

RAINIS' APOLOGY OF THE 'BASIC CLASS': THE WORLD REVOLUTION OR THE NATIONAL EMANCIPATION?

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to analyze the reasons for Rainis' appreciation of the phenomenon he labels as the 'basic class'. The Latvian writer attributes this concept to the members of society who provide the livelihood for themselves by doing mainly the manual labour. Although thus a praise for the proletariat is voiced, the reasons are more nuanced than the common Soviet interpretation allowed to see. Rainis sees the 'Basic class' as a crucial agent in the struggle for Latvian national emancipation. At the same time, the article seeks an answer to the question why, according to Rainis, bourgeoisie is reluctant to fight this struggle.

INTRODUCTION

The 150th birth anniversary of the Latvian poet and playwright Jānis Pliekšāns (pseudonym Rainis¹) is approaching (2015). In Latvia, his name does not require commentaries. However, this does not imply that his works are drained as objects of scholarly interest, at least looking from the angle of political science.

The well-known Polish philosopher Leszek Kolakowski, when juggling intellectually with the basic postulates of the main political ideologies, once proved: being a conservative liberal socialist is not impossible (Kolakowski 1997: 225–229). These were the nineties of the 20th century. Reasonings based on dichotomies, such as 'those who are not with us are against us', seemed to have disreputed themselves; the 'end of the history' was proclaimed (Fukuyama 1998: 86). When heading towards the ideological consensus, it seemed that the political ideologies are not as incompatible as it has seemed before.

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¹ One of the most prominent poets and playwrights of Latvia (1865–1929). He was politically engaged with the Social Democratic movement and the ideas of Marxism, though remaining committed to ethnic nationalist sentiments stressing the necessity for Latvians to unite in order to require the rights for statehood (and seeking independence from the Russian Empire). The most productive period of his intellectual biography (1905–1920) was spent at Lugano, Switzerland, in exile.

Rainis lived in an era imbued with the essentially different sentiment. Both the elite circles of certain fields as well as wider segments of society became penetrated by revolutionary ideas; alternative principles of social organization were put forward and gained a wide resonance. Nevertheless, this, Rainis arrived at similar conclusions through his literary philosophical quests as the Polish intellectual did in the end of the century. If one hypothetically assumes that the Latvian poet and playwright would have asked a similar question, it might have been phrased as follows: "Is it possible to be a *Marxist Liberal Nationalist*?" And the answer might be affirmative.

Indeed, Rainis did bring to Latvia some texts with a socialist content in a double-bottom suitcase (and he did not hesitate to attribute to himself the title of a person who had brought socialism to Latvia later on (Dobrovenskis 2005: 576)). His connection with the *Jaunā Strāva* [*New Current*]² is also an unquestioned fact. Though, details do matter. There were mainly pamphlets of secondary importance but not the works of the most authoritative Marxist authors in the legendary suitcase; the New Current was in its beginnings an organization with an absolutely unclear ideology. Miķelis Valters, member of the movement and the contemporary of Rainis, sums up the general disposition prevailing in the movement in this way: "The political thought was deeply underdeveloped" (Valters 1971: 23). Rainis was a figure far from unequivocal, too many-angled to be placed on the shelf of a single political doctrine. However, this is exactly what has been done to this outstanding figure of Latvian culture and politics. For instance, his writings were used for legitimizing the Soviet regime, interpreting his ideas narrowly and incorrectly, as well as slurring the nuances and motives of his socio-political activities. For the purposes of Soviet propaganda, and out of necessity to secure the regime's legitimacy abroad, works of the popular writer were translated into more than 40 languages, although the writings containing impulses of a nationalist character were deprived of publishing (Dziļleja 1971: 31). According to the Latvian press printed in exile, the text of translations was in certain cases deliberately misrepresented. This applies, for instance, to the play "Uguns un nakts" ["The Fire and the Night"], 1905, clearly advocating the Latvian national awakening, (Laiks 1965).

The ignorance of nuances enriched with falsifications produced during the Soviet period, as well as the further dissemination of clichés, cultivate a favourable soil for reproducing arbitrary interpretations regarding the ideas voiced by Rainis and solutions offered by him for the socio-political ordering of society.

The research has been focused mainly on the periods in which Rainis did not pursue a political career, and was outside any political arrangements, namely the period of his Slobodsk

² *Jaunā Strāva* was a reform movement initiated and run by the Latvian men of letters and arts, oriented towards social modernization, at the end of the 19th century, in the Baltic provinces of the Russian Empire. Based on the perception of their generation, as well as the social reality (for instance, changes in the social structure stemming from the rapid growth of the number of townsmen) they, in many respects, continued the course undertaken by activists of the former Awakening movement. The Marxist element in the drift of the New Stream has frequently been overemphasized.

exile (1897–1903) and the years spent at Lugano, Switzerland (from 1905 to 1920), with several historical incidents included. The main research object is the plays and poetry written in the respective periods, although the remarks included in his correspondence and personal notes were also given a certain attention. The ideas of the playwright will be explored against the background of the intellectual atmosphere of the age, processes, and social reality.

1. THE WRITTEN WORD AS A TOOL IN THE SOCIALLY POLITICAL DISCOURSE

Pēteris Stučka, a person who shared Rainis' views in their youth-days but turned into his principled opponent later on, pointed out: "I have openly condemned Rainis as a *politician*, but I have always fought for Rainis *the poet*, with all my heart..." (Stučka 2005: 611) (emphasis added). Despite the emerging disagreements, he still remained the one whom Rainis took for his closest friend. Although this might seem paradoxical, Rainis opposed most openly his dogmatically minded colleagues of the *New Current* directly through his literary activities. The contribution of him as a poet and playwright provides a much clearer evidence on his true views regarding the desirable principles of social settlement, than do the dispositions voiced by him as a member of the social political movement, and later as a politician, not only because Rainis himself had invited the reader to find in his works politically significant messages next to their literary value (Rainis 1983: 586), mainly due to the fact that, according to various lines of thought developed in the West, the intellectuals occupied in their primary field of action are not only attributed a significant political role, but also a peculiar responsibility is being invoked without any pathos. Exactly those who work with the written word are labelled in different conceptions as agents who fulfil a political function of utmost importance as they shape the self-perception of society and establish certain models of actions and attitudes (Nozick: 2010).

There is a certain tradition in the scholarly literature, stating that working with the written or spoken word intensifies the individual's interest in matters related to social and political processes and makes him responsive to them. Thus, the ideas voiced by such persons *a priori* possess a certain political relevance (Nozick: 2010) (regardless of whether or not the author of a literary work has claimed this in public). The field of literature may indeed contribute to rendering the individual politically inclined to an ever-increasing extent.

By producing a literary work, its author is able to demonstrate a certain stance. At the same time, a channel is provided via which his / her messages reach a rather wide audience, thus contributing to shaping the self-perceptions of the community. The politically and socially significant resources accumulated by the individual while working in the field of literature are, for instance, an inclination to disobey the generally accepted norms, i.e. originality, critical capacities, recognition in wide segments of society, a symbolic power. These are convenient tools for communicating certain ideas and addressing the intended audience. Rainis, especially during the periods of exile, saw his obligations exactly in this light: "I am the one who bears, senses, and expresses the pains of the people", he wrote in 1907 (Rainis 1990: 118). A similar pathos accompanies the poet's commentary on his accomplishment regarding the creation of the poem "Daugava", (1916):

“When reaction³ had crushed Latvia down to earth and was cutting its throat, I could not stand it any more, and I cried out “Daugava” against killing the people. They say: the rapture averted the death, not the technics and leadership of the troops. So, I also had a part to play there, as the rapture is my gear” (Rainis 1971: 31).

His biographer, Gundega Grīnuma sums up: “Rainis, indeed, did suffer heavily due to the solitude of exile, but at the same time he acknowledged well his role in both the literature and society” (Grīnuma 1977: 14).

So, when analyzing the mission of intellectuals in relation to social and political processes, one has to overcome the temptation to reduce the notions of politics, ‘the political’ and ‘the power’ to solely the institutional governing bodies of society and the decision-making processes. Since the age of the Enlightenment, intellectuals have been approved as peculiar agents of the political process whose politically relevant activities take place outside the realm of practical politics, i.e. as activities guiding the socially political discourse – as a social criticism and mediation between the state and civil society.

2. THE 'BASIC CLASS' AND THE REVOLUTION

In 1915, Rainis wrote:

“Each people, Latvians as well, is endowed with this instinct of life: not to extinct, but to develop, to become a self, and to grow into virility. This is my conviction affirmed by the Basic Class and the great struggles for the new order of social life through which the Latvian people already grows into virility” (Rainis 1969: 24).

Interesting and seemingly unambiguous is the choice of concepts here. In the introduction for the collection of poems “Gals un sākums” [“The End and the Beginning”] (1912), poems written from 1901 to 1912, Rainis included an acknowledgement “To you, the Basic Class!” (Rainis 1977b: 34) which was repeated by him recurrently later on. This is obviously his reverence for the incentives of the progressive segment of society.

While exiled to Slobodsk,⁴ Rainis wrote two poetry collections which deserve to be noted in this respect – “Tālas noskaņas zilā vakarā” (“Distant moods of the Blue Evening”) (1903) and “Vētras sēja” (“The Sow of the Storm”) (1905). They received harsh commentaries from the literary critics who did not find much of literary value in them, mainly due to the politicized and ideologized content of the verses: “Rainis was a committed Marxist, a protagonist of the proletarian struggle and socialism; many verses of his first collection resemble the propaganda of collective struggle masked by the fog of allegories only due to the censorship” (LLC 2013).

³ Reactionary forces.

⁴ Rainis and other members of the “New Stream” were arrested in 1897, sentenced for being members of ‘a secret antigovernmental organization’, and sent to Pleskav, and later to Slobodsk, Siberia. This period of exile lasted till 1903.

However, the collections undeniably left a great impact on the revolutionary processes which, as the title leads up to think, was the author's intention. As the solemn tone satiated with a revolutionary pathos is being pitched in the beginning, so it is further maintained in each poem:

“The dices have been thrown,
Now, go ahead, the whirlwinds!” (Rainis 1977c: 160).

Still, what was uttered by the verses of Rainis' poetry should also be analyzed from an alternative angle by asking two essential questions one of which is related to the historic reality, while the other is of a theoretical nature: first, what was, in essence, the revolution of 1905 for Latvians? Second, what theoretical account can one give on the notion of revolution, as well as who, in what circumstances, and for what purposes has the right to initiate it?

The course of revolution in the present territory of the state of Latvia should not be examined separately from the significance of the related national element, and paying attention to the sociological traits of proletariat is of no less importance. As historians point out, the social and national aspects were tightly interconnected in 1905. Convincing arguments were put forward in support of both versions: first, that the revolution of 1905 was a social uprising against the Baltic Germans, the landed gentry, and their privileges, and second, the events of 1905 may be regarded at the same time as a manifestation of national emancipation efforts in struggle against the bondage of Russia. Vita Matīsa, the Latvian political scientist, states:

“Although the revolution of 1905 in Latvia was not plainly national in the sense that its leading political organization, *Latviešu Sociāldemokrātiskā Strādnieku partija* [the Social Democratic Workers' Party of Latvians], had not included in its program a claim for the political independence and secession from Russia, it was still national in the sense that, for a the first time in history, the Latvian nation enjoyed a free self-government, although it was in existence only for a few months. And if the idea of a peculiar Latvian-like identity had been voiced cautiously before, now, after being gleamed by the victories of November and December of 1905 and having tried their capacities for power, Latvians had their own revolutionary tradition” (Matīsa 2006: 99).

The scholar also emphasizes:

“The independent state of Latvia was not born in 1905, however, an imposing myth originated – with its martyrs, heroes, and symbolic rites. In the Lettic thought and imagination, the revolution of 1905 was, undeniably, of a national character, a landmark on the way to independent Republic of Latvia, having a significance resembling the place of the year 1798 in the history of Europe” (Matīsa 2006: 99).

When proceeding to the second question outlined above, namely what is being perceived by the notion of revolution in different streams of thought, one has to keep in mind that revolution is a notion originating in the tradition of classical Liberalism. It is a tool to abolish the government not serving the interests of the governed and not enjoying their consent.

These are not only the rights of the governed, but also their obligation. The next step would be establishing a new power (whose legitimacy would derive from the loyalty of the governed); for instance, one can find this interpretation developed in writings of the John Locke, classic of the English Liberal Thought (1988: 415–426).

3. THE 'BASIC CLASS' ON GUARD OF ETHNIC UNIQUENESS

One must also admit that efforts to attribute to Rainis the label of the 'proletariat poet' are not purely reproducing *clichés*. However, it is worth elaborating on the reasons why Rainis holds the Basic Class in such a reverence. Rainis objects the conviction voiced in the "Manifesto of Communist Party" when he clears up what makes the proletariat the most progressive class in the emancipation struggle of classes. Unlike the classical Marxists, he adds the national component to the notion of emancipation and dedicates a great deal of attention to it. In 1915, Rainis wrote the following lines in a letter from Lugano, Switzerland to his close friend Roberts Ivanovs:

"We have to stick together now more than ever before. Then we will manage to survive the crisis, not as separate persons, but also as a people. We must never forget this; nor as the comrades, as *the People is more significant for the proletariat than it is for the bourgeoisie; the latter possesses enough in order to do well even without a fatherland and the People, but for the proletariat, the fatherland and its language are the most precious things*. Nobody has rights to annex it. We need autonomy. It is our will, as we need it for our future" (Rainis 1915a) (italics added).

Rainis holds the view that the Basic Class, or the ordinary working people, are the bearers of culture, they have preserved the "language, folk traditions, fairy-tales, legends, and folk songs in their purest form" (Ziedonis 1968: 19).

Rainis might be willing to sign under the notion on the progressive nature of the working people; however he would certainly not accept the destructive manner of action which is envisaged for this class in the program of classical Marxists. According to the latter, the efforts of this segment of society can be destructive and catastrophically drifted, once the proletarians have "nothing of their own to preserve" (Marx and Engels 2008: 16). According to Rainis, on the contrary, their concerns and social alignment are obviously much more complex. Thus, the struggle for emancipation has to be constructive as well, aimed at maintaining the existing values.

What concerns Rainis' stance towards the well-off segments of society, he, just like thinkers of the Marxist tradition, looks at them with suspicion, though, again, for different reasons. Matters related to the productive forces, and the impact of the new relations of production on the proletariat, are not of interest for the Latvian man of letters. His concern is for the apathy of bourgeoisie and thus for its unsuitability for the struggle of national emancipation. What, according to Rainis, are the reasons of this indolence, and what, in their turn, are the trump cards of the proletariat?

It is worth making a minor historical digression here in order to delve into the nuances related to the portrait of proletariat as it was in the territory of Latvia at that time. One should keep in mind that when addressing the working class, Rainis is at the same time turning to publics consisting of a large portion of ethnic Latvians. Besides, as the historian Ilga Apine points out, the Latvian workers had gained a higher level of education in comparison to their class-comrades elsewhere in Russia, and the former also dared voicing their own cultural demands. Arguing along the same lines as Vita Matīsa, Ilga Apine maintains that “the development of Latvia’s proletariat cannot be detached from the trends of development of the whole nation” (Apine 2005: 9). The proportion of ethnic Latvians grew increasingly in the circles of proletariat in the beginning of the 20th century. The national composition of population in cities had not been in favour of Latvians before, as their flocking into the urban areas was obstructed by serfdom existing at that time. As figures reveal, in 1863, 42.9% of the total number of population of Riga was composed of Germans, while Latvians made up only 23.6%. A few decades later, in 1881, there had remained only 34.4% of Germans, while the percentage of Latvians raised to 29.5% from the total number of inhabitants (Skujenieks as cited in Apine 2005: 8). Studies of the sociologist Mārgers Skujenieks give an evidence that the age of capitalist modernization opened the doors to cities for the indigenous inhabitants. Ethnic Latvians predominated in the population of Riga. At the turn of the 19th–20th centuries, there were 45% of them, leaving Germans in the second and Russians in the third position (Skujenieks as cited in Apine 2005: 8). Furthermore, Latvians were dominating in the fields requiring a certain level of education, high qualification and special skills (such as metal treating, mechanical engineering), making up 65% of the total number of employees (Bērziņš 1997: 7).

A friend of Rainis, the publicist and doctor Paul Dauge, in an article prepared as a tribute to the poet on the occasion of his 50th birthday (1915), reflected on proletariat as an integral part of the community of ethnic Latvians. He was thus justifying the peculiar affinity between the intellectuals and this class :

“If we bear in mind that three-fourths of the Latvian nation are members of proletariat, and there is only a thin upper layer of the gross landholders; that Latvian workers possess the highest level of education in the whole Russia ... , that all of them are literate persons; ... that the civic culture of Latvians is only 50–60 years old; that the creative forces of the Latvian civil community ... dried up early before turning into beautiful and fruitful blossoms. ... One can easily comprehend why the modern Latvian proletariat regards itself as the basic class of the modern Latvian community not only in the economic sense, but also it presents itself as the representative of the whole nation and the carrier of the new national culture in the cultural plane. The most gifted, learned and proactive minds are inclined towards the proletariat, and they become the ideologues of the new, revolutionary and creative social class for the whole society” (Dauge 1969: 47).

Based on this sketch of the Latvian proletariat, one can conclude that not only its socially political manner of action, but also, to a certain extent, its financial position matches up to the

social stratum which, according to notions of the contemporary political science, is thought to be the bulwark of individual initiative and civil society, namely the middle class.

4. PROSPERITY – TO BE PROMOTED OR ERADICATED?

Rainis seems to be insisting that the idleness, inherent, in its turn, to bourgeoisie regarding the activities of the movement of national emancipation, stems from the negative side-effects of the capitalist worldview. He argues that the individual initiative and self-dependency intrinsic to capitalism are overshadowed by certain pathologies. The intellectual encourages his reader to pay attention to the fact that the well-off segments of society in the capitalist order care not so much for challenging and altering the *status quo*, but instead, for maintaining and legitimizing it (as the existing state of affairs has provided and sustains the material advantages and social standing of the bourgeoisie). As members of this layer of society tend to submit to the logic of money accumulation, they are not appropriate for acceding to the values not being expressed in material or the status terms. Rainis tries to point to this socially hazardous tendency in his play "Uguns un Nakts" ("The fire and the night") (1907) in which he warns the reader to beware from the Black Knight whose "sword is gold" (Rainis 1980: 308). One should also recall the phenomenon characteristic *en masse* of the members of community of ethnic Latvians who had reached a certain level of prosperity. Namely, there were persons aspiring to dissociate themselves from their ethnic origin and present themselves, instead, as members of other ethnic communities. For Rainis, this is nothing but treason. According to him, such internal enemies, the denial of ethnic identity, are much more dangerous for the existence of the nation than any other threats coming from outside: "I have a fear of the osier Germans and showy Slavonians, of the merchants and cosmopolitans, I am afraid for the will of the People to live, but I am not afraid of external dangers", he wrote to Antonija Lūkina⁵ in December 1915 (Rainis 1915b).

Rainis is convinced that the aim of bourgeoisie (i.e. seeking more and more material guarantees) has been accomplished, and the potential of protest is hardly to emerge among members of this group. Activities undertaken with the aim of undermining the positions of power-that-be would clearly contradict their interests. His satiric poetry does not lack biting remarks in this respect (several poems of such content are included in his "Virpuļa kalendāri" ("Whirlwind calendars") for the years 1907 and 1908. The poetry collection "Vēja nestas lapas" (Leaves upon the wind) (1910) contains references to this problematics as well.

Verses from the collection "Tālas noskaņas zilā vakarā" ("Distant moods of the blue evening") (1903) are particularly worth mentioning. In these, the author brings to light the vices which were, according to him, typical of the civic community of that time. He taunts mainly the philistinism, narrow-mindedness, and cajolery to the power-that-be typical of its members:

⁵ The Latvian writer and philosopher. Her literary deeds were written under the pseudonym of Ivande Kaija.

‘...
 No more free laughter,
 No more loud talking,
 Instead – common judgement,
 Second-hand thinking.

...
 Now your new principle:
 “Behaving all-over,
 Being slow, having foresight
 Regarding the business!

One must not run his head
 against a brick wall...
 God’s given government’s
 Grounds can’t be shaken”.

(Rainis 1977a: 42–43; my translation)

In short, the proletariat has nothing to lose only in the sense of material and social privileges, while its members are aware that they have something to fight for in this struggle, and something to preserve, namely their own culture and ethnic identity. Via his appeals voiced in poetry and plays, Rainis also tries to emphasize that these values can be best preserved in the framework of a separate state.

The above-mentioned does not imply that the well-being, the material self-sufficiency and wealth should be regarded as potentially degrading qualities and hence to be condemned *per se* (as the general socialist-driven line of thought would suggest). In order to avoid the negative side-effects of the above-mentioned, Rainis dedicated a great deal of attention in his writings and polemics to the necessity of the spiritual development and perfection of an individual. This process of permanent advancement would contribute to growing into a personality capable of distancing himself from the superficiality of the material worldview as well as to promoting the awareness that dedication to a certain idea, on the one hand, and enjoying material benefits, on the other, are not incompatible. Jāzeps, one of Rainis’ literary characters, after having fought inner battles and overcoming inner discrepancies, explicates his dreams on feeding his brothers with the harvest reaped from the fields of wheat which are his own. In his socially political satire, again, Rainis not only derides the ‘virtues’ of the bourgeoisie, but he also points to the misery caused by it (he dedicated to these matters, for instance, the short story “*Suņa dzīve*” (“Life of the dog”) and the poem “*Ubagu dziesma*” (“Song of the Beggar”).

The age, the milieu, the peers fortified Rainis’ conviction which he did not give up for the rest of his life: accepting the idea of nationless cosmopolitanism and activities targeted at exterminating the national element are not only a crime against the People, but such course of action might at the same time harm the proletariat.

CONCLUSIONS

The idea stating that Rainis was a poet of proletariat is justifiable only if taking into account his, considerations on why the class should be singled out. First, for Rainis, any body of individuals chosen by society to rule and enjoying its consent, is authorized to fulfil this duty. In any case, the rights of a particular social class to rule are not being repudiated. Leaders lose the legitimacy of their status once they stop acting according to the common interest in the formulation of which, at least theoretically, all members of the community take part. Neither is the equality of results among the primary concerns of Rainis. The civic and political rights, and equality in this respect, are much more important aspects for him. However, Rainis, indeed, pointed to the indifference and self-contentment of the propertied strata of society and blame them for reluctance to weigh up critically the *status quo* in the framework of which their access to various privileges is being sustained. The material self-sufficiency, to a certain extent and in certain circumstances, benumbs the sentiments thus providing for a fallacious view on what the notions of full self-realization and true freedom imply. A meaningful life is being warranted to a large extent also by national identity and the whole one can identify him self with, argues the man of letters. Contrary to how it may seem at the first glimpse, Rainis disagrees with the Marxist thought in three respects: first, he draws attention to the lack of a normative element in the justification of the Proletariat revolution; second, he condemns the Marxist interpretation of cosmopolitanism, and, third, arguing against one of the central theses of the *Manifesto* (Markss and Engels 2008: 23), he insists that members of the proletariat do have their Fatherland.

Analyzing and interpreting the social and political views of Rainis is an initiative which has attracted the interest of numerous scholars and publicists both in Latvia and in exile. However, when one considers the material produced on him as a socio-political thinker, the situation does not seem to be so unequivocal. Namely, the majority of works which lay claim to exposing the political views of Rainis have been written in the Soviet period and thus cannot be regarded as fully equitable for obvious reasons. This is one of the challenges anyone willing to contribute to the exploration of Rainis' ideas still faces – a scrupulous source criticism is to be accomplished before undertaking an analysis of the subject. This applies particularly to the interpretations of the Soviet period, as well as the commentaries and memoirs of Rainis' contemporaries.

The affluent efforts of the last two decades to study the legacy of Rainis is mostly the merit of other academic disciplines, although having an interdisciplinary drift (history and literary science are to be mentioned first). The thorough analysis of Rainis' biography and his creative work by literary scientist Gundega Grīnuma deserves particular attention in this respect. Besides, a number of articles have been written for collections in which certain aspects of Rainis' thought are being analyzed from the angle of different disciplines. At the same time, there are also publications with a popular-scientific drift, devoted to Rainis; most prominent in this genre is certainly the book of Roalds Dobrovskis "Rainis and his brothers" (2005).

When thinking through the political views of Rainis in a wider context, one should pay attention to the plays written by him after returning from Switzerland, because they contain a valuable analytical material (overall, there are about 100 such plays). The names of eminent thinkers and statesmen (Alexander the Great, Socrates, Spartacus, Napoleon, among others) appear in the titles of these plays, as well as the lists of characters. Also, it would be worth undertaking deeper analysis of the reception of Rainis' works in the Soviet literary criticism and other interpretations, as well as examining in detail the general social context and the intellectual atmosphere in Switzerland during Rainis' exile period.

Rainis did not combine his political ideas into a unified system; thus, any universalist claims he might have cherished can easily be questioned, and there can be different opinions on whether he had strived to look at politics *sub specie aeternitatis*. Nevertheless, the fact that he did develop a certain all-embracing vision on politics and social life in general should not be in doubt (his considerations on an individual, labeled by the author as *egoism philosophy*, gives evidence for that). These Rainis' considerations are also worth further detailed explorations as many of his ideas stem from it.

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