according works. It could also imply the floor given to express oneself and to address the audience (word) as well as present the collective work.[8] The first issue of the magazine came out at the end of 1965. The magazine published 81 issues altogether, the last coming out in 1988. The plan was to prepare and print the magazine quarterly. However, it did not always succeed and the magazine's frequency was variable. There was only one issue at the very beginning (1965), none in 1987 and one in the last year (1988). The circulation of the Institute's internal magazine was 10 total copies. The typewritten mimeographed copies were distributed among the departments, respectively, different offices of the employees. "Then the magazine wandered from room to room in each sector. Some articles were discussed, some were ignored" (Vīksna 2021). These days, there are two entire collections of the magazine saved by the former neighbour departments of the Institute, namely, by folklorists and linguists.[9] Due to relatively low availability, it has not been much integrated into research.[10]

As indicated on the title pages, it was a publication of the Institute's directorate and public organizations. The organizations which operated under the institutional umbrella gradually branched out. By the end of 1980s, there were the following organizations indicated in the magazine (VuD 1988/1: 24–25): the Primary Party Organization, which was the lowest level in the hierarchy of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Party's "eyes and ears" at the grass-roots level within any collective (Smith 1988: 65); the Trade Union, which consisted of several committees with specific functional areas represented, like culture, production, mass organization, social security, and benefits; the paramilitary sport organization, Volunteer Society for Cooperation with the Army, Aviation, and Navy (DOSAAF); the Veterans' Council; the Society for Protecting Nature and Monuments in the Latvian SSR; the Primary Young Communist Organization; and the Council for young Scholars.

8 Anita Rožkalne (b. 1956), literary historian and the editor of the last issue of *Vārds un Darbs*, offered a different and creative interpretation of the title's semantics: "Maybe *Word and Work* means our written and spoken word turning into our joint cultural work?" (VuD 1988/1: 2)

9 The saved sets of the magazine *Vārds un Darbs* are stored accordingly in the holdings of the Archives of Latvian Folklore, Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art of the University of Latvia (since 2014, located at Mūkusalas iela 3, Riga) and at the Latvian Language Institute of the University of Latvia (since 2021, at Kalpaka bulvāris 4, Riga). Additionally, there are several issues of the magazine available at the Academic Library of the University of Latvia, at its Misiņš Library. Later academic journals of both institutes, *Letonica* (from 1998 to this day) and *Linguistica Lettica* (from 1997 to this day), in their beginnings, somewhat reflected the traditions of the magazine, *Vārds un Darbs*. This was observed in the presence of sections such as "Congratulations", "Academic Life", and the chronicles of the institutional history.

10 Just a couple of cases the magazine has been used as a historical or linguistic reference source in research publications (see Baltiņa 1976: 126; Vīksna 2006: 102, 108; Bušs, Ernstsone 2006). The most recent study of *Vārds un Darbs* is demonstrated in the written-source-based memoirs by former Director of the Institute, Viktors Hausmanis (b. 1931, in office 1983–1999; Hausmanis 2020).

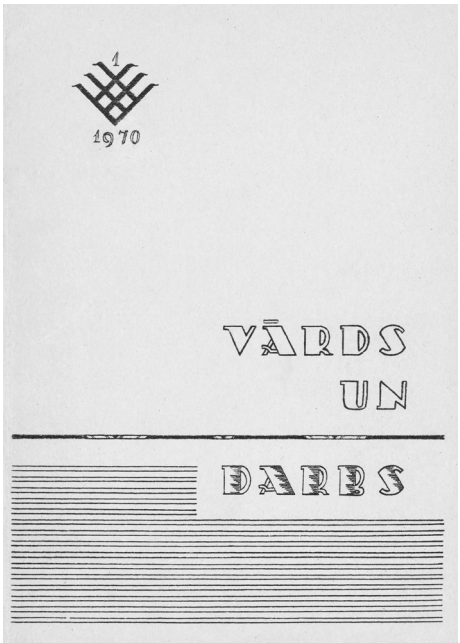

Fig. 1. The first issue of *Vārds un Darbs* (1965)

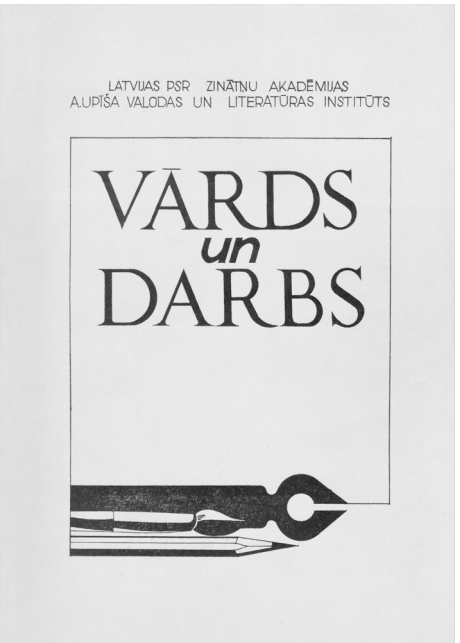

Fig. 2. The last issue of *Vārds un Darbs* (1988)

The editorial board of *Vārds un Darbs* changed occasionally. There were up to ten people representing the diverse departments of the Institute. From the Folklore Department, the editorial posts were taken by Jāzeps Rudzītis, Kārlis Arājs, Marija Banga, Maija Ligere, Iveta Politere. Among authors, one can see quite a variety; however, some were more prone to perform the duties of local journalists. The editors in charge addressed their colleagues to prepare chronicles of academic events and write on certain topics, such as anniversaries of life and work of other fellows, annual fieldworks, research conferences, trips abroad, defended dissertations, reviews of publications, obituaries, and so on. The authors' responsiveness and involvement could be regarded as acts of collegiate solidarity. "It was not a formal event; it was like this: let's put together what everyone has done now!" (AR).

The magazine *Vārds un Darbs* was a successor to the wall newspaper of the same name displayed somewhere on the Institute's premises (VuD 1965/1: 1). The historical artifacts or secondary evidence which would provide more information on the Institute's wall newspaper have yet to be found. However, it is most likely that the display of information and official political views in form of a wall newspaper (in Russian, *stengazeta*) was created updated between

1945 when the Institute was established and 1965 when its functions were taken over by the new magazine. The placard newspaper was a very typical means of communication in many Soviet workplaces, from factories to universities. Being one of the distribution mechanisms for institution's internal affairs, which included praise to the achievements of the collective work and criticism towards the labour shortcomings, it was also an addition to the State-issued periodicals in expressing Soviet propaganda statements. The hand-written genre of wall newspapers begun developing in the 1920s in Soviet Russia with the task of influencing the masses. In the initial phase, it was "a key instrument in the campaign to bring 'culturedness' to the factory floor" (Kelly 2002: 575). As early as in 1924, when the 13th Congress of the Russian Communist Party took place in Moscow, the potential of wall newspapers as a vehicle for Soviet propaganda was emphasized. The contents of these newspapers were not supposed to give the floor to mass opinions. Public expressions were subordinated to the editorial office and, surely, also to the mechanisms of Soviet censorship (Kelly 2002: 579–581).

Wall newspapers were a combination of short articles, hand-drawn slogans, images and, later, photographs (Oushakine 2019: 14). The appeal for the do-it-yourself approach which was present in the poster-like bulletins, these Soviet wall newspapers can be seen also in the page design of *Vārds un Darbs*. The letter-sized paperback edition contained occasional illustrations. These were photographs, tourist postcards, and holiday cards glued to the pages and even some handmade drawings (VuD 1967/4, 1968/1). The covers were sometimes hand-decorated too. The magazine's amateur graphical visuality and the typed pages of which further copies were already quite pale (Vīksna 2021) bears some resemblance to *samizdat*, an underground publication circulated in the Eastern Bloc countries (see Kind-Kovács, Labov 2013, Komaromi 2004, Wciślik 2021, Zitzewitz 2020). Nonetheless, these associations could be caused by surface observations alone and not the content of the magazine. The binding, however, was professional and it was done at the binding workshop of the Academy of Sciences. That, among other things, guaranteed that no ideologically unsuitable materials would appear between the covers.

Content wise, the magazine *Vārds un Darbs* did not continue every tradition of an earlier Soviet workplace newspaper. Thus, for instance, there was no place for formerly known oppressive behavioural control mechanisms like public shaming of certain comrades or groups of researchers. The atmosphere of the academe and the Institute's internal culture had changed already during the Khrushchev period. Reprimands from the management had become business-like, proportionate, and generally discreet. There was no more public mockery from positions of power and ideological correctness, no more forced contempt for colleagues and ideological self-criticism which were present in the harsh years of Stalin (see Ķencis 2019: 21–22; Ozoliņš 2017: 208; Pakalns 2017: 228–229; Treija 2009).[11] In the

11 Although the time of denunciations and public accusations were left behind, the leadership of each institution in their own manner had to ensure that the organization complied with Soviet ideology. At the Academy of Sciences, there were some other research institutes, namely, the Institute of History, whose leaders still passionately perceived the work of ideological upbringing by raising voice and "occasionally inviting someone to swear at" (BR3).

magazine, some criticism appeared, still, it was never manipulative, *ad hominem* or directed from the top-down. These were overall polite critical reflections on certain problems of work processes, such as slow and counterproductive manuscript discussion procedures (VuD 1965/1: 18–19). Benevolent animadversions and some teasing on topics like delays and wasteful use of working hours were included in comic observations. For instance, an anonymous person with the pseudonym "Lover of a nice everyday life" published a feuilleton-type essay, "A Comprehensive Guide on how to Spend an Interesting Day or Exchange of Experiences". Based on one's local observations, she probably illuminated routines of a typical Soviet white-collar workplace. Through exaggeration, a working day was described as an endless series of conversations, via the office phone or in person, on topics concerning household, leisure time and difficulties of late socialism consumerism due to the shortage and unpredictability of goods. The following ironic advice was given to the morning rituals at the Institute:

> In the morning, arrive on time, because it is not profitable to lose the reputation of a proper employee. After all the room and self-care and decoration works have been completed, the flowers have been watered and rearranged in a more advantageous position, you can put an open manuscript on the table, just in case [...] Then call your acquaintances, because the phone is not busy yet. After informing them about your past and future routes, you can also talk about events that have happened to relatives and common acquaintances, about what's new in stores, where you can get Palanga vodka, nylon shirts, etc., etc. (VuD 1965/1: 47)

By launching the magazine *Vārds un Darbs*, the Institute of Language and Literature set significantly higher standards for mutual communication among the departments as well as the circulation of inside institutional information. In the introductory essay, literary historian and Director of the Institute Jānis Kalniņš (1922–2000) who recently had taken the office (1963–1983) stressed that more depth and meaningful content now could be expected in regular reading than that which was manifested in the wall newspaper (VuD 1965/1: 1). Kalniņš also wrote his programmatic vision for the new magazine outlining its main tasks:

> The magazine has the opportunity to become a peculiar chronicle of the Institute's life and work. It will give a chance to regularly reflect on what has been done, it will need to talk about what remains to be done, come up with new initiatives. Including those that go beyond the scope of the Institute's direct work, but which are important in Latvian literary science, linguistics, folklore studies in general. (VuD 1965/1: 1)

Indeed, reports on the annual activities of each department and their intentions in the five-year planning context made permanent content of the magazine. Being in the imperial situation or, *Vārds un Darbs* was not able to be a professional magazine alone distributed at the institutional level in the Latvian SSR. In the years of late socialism, people in the Baltics were not dealing anymore with colonialism in camouflage (Annus 2018: 13–16), but straight-forward Soviet ideology. The directorate of the Institute and the editorial board of the magazine had to accommodate their needs for team-building of their human resources

to the agendas of the colonial centre, Moscow. In other words, the magazine had to emit ideological reliability by completing the Soviet ideological assignments what any institution and its leadership received.

The Ideological Framing of *Vārds un Darbs*

From today's perspective, hence, with the distance of time, in the magazine *Vārds un Darbs*, one can easily detect the presence of Soviet rule layer, the most recent one of colonial layers in the Baltic experience (see Annus 2014, cf. Kangilaski 2018: 38–39). The framing of Soviet ideology shows in the very structure of every issue as well the overall magazine layout. There are textual and also visual features that in the popular language are called "levies" to the official authority; thus, being reminiscent of earlier colonial layers, those dating back to the serfdom times.

An opening line to the Soviet colonialism embodiment in *Vārds un Darbs* is the magazine's motto, "Proletarians of all countries, unite!". The source of this political slogan was, of course, *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. The cover slogan and the concluding phrase of the influential proclamation[12] was taken over as a motto in the official emblem of the Soviet Union and accordingly in many Soviet periodicals (in the Latvian SSR, those were *Cīņa*, *Padomju Jaunatne*, *Rīgas Balss*, and many more). The conventional motto was typed on the title page of *Vārds un Darbs* up until 1980. For some reason, it was abandoned in later issues, even before the *perestroika* movement in the USSR increased in force.

Relating to the composition of *Vārds un Darbs*, it must be noted that, in most cases, every magazine issue was introduced by an essay or other form of written praise to some event of socialistic history. The beginning of the magazine, unlike the later pages, was an instant marker of ideological reliability and belonging to the socialist ideals. There was an abundant offer of occasions which to celebrate or look forward celebrating: over and over, anniversaries of the so-called October Revolution in 1917 (VuD 1967/4; 1969/4; 1972/4; 1973/4; 1976/4; 1977/4) and the Soviet Army (VuD 1968/2), Vladimir Lenin's birthday, (VuD 1969/1; 1970/2), the beginning of Soviet power in Latvia (VuD 1969/1), end of World War II (VuD 1975/2), etc. Flipping through issue after issue, echoing the official calendar of major events of the Soviet Union can be noticed considered by the publishers both the introductory essays and the glued postcards with well-known Soviet personalities, like Lenin (VuD 1970/2), and symbols, like flags of the USSR and the Latvian SSR (VuD 1968/3; 1968/4), red carnations with highlighted year of the Russian Revolution, 1917 (VuD 1972/4; 1974/4; 1975/3; 1977/3), et al.).

12 In German: *Proletarier aller Länder vereinigt Euch!* For the digitized source, see https://www.digitale-sammlungen.de/en/view/bsb10859626?page=1

Communist Party members from among the employees of the Institute, among them only two folklorists, Elza Kokare and Jadviga Darbiniece, composed these essays. In some cases, a relevant folklorist also gave a helping hand in writing the ideological meditations. The Head of the Department, Elza Kokare wrote two contemplative essays. One was called "Anxiety of October Flag" (VuD 1970/4: 2–3), and it was saturated with conventional Soviet pathos and didactics, addressed to her peers:

> This year, the red flags also signal the end of another five years, when one has to evaluate the daily work of each collective, compare what is intended, planned with what has been done, look for the reasons for delays and failures. And then there is an unusual question—is blush on our faces just a reflection of the flag, a joy at a job well done? Isn't it coloured by a good few easily lost hours, unjustifiable self-pity, putting your personal interests first? (VuD 1970/4: 3)

Another of Kokare's essay was dedicated to the 50th anniversary of the USSR (VuD 1972/2: 3–5). In a similar manner, it was fuelled by appeal to work cult and common goals: "As we drive the development of science in our Republic, we will put our own, albeit small, brick in the science building of the entire Soviet Union" (VuD 1972/2: 5). Boosting the pace of work for the common good as well as engaging in collective service were regular topics also in other propagandic publications which appeared in *Vārds un Darbs* (see, for example, VuD 1966/3: 1–2). The accuracy of the execution of one's tasks, in other words, "communist attitude towards work" was emphasized as well (VuD 1977/1: 4).

Socialist festivals and customs gave rhythm to the Institute's magazine. From an ideological point of view, the New Year, International Women's Day on March 8, and the Workers Day of International Solidarity on May 1 were less emphasized in *Vārds un Darbs*. Yet these relatively lightweight Soviet calendric dates could also serve as an occasion for some ideological and political reminders. Thus, linguist Aina Blinkena, in her the greeting for New Year 1977 reminded colleagues of the upcoming 60th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution, which should be celebrated with new success (VuD 1976/4: 3). In 1974, Cold War tension was manifested in the May 1 greeting. The holiday card was supplemented by a quote from a call from the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union: "A glowing greeting to the peoples of the colonial and dependent lands who are fighting against imperialism and racism, for freedom and national independence!" (VuD 1974/2: 2). The 8th of March was generally an easy, joyful holiday. "March 8 was such a nice holiday, when flowers appeared, there could be a festive atmosphere in the work rooms" (BR_3).[13] Both the administration staff and the men of the departments tried to prepare creative and humorous congratulations to their female colleagues. In the Institute's internal magazine, these greetings appeared both in the form of prose and funny rhymes from Latvian literature heritage or self-composed poems. Among other male colleagues, men of the Folklore Sector saluted their female counterparts (VuD 1967/2: 41; 1968/2: 62; 1969/2: 41).

13 The sustainable popularity of this holiday is confirmed by the fact that, despite the de-Sovietization and de-colonization attempts, the 8th of March is still a part of the Baltic ritual year (see Bula 2021).

Fig. 3. Photo illustrations of Elza Knope's report on Institute's clean-up at the Riga Big Cemetery (VuD 1980/2: 55–56)

Talcinieki

Lielajos kapos(Krišjāņa Valdemāra,
Krišjāņa Dīnsberga, Friča Brīvzemnieka,
Krišjāņa Barona kapu vietas.

56

An annual event which received a lot of attention in the magazine, was the All-Union Communist Saturday clean-up (*subbotnik*) organized around Lenin's birthday in April. This socialistic tradition of collective spring cleaning was, in its implementation, a team-building activity for the Institute employees and was reported in *Vārds un Darbs* with excitement and pride. The work took place in the properties supervised by the Academy of Sciences in Lielupe, in Salaspils, at the Fundamental Library in Riga, the Riga Big Cemetery where monuments for significant figures in Latvian cultural history were abandoned, and even on the Institute's own premises devoting work to arranging materials of scientific dictionaries and folk-song collections (VuD 1970/2: 25–28; 1971/3: 4; 1972/3: 13–16; 1973/3: 64–65; 1975/2: 71–74; 1980/2: 55–56; 1984/2: 26–27). In autumn, groups of researchers were sent to collective farms to fulfil the duties of manual labour at harvesting (VuD 1973/1: 49–53).

Along with the annual socialist rituals depicted in the magazine *Vārds un Darbs*, there were omnipresent references to five-year planning (VuD 1971/1: 3–8; 1972/1: 5–8; 1976/3: 2–5, et al.). The Five-Year Plan was a rolling motive in most of publications sharing the Institute departments' work. Ever since the very first Five-Year Plan for industrialization (1928–1932), the Soviet Union kept cultivating the myth of its success (Lyons 1967: 125–139; Jones 2013: 233). Generations of labour, even in late socialism, in their day-to-day work, had to live through this questionable big scale time management and productivity concepts for the USSR economy which was applied to any institution as the main tool in setting and measuring work progress. "Back then, we operated in the so-called Five-Year Kingdom," commented Institute's former Director, Viktors Hausmanis (Hausmanis 2020: 171).

In a Soviet workplace, the pace of work could be accelerated by institutional participation in socialist competition. This work-related competition, which was forced across all areas of Soviet society, encouraged employees to strive for even higher achievements and increase levels of productivity by setting the norms to be achieved (Sarasmo 2014). Although the magazine *Vārds un Darbs* does not reveal the particular techniques as to how the success was measured at the Institute, neither who were the imagined rival organizations, the idea of the socialist competition was adopted or at least in the air (VuD 1971/4: 3–4). Probably close to the spirit of competition was that one of the "elevated socialist commitments" undertaken by the Institute. These commitments included meeting deadlines set for completion of research manuscripts and professional development and were reported as successfully completed (1976/3: VuD 6–7).

In general, a lot of attention was paid to the dissemination of Soviet propaganda at the Institute. Based on the programmatic resolutions of the Central Committee of Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the responsible persons sought the ideological upbringing of the staff of the Institute. That included the promotion of Marxist-Leninist methodology in research, targeted seminars and lectures, developing complex action plans, and, among other things, utilizing the Institute's magazine, *Vārds un Darbs*, for ideological upbringing needs (VuD 1979/2: 6–7). A special structure of the Institute's collective, the Primary Organization of the Knowledge Society, was responsible for propaganda implementation in their workplace. Folklorists received commendations for participating in joint propaganda work. For instance, in 1967, a list of Institute researchers gave propagandic lectures within the work package of

activities dedicated to the 50th anniversary of the *Great October*, namely, the 1917 Revolution. Among the lecturers, there were Jēkabs Vītoliņš who gave a lecture, "Latvian Music Culture during the Soviet Era", and Harijs Sūna whose lecture was "Tasks of Folk-Dance Groups Regarding the Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of October" (VuD 1967/4: 24).

Researchers who devoted their efforts to propaganda work, including publications spreading Soviet ideology in *Vārds un Darbs*, were not seen as collaborators by other colleagues. On the contrary, their "sacrifice" was respected and viewed with gratitude (BR_3). Creating these texts was a part of socialism dynamics and a consequent guarantee of other things to be published too. Even an institution's internal magazine of only 10 copies had to follow the official standards of the ruling ideology. Besides, there was a background caution, at least in the 1960s and 1970s, that a "vigilant eye" might be watching you (BR_3, cf. AR); therefore, it was safer for even this tiny magazine not to challenge Soviet ideological views, nor provoke the supervisory authorities.

Within and Beyond the Folklore Department

The sense of community within the Folklore Department has been confirmed both in retrospective interviews and in the magazine *Vārds un Darbs*. The interactions between different generations were often described as "familial". These links were strengthened beyond typical employment relationships, thus, for example, colleagues' children were given gifts and the ill colleagues were visited at hospital (EM, GP, MV).

What was not revealed in the Institute's internal magazine were the daily rituals of the Department, such as the joint coffee breaks, a strict tradition, always at noon (JD). There were insiders' jokes going around, with their special linguistic codes and even "folklorists' folklore", sometimes with a reference to the archival number (AP).[14] The workspace of folklorists and thus, the micro teams of the collective were very much structured around the room principle, which means they were closely linked to colleagues based on the room in which they worked on the 15th floor of the Academy of Sciences building. For example, Room No. 2 was the "superiors'" room where the Head of the Department had her desk (JD, GP, EM, EO, AP, BR_1).

Likewise, the magazine would not reveal the Department's internal tensions and conflicts, such as objections towards the authoritarian leadership style of Elza Kokare or dislikes between some colleagues. These uncomfortable feelings and stories were shared and transmitted to others orally. Some workplace dramas, over the years, turned into institutional oral

14 Popular, in various situational contexts, was the proverb from the Soviet folklore documentations: "A Soviet man can do anything." (LFK 1850, 7707) Its use started from a comic situation at work and was constantly reproduced (see AP).

history narratives. For instance, there is a legend that folklorist Jānis Rozenbergs, being uncompromising in character, due to some disagreement, for several years, did not discuss any word with folklorist Alma Ancelāne, even though they shared one room. If it was necessary to pass on any information, they left a handwritten note on a colleague's desk (EM, JD, VB).

Vārds un Darbs illuminated the joint achievements of the Folklore Department. The events proudly brought to the surface were the ones which belonged to the work plans and were successfully implemented.[15] Each year, the Heads of the Department, Elza Kokare, reported on the progress of the team. In the magazine, there were concise updates on recently published books by folklorists. In very few cases, the publications were discussed in more detail (apparently reviews and discussions were meant to be written by outsiders in public media). Some books of prospective long-term significance and also recognized by official prizes were highlighted, such as Vilma Greble's bibliography of Latvian narrative folklore (VuD 1971/3: 14–16), Kārlis Arājs' and Alma Medne's "Type Index of Latvian Fairy Tales" (VuD 1978/1: 11–13), Elza Kokare's study on Latvian proverbs (VuD 1979/1: 51–52). Among the teamwork publications, there were entries for the "Little Encyclopedia of the Latvian SSR" (VuD 1970/4: 25–28) and the academic edition of Latvian folk songs, *Latviešu tautasdziesmas*. The human resources of Folklore Department almost entirely were mobilized to organize, edit and typewrite the folksong texts, regardless of the individual research interests (GP, EO, EM, JD).[16] Under Elza Kokare, there was strong subordination and daily work discipline. She made sure that researchers did not spend working hours on their own studies, those could be done only on their free time, such as annual vacation (JD). It was only during the leadership of Jadviga Darbiniece when folklorists were given more freedom to develop their own research and prepare dissertations (BR_2). When the first volume of *Latviešu tautasdziesmas* was published (in late 1979), Elza Kokare gave an interview to the magazine's reporter expressing dissatisfaction with the graphic designer Dainis Rožkalns' style of illustrations (VuD 1980/1: 5–8).

Regular reports were given on annual folklore expeditions, also the following events after the fieldwork, the so-called folklore sessions which consisted of few papers given by the researchers of Department and folk music presentation. The folk music concert on the 14th of October in 1978 at the Daile Theatre brought together several "authentic" folk music singers from various places in Latvia. It was described by Zaiga Sneibe as "sensational" (VuD 1978/3/4: 22–25). Indeed, later this event was considered as the beginning of folklore movement in Latvia, which caused a lot of intellectual discussion on the authenticity versus staged folklore issues. Also, findings on individual fieldworks were sometimes

15 Despite the rigorous discipline, not all of the Department's intended work was implemented. The project of the collective monograph, "Latvian Folklore", had to be accomplished in the 1980s. (VuD 1988/1: 65, LVA 2370. f., 1. apr., 440. l., 41. lp.) However, only the chapter on the history of Latvian folkloristics by Ojārs Ambainis was published in a separate book (Ambainis 1989).

16 Darbiniece herself stressed that it was important for her to address the Department issues through democratic agreement (JD).

Fig. 4. Folklorists Māra Vīksna (from the left) and Helēna Erdmane greeting their colleague Ojārs Ambainis on his 60th birthday in 1986. LFK 19860185. Photo by Vaira Strautniece

shared by folklorists themselves. For example, Vilis Bendorfs described his visits to Kurzeme where he recorded folk singers from his family (VuD 1978/3/4: 26–27).

Another event of social and scholarly significance which was organized by the Folklore Department in cooperation with the Writer's Union other institutions was the ambitious celebration of folklorist and folksong publisher Krišjānis Barons' 150th anniversary (1985). Actually, it was a series of various activities, including publications, exhibitions, and scholarly conferences, over a period of five years, from 1981 to 1985. Baron's anniversary raised folklorists to unprecedented heights of popularity among society. The first Afternoon of Folklore was organized in 1981:

> It had gathered a large community of listeners. Among the visitors, we saw not only researchers, artists, pedagogues and representatives of other public groups from Riga and the surrounding areas, but also many visitors from the province. Guests from neighbouring republics, Lithuania and Estonia also arrived (VuD 1981/4: 30).

Folklore Afternoons and Conferences took place also in the following years around Barons' birthday in the end of October. That developed into the annual and still ongoing Krišjānis Barons' Conference tradition.

A vivid feature of *Vārds un Darbs* was highlighting the individual professional achievements. That was a form of public acknowledgement provided by the Institute's directorate and colleagues. Folklorists who defended dissertations and obtained scientific degrees were congratulated in special essays (Elza Kokare, Harijs Sūna, Jadviga Darbiniece, Beatrise Reidzāne). Prizes, money bonuses, official recognitions and other individual victories were always celebrated in the pages of the magazine. Both by brief mentions in the chronicles and longer reflections in essays, the magazine kept the track how Elza Kokare's, Jadviga Darbiniece's, Harijs Sūna's and, to a slightly lesser degree, also other colleagues' careers unfolded. The names of new employees were given and also a platform for publishing at *Vārds un Darbs* provided to them. Thus, one can see new generations joining the community of folklorists. In 1980s, those were Guntis Pakalns, Dace Bula, Elfrīda (Edīte) Olupe, and Aldis Pūtelis.

The magazine was a place to celebrate significant anniversaries of colleagues. Every folklorist, reaching 50, 60, 70 and other respectable years, was greeted both in presence and through the pages of *Vārds un Darbs*. Those were sincere and often humorous portrait essays of the birthday person. The authors' approaches to writing these articles were creative. For instance, Harijs Sūna for Elza Kokare's 50th birthday had interviewed her schoolmate who gave evidence that Elza at school was a sharp mathematician (VuD 1970/4: 75). On his 50th birthday, Jānis Rozenbergs was greeted as "a man in his best years", with a reference to then popular Raimonds Pauls song (VuD 1977/4: 61).

Commemorative articles to deceased colleagues, in their turn, were heartfelt and informative about their professional lives and human qualities. In 1977, when music folklorist Jēkabs Vītoliņš passed away, a whole set of essays, also in the epistolary genre, were written in his memory (VuD 1977/3: 49–64).

The magazine *Vārds un Darbs* played an obvious role in shaping the collective memory of the people of the Institute. Now and then, approaching a significant anniversary of the Institute of Language and Literature or its magazine *Vārds un Darbs*, historical reflections appeared in the issues of the magazine (VuD 1966/1, 1971/2, 1976/1, 1976/2, 1981/1, 1980/4, 1986/2 et al.). The Folklore Department's institutional memory went further than other departments', finding the beginnings back in 1920s. In 1966, Vilma Greble wrote her "Folklorist's Memories" on the first post-war years at the Institute of Folklore (VuD 1966/1: 11–15). She highlighted the genealogical connection of her Soviet workplace to the Archives of Latvian Folklore. With deep respect, she portrayed her early-career colleagues, already interwar period folklorists Alma Medne-Romane, Pēteris Birkerts, and Anna Bērzkalne. The last two, under Stalinism, got banned as "bourgeois" scholars. Still, in the internal magazine of late socialism their memory could be maintained. In 1986, Austra Infantjeva published an essay "My First Years at the Institute of Folklore" (VuD

1986/1: 13–18) with very explicit tribute to Alma Medne-Romane and Anna Bērzkalne. That was before the Third Latvian National Awakening when Bērzkalne and other interwar intellectuals were rehabilitated (see Treija 2018: 32–33).

Being the only folklorist institution in the Latvian SSR, the Folklore Department of the Institute of Language and Literature maintained contacts and felt brotherly fellowship with Lithuanian and Estonian colleagues. The former folklore archives of the Baltics shared quite similar histories, starting from interwar period and through the subsequent occupation regime which subjected them to institutional restructuring.[17] Their communication included individual correspondences (see Grigienė 2006: 262–278), mutual collective visits between Riga, Vilnius, and Tartu and, in several areas, coordinated work.

In the mid-1960s, cooperation with the Lithuanian colleagues took place in the coordinated fieldwork tasks during the collective expeditions (VuD 1965/1: 29–31). On April 12–17, 1967, the Lithuanian Language and Literature Institute at the Lithuanian SSR Academy of Sciences organized a conference on the issues of Lithuanian and Latvian folklore interactions. A delegation of researchers from Riga made their way to Vilnius to participate in the academic even. (VuD 1967/3: 64).

Among the research staff of the Institute, there was the urge to look beyond the Iron Curtain, or at least beyond the borders of their own Republic (VH). Within the USSR, they willingly went to other Republics, to study in libraries and archives, to meet with other Soviet scholars, also to discuss upcoming dissertations and publications, to share the experience of folklore expeditions, to give at symposiums, conferences and work seminars. Often, Latvian folklorists returned to the same cities and institutions, like N. N. Miklukho-Maklai Institute of Ethnography in Leningrad, to continue working or take on new tasks.

Based on the chronicles and overviews, published in *Vārds un Darbs*, folklorists who most often went on business trips in the period from 1961 to 1988 were: Elza Kokare (Gorky, Kyiv, Leningrad, Moscow, Sverdlovsk, Vilnius, Kishinev, Tallinn, Chernivtsi, Stockholm), Jadviga Darbiniece (Moscow, Leningrad, Vilnius, Kyiv, Tbilisi, Kishinev, Stockholm, Grozny), Jēkabs Vītoliņš (Moscow, Kyiv, Tallinn, Vilnius, Leningrad, Kazan, Alma-Ata), Jāzeps Rudzītis (Tallinn, Tartu, Moscow, Vilnius, Dushanbe, Minsk, Viru), Ojārs Ambainis (Vilnius, Tbilisi, Moscow, Rostock, Berlin, Suzdal), Alma Ancelāne (Tallinn, Tartu, Moscow, Vilnius, Leningrad), Harijs Sūna (Moscow, Vilnius, Tallinn, Leningrad, Dushanbe), Vilma Greble (Tartu, Moscow, Sverdlovsk, Vilnius), Vilis Bendorfs (Leningrad, Kuybyshev, Tallinn,

17 The Lithuanian Folklore Archives was established in 1935 in Kaunas. In 1941, the collections of the Lithuanian Folklore Archives were incorporated into the Lithuanian Language and Literature Institute at the Lithuanian SSR Academy of Sciences in Vilnius. Prior the second Soviet occupation of the Baltic States, its founder Jonas Balys (1909–2011), went into exile. So did also Latvian folklorist Kārlis Straubergs (1890–1962) who was Head of the Archives of Latvian Folklore from 1929 to 1944 and Estonian folklorist Oskar Loorits (1900–1961), founder and Head of the Estonian Folklore Archives (1927) in Tartu. The Estonian archives was reorganised in 1940 as the Folklore Department of the State Literary Museum. Balys found his permanent residency in the United States of America, whereas Straubergs and Loorits lived in Sweden.

Tbilisi), and Beatrise Reidzāne (Vilnius, Moscow, Ulyanovsk). The list of the travel destinations, to a large extent, marks the centres for folklore research in the USSR. The most visited city was Moscow—folklorists travelled to this colonial flash point constantly. In 1985, Jānis Rozenbergs and Vilis Bendorfs took part in the collective fieldwork at Latvian settlements in the Bashkir ASSR (VuD 1986/2: 19–22).

In the geography of academic trips, places outside the USSR were available only in a few cases. Folklorists later shared their impressions of these rather exotic journeys for a Soviet citizen, highlighting various specificities, however, not without humour. Thus, Ojārs Ambainis described *Unter den Linden* in Berlin which he had chance to observe during his East Germany visit in 1978: "Those lindens are smaller than our trimmed ones on our Lenin Street" (VuD 1978/2: 39). Elza Kokare expressed uncomfortable feelings about attending a conference in Stockholm in 1981 due to the politically tense situation: Latvians in exile, led by Bruno Kalniņš, were going to protest against cooperation with Soviet science. However, she was pleasantly surprised that the conference was attended by young Latvian people who expressed a lively interest in folklore, folklore ensembles and their activities in Latvia (VuD 1981/2: 16–20).

Travel certainly gave dynamism to otherwise rather static weekdays. The annual group trip for folklorists was a scientific expedition. Individual domestic business trips outside Riga were also carried out, for example, by visiting and recording repertoire of folklore narrators (eg. Jāzeps Rudzītis to the village of Malta in 1965), doing preparatory work before collective folklore expeditions in the respective districts (eg. Jānis Rozenbergs to Valmiera in 1967), giving lectures and other presentations (e.g. in 1968, Harijs Sūna demonstrated to the local people of Madona previously filmed materials), consulting ethnographic ensembles (throughout the years, Jānis Rozenbergs did it), and so on. Besides, the Institute occasionally organized cultural and educational tourism trips. Two of them, to Lithuania and to Krustkalni Nature Reserve in Latvia, were later described in the magazine *Vārds un Darbs* by folklorist Māra Vīksna (VuD 1980/3: 51–60; 1984/3: 32–34).

People of the Institute were very fascinated about culture not only in research but also in their free time. At the workplace, they reflected on cultural experiences and, on regular basis, shared new impressions (AR, VH). Small groups of colleagues attended concerts, ballet and theatre performances. For folklorists, tickets or invitations were often provided by choreographer Harijs Sūna (JD). A vivid example of one's seemingly insatiable lust for culture was given by Jadviga Darbiniece when she remembered her late colleague, Helēna Erdmane:

> She always told me that a person needed to educate themself. She took part in all kinds of events, after work she went to various exhibitions, conferences, various events—on cinema, on theatre, she also listened [to lectures] on folklore at Ethnographers. (JD)

Travelling within the limited freedoms as well as cultural consumption allowed people of late socialism to "escape" the comprehensive ideological settings without leaving them. Breaks from the working day routines were often turned into "socialist escapes" (Giustino et al. 2013) which, among other things, strengthened people's individual agency under socialism.

Conclusion

The analysis of the workplace of Latvian folklorists in the late socialism period, the Institute of Language and Literature at the Latvian SSR Academy of Sciences, exposed by the institutional magazine, *Vārds un Darbs*, has led me to some ontological understanding. The everyday life of folklore researchers and everyone else at the Institute was strictly subject to Soviet ideology, which pervaded through various channels, the internal magazine unavoidably being one of them. The ideological layers of *Vārds un Darbs*, however, were not internalized, rather seen as a necessary evil within the colonial situation. The visual and textual elements of Soviet ideology, including propaganda essays, were easily distinguishable from the rest of the content. Likewise, the conditionality of ideologically loaded work-life rhythms and rituals, such as five-year planning, socialist competition, and living with the socialist calendric festivities, was considered. Elza Kokare, the long-term Head of the Folklore Department and a member of Communist Party of the Soviet Union, was seemingly a true believer in communism which matched ideological expectations towards professionals who held leading positions in the late socialist period.

Among Institute staff, there was an awareness of the Committee for State Security (KGB) stationed permanently nearby. The Stalinist architecture and the spatial settings of the Academy of Sciences, with the secret Second Department of the KGB, only added to the Orwellian atmosphere. In my reading of the magazine *Vārds un Darbs*, I observed no signs of resistance against the Soviet regime. However, based on the knowledge derived from the life story interviews, it could be noticed beyond the dry facts, respectively, records of some employees dismissed from work (e.g. Beatrise Reidzāne).

Folklorists formed their own family-like community within the Institute. Their collective memory linked them back to the predecessors of the Institute, the Archives of Latvian Folklore (1924) and their former colleagues, interwar folklorists. Under socialism, Latvian folklorists resided in the colonial borderlands of the USSR. To maintain a high level of professionalism, they often travelled to the colonial centre, Moscow, as well as other places in the Soviet Union. One particularly close cooperation Latvian folklorists had with colleagues was with the Lithuanian Language and Literature Institute at the Lithuanian SSR Academy of Sciences, the institution with whom they shared a similar colonial history.

During the years of late socialism, the Folklore Department, strictly monitored by Elza Kokare, committed to joint projects, the most grandiose and time-consuming being the academic edition of Latvian folk songs, *Latviešu tautasdziesmas* (from 1979 to this day). The internal magazine *Vārds un Darbs* was a platform to reflect the achievements of the Department. It also celebrated employees' individual highlights, like doctoral promotions, and significant life anniversaries. Being a teambuilding instrument, the magazine also provided an insight into the cultural adventures of employees, such as travels. Both travelling and intensive cultural consumption could be viewed as two of the many "socialist escapes" which provided relative individual freedoms under late socialism.

When it comes to the magazine *Vārds un Darbs* as a historiographical source for Latvian folkloristics, I find it of an outstanding value. It is a rich testimony of the work life of intelligentsia during the *twilight* of Brezhnev era. The magazine manifests a fusion of Soviet ideology, professional contents, and humane communication. It discloses the institutional logics and, to some extent, relations between the individual players at the Institute. Understanding the latter, however, would not be fully possible without additional sources, such as subjective experiences retrieved from autobiographical narratives (I used the qualitative interviews, but memoirs, correspondence, and other written sources could be just as useful).

I see this magazine used as an additional source for further studies of disciplinary history of Latvian folkloristics. I see also the potential for comparative studies of institutional polyphony. Such would focus on certain topics, by bringing together, along with the magazine *Vārds un Darbs*, other texts issued by the Institute (protocols, orders, reports, notes, press publications, etc.).

Finally, I would like to say that carrying out this study gave me a better understanding of the past and still ongoing traditions at my own workplace. When I first entered the Archives of Latvian Folklore in the early 2000s, I was amazed by the abundance of collective memory stories and humorous codes of folklorists which were refreshed from time to time. Some of them originated in the late socialism period which I now had an opportunity get to know better. Although the magazine *Vārds un Darbs* ended in 1988, I have noticed that its contents have echoed throughout the years among conversations of folklore researchers. This shows our propensity in the workplace toward oral history. This may also show the power of printed texts, no matter how local and how few, in creating a collective memory.

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LFK [2250], interviews with the employees of the Institute of Language and Literature at the Latvian SSR Academy of Sciences

Interviewed by Rita Grīnvalde (Treija):

AP = Aldis Pūtelis, folklorist, May 13, 2021

AR = Anita Rožkalne, literary historian, editor of VuD, June 8, 2021

BR_1 = Beatrise Reidzāne, folklorist, Head of the Archives of Latvian Folklore (1993–1999), May 17, 2019

BR_2 = Beatrise Reidzāne, May 20, 2019 (interviewed together with Digne Ūdre)

BR_3 = Beatrise Reidzāne, July 16, 2021

EM = Elga Melne, folklorist, May 27, 2019 (interviewed together with Digne Ūdre and Baiba Krogzeme-Mosgorda)

GP = Guntis Pakalns, folklorist, June 10, 2021

JD = Jadviga Darbiniece, folklorist, Head of Department of Folklore (1985–1993), September 8, 2016

MV = Māra Vīksna, folklorist, May 28, 2019 (interviewed together with Digne Ūdre)

VB = Vilis Bendorfs, folklorist, musicologist, June 6, 2019 (interviewed together with Digne Ūdre)

VH = Viktors Hausmanis, literary historian, Director of the Institute of Language and Literature (1983–1999), July 28, 2021 (a phone conversation)

Interviewed by Aigars Lielbārdis:

EO = Edīte Olupe, folklorist, April 12, 2021

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Summary

Latviešu folkloristi vēlīnajā sociālismā: darbavietā

Rita Grīnvalde

Atslēgvārdi: *Vārds un Darbs*, institucionālā etnogrāfija, Latvijas PSR Zinātņu akadēmijas Valodas un literatūras institūts, latviešu folkloristikas vēsture, Brežņeva laiks

Raksts veltīts latviešu folkloristikas vēsturei padomju perioda stagnācijas gados – Latvijas PSR Zinātņu akadēmijas Valodas un literatūras institūta Folkloras sektora (daļas) darbībai. Pētījuma pamata avots ir institūta iekšējais žurnāls *Vārds un Darbs*, kas iznāca no 1965. līdz 1988. gadam. Šai nelielās tirāžas izdevumā viņpus padomju ideoloģijas slāņiem ir daudz vērtīgas historiogrāfiskas informācijas – par folkloras pētnieku kopīgajām un individuālajām gaitām, profesionālajām virsotnēm. Papildu avots interpretācijai ir dzīvesstāstu intervijas ar kādreizējā institūta darbiniekiem. Analīze veikta, izmantojot institucionālās etnogrāfijas metodi un padomju postkoloniālo studiju instrumentāriju.

Rakstā iztirzāta folkloristu darba vides dinamika, savstarpējās saiknes un padomju ideoloģijas klātbūtne institūtā. Lūkots rast atbildes uz šādiem pētnieciskajiem jautājumiem: kāda bija latviešu folkloristu ikdiena vēlīnajā padomju sociālismā? Kā institūcijā izpaudās valsts varas manifestācijas? Kādas bija hierarhiskās attiecības? Kādi bija darba un brīvā laika saskares punkti?