

Abstract

The topic of the bachelor thesis is minority policy towards Lusatian Sorbs in the German Democratic Republic. The thesis focuses mainly on the period from the establishment of the East German state to the beginning of the 1970s. The aim of the thesis is to discover which aspects of Leninist nationality policy can be found in the East German model of minority policy directed towards the Lusatian Sorb ethnic group. The thesis first briefly introduces who the Lusatian Sorbs are and describes their changing position in the 20th century. This work then provides a definition of ethnicity and other important concepts established by the Norwegian anthropologist T.H. Eriksen. Following terminology, the approach to ethnicity in the Soviet Union and East Germany is described and the most important aspects of Soviet nationality policy, with an emphasis on “korenization” (nativization), which was an important part of Leninist nationality policy. Similarly, the thesis deals with nationality policy in the GDR and examines the application of Leninist nationality policy in the work of the umbrella organization Domowina and in bilingual education in Lausitz. The last chapter mentions collectivisation and industrialisation, which significantly affected the situation of Lusatian Sorbs, but do not fall within the main framework of the examination. The main conclusion of the thesis is the finding that Leninist nationality policy as a set of support measures in the minority policy towards the Lusatian Sorbs can only be spoken of in connection with the East German state in the limited time period between 1952 and 1958 when korenization was applied to some extent. In the following years, the minority issue was overshadowed by the idea of socialism. However, the long-term goal of Leninist national policy, which was to empty the concept of ethnicity and unite the peoples, can be traced throughout the history of the GDR, when the Lusatian-Sorbian identity was limited to the folkloric aspect and the ethnic group was assimilated.