

PEDAGOGICAL AND POLITICAL ACTIVITY OF PĒTERIS SAULESKALNS (1876–1975), A GRADUATE (1908) OF RIGA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

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Summary. In the study dedicated to *Pēteris Sauleskalns* (1876–1975), a graduate of Riga Polytechnic Institute (RPI), an agronomist, pedagogue, and teacher, the author used archival and library materials describing the family of *Sauleskalns* and the childhood of his son *Pēteris*, his study and work life, and pedagogical activities at *Priekuļi* (1912–1918) and *Latgale* (1921–1936) / *Malnava* (1936–1940) Agricultural Secondary Schools, evaluating his contribution to the establishment and management of the *Malnava* Agricultural Secondary School. The teacher with a long-term experience, *P. Sauleskalns* also participated in political life – he represented the Latvian Farmers’ Union at the Latvian Constitutional Assembly (1920–1922). For his successful work in the area of agricultural education, he was twice awarded the highest Latvian state award – the Order of the Three Stars. After World War II, he lived in exile in the United States.

Keywords: *Pēteris Sauleskalns*, Riga Polytechnic Institute, Latvian Constitutional Assembly, agricultural schools.

School Years of *P. Sauleskalns*

Pēteris Sauleskalns was born on 17 December 1876 [1] in the family of *Jānis* and *Ede Sauleskalns*, the owners of «*Aizjošnieki*» House, *Odziena* Parish, *Vidzeme* Governorate. He was the third son in the family. In the second half of the 19th century, there were two parishes of *Odziena* in the *Cēsis* County. They were established on the land of two different manors, *Odsen* (*Ļaudona* Congregation) and *Odensee* (*Vietalva* Congregation), respectively, so the exact congregation was usually

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mentioned to distinguish between them. During the period of the First Republic of Latvia, *Ļaudona-Odziena* Parish, where *P. Sauleskalns* was born, was renamed *Mētriēna* Parish. *Andžs Sauleskalns* (1866–1931), the eldest son of the *Sauleskalns* family, inherited the 34.93-hectare «*Aizjošnieki*» farm [2]. The youngest son, *Pēteris*, chose the education path.

After three winters in *Odziēna* Parish School and two in *Ļaudona* Lutheran Congregation School, *P. Sauleskalns* entered *Gorki* Agricultural School (*Горы-горецкая земледельческая школа*) in 1891. This educational institution was opened in Mogilev Governorate, Russia, in 1840. The University of Agriculture was later established on its basis, the University was relocated to St. Petersburg in 1864. There was also a class of surveyors-appraisers at the Agricultural Secondary School in *Gorki*. Several later RPI students studied at this educational institution, including *Hugo Celmiņš* (1877–1941), *Pēteris Delle* (1877–1946), and *Augusts Kalniņš* (1876–1940), who were contemporaries of *P. Sauleskalns*. This educational institution was a model for the later Latvian agricultural schools. In the spring of 1897, two Latvians graduated from *Gorki* School – *Pēteris Kandars* (?–?) and *P. Sauleskalns* [3].

The First Years of Work of *P. Sauleskalns*

After graduating from the agricultural school, a boy from «*Aizjošnieki*» House *P. Sauleskalns* worked in manors in Tver Governorate, Russia, and later in Mogilev Governorate, present-day Belarus. From 13 December 1900 to October 1903, he was a teacher at Mainov Agricultural School in Chernihiv Governorate, Ukraine, which was opened in 1891 [4]. Even before *P. Sauleskalns*, another graduate of *Gorki* School, *Ernests Celmiņš* (1872–1937), a teacher from *Lubāna*, worked there. In future, he became *P. Sauleskalns*' colleague – they later worked together in *Priekulji*.

After graduating from *Gorki* Agricultural School, *P. Sauleskalns* managed to earn some funds, so that he could start studying at the RPI Department of Agriculture in the autumn of 1903 [5].

RPI mostly educated and trained the specialists in the industrial sectors, which might be even called urban sectors. However, apart from the Departments of Chemistry, Engineers and Manufacturers (which existed for two years), the Department of Agriculture was among the first units of the Institute. The Departments of Mechanics, Trade, Architecture and Land Surveying (operated for 20 years) were established later. During the existence of RPI until 1919, the graduates of

the Department of Agriculture accounted for 12.4 % of the total number of graduates [6]. An agronomist *P. Sauleskalns* was one of them – a public and political figure, whose greatest merits were related to Latvia's agricultural education.

During his studies, *P. Sauleskalns* became involved in public life, especially in the area of agriculture. In 1903, *P. Sauleskalns* joined the Latvian Student Corporation «*Talavija*» [7]. On 9 January 1905, at the annual meeting of *Ļaudona* Agricultural Society, *P. Sauleskalns* spoke about the possibilities of establishing an agricultural school. He referred to his experience in the Russian schools, compared these schools with similar institutions in France and Germany, and suggested organizing such a school in *Ļaudona* as well [8]. However, further interest in this enterprise waned because of the government demand of the time to use Russian as the mandatory language of instruction. *Arvīds Bremers* (1871–1941), the owner of «*Glāznieki*» House in *Ļaudona*, was elected the Head of the Agricultural Society at this meeting. He held this position for many years, participating in many events outside *Ļaudona*, also in cooperation with *P. Sauleskalns*. With the participation of *A. Bremers*, the two-year agricultural school in *Ļaudona* started working later, in 1924.

A student *P. Sauleskalns* worked in the Riga Branch of the Imperial Russian Horticultural Society [9]. In September 1906, he was elected a record keeper of the Board of the newly established Riga Dairy Farmers' Society [10], he was also a lecturer in the dairy farming courses. The Dairy Farmers' Society, on the other hand, soon became part of the Riga Central Agricultural Association (RCAA), which was established around the same time. A year and a half later, he resigned from the position of the record keeper in order to further assist the RCAA, where he was elected a member of the Audit Committee. At the invitation of the *Vecpiebalga* Agricultural Society, a meeting on the possibility of establishing an agricultural school in *Vidzeme* was held on 25 September 1906 [11]. *P. Sauleskalns*, together with the pastor and the Head of the *Vecpiebalga* Agricultural Society *Pauls Gailītis* (1869–1943), a farmer and member of societies *Hermanis Enzeliņš* (1867–1953), *A. Brēmers* and the cultural technician *Jānis Laursons* (1870–1951) were included in the school curriculum development committee. The author of the article has concluded that *P. Sauleskalns* had the most extensive experience in this field. At that time, a possibility to establish a three-year school was discussed. It was envisioned that applicants would be able to enrol in this school after at least two classes in the parish school and that its program would be similar to those of the Russian schools to make the approval process easier. The developers of the school curriculum believed that the language of instruction must be Latvian. It was decided to ask the government for permission to hold special longer winter

courses in which existing farmers could be educated. *P. Sauleskalns* was also nominated to participate in the work of the committee to raise funds for the school to be established. *Vainiži* Manor near *Limbaži* in *Valmiera* County was mentioned as its possible place at the beginning, but later another place was chosen – in *Priekule* near *Cēsis*.



Figure 1. Students of the RPI Department of Agriculture. From left: the second – *J. Vārsbergs*, the third – *P. Sauleskalns* (1906).

After graduating from the university in the spring of 1908, *P. Sauleskalns* again started working as a manor manager, this time in the Podolsk Governorate, in the western part of present-day Ukraine. In the following autumn, he was recruited as a teacher of special subjects at the newly opened Voronezh Agricultural School. It was located in the Vilnius Governorate (northwest of the present-day Republic of Belarus near the Lithuanian border). *Arvīds Valdmanis* (1890–1942), a graduate of the RPI Department of Agriculture, also worked at this three-year educational institution [12].

Since the time of his studies, *P. Sauleskalns* focused on animal husbandry, which involved working in the Riga Dairy Farmers' Society. In 1911, a brochure compiled by *P. Sauleskalns* entitled «*Barības normas ar pielikumu par liellopu, zirgu un cūku dzīvsvara noteikšanu caur mērišanu*» (Feed Standards with an Appendix on Determining the Live Weight of Cattle, Horses, and Pigs by Measurement) was published in Riga. *P. Sauleskalns* used the works of Oskar Kellner (1851–1911), a German professor, agro-chemist, and animal nutrition specialist, on animal nutrition, water, protein, and protein composition in various types of feed. An agronomist with newly acquired education explained how livestock productivity could be increased by changing the feed.

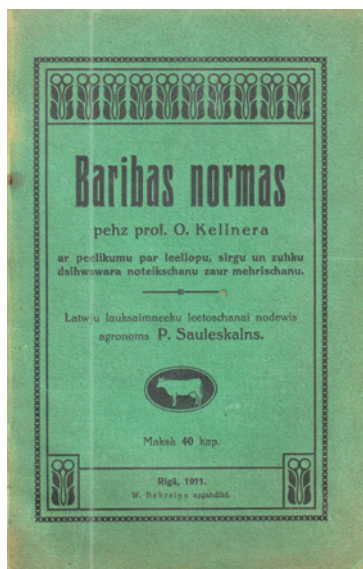


Figure 2. Cover of the brochure on animal nutrition compiled by *P. Sauleskalns* (1911).

Pedagogical Activity in *Priekuļi*

In the autumn of 1912, *P. Sauleskalns* moved to the *Priekuļi* Agricultural School. Before that, *Jānis Mazvērsītis* (1866–1943), a graduate (1890) of the Department of Agriculture of Riga Polytechnicum, and *Edgars Zemels* (1874–1941) were mentioned among the possible supervisors of the RCAA as other candidates [13]. The latter was approved in office, while *J. Mazvērsītis* was the principal of an agricultural school in *Jelgava*. *E. Zemels*, *P. Sauleskalns*, and *Jānis Bickis* (1877–1933), a graduate of the RPI Department of Agriculture, worked as teachers in *Priekuļi*. He was the head of the courses, which existed even before school, shortly before the start of the career of *E. Zemels* as the principal in 1911. The already mentioned *E. Celmiņš*, *Ernests Gaujēns* (1877–?), and others also taught at the courses. Former students of the RPI Department of Agriculture, *Jānis Blumbergs* (1886–1941), *Pāvils Kvelde* (until 1940 – *Kreišmanis*; 1885–1971), *Viļums Skubiņš* (1876–1971) and graduates *Hugo Celmiņš* (graduate of 1903; 1877–1941), *Jānis Lūke* (graduate of 1905; 1876–1942), *Jānis Vārsbergs* (graduate of 1908; 1879–1961) worked nearby in the *Priekuļi* Farm and its pilot station, as well as at the Farmers' Winter Courses. Some of these men were also among the founders of the Latvian Farmers' Union in 1917.

In August 1913, the first students graduated from the *Priekuļi* Agricultural School, including *Pēteris Upītis* (1896–1976), who later

became a prominent breeder. A few weeks before the end of the school year, misunderstandings between pupils and teachers became public [14]. Senior pupils felt that during their studies too little attention was paid to practice and that they were not sufficiently introduced to the use of machinery in the work of a farmer. The last test was organised on 4 August, and pupils hoped to be shown something more important in the remaining few weeks before the graduation ceremony on 17 August [15, 16]. On 8 August, teacher *E. Zemels*, whose work received the most criticism from the pupils, was in Riga, while teacher *P. Sauleskalns* promised to organise a study trip to get acquainted with the work of *Matīši Dairy*. However, the next day the teachers announced that the planned trip would not happen because it was not foreseen within the school curriculum. Already in winter pupils suggested organizing some question-and-answer sessions making an emphasis on agriculture rather than on political matters. They were particularly interested in the work of agricultural cooperation. However, teacher *P. Sauleskalns* said that he had not had to deal with such pupil wishes anywhere in Russia before. The newspaper «*Latviešu Avīzes*» published the opinions of both parties – the pedagogical council and the pupils [17]. The author has concluded that the conflict forced the agronomist *P. Sauleskalns* to change his mind, because later, during his work at *Malnava School*, his position was different.

The educator's work in *Priekuļi* continued during World War I and after the proclamation of the Republic of Latvia. *P. Sauleskalns* emphasized the need for farmers to receive education and not to rely solely on the experience of their grandfathers. Therefore, the courses for the farmers were organized and *P. Sauleskalns* became the head of these courses [18]. The purchase of 42.5 desetina (46.43 ha) farm – «*Lielrubēnu Jānis Nr. 16*» in *Jaunrauna* from *Andrejs Karnītis* (?-?) in March 1917 [19] can be considered evidence that *P. Sauleskalns* wanted to connect his future life with farming.



Figure 3. *P. Sauleskalns* (1920s).

It may be assumed that the agronomist lived in the purchased property with his wife *Lucija Johanna Ērgle-Sauleskalne* (1884–1933). The daughter of the couple *Laima Sauleskalne* (later – *Vanaga-Bērziņa*) was born in *Jaunrauna* in 1920. It may also be assumed that tenants worked there for the next 20 years, until *Laima*, the daughter of *Pēteris* and *Lucija Sauleskalns*, moved there in 1937 after graduating from the State *Latgale* Agricultural Secondary School. At the end of 1934, the name of the house was changed, it was renamed «*Saulkalni*» [19].

In the autumn of 1916, the RCAA conducted even more heated discussions on agricultural education, as the Ministry of Agriculture planned to expand the network of agricultural schools. *J. Bickis* was the keynote speaker, he elaborated his report together with *P. Sauleskalns*. The spring of 1917 brought major political changes in Russia. On 19 March 1917, reports on the most important recent events were delivered in the hall of *Priekuļi* Agricultural School. An agronomist *P. Sauleskalns* compared the current events with the manifestations of 1905 after the February Revolution [20]. He took part in the reorganization of the life in *Cēsis* County after the February Revolution, he worked in the agrarian administration of the County. When the Latvian Farmers' Union (LFU) started to emerge, *P. Sauleskalns* from *Priekuļi* was mentioned as one of the persons who could be interested in these issues [21]. At the founding meeting of the LFU in *Valka* in the spring of 1917, he was elected to the Party Council (the Board of the LFU consisted of five members, the Council comprised 15 members) [22]. In February 1919, the *Cēsis* County Revolutionary Tribunal opened an investigation against the arrested *P. Sauleskalns*, who was accused of counter-revolutionary activities. On the last day of the month, however, the tribunal found the allegations to be insufficiently substantiated and closed the case [23].

Political Activity

Representing the LFU, *P. Sauleskalns* served in the committees on agrarian reform, education, national affairs and public work of the People's Council. He was a substitute for a member of the People's Council, that is, a substitute for a permanent member in his absence. In total, there were 35 members and 10 substitutes at the LFU People's Council. In the summer of 1919, after the return of the Provisional Government to Riga, an agronomist *P. Sauleskalns* participated in the meetings of the Ministry of Agriculture to discuss agricultural education and the establishment of the Faculty of Agriculture at the Latvian Higher School. In August 1919, he became inspector of the state lands

of Cēsis County [24]. *P. Sauleskalns* also chaired the election committee of the Constitutional Assembly of the County in 1919 [25], although he was included in the list of the *Latgale* Farmers' Party (LFP) in these elections [26]. There were only three of 21 candidates who were not born in the Latvian part of Vitebsk Governorate – an agronomists *H. Celmiņš* and *P. Sauleskalns* from its border, as well as a teacher *Pēteris Zvagulis* (1886–1957) born in *Kurzeme*, who was working in *Varakļāni, Rēzekne* County at the time. All of them were elected. The LFP won 17 seats in the Constitutional Assembly, it cooperated with LFU. Both agronomists mentioned above were LFP activists since its foundation and had remained members of this party. *P. Sauleskalns* worked in the Education Committee of the Constitutional Assembly, was the main developer of the Law on Agricultural Schools [27]. The law was passed on 17 September 1920 [28].

Work at the Agricultural Secondary School in *Malnava*

At the beginning of 1921, it was decided to establish a state agricultural secondary school in *Latgale*. Such educational institutions existed in *Cēsis* and *Jelgava* at that time, but they operated as schools ran by societies. The organizers planned that the graduates of such four-year schools would be ready for work on their own farms, would help others with their knowledge, and that the secondary education they obtained would allow them to continue their studies at the university. After inspecting several possible locations for the school, *Malnava* Manor in *Kārsava* Parish near the Russian border was selected. The decision was made by the Central Land Development Committee at its meeting on 2 February [29]. It was partly related to the proposal made at the Constitutional Assembly at that time regarding the envisioned administrative-territorial changes, especially in *Latgale*. It was planned to change the borders of the existing *Daugavpils*, *Ludza*, and *Rēzekne* counties [30]. It was also planned to add several parishes of the *Ilūkste* County located on the left bank of the River *Daugava* to the *Daugavpils* County, to add nine parishes of the *Ludza* County and *Ludza* itself to the *Rēzekne* County, to relocate the district institutions to *Kārsava*, then the school would be situated next to the district centre. However, these intentions were not realized. On 15 February 1921, agronomist *P. Sauleskalns* was appointed the organizer of the school [31]. Until 1922, he continued working at the Latvian Constitutional Assembly, but on 28 September 1921, he resigned from the Education Committee. He was granted a vacation leave on 7 October at the sitting of the Constitutional Assembly. Later, the school principal maintained that

his experience at the Constitutional Assembly and the observations he made contemplating the work of the Saeima made him doubt that the principles of parliamentary democracy had ever been observed, since the members of the parliament had first considered the interests of their party and their allies, rather than the interests of the state. Therefore, the mutual opposition among the parties often hindered practical solution of various issues.

In the spring of 1921, *Malnava* Manor was not ready to operate as an educational institution. The buildings were worn, and they were largely occupied by the people who hoped to set up their new farms there during the agrarian reform. 930 ha of land together with the buildings were handed over to the planned school, which caused dissatisfaction among some local people. The principal had to overcome these challenges, he had to organize the repair and refurbishment of the buildings and take care of the land [32]. In June 1921, the newspaper «*Valdības Vēstnesis*» published an invitation from the Principal of *Latgale* Agricultural School, agronomist *P. Sauleskalns*, addressed to the future pupils to apply for studies at school. «Preferably, [we expect] those with a tendency and interest in agriculture in general or in certain farming sectors: agriculture, animal husbandry, horticulture, households, etc., and who have already worked on the farm at home [33].» A similar appeal was repeated in the newspaper a month and a half later, it was also published in the Monthly Bulletin of the Ministry of Education «*Izglītības Ministrijas Mēnešraksts*». However, the articles in the newspapers «*Latgalīts*» and «*Latgolas Lauksaimņiks*» were more directly addressed to potential pupils. In September 1921, entrance examinations were held, testing the knowledge at the level of elementary school, and on 10 October, the school started working. There were 22 pupils in the first grade at that time. The ceremonial address of *H. Celmiņš*, Deputy Minister of Agriculture, a graduate of the RPI Department of Agriculture (in the spring when *P. Sauleskalns* was appointed, he was the Minister), at the opening ceremony was a significant event. *H. Celmiņš* emphasized that there were not many mineral resources in Latvia, but arable land was the main value of the country, which farmers and the whole country should have used to obtain private and public wealth. He stressed that agriculture formed both economic and political basis of Latvia. In *Latgale*, rural productivity was relatively lower. He noted that knowledge was the only way to improve productivity, and an agricultural school was supposed to provide that knowledge [34].



Figure 4. *Latgale Agricultural Secondary School Orchestra (c. 1926).* From left in the second row: third – singing teacher and orchestra leader *Nikolajs Zakrevskis* (1881–?), fourth – School Principal *P. Sauleskalns*, third in the third row – later the conductor of the school orchestra *Jānis Ģēģeris*.

Subsequently, the number of newly enrolled pupils increased, as well as their total number, exceeding two hundred in some years. Pupils were admitted to the school from the age of 14; at that age pupils generally completed a six-grade primary school, but older pupils also started their studies. There were cases when some pupils entered secondary school after graduating from a two-year agricultural school. In addition to subjects of general education, there were also special subjects in *Malnava*: agriculture; animal husbandry; gardening; agricultural economics addressing such issues as cooperation and accounting; economy; agricultural machinery; land reclamation and surveying; construction; forestry; economic geography; hygiene; housekeeping with handicrafts and crafts [35]. The first 18 pupils graduated in August 1925. During the term of office of *P. Sauleskalns* from 1925 to the summer of 1940, the total number of graduates was 541. Agricultural Secondary School was mainly intended for young people from *Latgale*, but pupils came also from *Vidzeme*, *Zemgale*, fewer from *Kurzeme*. For example, during academic year 1932/1932 there were pupils from 13 counties: *Bauska* – two; *Cēsis* – six; *Daugavpils* – 20; *Ilūkste* – five; *Jaunlatgale* – 25; *Jēkabpils* – 10; *Kuldīga* – one; *Ludza* – 25; *Madona* – 31; *Rēzekne* – 26; *Rīga* – seven; *Valka* – six; *Valmiera* – four; a total of 108 boys and

60 girls. In the 1930s, there were similar schools in *Kazdanga*, *Mežotne* (formerly *Jelgava*), and *Priekule*, but *Malnava* was the largest in terms of number of pupils. It should be noted that in 1935, the Latvian secondary schools, including agricultural ones, switched to five-year education. The future course of the graduates was different – practical agriculture, teaching, various positions of agricultural and housekeeping instructors, agronomic duties after graduation, also career in agricultural science. There were graduates who connected their life with the army. A graduate of 1937, Lieutenant *Roberts Rubenis* (1917–1944) is the most frequently mentioned example. He joined the military unit of the Latvian Army headed by General *Jānis Kurelis* (1882–1954), affiliated with the Central Council of Latvia in 1944 and commanded a unit of soldiers in *Kurzeme* in the fight against a German penal unit.

Almost all pupils lived in a boarding school. In addition to classrooms, the school also had dormitories for boys and girls, a dining room and a kitchen, and the manor house also housed individual apartments for employees. Already in the first half of the 1920s, the school premises were expanded. One, then the other three-storey wing was added to the two-storey building of the manor. Later, a separate house was built for the teachers, and the *Sauleskalni* family also moved there. It was an established procedure that the management of the Agricultural School was implemented and it was supervised by its principal, the Pedagogical Council and the School Council. All teachers were included in the Pedagogical Council, meetings were held at least once a month. Representatives of parents and an employee of the Ministry of Agriculture also served on the School Council, and meetings were held at least once a quarter. The head of the school (principal) managed the school and its farm, managed the accounts, supervised the co-administration, recruited and dismissed the staff, monitored its activities, chaired the Pedagogical Council and convened the School Council [36].

It was desirable that the teachers of the Agricultural School had higher education. Several teachers with a university degree in agronomy also taught some subjects of general education, such as science. In addition to teaching animal husbandry, agricultural economics, and other subjects, *P. Sauleskalns* also taught chemistry. In the autumn of 1925, his work record as an agricultural school teacher included only the work in *Malnava* from 15 February 1921, his pedagogical work in *Priekule* and schools in Russia was not included [37]. The length of service affected the pay – the longer it was, the higher was the salary, so everyone was interested to have their length of service longer and all years of service to be taken into account. In the second half of the 1920s, some staff, graduates of Russian agricultural schools, were transferred

from *Malnava* School to two-year agricultural schools or elsewhere. However, *Jānis Ģēģeris* (1909–1946?), a graduate (1927) of *Latgale* Agricultural Secondary School, who as a pupil conducted the school choir and orchestra, in 1929 was accepted as a gardener. From 1931 to 1939, he taught singing, drawing and gymnastics (he supplemented his knowledge with special courses). *J. Ģēģeris* stated that his focus on music was strongly supported by Principal *P. Sauleskalns* [38].



Figure 5. The fourth graduation of *Latgale* Agricultural Secondary School (1928).



Figure 6. The seventh graduation of *Latgale* Agricultural Secondary School (1931).

On the recommendation of the principal, a cooperative was set up at school, it was mainly active in the distribution of teaching aids and the promotion of general operational skills [39]. Extracurricular activities were also organized for the pupils. There were various organizations at school – *Latvijas Vanagi*, *Latvian Scouts Central Organization*, *Latvian Waits Central Organization*, *Latvian Regiments*, and *Latvian Guards Organization*. *P. Sauleskalns* was the Head of the 16th *Malnava* District of the *Latvijas Vanagi* (Latvian Hawks) Society and one of the few who received the highest award of this organization – a Badge of Honour in 1930, the Order of the Hawks of the First Class in 1934 and the title of the Chief of the Hawks in 1938. The organization organized sports events, including theatre performances, and concerts for the pupils with a nationally patriotic orientation. In 1927, the Social Democrat newspaper «*Sociāldemokrāts*» published several publications criticizing *P. Sauleskalns* for involving the pupils of the agricultural school in various organizations, but not supporting the leftist ideas, not allowing the newspaper to be read. One of the texts was even entitled «*Malnavas lauksaimniecības skola – mūsmāju fašistu ligzda*» (*Malnava Agricultural School – the Nest of Today’s Fascists*) [40]. Two weeks later, a letter rejecting the allegations was printed, signed by 162 pupils of the school [41]. The Order of the Three Stars of the IV class awarded to the principal of *Latgale* Agricultural Secondary School in November 1927 was another sign of recognition. Four years later, in 1931, *P. Sauleskalns* was awarded the Order of the III Class [42]. The agronomist welcomed the establishment of the authoritarian regime of *Kārlis Ulmanis* (1877–1942). In 1936, *Latgale* Agricultural School was renamed *Malnava* Agricultural School, and *P. Sauleskalns* continued running it. In 1936, the school celebrated its 15th anniversary [43]. On 1 April 1937, at a meeting of staff of the schools subordinate to the Ministry of Agriculture, the Principal of *Malnava* School reported on the management of the farm. *P. Sauleskalns* presented an album about all Latvian agricultural schools to *K. Ulmanis* on behalf of the people participating in the meeting [44]. *P. Sauleskalns* once used to work together with *K. Ulmanis* at winter courses in *Priekulji*.

Conclusions

After Latvia’s accession to the Soviet Union in the summer and autumn of 1940, the administration of many schools changed. Some resigned, not willing to serve the Soviets, and some were fired. In August, 16 principals of agricultural schools were dismissed (officially at their own request) [45]. *P. Sauleskalns* allegedly retired and moved

to «Saulkalni» in Jaunruna. In the autumn of 1944, he fled to Kurzeme as a refugee with his daughter and her children. His son-in-law was summoned to the Latvian Legion, where he fell. The family later moved from Liepāja to Mecklenburg, Germany, in the Soviet occupation zone. From there, they managed to go to Berlin and move to the American occupation zone. P. Sauleskalns worked as a teacher at the Latvian school in the Zehlendorf refugee camp, where about 250 Latvians lived in the spring of 1946 [46]. Later, together with his daughter and grandchildren, the old man went to Bavaria, Germany, and arrived at the Latvian refugee camp in Valka (Latvians chose Latvian place names for the names of the camps). During this time, P. Sauleskalns contacted the former students of Malnava Agricultural School. He sent Indulis Kažociņš (1917–2000), a graduate of 1937, a 50-page manuscript «Celsim cilvēcīgu dzīvi» (Let's Build a Human Life) written in 1949 – judgments about how, according to P. Sauleskalns, Latvia should develop [47]. For example, he considered that it should be a presidential, not a parliamentary republic. In November 1951, the family moved to Mississippi, USA [48]. With the support of Pastor Pāvils Ķirsons (1913–1965), the family initially lived in the house of the Latvian Congregation in Senatobia, and the former agronomist became a hen farmer. Half a year later, his family moved to Tennessee, his daughter Laima worked as a cleaner and a cook for an American family, and her father took care of the house's exterior. In the summer and autumn of 1952, he was a teacher at the Latvian youth courses and a children's summer camp organized by P. Ķirsons. In 1961, the family moved to Pittsburgh, where on 15 September 1975, Pēteris Sauleskalns demised at the age of 98.

Although agronomist P. Sauleskalns is generally considered a politician, he was a teacher for most of his working life and dedicated more than 30 years to educating and training the new generations. Under his leadership, several hundred educated farmers were trained in Malnava during the interwar period, who made their contribution to Latvia as an agricultural country.

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SOURCES OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1. Tāja Pumpuriņa privātarhīvs.

Figure 2. Latvijas Lauksaimniecības muzejs.

Figure 3. Igora Pliča privātarhīvs. J. Alibera foto.

Figure 4. Madonas novadpētniecības un mākslas muzejs (turpmāk – MNM), inv. Nr. 33983:2.

Figure 5. MNM, inv. Nr. 28836. J. Alibera foto.

Figure 6. Igora Pliča privātarhīvs. J. Alibera foto.



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Indulis Zvirgzdiņš

Rīgas Politehniskā institūta absolventa (1908) Pētera Sauleskalna (1876–1975) pedagoģiskā un politiskā darbība

Pētījumā par Rīgas Politehniskā institūta (RPI) absolventu agronomu, pedagogu un skolotāju Pēteri Sauleskalnu (1876–1975) autors izmantojis arhīvu un bibliotēku materiālus, raksturojot Sauleskalnu dzimtu un tās dēla Pētera bērnību, studiju un darba dzīvi, pedagoģisko darbību Priekuļi (1912–1918) un Latgales (1921–1936) / Malnavas (1936–1940) Lauksaimniecības vidusskolās, izvērtējot viņa ieguldījumu Malnavas Lauksaimniecības vidusskolas izveidē un vadībā. Ilggadīgais skolotājs P. Sauleskalns darbojies arī politikā – pārstāvējis Latviešu zemnieku savienību Latvijas Satversmes sapulcē (1920–1922). Par sekmīgu darbu lauksaimniecības izglītībā viņš ir divreiz apbalvots ar augstāko Latvijas valsts apbalvojumu – Triju Zvaigžņu ordeni. Pēc Otrā pasaules kara dzīvoja emigrācijā, ASV.

Atslēgas vārdi: Pēteris Sauleskalns, Rīgas Politehniskais institūts, Latvijas Satversmes sapulce, lauksaimniecības skolas.