

Ott Raun. Preface

Before you lies a selection of articles from the Estonian historical-cultural journal *Tuna* that have a more or less direct link with Russian history, or with Estonian-Russian relations. The period at the end of the 1980s and the start of the 1990s was a time of great upheaval and change in the eastern part of Europe. By the end of the decade, the time was ripe to interpret these events. For the first time, it was possible for historians to access archives or files in Estonia that had previously been closed. This was one of the reasons why the historical-cultural journal *Tuna* was founded in Estonia eight years ago, in 1998. The initiative to establish the magazine came from the Archives. “*Tuna*” in Estonian means “before”, as in the day before yesterday, or the year before last year. From the very beginning, the objective of the journal was to place the Estonian approach to history in a broad context. In addition to publishing treatments of archival documents, *Tuna* was also established in order to publish analyses of a more general nature along with discussions, and to deal with the philosophy and theory of contemporary history. Our authoritative international Editorial Board has scholars from Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands and the U.S as its members, in addition to scholars of Estonian history. When we compiled a bibliography for the journal at the start of 2005, the range of articles that have been published over the years came to our attention once again, starting with the Sumerians and ancient Egyptians, up to topics that pertain to modern Estonia. The greatest emphasis has been placed on the 20th century, which was the most complicated period in the history of Estonia.

If we in Estonia do not have a relatively unified view of many of the events in our recent past, what chance would the rest of the world – particularly Europe and Russia – have of understanding us? In addition, there are many factors that create tension, particularly in respect to Estonian-Russian relations, and relations between Estonians and Russians. This is at least to some extent due to a lack of knowledge, or partial information or misinterpretations. Although it is not possible to understand everything the same way, it is possible to bring the views of people closer together. This is why we had the idea to make available – to those who do not understand Estonian, and for whom our English-language summaries in each issue are insufficient – the writings of Estonian historians on joint Estonian-Russian history, and other parallel tracks of history in respect to Russia and Estonia. Although everything that has been published on these topics would simply not fit between these covers, a cross-section of the topics that have been analyzed in Estonian has been selected, in order to make it available to Russian-speaking readers. By “Russian-speaking readers”, we mean people who live in Estonia and think in Russian, and those in Russia who

have an interest in historical and Baltic issues, as well as people in the West who take an interest in history. In this latter category, there are incomparably more Russian-speakers than Estonian-speakers.

What we are presenting here is not a smooth flow of items about history from its beginnings to the present time, where all the most important historical events have been ranked in strict order. Textbooks of popular history and overviews have of course been previously translated, as well as some document collections. Recently, a selection of Estonian life stories was also published. Our aim, on the other hand, is to introduce various Estonian historians and their research topics. This is why we selected no more than one article from each historical era, but our main emphasis remained on the 20th century. Since these articles were all originally written for Estonian-speaking readers (although each issue also contained an English-language summary of the articles) they were not directly written with Russian-speaking readers in mind. The criterion for the choice of the articles was to find those that have something important to say. We arranged the articles selected for translation according to their respective periods. We started in the 17th century, at the time when Estonia still was part of the Swedish Empire. Sweden also had control of Ingermanland. The transit trade center of the Swedes was Nyen on the banks of the Neva River. Although it is commonly believed that St. Petersburg was built on virgin land, this was not actually the case, and Nyen was far from being the first settlement on the Neva. On this topic, we present two articles by different authors.

The second section deals with Estonia as part of the Russian Empire. This situation lasted for over two hundred years. For the characterization of this era, we have selected articles on very different people who had links to Estonia, and who also had interesting roles in Russian history. Baltic German scholar Mellin, who saw himself as a friend of the peasants, is one of these figures. Russian Buddhist scholar Otto Rosenberg also had an interesting fate. There is also the Estonian political adventurer Aleksander Kesküla, who in 1905 was one of the Bolshevik leaders in Estonia. Later he spent time in Western Europe and plotted utopian plans, such as that of “Greater Estonia”. He also played a part in Lenin’s return to Russia via Germany in 1917.

The next section looks at the 1918–1940 period, when the Estonian state was an active actor on the stage of history. The topics here include the genesis of the Estonian Declaration of Independence, meaning the declaration that marked the birth of the Republic of Estonia. There is an article on political and business dealings in Estonia in the 1920s, where politicians profited during the period after the Estonia-Russia Peace Treaty, when Estonia was the only transit corridor for Soviet Russia, and was used to move massive amounts of gold. The third article dealing with the

independence period dates back to the time when Soviet bases were imposed upon Estonia as a result of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. The final part looks at Estonia after annexation. This segment has an overview of what happened to historical scholarship in Estonia during the Stalinist period. There is also a tragicomic story about how, during the Stalin era, employees in the Museum of History were accused of planning an armed insurrection, merely because weapons were part of the museum's collection. The issue ends with an article on Beria's "new course" for the suppression of resistance in spring 1953.

Finally we return to the beginning. For the introduction of the first issue, we selected an essay by one of Estonia's most authoritative historians, Professor Emeritus Enn Tarvel of Stockholm University, entitled "Is it possible to write objectively about history?", where he gives a positive answer to his own question, but also emphasizes that in principle, it is not possible to write a so-called objective history that is not dependent on the active involvement of the historian himself, his standpoints or his attitudes. Professor Tarvel states that even the purest, most theoretical and scholarly historical analysis has its social and national preconceptions.

Regardless of this, it seems that the more one reads other people's historical analyses, the more one understands those others.

ESSAY

Enn Tarvel. Can history be written objectively?

The study of history must be objective – i.e. matter-of-fact, neutral and factual. This is achieved through abundance by generally accepted research methods, and by the sincere and exhaustive use of source material. Knowledge of history, however, is not born without constitutive contribution by the researcher in the creation of a values system and in the formulation of problems, and the creation and placement of emphasis on historiographical facts. An objective values system does not exist. Each values system unavoidably contains in its starting points the researcher's subjective social, national and other preferences. Ignoring one's national starting points does not mean that one has adopted an objective, universal, and truly scientific conception of history. Rather, one ends up proceeding instead on the basis of foreign and also more limited national and state interests.

HISTORY PRIOR TO 1700

Enn Küng. Nyen (Nevanlinna) as a transit trade centre at the mouth of the Narva river, 1632–1703

The aim of the article is to take a look at the history of Nyen – the forerunner of the city that was once the capital of the Russian Empire – as part of the

commemoration of the 300th anniversary of St. Petersburg. The article concentrates on the founding of the town of Nyen, the way in which it was accorded its privileges, and also on the economic-political importance of Nyen in the eyes of the Swedish central authorities, and its place in transit trade for Sweden and Russia, and western Europe.

In contrast to neighboring towns, Nyen was a new settlement, without historical privileges and rights, which the Swedish central authorities would have been obliged to consider. The town was founded at the initiative of the state in 1632, and was completed in 1638 on a site previously settled by traders. This was primarily a part of economic-political reforms carried out by the central authorities, where the aim was to shift Russia's foreign trade from Archangelsk to the Baltic Sea, and to extend the trading hinterground for Swedish towns into Russia. Nyen was suitable for fulfilling this state economic-political program, due to its favorable location at the starting point of Russia's internal waterways. This was the case despite the distance of the settlement from the major sea towns of western Europe and the difficulty of access from the Baltic Sea. The mediating role of Swedish trading towns along the Finnish Gulf between the traders of western Europe and Russia was guaranteed by both the Stolbovo (1617) and Kärde (1661) peace treaties. The second state program that was implemented by Gustav II Adolf must also be mentioned – this involved Nyen's colonization, swedification and unification with the Swedish State of Ingermanland. For a brief period (1642–1651) Nyen, as the provincial capital, also had an administrative role to fulfill. At the same time, the town was located in a vitally important place for Sweden. In some respects, Nyen also constituted a barrier for Russia, hindering its direct access to the Baltic Sea. From the first decades after its founding, Nyen was a place of transit for Russian direct trade with Stockholm. Exports to western Europe were insignificant, although these increased gradually during the second half of the century. While trade volume in Nyen cannot be compared to that of Narva, many trade processes were similar in both towns. For example, when the Northern Arctic route was closed to the Russians, goods began to be routed to the Baltic Sea. This occurred at the start of the 1650s, and also continued later on. This was evident in both towns. Nyen also reacted similarly to Narva to changes in western Europe in the last decade of century, when an increasing number of merchant ships from the Netherlands and England visited both harbor towns. The only major difference between the two towns was the role of Nyen as mediator between Northwest Russia and Stockholm. Nyen's development was rapid. Foreigners ignored the local traders at the start of the 1640s, bypassing them in trade deals, but by the second half of the century, Nyen had become a town with regulated trade, where local trading procedures were applied. In posing the question as to whether

Nyen as a trade town helped the Swedish economic program to channel the Archangelsk trade back to the Baltic Sea, the answer – broadly speaking – would tend to be no. Founding a new town did not cause any essential change in Swedish-Russian trade relations. It was inevitable that Russian trade with Stockholm took place via Nyen. The Neva water route was the only possible trade route between Northwest Russia and the Swedish capital. However – the communications of Russia as a whole with western Europeans tended to remain in Archangelsk. Nyen never became the harbor for the foreign trade of all of Russia. That role would be taken by St. Petersburg, the successor to Nyen.

Piret Lotman. Forgotten New town.

Nyen, which was accorded town privileges in 1642, was different by virtue of its varied population from other trading towns founded in the Swedish Kingdom at the same time. During the Russian – Swedish war of 1656–1658, less than 50 persons lived in Nyen. The population was comprised mostly of Lutheran Finns and Swedes, and the few Orthodox people who were present had no noticeable influence on the life of the town. Power in Nyen was held by a small group of citizens comprised of wealthy German merchants. Throughout Ingermanland, relations between Swedish state authorities and town and church structures were complicated, and this was also reflected in Nyen’s church life. The town flourished during the second half of the century. Just before the Great Northern War, Nyen had a population of 2,500. The influence of the German community also grew – the Royal Resolution of 1671 gave magistrates the right to inspect the school and to appoint suitable school-teachers. Even in the disputes of the German community with various superintendents over the right of patronage in the church, Swedish church law lost out to the economic interests of the Kingdom.

ESTONIA AS PART OF THE
RUSSIAN EMPIRE

Indrek Jürjo. Count Ludwig August Mellin – a Friend of Peasants and Estophile.

Count Ludwig August Mellin (1754–1835) is primarily known as a Baltic cartographer. This talented and humane personality – a person who was progressive for his time – has unfortunately been largely ignored. Mellin left manuscripts that have not been thoroughly studied. His father Carl Johann von Mellin had an important role in forming the younger Mellin’s attitude towards the peasants, since he was the first to accord private rights to the peasants in the Baltic provinces at Tuhala manor in the mid 18th century. The son later accorded a similar private right to his Latvian peasants. As a representative of the nobility of the era, Mellin never questioned the class structure of

Baltic society. He did associate the socially privileged class of the aristocracy with a strong work ethic, and was critical of class snobbery. Mellin’s relations with Estonian and Latvian peasants were based on patriarchal family traditions, which were well intentioned regarding the peasants, and on the liberal humanity tradition of the Enlightenment. Mellin stands out from his Baltic German contemporaries because of his particular interest in and friendly attitude towards the national character and folk culture of Estonians. Mellin was very interested in the ancient history of the Baltic area, and could be considered the first Baltic archaeologist. He does not limit himself to the external description of ruins, but also draws numerous historical conclusions based on these. Mellin believed it was possible to note rudiments of the love of freedom in the nature of the Estonian serfs that had their roots in pagan times. Mellin’s respectful attitude towards the peasants resulted in his having a lifelong dispute with the contemptuous preconceived notions and attitudes regarding Estonians and Latvians that were held by many Baltic Germans. During the debate of the Courland Literature and Art Society on germanization, Mellin rejected a plan to germanize the Estonians and Latvians, basing his arguments on Herder’s standpoints. In his written notes on the study of history published by the Bavarian diplomat Francois Gabriel de Bray in 1817, “*Essay critique sur l’histoire de la Livonie*”, Mellin describes in detail the customs of Estonian peasants, as well as the national culture, also noting the slow but steady acculturation process of the Estonian rural population, which is to say that the peasants were adopting many German cultural influences. The appendix of the article consists of Mellin’s letter of July 25, 1822 to the Courland Literature and Art Society on the issue of germanization, and a polemical article sent on February 20, 1835 to “*Rigasche Stadtblätter*”, which was not published.

Kaido Jaanson. The Estonian Aleksander Kesküla and Berlin: the Beginnings (September 1914 to May 1915)

The article examines the start of the relationship of Estonian Aleksander Kesküla with Imperial Germany. After having contacted Berlin’s Ambassador Gisbert von Romberg and having been assured by Deputy Foreign Minister Artur Zimmermann that Germany did not intend to occupy Estonia, Kesküla left in October 1914 for Sweden. At some point in time before this, his meeting with Lenin had also taken place. In Germany and Stockholm, Kesküla meet with Wilhelm Ostwald, the only Nobel laureate from the University of Tartu. Both noted the similarity of their opinions on political developments in Estonia and the Baltic Sea region, and also their feelings of mutual respect. In Sweden, Kesküla had contact with the Bolsheviks and established good relations with the German Embassy. In one of his letters to Romberg, he characterized Lenin and his sympathizers as a politically

unimportant group, which, however, could be used in a way unbeknownst to them. This letter, posted on November 30, 1914, is the earliest document in the German archives where there is a mention of Lenin. Kesküla contacted German diplomats four months earlier than Alexander Helphand-Parvus. He initiated contacts with the central authorities in Berlin at the end of 1914 and the early part of 1915, at least two months earlier than Parvus. During the period under examination, there are seven known Russian analyses by Kesküla, either written under his own name or as reports by Romberg. In March 1915, Kesküla forwarded materials to Berlin from the Bolshevik conference that had taken place in Bern. The possible party who procured these documents – Kesküla’s insider in Lenin’s circle – could have been the Estonian Arthur Siefeldt. Siefeldt later lived in the Caucasus, mainly in Baku, where he, as a Turkish specialist, became the director of an institute. He was jailed in 1938 and died in a prison camp in Kolyma in 1939. To date, research has concentrated primarily on those parts of the Kesküla-related documents where there are mentions of Lenin. His document dated May 3, 1915, analyzes how to make use of revolutionary organizations, but it also contains a warning regarding Lenin. After visiting the Ukraine and marrying, Kesküla went to Sweden for a longer stay in May 1915.

Märt Läänemets. A Buddhist scholar: Otto Rosenberg and Estonia

Baltic German Otto Rosenberg (7.07.1888 – 26.11.1919) – a Russian orientalist and Buddhist scholar who died young – has passed into the modern history of Buddhism mainly due to his epochal work “The Problems of Buddhist Philosophy”. That work was published in Russian in 1918 (reprinted in 1991) and also appeared in a German translation in 1924. The Russian Sinology school recognizes him as one of the creators of the simple but brilliant graphical system for the classification of Chinese writing. Many Russian-Chinese dictionaries have been published using Rosenberg’s system. In the history of Russian and Soviet scholarship, the sudden departure of Rosenberg in autumn 1919, during a complicated period in time that was rife with dissension, has been shrouded in secrecy for decades, and eventually became a subject of mystification. According to the Soviet Scholarly Bibliography, Otto Rosenberg died of typhus in September 1919 at his home in Gatchina near Petrograd, but this was apparently a myth that was deliberately created. In his works published at the start of the 1920s in Germany, it is stated that he died on November 26, 1919. The place of death was listed as Tallinn – the capital of Estonia. American Rosenberg researcher John S. Barlow, in his thorough study written in the 1990s (see <http://wason.library.cornell.edu/iaol/bulletin.htm>), also presents information based on documents found in the St. Petersburg

archives, according to which Rosenberg was definitely still alive in October 1919. His tracks in Petrograd only went cold at the end of 1919. Documents found in the Estonian National Archives in Tallinn by the author of this article prove conclusively that Rosenberg left Petrograd at the end of October 1919, together with retreating White Guard forces, whose major assault on the Russian capital had not succeeded. In his letter of 28 October, written in the refugee camp at Jamburg to the Minister of Education of the Government of Northwestern Russia, Rosenberg requests assistance for him and his wife to cross the border and the front line, in order to be able to enter Estonia. Additional documents in the correspondence between the governmental institutions of Estonia and Northwestern Russia show that he received this permission, and apparently left Jamburg for Estonia on 14 November, when the Whites abandoned that town. As early as December 1, the Tallinn German-language newspaper “Revaler Bote” published an obituary in memory of their compatriot, the oriental scholar Otto Rosenberg of St. Petersburg University, who had died on November 26, and was buried on November 29 in the Tallinn Kopli graveyard. The cause of death was stated to have been scarlet fever. In the next issue, on May 28, 1920, a longer article was published by Rosenberg’s student Andrei Baiov, who confirmed the information in “Revaler Bote”, but added that the cause of death was a heart attack due to the privations Rosenberg had endured, in addition to scarlet fever. This constitutes conclusive proof of Rosenberg’s departure from Petrograd and his death in Tallinn. Future speculation on this topic should therefore be ruled out.

REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA PRIOR TO THE OCCUPATION (1918–1940)

Ago Pajur. The Birth of the Declaration of Independence

Although the Declaration of Independence, which was the text used to declare Estonian independence in February 1918, is one of the most important primary documents of Estonian statehood, the issues associated with its creation are far from clear. For this reason, the present article attempts to answer, on the basis of existing documents, questions regarding the way the text of the manifesto was written, and where it was proclaimed and printed. Written sources have often left the impression that compilation of the manifesto was begun right at the start of 1918. Actually, at that time, there was no need for a such a document, because leaders of the Estonian nation regarded the Founding Assembly as the declarer of independence. The need for the Declaration arose only after January 27, when Bolsheviks interrupted the elections for the Assembly. It seems that the “revolutionary way” to independence was chosen on February 18/19, when a committee was formed to work out the wording of

the manifesto, and a Salvation Committee was elected for the purpose of declaring independence. The basic ideas for the document were put on paper by Juhan Kukk, who had been authorized to do so by the committee elected to prepare the manifesto. The initial text was discussed during the night of February 20, and some changes and additions were decided upon. The edited document was ready by the next morning, and was approved the same day. The author of the manifesto cannot be considered to be Juhan Kukk or the committee as a whole, because the manifesto was largely based on documents that had been previously published, such as the “Estonian Labour Republic” memorandum of the Social Democrats, a clarification by the Rural Council entitled “The Independent Estonian Nation State”, and a memo written by members of the foreign delegation. As a result, the Declaration of Independence was a collective creation. The wording of the manifesto had been agreed upon, but opportunities for its proclamation seemed to be almost non-existent. Neither the Bolsheviks controlling mainland Estonia nor the German forces approaching from the south and west were interested in Estonian independence. There was a slight hope of making use of the interval which might occur between the departure of the Bolsheviks and the arrival of the Germans. There was at least hope for Tallinn, where the Bolsheviks had large numbers. This is why members of the Salvation Committee attempted to travel to Haapsalu on February 21, so that under the protection of the 1st Estonian Division located there, the manifesto could be made public. Unfortunately, the Germans took Haapsalu before the Salvation Committee arrived. The following attempt to reach Tartu also failed. The text of the manifesto was thereafter sent to the other larger towns, in the hope that in at least one of these places, it could be read in public. These hopes were fulfilled. On February 23, the Declaration of Independence was read in public in Pärnu, on February 24 in Viljandi, on February 25 in Tallinn and Paide, and on February 26 in Rakvere. The news spread from these towns to other municipalities. On February 21, five typed copies of the manifesto had been prepared in Tallinn, but this was clearly inadequate. Printing facilities were sought. This was not initially possible, because all printing presses had been nationalized by the Bolsheviks and were under heavy guard. Once again, Pärnu was the first. It was in Pärnu that the manifesto was printed on February 23. A day later, the manifesto was also printed in Tallinn and Paide. An estimated 40 000 copies were printed. The copies printed in Pärnu and Paide differed from the ones printed in Tallinn, which leads to the conclusion that someone in Tallinn – possibly members of the Salvation Committee – had edited the text of the manifesto. The differences are not particularly important, except for one confusing fact: the manifesto printed in Pärnu is dated February 21, but the Tallinn version has February 24 as the date.

The date is important, because the manifesto states that Estonia is proclaimed independent “from this day on”. “This day” should be taken as the day printed at the end of the manifesto – but in which version? February 21 would seem to be the better choice, because that was the day that the manifesto was approved and the first attempts took place to proclaim it. There is of course another possibility – to consider “this day” to be the moment that the manifesto was first made public – i.e. February 23. The officially accepted date of February 24 seems to be relatively unimportant compared to the other possible dates.

Jaak Valge. Breaking the Bank of Estonia

At the end of 1922 and the beginning of 1923, there was a radical change in Estonian-Soviet Russian economic relations. The Bolsheviks reduced the sale of gold through Estonia, the amount of of valuables that Estonians returning from Russia were allowed to have in their possession was also reduced, as was border trade, on top of which Estonia’s official exports to Russia were curtailed. Prior activities had nonetheless left their mark, precipitating an Eastern “business fever”. This had a major effect on the vision that Estonian political and economic circles had regarding Estonia’s position and future. The key figures who formed Estonia’s economic policy in 1920–1923 were Konstantin Päts, Georg Westel, and to a lesser degree Madis Jaakson.

The Bank of Estonia lent out most of its credits to businesses with an Eastern orientation. All of the companies that received the largest loans had connections to leading figures in the Bank of Estonia, or to top politicians. The grouping that received the biggest loan consisted of companies associated with Päts, Westel and Jaakson. The Farmer’s Party was the top recipient among those who received loans.

Emptying the Bank of Estonia by lending out all its money could have been caused by the fact that influential people had no faith in the independence of Estonia or the future of an independent Estonia. Distributing the gold to friends could also have been an attempt to create an ethnically Estonian middle class, but laws were being broken. According to the statutes, it was the Board of the Bank that was obligated to supervise banking practices. The members of the Board, controlled by Westel, were unfortunately also the main recipients of the loans, as were the Minister of Finance and the Head of State. It was not until the resources of the Bank of Estonia were completely used up, the exchange rate for the Mark had started to drop, and the so called gold scandal broke that changes were made in loan policy.

Heino Arumäe. Prelude to the Bases Agreement

The article examines how the Soviet Union succeeded in strengthening its strategic position in the Baltic Sea

region in 1938, due to increased tension in the international situation on the European continent.

In April 1938, Stalin – in the presence of his deputy Vyacheslav Molotov and People’s Commissar for Defense Kliment Voroshilov – tasked Soviet espionage officer Rybkin, who was then working under the name of B. Yartsev as the Second Secretary of the Embassy of the Soviet Union in Helsinki, to begin secret negotiations with the Finnish government, in order to conclude a military agreement between Finland and the Soviet Union. Stalin presumed that in the case of possible German aggression against the Soviet Union, Finland might permit German forces to transit its territory.

Yartsev-Rybkin began negotiations with Finnish Foreign Minister Rudolf Holsti on April 14, 1939, and subsequently also had negotiations with Prime Minister Aimo Cajander, Finance Minister Väinö Tanner, and Secretary to the Prime Minister Inkila. Moscow’s emissary emphasized the need for mutual assistance between Finland and the Soviet Union in case of war, and wanted Finland to provide guarantees that there would be military resistance in the case of possible German aggression, and that Soviet military assistance would be accepted. In addition, Yartsev-Rybkin wanted the Soviet Union to have the right to set up an air and navy base on Finnish-owned Suursaare. In return, Finland was promised a favorable trading agreement, and Moscow’s support for the fortification of Åland, which the Convention concluded on October 21, 1921 in Geneva did not allow.

Only a small group of politicians in Finland was informed of these negotiations. The chairman of the Defense Council Karl Gustaf Emil Mannerheim was not among them. The negotiations that lasted until autumn 1938 ended inconclusively.

In the spring of 1939, the secret negotiations continued, with the Soviet Union wishing to either rent four islands in the Finnish Gulf or exchange them for some Soviet frontier territory. These negotiations also ended inconclusively.

Some persons in the Estonian leadership received information about these negotiations, and feared that Moscow planned similar actions against the Baltic States.

E S T O N I A D U R I N G T H E O C C U P A T I O N S (1 9 4 0 – 1 9 9 1)

Ants Viires. Estonian history in the Grasp of Stalinism

The Soviet occupation in 1940 confronted Estonian historians with a difficult task. They were now expected to interpret Estonian history in order to justify the annexation of the country. The situation was later made all the more difficult by the 1941–1944 German occupation, with its diametrically opposite ideology.

During the Soviet periods, the entire history of Estonia had to be divided up into periods according to

Marxist-Leninist teachings on social formations, tying it closely at the same time to Russian history. Particularly from 1944 onwards, it was expected that ancient friendship with the Russian people be emphasized. The Germans had to be seen and portrayed as the enemies and oppressors of the Estonian people. Class struggle became of central importance in history. The Estonian War of Independence of 1918–1920 had to be interpreted as a class war, and the independent Estonian State of 1920–1940 portrayed as a platform used by Western capitalist imperialists against the Soviet Union. There were great difficulties in emphasizing the leading role said to have been played by the Estonian Communist Party in the working people’s “freedom struggle”. In the history texts, the Party generally had to be treated as an essentially nameless power, because most of its leaders had been executed during the Stalinist purges of the 1930s in the Soviet Union. Members of the Party consequently could not be mentioned. The Soviet annexation was presented as a people’s revolution, where the presence of Soviet occupation authorities did nothing more than create favorable preconditions for Estonia’s joining the USSR. Throughout this process, Hans Kruus (the leading historian from the era of the independent Republic of Estonia), who made major concessions in the writing of history, managed to retain his leading position in the field of history, despite extensive behind-the-scenes power struggles. In 1950 Kruus was publicly denounced and arrested as a bourgeois nationalist. After the death of Stalin in 1954, he was released due to lack of evidence.

Sirje Annist. The Historical Museum Court Case of 1945–1946

This article examines, using National Archive ERAF case files, the 1945–46 court case against 15 Historical Museum workers who were accused of planning armed insurrection. On the basis of after-the-fact memories, the article attempts to clarify how much truth there was to the reasons given for the court case. The version that the process was directly initiated by the Director of the Museum Leida Loone cannot be substantiated on the basis of available documents. The attention of the Soviet state security authorities was apparently drawn by the statements of an ordinary informer among the technical staff of the Museum, saying that people were listening to radio broadcasts in the Museum, making anti-Soviet statements, and claiming that the weapons in the Museum were usable and not dummy weapons. The charges subsequently leveled were cleverly constructed, using the statements made during interrogations. The Director was pardoned after his having consented to become a cell informant. An examination of the archive material exposes varying levels of its reliability. Arrest warrants were often compiled after the fact, but the right dates are on the protocols of personal

searches. Summons to interrogations are also a good source materials, since they show the order in which the accused were summoned before the investigators, and how their statements were used against the other accused persons. Research shows which documents were destroyed as early as the 1950s.

It is characteristic that the Soviet security authorities clearly worked hand in hand with the leading Party organs, which were informed above all of the names of intellectuals against whom measures had to be taken. The security structures, however, were not run by local people, and in the Party structures immediately after the war, there were still some erstwhile local left-wingers, who moved in the same circles as the accused. These locals were only tolerated temporarily, and were finally dumped during Plenary N. VIII Central Committee of Estonian Communist Party. In any event, distrust of these locals was apparent even at the time leading up to the History Museum trials. The article also explains methods used to get information from those who were interrogated.

The History Museum trial was one of the numerous processes of that time against intellectuals. It appears as though additional issues can be clarified only when documents regarding University of Tartu workers who were arrested at the same time have also been examined, since it seems that there was an attempt to link the two cases.

Tõnu Tannberg. Notes on Beria’s “new course” in suppressing the resistance movement in spring 1953

After the death of Stalin, L. Beria, who had become the Minister of the Interior in 1953, began to implement a “new course” as regards the periphery of the empire, which also consisted of changing the methods and tactics of the anti-resistance struggle, with the aim of finally “pacifying” these areas.

The pointlessness of the previous anti-resistance struggle was also to be proved by the statistics on repressions as compiled on Beria’s orders. Based on the data compiled by the security organs, a total of 270 000 persons underwent repressions in the Lithuanian SSR in 1944–1952, of whom 63 011 persons were arrested as members of the “anti-soviet nationalist underground”, 67 326 persons were arrested by the militia and prosecutor offices, 126 037 persons were deported, 20 005 forest brothers were killed, as were 12 910 party and soviet activists. Therefore, almost 10% of the Lithuanian population fell victim to repression. In western Ukraine, however, almost 500 000 persons fell victim to repression, of whom 134 467 persons were arrested, charged with belonging to the “nationalistic underground”, or participating in diversionary activities or in some other “anti-soviet” activity. In Latvia, 119 000 persons fell victim to repression, of whom 43 702 were deported, 26 617 were arrested by the security organs, 46 358 were arrested by the militia or the prosecutor’s of-

fice, and 2321 were killed as “bandits”. In Estonia, in the period 1944–1953, a total of 662 “gangs” and 336 national organizations were disbanded. During the same years, a total of over 67 000 persons were arrested or deported, including 18 772 arrested by the security organs, 26 284 by the prosecutor’s office and militia, 20919 were exiled, and 1425 “bandits” were killed.

In the wider context, Beria’s “new course” was to assist the local cadre to power, and in doing so, to also increase the decision-making of the union republics themselves – thereby completing the sovietization of their regions. One of the primary goals of realizing this “program” was also the suppression of armed resistance, the calming of the periphery of the empire, ceasing to carry out the mass repressions and the “military-Chekist operations”, since these had not had the desired results despite the time that had passed. Total mass terror was replaced by selected repressions. Thereby, the repressive organs were also to become more acceptable to the population. This meant the promotion of the local cadre to leading positions, and in the longer perspective, the estonianization, latvianization, etc, of the security organs.

One possibility that Beria saw for suppression of the resistance was cooperation with persons who had participated in the resistance movement and independence-era politicians who had been repressed. His aim in co-opting these people was, on the one hand, to increase the support base of the regime, to provide it with a greater legitimacy in the eyes of the people. On the other hand, however, such an approach was to eventually neutralize any real resistance to the regime, both nationally and internationally.

It was important for the Kremlin that this should be done under the control of the authorities. But this in turn would require an institution that would be acceptable to the population, that the people would start to trust. Thus, Beria suggested a plan to create an underground organization that would operate under the control of the authorities, where persons publicly known and respected in western Ukraine and Lithuania would be brought to the fore. The plans for such a pseudo-organization were developed the furthest in western Ukraine. This approach also did not exclude the promotion of “prominent nationalists” to the leadership of a union republic, which was probably being planned for the Estonian SSR.

The “new course” was undoubtedly also meant to achieve control over the exile groups. These plans are also reminiscent of the pseudo-organization “Trust” which successfully operated in the 1920s, and which helped Moscow to control, to a substantial degree, the Russian emigrant circles.

In conclusion, the goal of Beria was to completely unite the western areas of the Soviet Union, and it seems that such a milder, and a so-called local sovietization would actually have accelerated adaptation to, and reconciliation with, the regime.