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Bradley D. WOODWORTH

**PATTERNS OF CIVIL SOCIETY
IN THE MODERNIZING MULTIETHNIC CITY:
A GERMAN TOWN IN THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE
BECOMES ESTONIAN**

Although modernization has long been a topic in the historiography of Russia, scholars have only recently applied the interpretive and heuristic category of civil society to Russia and the Russian Empire. Indeed, as long as the Russian Empire was viewed as an authoritarian and politically backward monolith, there was little reason to look for civil society – one could only expect to confirm its disappointing absence. But the weakening and collapse of authoritarian governments in eastern Europe in the late 1980s and early 1990s surprised us by revealing that even the most comprehensively controlling regimes may produce unexpected undercurrents of unsanctioned popular organization. Scholarly interest was thus directed to the possibility of overlooked historical parallels; hence scholars have recently found that in late imperial Russia, the tsar's subjects did indeed self-organize and created a public sphere and growing civil society despite the centralizing and controlling mechanisms of the state and its sclerotic rhetoric of autocracy.¹

¹ See the early collection edited by Samuel D. Kassow, James L. West, and Edith W. Clowes (Eds.). *Between Tsar and People: Educated Society and the Quest for Public*

If one adds to these very productive paradigms of modernization and civil society issues of the multiethnic city and the development of nationalism, the historical questions become complex, challenging, and all the more interesting. The tsarist Baltic cities of Riga and Tallinn (Reval, Revel') provide just such cases of compounding social developments. One of the most productive aspects of examining social change in the tsarist Baltic provinces within the paradigm of civil society is that it helps break with past approaches to the social history of the region which tend to examine the experience of the Baltic German elite and the Estonians and Latvians in isolation from each other.² It also frees the historian to see the ostensibly

Identity in Late Imperial Russia. Princeton, 1991. See also Adele Lindenmeyr. Poverty Is Not a Vice: Charity Society and the State in Imperial Russia. Princeton, 1996. On voluntary associations as evidence for civil society in tsarist Russia, see Joseph Bradley. Subjects into Citizens: Societies, Civil Society, and Autocracy in Tsarist Russia // *American Historical Review*. 2002. Vol. 107. Pp. 1094-1123. On the belated fostering of institutions of civil society and social activism by the state after 1905, see A. S. Tumanova. Samoderzhavie i obshchestvennye organizatsii v Rossii: 1905-1917 gody. Tambov, 2002. Boris Mironov has used the concept of civil society in his recent major study of social history in tsarist Russia; he employs the term *grazhdanskoe obshchestvo*, which he defines as a "society, founded on political freedoms and on law, whose members share developed economic, cultural, legal and political relations independent of the state, though which also cooperates with the state." See B. N. Mironov. Sotsial'naia istoriia Rossii perioda imperii (XVII-nachalo XX v.). Genезis lichnosti, demokraticeskoi sem'i, grazhdanskogo obshchestva i pravovogo gosudarstva. Vol. 2. St. Petersburg, 1999. P. 110.

² Ulrike von Hirschhausen sees late-tsarist Riga foremost as a multiethnic space. Riga's path to modernity, in her view, is found in social and economic modernization and in the formation of nationalities. See Ulrike von Hirschhausen. Die Wahrnehmung des Wandels: Migration, soziale Mobilität und Mentalitäten in Riga 1867-1914 // *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung*. 1999. Bd. 48. S. 475-523. An important recent collection of essays on multiethnic tsarist-era Riga is Erwin Oberländer and Kristine Wohlfart (Hg.). Riga. Portrait einer Vielvölkerstadt am Rande des Zarenreiches 1857-1914. Paderborn, 2004. Unfortunately, the essays in this volume examine each ethnic group separately, and there is no synthetic treatment of shared experience and interaction between nationalities. See also the essays in Eduard Mühle and Norbert Angermann (Hg.). Riga im Prozeß der Modernisierung. Studien zum Wandel einer Ostseemetropole im 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert. Marburg, 2004. On the genesis and development of civil society among all major ethnic groups in Tallinn in the late tsarist era, see Bradley D. Woodworth. Civil Society and Nationality in the Multiethnic Russian Empire: Tallinn/Reval, 1860-1914 / Ph.D. dissertation; Indiana University, 2003. Interesting comparisons can be made with Helsinki; on innovation as a prism for understanding urban development in this city, see Marjatta Bell and Marjatta Hietala. Helsinki: the Innovative City. Historical Perspectives. Helsinki, 2002.

paradoxical, though close, relationship between developing civil society and emergent national orientations.³

In the case of Estonian areas (the provinces of Estland and northern Livland), the themes of national and class conflict that generally dominated historical literature on the Baltic provinces produced in the West and in the Soviet Union have in recent years given way to a new emphasis on the social energy and confidence within the region's population on the whole. The primary source of this new vigor was the breakdown of estate-based society (*ständische Gesellschaft, soslovnoe obshchestvo*) and the development of new social and political orientations. Prominent among these was a nascent civil society that developed both in urban areas as well as in the countryside. This civil society was marked foremost by a vigorous associational life and by elected urban self-government that in the early twentieth century was increasingly confident and robust. The development of the modern Estonian nation took place within this context of growing civic activity. This essay reviews the impressive demographic, economic, social, and political growth in Tallinn and argues that it was in the late tsarist period that the city left behind its estate-dominated, Baltic German past and became a modernizing city dominated by the concerns of its majority Estonian population.

Tallinn's multiethnic population and demographic change, 1897-1913

Tallinn's population was multiethnic from the earliest of times. In the early thirteenth century, an Estonian fortress on the site of the future town was captured by German and Danish forces and subsequently was a stronghold of the Teutonic Knights. As an autonomous member of the Hanseatic League, and then as a town within both the Swedish and Russian empires, Tallinn was dominated by Germans politically, economically, and demographically.

Tallinn's Germans were the largest ethnic group in the city until the 1840s, though at no time in their history, with the possible exception of the years after the 1905 Revolution, did they see themselves as a coherent, unified group, a fact too often overlooked by historians. (For basic infor-

³ See the monograph by Ea Jansen. Inimene muutuv asjas: seisusühiskonnast kodanikeühiskonda [The Individual in Changing Times: From Estate Society to Civil Society]. Tartu, forthcoming 2006. See also the comments by Jörg Hackmann. Civil Society against the State? Historical Experiences of Eastern Europe // Norbert Götz and Jörg Hackmann (Eds.). Civil Society in the Baltic Sea Region. Aldershot, Hampshire, England, 2003. Pp. 61-62.

mation about demographic change in Tallinn in the second half of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, see Table 1.) In fact, Tallinn's Germans were of widely divergent social and economic status. Socially and politically dominant among them were the *Bürger*, merchants and master artisans who controlled city government through the city magistracy (*Magistrat*) and the leading guilds. This group comprised about a quarter of the German population in the mid-nineteenth century. By the late nineteenth century, the category of *Bürger* had been expanded (56 percent of all Baltic Germans in 1897). *Bürger* then included lesser artisans and small merchants belonging to guilds of individual artisan professions (*Zünfte*), a group that in the first third of the nineteenth century, if not earlier, began to include upwardly mobile Estonians.

Year	Estonians		Russians		Germans	
	number	%	number	%	number	%
1844 ^a	6,062	42.3	2,759	19.3	5,292	37.0
1871	15,097	51.8	3,300	11.3	10,020	34.4
1881	26,324	57.4	5,111	11.1	12,737	27.8
1897	40,406	68.7	6,008	10.2	10,297	17.5
1913	83,133	71.6	13,275	11.4	12,424	10.7
1917 ^c	90,000	57.5	40,000	25.6	13,000	8.3
1922	102,568	83.8	7,513	6.1	6,904	5.6

Table 1. Demographic change in Tallinn in the second half of the 19th – early 20th century.

Sources: Tallinna Linna Statistiline Aastaraamat 1924. Tallinn, 1925. P. 15; Raimo Pullat. Eesti linnad ja linlased XVII sajandi lõpust 1917. aastani. Tallinn, 1972. P. 58.

a. The data for 1844 should be considered approximations. The first thorough census conducted in Tallinn was that of 1871.

b. In the data for 1844 and 1871, Jews were counted as Germans. In 1871, those of Jewish faith numbered 412; similar data for 1936 and 1844 are unavailable. In 1917, Jews in Tallinn were apparently included in the category “other nationalities.” Paul Jordan (Hg.). Die Resultate der Volkszählung der Stadt Reval am 16. November 1871. Reval, 1874. P. 106; and Raimo Pullat. Eesti linnad ja linlased XVII sajandi lõpust 1917. aastani. Tallinn, 1972. P. 58.

c. The data for 1917 are estimates by the Tallinn City Statistical Bureau. See Tallinna Linnaarhiiv (Tallinn City Archive = TLA). F. 195. N. 2. S. 2172. L. 10. The large number of members of other nationalities included the following: Latvians, 5,000; Poles, 4,000; Jews, 1,300; Lithuanians, 800. Most of these were war refugees.

Those who belonged to the Estland corporation of nobility (*Ritterschaft*) were a relatively small minority; in 1897, only 18.4 percent of all Germans in the city were members of the nobility. Throughout virtually their entire historical experience (that is, until the 1905 Revolution), the Baltic German aristocracy maintained strict estate barriers from the rest of the population of the city, Germans and non-Germans alike. A separate group among Baltic Germans were the so-called “literati” (*Literaten*) – those with higher education, primarily jurists, physicians, pastors, and schoolteachers. By the nineteenth century, the literati formed their own estate category, both in law and in culture, and the group experienced a social rapprochement with the Baltic German nobility. In Tallinn, the status of the literati was particularly high, and together with the wealthy merchant elite they formed a pa-

Jews ^b		other nationalities		nationality unknown		Total
number	%	number	%	number	%	
-	-	204	1.4	-	-	14,317
-	-	745	2.6	-	-	29,162
963	2.1	600	1.3	145	0.3	45,880
647	1.1	1,313	2.2	130	0.2	58,810
1,100	0.9	4,725	4.1	1,475	1.3	116,132
-	-	13,450	8.6	-	-	156,450
1,963	1.6	3,320	2.7	151	0.1	122,419

triciate that in both social and economic standing drew ever closer to the Estland nobility.

Tallinn also was home to a lower class of Germans. In 1897, nearly nine percent of Germans in Tallinn were of the peasant estate. Many lower status Germans were employed as service personnel – attendants, valets, maid-servants, barbers, cooks, waiters and the like – positions usually held by Estonians.⁴

Demographic growth among Tallinn's Germans in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century was on the whole stagnant. While in

⁴ Pervaiia vseobshchaia perepis' naseleniia Rossiiskoi Imperii, 1897 g. / Ed. by N. A. Troitskii. Vol. 49. St. Petersburg, 1905. Pp. 116-117; Paul Jordan (Hg.). Ergebnisse der baltischen Volkszählung vom 29. December 1881. Theil II. Ergebnisse der ehstländischen Volkszählung. 1. Band, Die Zählung in Reval. Lieferung I. Reval. S. 20.

the early twentieth century the number of Germans did not actually fall, as it had in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, their relative size within the city's population continued to decline due to the much greater Estonian and Russian increases. In 1897 Germans made up 17.5 percent of the city's population; by 1913 they comprised only 10.7 percent. This demographic decline reflects the pessimism with which many Germans saw their position within the Russian Empire. Some Germans emigrated to Germany, though in what numbers is not clear.⁵

The rapid growth of the Estonian population of Tallinn, in both absolute and relative terms, is the most important demographic change in the city's second century under tsarist rule. From just over 6,062 in 1844 (42.3 percent of the population), Estonians grew to 40,406 in 1897 (68.7 percent). Most of this growth was due to peasant immigration. Estonians in the city were simple laborers and servants, though some were small merchants and minor artisans – low prestige work that rarely entailed *Bürger* status. Newly arrived Estonians found employment in light industry, particularly in construction, and also as domestic servants and drivers. Estonian population growth was at its fastest in the waning years of the nineteenth and in the early twentieth century, occurring primarily in the form of peasant urban immigration spurred by a boom in industrial growth. Estonians were both attracted to the increasing economic opportunities in the city, and also driven from the countryside by rising land rents, particularly a problem for landless peasants. Improvements in transportation aided their migration.⁶

Even in the late nineteenth century, many Estonians tended to view other groups in the city not primarily in terms of nationality, but rather social class. The Estonian colloquial term *saks* (from the German *Sachse*, that is, “Saxon,” used to refer to all Germans) referred not only to Baltic Germans, but also to Estonians who had risen in wealth and status, or who had become urbanized and educated (in German). Estonians who sought to improve their social and economic position adopted German language, dress, and manners, Germanized their names, and otherwise did all they could to distance themselves from their peasant past.

The number of Russians in Tallinn grew steadily in the second half of the nineteenth century and in the early twentieth century, from some 3,000 at mid-century to just over 6,000 in 1897, though given the more rapid growth of the Estonians, the portion of Russians in the city remained rather

⁵ Reinhard Wittram. *Geschichte der baltischen Deutschen: Grundzüge und Durchblicke*. Stuttgart/Berlin, 1939. S. 176.

⁶ Hans Kruus. *Linn ja küla Eestis [Town and Village in Estonia]*. Tartu, 1920. Pp. 22-29.

steady at 10 to 11 percent until the rapid industrial expansion during World War I. The center of Tallinn's Russian community was merchants, who worked within their own artisan hierarchy, separate from that of Baltic Germans. Russian artisans had a firm presence in the city, even dominating some professions; Russian workers of the peasant estate lived in the suburbs, several of which became Russian-dominated.⁷ The overwhelming majority of tsarist troops stationed in the city were of Russian nationality, and beginning in the second half of the 1880s with the onset of administrative Russification, Russian bureaucrats settled in the city in increasing numbers. In the late nineteenth century and into the twentieth century, the lack of social cohesion among the three leading sections of the city's Russian population – the merchants, the officer corps, and the new cadre of bureaucrats – was noted by contemporaries.⁸

Tallinn's Estonians, Germans, and Russians shared the city with other ethnic groups, particularly Swedes, Finns, and Jews. By the early nineteenth century, the number of Swedes and Finns was small; however, the even smaller number of Jews grew after 1865 when the state permitted Jewish artisans to reside outside the Pale of Settlement.

Urbanization and industrialization, 1897-1914

The twin processes of urbanization and industrialization are key to understanding the transition of Tallinn from a small, tradition-bound Baltic town ruled by Baltic German urban elites to a modernizing city, run by an elected Estonian city council. The city's population had doubled every twenty-five years since the mid-nineteenth century, but in the waning years of the century to the end of the tsarist period, growth occurred even faster. Between the years 1897 and 1913 the population more than doubled, expanding from 58,810 to 116,132, and then increasing at an even faster rate in the war years, reaching 156,450 in 1917. Estonians accounted for most of this growth, though the rate of increase between 1897 and 1913 was equal between Estonians and Russians. Tallinn's demographic growth in the last two decades of tsarist rule had two primary sources: Estonian peasants arriving from the countryside to work in the city's expanding indus-

⁷ Venelased [Russians] // Tallinn. *Entsüklopeedia*. Tallinn, 2004. Vol. 1. P. 324.

⁸ In 1912 the largest Tallinn Russian-language daily wrote in an editorial of the “feebleness” (*bezpomoshchnost'*) of and “lack of coordination” (*razroznennost'*) of Russian society in the city. See *Revel'skie Izvestiia*. 1912. February 4. P. 1. See also Elfriede Lender. *Minu lastele [To My Children]*. Stockholm, 1967. P. 244.

tries, and Russian peasants and workers who took advantage of newly established rail links with Russia proper to seek work in the Baltic region.

In the late tsarist period, Tallinn emerged as an economic center, second in the Baltic provinces only to Riga. The late 1890s saw the founding in Tallinn of a number of large industrial factories, adding to the city's role as a commercial center. The largest of these was the factory *Dvigatel'*, founded as a joint-stock company in 1898. Production was focused upon railway wagons and other rolling stock, though diversification soon followed. By 1900 *Dvigatel'* had 3,000 workers.⁹ Other large new industrial concerns in Tallinn included a machine-building factory, and factories producing textiles, cellulose, and cement.¹⁰ Despite this growth, the town of Narva (part of St. Petersburg province) with its textile factories outmatched Tallinn in industrial production until the very end of the tsarist period. Only in 1913 did the number of workers in Tallinn exceed the number in Narva.¹¹ The first decade of the twentieth century witnessed intermittent industrial crises in Tallinn, as elsewhere in the Russian Empire, and economic instability remained until the years immediately before the outbreak of World War I. Tallinn shared in the economic growth in the Russian empire beginning in 1911 as the state expanded military production. In 1909 the tsarist state selected Tallinn as a central location for the building of military ships, and construction of a fortified naval base and military shipbuilding works began in the spring of 1912. Construction of ships began in the fall of 1913, and work commenced on an expansion of the Tallinn harbor to prepare it for wartime needs. Railway construction expanded, and military industrial orders also led to further growth in machine-building.¹²

Despite gaps in the census data after 1897, it is clear that the last two decades of tsarist rule in Tallinn were the period of most rapid economic expansion in the city's history and also occasioned the formation of an Estonian middle class. Estonian historian Raimo Pullat has presented data indicating that the percentage of Tallinn's property owners who were Esto-

nians (nicknamed *pürjerid* in Estonian, from the German *Bürger*) increased dramatically in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, reaching 68.7 percent of all property owners in the city in 1912.¹³ Growth of this middle class made the expansion of Estonian associational life possible.

Associational life, 1900-1920

The early years of the twentieth century witnessed the emergence of a self-consciously Estonian society in Tallinn that was markedly more confident than in the nineteenth century. The formation of an Estonian polity in Tallinn that placed a strong sense of its own nationality at the forefront of its activities and aims is closely associated with the growth of associational life in the city in the first few years of the twentieth century.

Associational life in late tsarist Russia developed vigorously in the Baltic provinces already in the first half of the nineteenth century, primarily among Baltic Germans.¹⁴ Acting on the Baltic German example, Estonians in Tallinn in the second half of the century formed several cultural associations, though until the 1890s these functioned primarily as social clubs. However, voluntary associations among Tallinn's Estonian population grew impressively in the early twentieth century until World War I, both in their membership and range of activities. The number of associations that were comprised nearly exclusively of Estonians rose from a mere handful at the turn of the century to over thirty in 1918. This increase was due to the Estonians' increased focus on social activities and causes, but also to the easing of restrictions by the state on associational life. On March 4, 1906, the state promulgated the "Temporary Laws on Associations and Unions" (*Vremenyie pravila ob obshchestvakh i soiuzakh*), according to which groups were not required to obtain permission from the state to form voluntary associations, though associations were required to register with local provincial authorities.

The first new Estonian association formed in the city in the twentieth century, the bicycling (and later, general sports) association *Kalev*, founded in May 1901, was often more deeply engaged in discussing social issues

⁹ *Dvigatel'* // Tallinn. Entsüklopeedia. Tallinn, 2004. Vol. 1. P. 48.

¹⁰ Maie Pihlamägi. Eesti industrialiseerimine 1870-1940 [The Industrialization of Estonia, 1870-1940]. Tallinn, 1999. P. 29.

¹¹ *Ibid.* P. 31.

¹² O. Karma. Tööstuslikult revolutsioonilt sotsialistlikule revolutsioonile Eestis. Tööstuse arenemine 1917. aastani [From the Industrial Revolution to the Socialist Revolution in Estonia: Industrial development to 1917]. Tallinn, 1963. Pp. 287, 293-297; A. Takkin. Tallinna tööstustöölise majanduslikust ja poliitilisest olukorrast 1914.-1917. a. [On the Economic and Political Status of Industrial Workers in Tallinn, 1914-1917] // Eesti NSV Teaduste Akadeemia Toimetised. VIII. Ühiskonnateaduste seeria. 1959. No. 2. P. 138.

¹³ Raimo Pullat. Tallinnast ja tallinlastest: Nihked elanikkonna sotsiaalses koosseisus, 1891-1914 [On Tallinn and Tallinners: Shifts in the Social Composition of the Population, 1891-1914]. Tallinn, 1966. P. 86. Of Estonian property owners in 1904 and 1908, over half (57.4 percent) owned property valued between 1,000 and 5,000 rubles, an amount which according to Pullat placed them among property owners of middling wealth.

¹⁴ A. D. Stepanskii. Istorii obshchestvennykh organizatsii dorevoliutsionnoi Rossii. Moscow, 1979. P. 10.

and politics than it was interested in holding bicycle rides and races – its putative purpose.¹⁵ Indeed, its founders chose this type of association precisely because they felt it likely would not arouse suspicion on the part of tsarist officials.¹⁶ A central issue for some *Kalev* members was the need to strengthen Estonian representation in the Tallinn city council. A contemporary later recalled:

When only the trustworthy were present, beyond the eye of the police, [*Kalev* members] spoke of things that had nothing to do with sports or bicycling. Neither the Germans nor the Russian authorities had any idea that serious action was being planned against those who then were the masters of Tallinn.¹⁷

Several of *Kalev*'s leaders were among those eligible Estonian electors who in coalition with Russian electors won control of the Tallinn city council in December 1904. With this victory, Estonians were able to enter the realm of real politics in Tallinn, and the political function of *Kalev* ended, though it did continue functioning as a sports society.

An important Tallinn association formed shortly after the passage of the 1906 "Temporary Laws" on voluntary associations was the Estland Society for Popular Education (Est. *Eestimaa Rahvahariduse Selts*). This association sought for several years to open in Tallinn a secondary school for Estonian children. Its efforts were unsuccessful, largely due to opposition from tsarist education officials in Riga. Estland governor I. V. Korostovets (in office July 1907 to November 1915) was highly suspicious of the society, forbidding it to open its own library and reading room in Tallinn, despite the society's offer that it name the library after emperor Alexander II.¹⁸ The association's greatest success was in organizing general-education evening courses in the city.¹⁹ Other new cultural associations for Estonians created

¹⁵ E. S. S. [Eesti Spordi Selts]. "Kalev": Juubeli album 1901-1921 [The E. S. S. (Estonian Sport Society) "Kalev": Anniversary album, 1901-1921] (n.p., n.d.). P. 2. The society was named for a mythical Estonian hero, Kalev.

¹⁶ Ferdinand Karlson. E. S. S. "Kalevi" sünnipidu [The E. S. S. "Kalev" Birthday Celebration] // Eesti Spordileht. 1931. No. 18-20. May 29. P. 2.

¹⁷ Ed. Jürisson. Kui murti saksluse selgroog... 25 aastat eestlaste ülemvõimu võidulepääsemisest Tallinna volikogus [When the Backbone of Germanism was Broken... 25 Years Since the Estonians' Victory in the Tallinn City Council] // Kaitse Kodu. 1929. No. 5. P. 1458.

¹⁸ Kaarel-Robert Pusta. Kehra metsast maailma [From the Forest of Kehra into the World]. Stockholm, 1960. P. 148.

¹⁹ Feliks Kinkar. Eesti haridusseltside ajaloo [On the History of Estonian Educational Associations]. Tartu, 1996. Pp. 74-83. Among the association's directors were leading

in the early twentieth century included the Estland Society for Popular Education, the Estonian Society for the Raising of Children, and the Estonian Evangelical Society of Young Men in Tallinn.

In the new century, Estonians also formed economic and charitable organizations, which in the nineteenth century had been the bailiwick of Baltic Germans. Consumer associations were founded; employees in various fields and professions created self-help organizations, including employees' assistance funds, workers' sickness insurance, and burial funds. Perhaps most significant for Estonian society in Tallinn was the founding in 1907 of a lending organization aimed at Estonians – the Tallinn Mutual Credit Union, for which a new building designed by the Finnish architect Eliel Saarinen was erected in 1912.²⁰

Active Estonian associations included not only newly created societies but also older ones from the nineteenth century that were reinvigorated. For instance, the Estonian Agricultural Society of Tallinn, founded in 1888, expanded from some 100 members in 1906 to over 1,700 in 1913, and the number of meetings held by the association each year increased by nearly five times in the same period.²¹ Annual exhibitions held by the society grew in size and in number of attendees, in part as a result of financial support granted by the Estonian-controlled Tallinn city government. The most noteworthy Estonian cultural association in Tallinn in the early twentieth century was the music association *Estonia*, organized in 1865. This society, which was virtually moribund in the early 1890s, rose to build a large combined theater and concert hall in 1913.

In 1905, in the aftermath of the Estonian-Russian electoral victory, Estonian women in Tallinn created what Elfriede Lender, wife of soon-to-be mayor Voldemar Lender, called an "Estonian society." The vast majority of Estonian women in Tallinn who moved in educated circles spoke German as the language of "proper" society, but now for the first time a sort of high society for Estonian speakers was forming, within which Estonian was used at formal receptions and other social functions.²²

Associational life remained strong among Tallinn's Baltic Germans in the early twentieth century. The most significant new Baltic German as-

figures in Estonian public life in Tallinn in the post-1905 period, including Tallinn mayor Voldemar Lender, Konstantin Konik, and Jüri Vilms.

²⁰ Krediid-Pank [Credit Bank] // Tallinn. Entsüklopeedia. Tallinn, 2004. Vol. 1. P. 240.

²¹ M. Aitsam. Tallinna Eesti Põllumeeste Selts [The Estonian Agricultural Society of Tallinn]. Tallinn, 1939. Pp. 228, 265.

²² Lender. Minu lastele. Pp. 164-165 and 262-271.

sociation was the Estland German Union (*Deutscher Verein*), created in Tallinn in September 1905. (Parallel associations were established in Livland and Kurland provinces.) At its peak in 1907-08, some two-thirds of the adult German population of Tallinn were members.²³ All three German unions sought to foster among Baltic Germans a greater sense of their German identity and a stronger attachment to the German nation, while remaining loyal to both their Baltic homeland and the house of the Romanovs.

Associational activity among Russians in Tallinn was considerably more subdued than that of the Estonians and Baltic Germans. Though Russifying governor S. V. Shakhovskoi (Estland governor from 1885 to 1894) dreamed of uniting all of Tallinn's Russians into a powerful social force, his goal was not realized. The most interesting aspect of Russian associational life in the early twentieth century was collaboration with Estonians, particularly in the group called the Revel' Literary Circle (Rus. *Revel'skii literaturnyi kruzhok*), the closest thing there was to a Russian intellectual center in Tallinn. A number of leading Estonian political leaders, including Konstantin Päts and Jaan Poska, were members.²⁴

The music association Estonia

In the early twentieth century, the musical society *Estonia* reasserted itself as the leading Estonian voluntary association. Its rise, or rather, rebirth, as a center for Estonian associational life had begun in the second half of the 1890s; a number of new members, dissatisfied with Estonian associations in Tallinn as places primarily for card playing and drinking, sought a venue where they could pursue, in the words of one contemporary, "culture and success" – not through assimilation to Baltic German language and culture, but as ethnic Estonians.²⁵ By 1900 *Estonia* had expanded its activities and had a choir, orchestra, and theater troupe. Gradually, the indecorous character of the association's earlier years diminished. Card play-

²³ This estimate is based on membership numbers given by the German Union and figures from the 1897 census, taking into account the small numerical increase Germans were undergoing in the early twentieth century. For German Union membership numbers, see Feliks Kinkar. *Lehekülg Eestimaa kultuuriloost: Baltisaksa haridsuseltseltsid Eestis, 1905-1914* [A Page from the Cultural History of Estonia: Baltic German Education Associations, 1905-1914]. Tallinn, 2000. P. 35.

²⁴ V. Novitskii. *Revel'skii Literaturnyi Kruzhok // Revel'skii Vestnik*. 1931. July 5. P. 2.

²⁵ See Jaan Kärner. "Estonia" kuuskümmend aastat: Kroonika 1865-1925 [Sixty Years of "Estonia": Chronicle 1865-1925]. Tallinn, 1925. P. 38.

ing, always a source of fights, was banned, and the society acquired a library and held public lectures.

In the early years of the twentieth century *Estonia* attracted to its ranks most of the young, university-educated Estonians who had begun to settle in Tallinn. The new members included Päts, Karlson, Jaan Teemant, and Mihkel Pung, all of whom later were leading figures in the Tallinn city government after the city council elections of December 1904. The leading Estonian politician in both the early twentieth century and in the interwar Estonian republic, Päts had received a law degree from Tartu (Dorpat, Yur'ev) University, and came to Tallinn at the turn of the century. In 1901 he co-founded and edited the first Estonian-language daily newspaper in Tallinn, *Teataja* (The Herald). From its inception, *Teataja* addressed political issues, including municipal government, and it played a vital role in the consolidation of the Estonian electorate in the early twentieth century and its victory in the city council election of 1904.²⁶ Päts was the leading Estonian figure in the electoral campaign for this election and was the key Estonian deputy in the Estonian-led city government in 1905. Teemant, president of the *Estonia* association from the fall of 1903 to late 1905, had studied law in St. Petersburg, where he participated in Estonian voluntary associations organized there and was a founder of an association of Estonian university students. In 1905 he was a leading figure in the Tallinn city government and also at the All-Estonian Congress held in Tartu (Dorpat, Yur'ev) in November of that year. Päts and Teemant were both forced to flee Tallinn and Estland after the declaration of martial law in Tallinn and northern Estland province on December 10, 1905.²⁷ Both eventually returned to Estland, however, and both became heads of state in independent Estonia.

Despite the upheavals of 1905 and 1906, the association *Estonia* remained intact and strong; its continuing vitality was borne out by its organization of an all-Estonian song festival in Tallinn in 1910, the first such festival at which the music performed was nearly exclusively by Estonian composers, not borrowed from other (notably, Baltic German) sources. This was a huge undertaking, as the festival included some 10,000 participants

²⁶ On the early history of *Teataja* see J. Käosaar. *Teataja saamiloost ja algupäevist* [The Founding and Early Days of *Teataja*] // J. Peegel (Ed.). *Läbi kahe sajandi* [Through Two Centuries]. Tallinn, 1971. Pp. 197-212.

²⁷ On Teemant, see *Eesti biograafiline leksikon* [Estonian Biographical Dictionary]. Tartu, 1926. Pp. 514-16. On Päts, see Ed. Laaman. *Konstantin Päts: poliitika- ja riigimees* [Konstantin Päts: Politician and Statesman]. Stockholm, 1949.

(choir members and musicians) – twice the number of participants in the previous all-Estonian song festival of 1896.²⁸

The 1910 song festival was closely related to the association's greatest accomplishment in the post-1905 period: the building of a large combined theater and concert hall in central Tallinn. The cornerstone was laid during the festival, and the building was completed three years later.²⁹ The idea to build the theater emerged as the result of discussions between the four largest Estonian voluntary associations beginning in 1902 about merging into one larger Estonian cultural association.³⁰ In the end, the theater was built, but the associations decided not to merge. A separate association, the *Estonia* Theater Building and Maintenance Joint Stock Company, was created in 1909 to coordinate the financing and construction of the building. Combined with interest payments on loans, the cost of the building amounted eventually to 811,000 rubles.³¹ The building was financed largely on loans from the aforementioned Tallinn Mutual Credit Union, owned and directed by Estonians. In 1912 the union completed construction of its own new building, located only a few hundred meters from the *Estonia* theater.³²

The planning, financing, and successful construction of the building was a sign that Estonian associational life and the Estonian community in Tallinn had matured. The theater was one of the largest and most impressive buildings in the city and was the most complicated and ambitious building project ever undertaken by Estonians anywhere in Estland or northern Livland province. Its significance for all Estonians and for the future of the Estonian people was emphasized in the dedicatory remarks of Estonian Orthodox

²⁸ Arnold and Ellen Takkin. Kolm laulupidu. Eesti laulupeod aastail 1909-1912 [Three Song Festivals. Estonian Song Festivals in the Years 1909-1912]. Tallinn, 1995. P. 38.

²⁹ The association's leaders had planned for the laying of the theater's cornerstone to be a central part of the song festival events. However, governor Korostovets placed so many conditions on the proposed occasion – no speeches in Estonian and no singing of the Estonian patriotic song “Mu isamaa, mu õnn ja rõõm” (“My fatherland – my joy and happiness”) – that a public cornerstone laying was cancelled. See Kärner. “Estonia” kuuskümmend aastat. P. 52.

³⁰ Teataja. August 17, 1902. P. 1. The associations were the cultural associations *Estonia* and *Lootus* [Hope], the Tallinn Estonian Agricultural Society, and the Estonian Artisans' Assistance Society.

³¹ For the history of this association (in Estonian, *Estonia Teatri Ehituse ja Ülalpidamise Osaiühisus*), see H. Peets. “Estonia” teatri – ja kontsertihoone ajalugu [The History of the “Estonia” Theater and Concert Hall]. Tallinn, 1938. Pp. 135-172.

³² H. Arman, et al. Eesti arhitektuuri ajalugu [The History of Architecture in Estonia]. Tallinn, 1965. P. 415.

priest Karp Tiisik. Despite the presence of governor Korostovets, Tiisik spoke only in Estonian.³³

Voluntary associations in Tallinn in the last decade and a half before the outbreak of World War I were arguably the birthplace of both Estonian urban civil society and the modern Estonian nation as a political entity. Voluntary associations were forums in which Estonians gained organizational skills and learned how to negotiate with tsarist officials and with the traditional masters of the city, the Baltic German elite. In voluntary associations Estonians also learned how to mobilize the economic strength of the increasing numbers of Estonians in the city and the growing Estonian middle class. The association that built the *Estonia* theater, in particular, provided positions of great responsibility; many within the association later used the skills and experience they developed when they assumed leading positions in the government of independent Estonia after World War I.³⁴

During World War I, Estonian associations continued their activity, though military mobilization decreased strength and activity levels to a great degree. The *Estonia* theater was turned into a military hospital, and theatrical presentations were drastically reduced in number. In 1915, however, resources were found for the society's orchestra to give free Sunday concerts, and in 1916 the society again began staging theatrical presentations.³⁵ After the 1917 October Revolution in Tallinn, Estonian Bolsheviks threatened to seize and nationalize the theater. When by January 1918 nothing had happened, the society's employees – actors, musicians, and workers – met and declared that they, not the society's governing board, controlled the society, and they appointed an acting director as “theater commissar.”³⁶

Some limitations on associational life in Tallinn followed with the arrival of the German army in Tallinn in February 1918, though the extent of these

³³ Peets. *Estonia teatri- ja kontsertihoone ajalugu*. P. 108. See also Pusta. *Kehra metsast maailma*. P. 147.

³⁴ The directors of the joint stock company during the years 1909 (the year of its creation) to 1919 included the following future leading Estonian politicians: Jaan Poska, Konstantin Päts, Jüri Vilms, Otto Strandman, Anton Uesson, Friedrich Akel, and Konstantin Konik. Two leaders in the Estonian-led city council in the years after 1904 were also directors: Voldemar Lender (mayor from 1906 to 1913), and Juhan Umbli, a leading Estonian city council deputy. See Peets. “Estonia” teatri- ja kontserthoone ajalugu. Pp. 174-179.

³⁵ Kärner. “Estonia” kuuskümmend aastat. P. 60.

³⁶ *Ibid.* P. 62.

limitations is not clear. In June the military authorities required each association in the city to submit a copy of its statutes, a short statement concerning its purpose, identifying the language in which the association's affairs were conducted, and a list of members. Apparently, some associations, particularly those with Russian memberships, did not even apply for confirmation by the German authorities. These included the Revel' Literary Circle (*Revel'skii literaturnyi kruzhok*) and the Estland Russian National Club (*Estliandskii russkii natsional'nyi klub*), founded in 1912.³⁷ With the withdrawal of German forces in November, the association *Estonia's* former board of directors resumed control.

The implications of Tallinn's vigorous associational life in the late tsarist years for the emergence of an active Estonian polity were not lost on contemporary observers. During construction of the *Estonia* theater and the Tallinn Mutual Credit Union, Estland governor Korostovets had commented, "It's obvious – you are building for yourselves an Estonian bank and parliament."³⁸ Korostovets's prediction came true. In late 1918 and in 1919 the Estonian provisional government conducted financial operations in the credit union building, and the Estonian Constituent Assembly convened in the *Estonia* theater in April 1919.

Municipal government, 1904 to 1920

After associational life, the arena in which Tallinn most clearly made the transition from Baltic German to Estonian city, distancing itself from its traditional, estate-based past and moving into modernity, was municipal self-government. With the introduction of the tsarist Municipal Statute in Tallinn and other cities in the Baltic region in 1877, the Baltic German magistracy lost power to a city council, elected by property owners in the city. A three-tiered voting system ensured that the proportion of representation was tied to income levels. Baltic German urban elites retained power for several decades, no longer empowered by the estates, but instead by the new yardsticks of Russian law and personal wealth. From the seating of the first city council in January 1878, the few Estonian and Russian deputies,

³⁷ Tallinna Linnaarhiiv (Tallinn City Archive = TLA). F. 196. N. 1. S. 169. Several Russian associations were approved, however, including the Russian Assistance Society and the Tallinn Russian Club. The latter was approved despite a written statement by the director of police asserting that most members were former Russian officers and "convinced monarchists." See TLA. F. 195. N. 1. S. 177. L. 187.

³⁸ Peets. "Estonia" teatri- ja kontserthoone ajalugu. P. 161.

together with the occasional German, formed an opposition to the dominant conservative Baltic German majority.³⁹ During his tenure as governor, Shakhovskoi had done all he could to weaken the position of Baltic Germans in municipal affairs. These efforts were undermined in 1892 when a new Municipal Statute promulgated from St. Petersburg disenfranchised many previously eligible Estonian and Russian voters by raising the level of property required for participation in municipal elections. While the raised property requirement caused the number of electors to fall, the new Statute eliminated the three-tiered voting system, thus making every vote equal. The Statute also strengthened oversight by the state, and the governor could now veto city council decisions.

The task of building up an Estonian electorate was a challenging one. When the politically-ambitious Estonian school teacher Juhan Umbliia moved to Tallinn in the late 1890s, he visited the home of Jaan Poska, a respected lawyer, and the only Estonian and non-German lawyer in private practice in Tallinn at the time. "The Germans have all the wealth, education, and power," Umbliia recorded him saying. "We can't do anything against them – we don't have the people or the resources."⁴⁰ Umbliia was elected to the city council in 1900 and was appointed to the commission that oversaw property assessment within the city. Poska realized the opportunity this presented, and he suggested to Umbliia that he use the position to get Estonians appointed as voting proxies for women and minors whose property permitted them, as per the Municipal Statute, a proxy vote in city council elections.⁴¹ A central role in the search for what amounted to voting sponsors was played by a number of young, energetic, educated Estonians who had settled in Tallinn in the early years of the new century. This group largely intersected with the men who reinvigorated Estonian associational life in the city at this same time. As a collective, these young men created an intellectual and cultural environment in the city important for the mobilization of middle-class Estonians as a political force, one that, when allied with eligible Russian voters, was capable of ousting Baltic German elites from the Tallinn

³⁹ Sulev Mäeltsemees. Tallinna linna juhtimine: 100 aastat eestlaste võimuletulekust pealinnas [Governing Tallinn: 100 Years Since Estonians' Coming to Power in the Capital]. Tallinn, 2004. P. 17.

⁴⁰ Eduard Laaman. Jaan Poska: Eesti riigitegelase elukäik [Jaan Poska: The Life of an Estonian Statesman]. 3rd edition. Tartu, 1998. P. 21.

⁴¹ Ibid. Pp. 21-22. See the Municipal Statute of 1892. Chapter II. Section 1. Paragraph 26. Similar rules for proxy votes were in the 1877 Municipal Statute; see Chapter II. Section 1. Paragraph 20.

municipal government. Soon, Konstantin Päts emerged as the leader of Estonian political activity in Tallinn.

In a series of articles in *Teataja*, Päts emphasized the importance of the city council in Tallinn's urban life and criticized the Baltic German elites who controlled municipal administration. Päts fought the notion, held by many Estonians in Tallinn, that the city's Baltic German population was the natural and expected leader in all municipal affairs, and he encouraged Estonians in the city to become politically aware and, as far as possible, politically active. In January 1904, Päts wrote in the paper:

...[T]he current ruling party is attempting to do everything possible to keep broader groups of the city's residents out of municipal self-government... [T]he current party in this question is utterly conservative: it does not want administration by those who live in the towns and cities, but rather administration of a single class... Urban self-government should know and take into account the needs of all city residents. It can do this only when all types of residents occupy their positions as permitted by law.⁴²

In the elections, held between December 9 and 15, 1904, the Estonian-Russian bloc emerged with a stunning victory, capturing 43 of the 60 city council seats. The margin of victory surprised the Estonians and Russians themselves. The opposition bloc of elected deputies was dominated by Estonians: 37 were Estonian, five were Russian, and one was German. The cooperation of Russians and Estonians in electoral groups opposed to Baltic German domination was a decades-old tradition in the city council, and one of the elected Russians, Gavril Filippovich Beliagin, went on to occupy important positions in the city council, becoming deputy mayor in 1908.⁴³

The resounding victory resulted from first, an increase in the size of the Estonian and Russian electorate, and second, the mobilization of Estonian and Russian voters. The entire electorate Tallinn in 1904 had increased in size by 16.4 percent from that of the preceding election – from 1,697 elec-

tors in 1900 to 2,031 electors in 1904.⁴⁴ Furthermore, the level of electoral participation also rose. In 1904, 61.9 percent of all qualified electors voted, which was 17.5 percentage points higher than the level of electoral participation in 1900, and 28.7 percentage points above that in the 1896 elections.⁴⁵ As the nationality of electors was not recorded, it cannot be determined precisely what portion of these increases were contributed by each nationality in Tallinn. Undoubtedly the excitement surrounding the election increased the interest of qualified electors of all nationalities. But in light of the push for greater electoral participation by Estonians, much of the increase in electoral turnout in 1904 over the levels in the previous two elections is clearly attributable to Estonians and their Russian allies. The Estonian drive to make all eligible Estonian electors aware of the importance of the upcoming elections was intense. "All hopes were not placed in holding public meetings," wrote Estonian elector Mihkel Pung. "[I]nstead, stumping was done house by house, street by street, and the importance of the upcoming elections was explained to each house owner."⁴⁶

Control over the council remained in Estonian hands for the remainder of the tsarist era, even in the difficult, revolutionary months of 1905 and while tsarist punitive expeditions arrested several hundred suspected revolutionaries in December 1905 and early 1906. This control was anchored in the support that the city council had from the city's non-Germans, Estonians especially, whose level of property qualified them to vote. The Estonian and Russian populations continued to increase in size, both more than doubling between 1897 and 1913, from 40,406 to 83,133 Estonians and 6,008 to 13,275 Russians, while the increase in the number of Germans was modest, 10,297 to 12,424.⁴⁷ While there are no statistics available on the increase in the number of eligible voters broken down by nationality, the continued growth of the Estonian and Russian middle class in these

⁴² *Teataja*. 1904. January 17. P. 1.

⁴³ Gorodskoe khoziaistvo Revelia 1905-1915. Pt. I. P. 85. Beliagin had strong roots in the Baltic region; his family had lived in Estland for at least several generations. Beliagin himself spoke good Estonian. See Lender. *Minu lastele*. P. 153. It should be noted that not all Russians elected to the city council in 1904 were associated with the opposition. The council included three additional Russians, who most likely were Germanized to one degree or another.

⁴⁴ Toomas Karjahärm. *Eesti linnakodanluse poliitilisest formeerumisest 1870-ndate aastate lõpust kuni 1914. aastani (linna- ja duumavalimiste materjalide põhjal)* [The Political Formation of an Estonian Urban Bourgeoisie From the Late 1870s to 1914 (Based on Materials on City and Duma Elections)] // *Eesti NSV Teaduste Akadeemia Toimetised. Ühiskonnateadused*. 1973. Vol. 22. P. 254. The increase in the size of the electorate in 1900 over that in 1896 was 9.4 percent (1,697 to 1,538).

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* P. 254.

⁴⁶ M. Pung. *Eestlaste võit Tallinna linnavalimistel* [The Estonians' Victory in the Tallinn City Elections] // K. Päts. *Tema elu ja töö: Kaasaeglaste mälestusi* [K. Päts. His Life and Work: Contemporary Memoirs]. Tallinn, 1934. P. 100.

⁴⁷ Pullat. *Eesti linnad ja linlased*. P. 58.

years leads to the conclusion that the size of the non-German electorate grew more rapidly than the German electorate.

One of the most remarkable things about city government in Tallinn in the decade before the revolution of 1917 was how well it functioned, especially given the turnover in city council leadership in early 1905 and the violence that this leadership had to cope with.⁴⁸ Before 1905, Estonians had never been included in the inner workings of local government. While one might expect that such a drastic change at the helm of the city government would result in instability, lack of confidence, and recriminations, none of this occurred after 1905.

Significant differences existed among the city council members – differences in wealth, native language, and cultural background. As in the years before 1905, when Baltic Germans controlled the city council, these differences generally divided deputies into two groups: Germans and non-Germans, that is, Estonians and Russians. There were instances when an Estonian or Russian deputy tended to side with the Germans on issues in which this major division was prominent, but such cases were rare. It is difficult, however, to know to what degree national sentiment was openly acknowledged by deputies themselves as a factor in discussions of any particular issue. Apparent or potential differing interests between Estonians, Russians, and Germans as separate groups were rarely identified as such in the work of the council. Conflicting views within the council were generally rooted in the very different needs and interests of the people whom the deputies represented. In the era before 1905 when the council was controlled by Baltic Germans, the Estonian and Russian deputies often were conservative in fiscal matters. However, when the Estonians and Russians were at the city's helm, it was the Baltic Germans who urged caution in municipal spending. What is clear is that in the Tallinn city council Estonians not only had a forum in which they could discuss issues of central importance to the majority Estonian population, but also the means by which these issues could be addressed and remedied.

Relations between the city council and local tsarist officials in the period after 1905 were on the whole good, and sometimes even cordial. The tensions evident in 1905 and in 1906 soon abated. The city council records do not bear evidence of substantial interference in the work of the city

⁴⁸ Even while in exile in Switzerland and Finland from 1905 to 1909, Päts continued working to improve Estonians' skills in managing municipal affairs by translating into Estonian works published in Western Europe on local government, including books by Adolf Damaschke and Franz Lieber. See Mäeltsemees. Tallinna linna juhtimine. P. 25.

council and municipal administration after 1906 either by officials from Estland province or by central state ministries in St. Petersburg. The new mayor of Tallinn, Estonian Voldemar Lender, got along well with governor Korostovets.⁴⁹ Lender's successor, Poska, was on friendly terms with several high-level provincial officials, including the Tallinn chief of police, though his relationship with Korostovets was somewhat cool. However, in one instance, Poska and other Estonian leaders secured acquiescence from the governor on various issues with the help of joint excursions to the Estonian countryside, freely lubricated with rounds of vodka.⁵⁰

The city council's primary functions remained economic and administrative for the remainder of the tsarist era. In his inaugural speech before the city council in April 1913, newly elected mayor Poska outlined the main tasks facing municipal government in Tallinn: raising revenue for improving the city's infrastructure;⁵¹ increasing the number of commercial enterprises in areas in which the city held monopolies; keeping the city budget balanced; and establishing an office within the municipal administration to oversee compliance with city ordinances.⁵² Poska increased the size of the municipal board and improved the efficiency of the day-to-day running of city affairs. During his tenure (April 1913 to April 1917) advances were made particularly in education and health care.⁵³

Ten years at the helm of the Tallinn city council produced an Estonian leadership that was eminently responsible and capable. Good relations were maintained with the tsarist state and its officials. Relations within the Estonian-Russian bloc remained good in the years after 1905, and the bloc may even have strengthened in the years immediately before World War I. Estonian leaders in the city council were willing to work with the Baltic German opposition, though they were realistic enough to realize that the divisions within Tallinn society would not disappear. As Poska told the council in his first mayoral address in 1913:

⁴⁹ Elfriede Lender, the mayor's wife, attests to this in her memoirs. See Lender. *Minu lastele*. Pp. 257-261. Korostovets was comfortable with the Lenders in part because each had a Russian-language education.

⁵⁰ Laaman. Jaan Poska. Pp. 40-41.

⁵¹ In a 1915 speech before the Tallinn society of house owners, Poska mentioned the areas in which improvements were overdue: paving streets, expanding the sewage system, and building a city hospital and more schools. See Gorodskoe khoziaistvo Revelia 1905-1915. Pt. I. P. 96.

⁵² *Ibid.* Pp. 94-95.

⁵³ Laaman. Jaan Poska. Pp. 38, 42.

I am convinced that for each one of us the interests of the city come first in importance, in defense of which all groups in the city council can work jointly. A complete confluence of all these groups is, of course, impossible and perhaps not even always desirable. However, it is necessary that any opposition group in the council recognize its responsibility.⁵⁴

Despite the good relations between the city council and officials of the Russian state, there is evidence that Estonian leaders felt constrained by the limitations of working within the tsarist order itself. On the occasion of his departure from Estland as governor in November 1915, Korostovets met with the city council and praised its work in education and in coping with the difficulties the war had brought the people of Tallinn. In response, Poska thanked Korostovets and added:

[The] apparatus of the Municipal Administration is very imperfect: there is much that is superfluous and much that is wanting. Its primary shortcoming is that the law seeks to force civic initiative into the framework of a bureaucratic machine. Hence the frequent friction and conflict that our Municipal Administration has not been able to avoid, despite unending efforts to reconcile it with the views of the Government.⁵⁵

In this veiled criticism of the tsarist order, Poska made clear his view that the work of the city council would be improved only when the conditions of “civic initiative” (*obshchestvennaia samodeiatel'nost'*) were not constrained by the “views of the Government.”

More than four years later, in 1920, civic initiative could be comfortably wielded in Tallinn. Intervening was the continuing pressures of wartime, then the chaos of 1917, the German occupation from February to November 1918, and then war with Russian troops on the eastern border of Estonia, with an armistice coming only in January 1920. Municipal elections held in the summer of 1917 showed the Bolshevik and SR parties to be the most popular parties in the city, receiving 31 and 22 percent of the vote, respectively. The political scene in 1917 was complicated by the presence of non-Estonians: Russian soldiers, who in the elections formed over sixteen percent of the electorate, and war refugees, particular Latvians. Non-Estonians made up over three-fourths of the Tallinn Soviet Executive Committee.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Reprinted in Gorodskoe khoziaistvo Revelia 1905-1915. Pt. I. P. 95.

⁵⁵ TLA. F. 195. N. 4. S. 38. L. 310.

⁵⁶ Toivo U. Raun. *Estonia and the Estonians*. Updated 2nd ed. Stanford, 2001. P. 101.

Bolsheviks held power in the city briefly, taking control in October from Jaan Poska, the Provisional Government's commissar in the province (which now combined Estland and northern Livland). The non-Bolshevik city council was removed only in late January 1918, less than a month before the Bolsheviks fled from the advancing German army. Before the arrival of the Germans, a small group of representatives of the provincial assembly elected in May 1917 declared Estonian independence on February 24 in Tallinn. The group was led, not surprisingly, by Konstantin Päts.

The continuity in political leadership among Estonians from the late tsarist period all the way through the end of independence in 1940 is remarkable. Many of the leading politicians in the interwar republic cut their political teeth on the Estonians' victory in municipal elections in Tallinn in 1904, and then in the years to the end of the tsarist regime learned the lessons of administration, cooperation, and compromise. With the exception of the brief period of Bolshevik rule and the months of German occupation, the reins of municipal administration in Tallinn from 1905 to 1934, when Päts seized power in a coup, was in the hands of one of three men: Voldemar Lender, mayor from 1906 to 1913; Jaan Poska, mayor from 1913 to 1917 (also Estland governor from March to October, 1917); and Anton Uesson (originally a professional colleague of Lender's), mayor from 1919 to 1934.

City planning and urban architecture

The confidence and resolve of the Estonians to remake the city into a modern, growing metropolis and to leave behind the town's past as the seat of a static, if not stagnant, Baltic German elite is clearly manifest in both the buildings erected in Tallinn in the first decade and a half of the twentieth century, and also in the broader plans the city made for future expansion. Overall, there was continuity in the architectural style of public buildings erected in Tallinn in the late tsarist period and in the years of Estonian independence.⁵⁷ Designs selected for major new building projects in Tallinn in the early twentieth century included ones by Baltic German, Russian, and Finnish architects. The latter in particular helped develop an Estonian national romantic style of architecture, which represented a clear departure from the buildings erected when the city was under Baltic German control.⁵⁸ The plans of the aforementioned *Estonia* theater and concert hall

⁵⁷ Arman, et al. *Eesti arhitektuuri ajalugu*. P. 438.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* P. 413. On the connection between architecture and nation building in Estonian areas in the tsarist period and in independent Estonia, see Jörg Hackmann. *Architektur als*

were based on an original design by Finns Armas Lindgren and Wivi Lönn. An interesting contrast to these buildings in Tallinn is the Estland Nobility Credit Union, completed in 1904 and designed by the Riga-based Baltic German architect August Reinberg. The gothic lines of the building and its accompanying tower clearly echo structures of medieval Tallinn. However, Baltic German and Estonian tastes in architecture in fact were similar, and the style of national romanticism is seen in buildings commissioned both by Estonians and Germans. The most significant Baltic German-commissioned structure of these years was the new German Theater, built in this style, and completed in 1910. The competition for this commission was won by the Petersburg architects Aleksei Bubyer and Nikolai Vassilev. (Russian architects adopted this style from Finland, calling it *severnyi modern*.)⁵⁹ The Estonian and German theaters were built on the same city block, just outside the Old Town walls, but while the façade of the German theater faces the Old Town, the *Estonia* theater faces in the opposite direction, toward the suburbs where the Estonian working class dominated.

The above-mentioned structures all contrast greatly with the Alexander Nevsky Russian Orthodox Cathedral, completed in 1900, which dominates Toompea Hill above Tallinn's Old Town. The impetus for this large church in the Neo-Russian style, designed by Mikhail Preobrazhenskii, came from the Russification era of the 1880s, and it was commissioned by the tsarist state.⁶⁰ The state erected no additional major buildings in the early twentieth century.

The ambition of Tallinn's Estonian-led city government in the late tsarist years is reflected in the ambitious design for municipal development authored by Eliel Saarinen and approved by the city in 1913. The plans foresaw a growth in population to 300,000 in the following quarter century, nearly triple the estimated 1913 population of 116,000, and they predicted another two-fold population expansion in the more distant future.⁶¹ Hopes of realizing Saarinen's vision for the development of Tallinn ended with the outbreak of World War I; the Estonian Republic that emerged from the war did not have the means to carry it out. Nevertheless, city

officials had the vision and energy to dream big already in the tsarist period.

Baltic German city leaders had realized at the turn of the century the urgency for the city to seriously consider needs and directions for its future physical expansion. However, they did not grasp the social and economic transformation already underway, and little was accomplished beyond charging a new city council commission formed in 1901 with the task of working on the question of future plans for the city.⁶² In 1911, the Estonian-led city council took up the issue anew and announced a competition for the best plan for city expansion.⁶³ Saarinen's winning design, selected in March 1913 by a group that included experts from Berlin, Helsinki, and Kiev, left the medieval Old Town unchanged, but outlined the construction of an entirely new administrative and financial district, to be located to the southeast of the old medieval center. Traffic would follow along a new grand boulevard, running from Lasnamäe in the northeast to Mustamäe in the southwest. Several new impressive squares were to be constructed at various points along this boulevard, onto which large arterial roads would feed; the plan even foresaw underground rail lines reaching into the suburbs.

In retrospect, it is clear that the plan was based on overoptimistic projections for Tallinn's growth. In the event, the city's population in 1934 was only 137,792 and did not reach 300,000 until 1962. Saarinen's estimates seem to be based on population growth in the fifteen years immediately prior to the city planning competition, and in these years the city population grew by nearly 100 percent (97.5 percent between 1897 and 1913); in this light Saarinen's projections did not seem outlandish.

City planning came to a halt with the outbreak of the war and remained dormant until independence was established in 1920. The rise in population from 116,000 to 156,500 between 1913 and 1917, the result primarily of war refugees and the increased numbers of workers in war industries, did not lead to a large amount of new urban building. The unrest of 1917, the nine months of German occupation in 1918, and the efforts to drive remaining Soviet forces out of the country also did not leave the time, resources, or energy for new construction. In the period from the fall of 1917 to 1919, some 56,000 people left the city – primarily Russian workers and non-Estonian wartime refugees, but also Baltic Germans and some Esto-

Symbol. *Nation-building* in Nordosteuropa. Estland und Lettland im 20. Jahrhundert // Angermann and Mühle (Hg.). Riga im Prozeß der Modernisierung. S. 149-172.

⁵⁹ Mart Kalm. Eesti 20. sajandi arhitektuur [Twentieth-Century Architecture of Estonia]. Tallinn, 2002. Pp. 28, 31.

⁶⁰ Aleksander Nevski kirik [Alexander Nevsky Church] // Tallinn. Entsüklopeedia. Tallinn, 2004. Vol. 1. Pp. 17-18.

⁶¹ Gorodskoe khoziaistvo Revelia. Part I. P. 13.

⁶² Dmitri Bruns. Tallinn. Linnaehituslik kujunemine [Tallinn: the Course of City Building]. Tallinn, 1993. P. 103.

⁶³ TLA. F. 195. N. 4. S. 34. L. 408-409.

nians – a loss of about 35 percent of the population.⁶⁴ In the years 1918 to 1921, only 17 new apartment buildings were erected.⁶⁵ It took until 1924 for the city to recover to pre-war population levels.⁶⁶

Architecturally, Tallinn in the 1920s looked much the same as it had in the last years of tsarist rule. City architect Eugen Habermann drew up a set of urban planning directives in 1921, but these were very modest, involving little more than plans for some new connecting streets, the straightening and widening of other streets, and guidelines for the further development of areas around already-existing squares. More ambitious plans than these were impossible given the unpredictability of Estonia's and Tallinn's future economic and demographic development.⁶⁷

Conclusion

Historians have paid an increasing amount of attention in recent years to aspects of life in the late tsarist period away from the arenas of revolution and grand politics. Studies on civil society and *obshchestvennost'*, the public sphere, associational life, the middle class, professionals, and other elements of what can be called a "liberal milieu" have found a vitality that earlier had been discounted or ignored. Examinations of these aspects of communal life are beginning to be made for areas beyond the capital cities of St. Petersburg and Moscow, though as of yet few have been written on non-Russian areas of the empire.⁶⁸

In a city whose population was nearly eighty-four percent Estonian in 1922, having grown from two-thirds Estonian in 1897 and nearly three-quarters Estonian at the outbreak of the war, it is, of course expected that

⁶⁴ Tallinna linna statistiline aastaraamat 1940 [Tallinn City Statistical Annual, 1940]. Tallinn, 1941. P. 11. Cited in Bruns. Tallinn. Linnaehituslik kujunemine. P. 110.

⁶⁵ E. Mäsak. Elutingimustest Tallinna eeslinnades 1870-1940 [On the Living Conditions in Tallinn's Suburbs, 1870-1940]. Tallinn, 1981. P. 97.

⁶⁶ Tallinna linna statistiline aastaraamat 1924 [Tallinn City Statistical Annual, 1924]. Tallinn, 1925. P. 15.

⁶⁷ Bruns. Tallinn. Linnaehituslik kujunemine. Pp. 111-112. Urban planning in Tallinn in the interwar period has been most recently examined in: Andreas Fülberth. Tallinn – Riga – Kaunas. Ihr Ausbau zu modernen Hauptstädten 1920-1940. Köln, 2005. S. 48-182.

⁶⁸ See Manfred Hildermeier's recent study on late tsarist Yaroslavl'. *Liberales Milieu in russischer Provinz. Kommunales Engagement, bürgerliche Vereine und Zivilgesellschaft 1900-1917 // Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*. 2003. Bd. 51. 2003. S. 498-548. Noteworthy here is Ulrike von Hirschhausen's work on social modernization in late tsarist Riga.

the majority population would have the strongest influence on life in Tallinn. The Estonians' growing economic strength, increased social confidence, and impressive new political skills combined with democratic rule, first installed in 1917, though not firmly and comfortably until 1920, to transform Tallinn into an Estonian city. While democratic rule arrived only with the collapse of the tsarist regime, the key social and political transformations of life in Tallinn occurred in the tsarist period, in the years before World War I. It was then that the city became Estonian, not through revolution and violence, but through the determined, peaceful efforts of the city's Estonian population.

One might ask why civic nationalism as described by Ernest Renan never developed in Tallinn, or elsewhere in the Baltic region of the Russian Empire. Tallinn's peoples had similarities of experience in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and aspects of civil society emerged both within and between nationalities. However, the city's population never developed a culture that was shared enough for all to feel that their joint participation was an "everyday plebiscite." Civic nationalism in Tallinn most likely would have had to develop around a Russian orientation. This may have been possible for Tallinn's Estonians, but not for the city's Germans, particularly for the German elite, whose estate-based traditional privileges were increasingly encroached upon by the tsarist state. The deep differences among Tallinn's residents, rooted in the disparities of status of past centuries, were never fully overcome by the elements of civil society that did develop.

The newly independent state of Estonia was by no means a tabula rasa: its social, demographic, economic, and political profile was formed in the tsarist period. More study of the great changes of the early twentieth century will not only contribute to our understanding of the final years of the tsarist empire, it will also help us put in a broader context the environment in which Estonia began its life as an independent nation-state.

SUMMARY

В своей статье Брэдли Вудворт исследует процесс национализации многонационального окраинного города Российской империи Таллинна (Reval, Ревель) в конце XIX – начале XX века как часть процесса территориализации (формирования образа "родной земли") национального сообщества. В центре исследования – процессы развития граж-

данского городского общества, жизнь профессиональных и общественных ассоциаций, местное самоуправление. Все эти аспекты городской жизни, как замечает автор, были заслонены в историографии темами национальной и классовой борьбы. Автор обращает внимание на то, что в языке самоописания эстонского сообщества столица Эстляндии воспринималась как инонациональное пространство, а вертикально мобильные эстонские элементы, проникающие в городскую среду, описывались в немецких терминах социальной и культурной иерархии. Данное положение меняется во второй половине XIX века с развитием индустриализации и изменением демографического баланса города. Автор прослеживает развитие форм гражданской и политической жизни эстонского общества, диалектическое взаимодействие этих форм с доминантными формами немецко-балтийского общества и то, как эти формы создавали фундамент для современного национального развития с опорой на национальную территорию и политическую независимость.