

VIOLENCE AND ACTIVISM IN THE BALTIC PROVINCES DURING THE REVOLUTION OF 1905

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This article focuses on the phenomena of violence and activism in the Baltic Provinces during 1905. The level of violence was substantially greater in the Latvian areas than in the Estonian ones for the following reasons: more advanced economic development, especially in the metropolis of Riga; a much stronger social democratic movement; and greater social and ethnic tensions in the relations between Latvians and Baltic Germans. On the other hand, various manifestations of activism in the form of political and social mobilization, e.g., petition campaigns, the holding of national congresses, and the strike and trade union movements, were essentially comparable in the two cases. The one major contrast in political mobilization was the much more sweeping reorganization of rural government in the Latvian areas.

In assessing the experience of the Revolution of 1905 in the Baltic region, both contemporary and later observers have often noted a striking difference between the Latvian and Estonian halves of the Baltic Provinces: the level of violence, i.e., attacks on persons and the destruction of property, was much greater in Kurland and southern Livland than in Estland and northern Livland. The first major Baltic German treatment of this issue by Astaf von Transehe-Roseneck in 1906–1907, pointedly entitled *Die lettische Revolution*, devoted only a few pages to events in the Estonian areas and dismissed them as merely “disturbances” (*Unruhen*).¹ With the passing of the hundredth anniversary of the Revolution of 1905, it seems appropriate to take a fresh look at this issue and to offer a reassessment of how best to explain the more extensive violence and destruction in the Latvian case. At the same time, however, I will argue that simply focusing on violence is inadequate as an index of participation in the revolution. In fact, a more meaningful standard is activism, as indicated by various forms of political and social mobilization, and by this measure the differences between the two

¹ **Transehe-Roseneck, A. von.** *Die lettische Revolution*, 2 vols. Berlin, Georg Reimer, 1906–1907.

halves of the Baltic Provinces in 1905 appear much smaller, as this article will seek to demonstrate.

The most remarkable contrast between the Latvian and Estonian regions of the Baltic Provinces with regard to violent activity was in the number and location of murdered Germans (nearly all Baltic Germans, but also including two *Reichsdeutsche*) during the revolutionary year. Overall, 41 Germans were killed in the three provinces in 1905, all but one in the Latvian areas: 21 in Riga or near the city, 14 in Kurland, five in southern Livland (elsewhere than the Riga area), none in northern Livland, and one in Estland.²

It is characteristic that all but two of the murders took place in the second half of the year, and over two-thirds occurred during October, November, and December, when tensions were at their highest level. Another major and well-documented aspect of violence in the Baltic case was the partial or total destruction of manor houses and estates, by arson or other means, in 1905 and early 1906. In Kurland and southern Livland, 412 estates suffered damages, as compared to 161 estates in northern Livland and Estland. As a proportion of the total number of estates, the figure for the Latvian areas was double that for the Estonian ones (38 percent of the total versus 19 percent). In terms of ruble value of the damages caused, the level of destruction was nearly three times higher in the southern part of the Baltic Provinces (8.84 million) than in the northern part (3.21 million).³ It is also characteristic that during the height of the revolution in fall 1905 armed skirmishes or even battles with up to thousands of participants, e.g., in Talsi, Tukums, and Aizpute, were common occurrences in the Latvian areas (especially Kurland), but rare in the Estonian areas.⁴

With regard to other forms of violence, for example, the so-called church demonstrations, there is less systematic documentation available, but the available evidence once again indicates that these actions were much more pervasive in the Latvian areas than in the Estonian ones. In the southern half of the Baltic Provinces the church demonstrations reached a high point in the month of June, but continued during the rest of the summer as well. The church disturbances in Kurland and southern Livland typically involved the disruption of Lutheran church services with revolutionary lectures and songs, forcing the pastor to carry a red flag, and at times a physical assault on the clergyman. In some cases stink bombs were thrown into the churches during Sunday services.⁵

² Calculated from data in Verzeichnis der während der Revolutionszeit 1905-7 in Liv-Est-Kurland ermordeten Deutschen. – Baltische Monatsschrift, 1909, 67, 284–285. This same pattern continued in 1906 when all 29 murdered Germans met their end in the Latvian areas. The situation changed slightly in 1907 as four of the 12 German victims in that year died in the northern half of the Baltic Provinces. See pp. 285–286.

³ **Raun, T. U.** The Revolution of 1905 in the Baltic Provinces and Finland. – Slavic Review, 1984, 43, 460–461.

⁴ **Bleiere, D. et al.** Istorija Latvii: XX vek. Riga, Jumava, 2005, 65.

⁵ **Benz, E.** Die Revolution von 1905 in Estland, Livland und Kurland (1). – Acta Baltica, 1990, 28, 99–104.

Transehe-Roseneck set the tone for Baltic German interpretations of the Revolution of 1905 by stressing that the tsarist regime's wrongheaded policy of Russification thoughtlessly destroyed the educational, judicial, and other key institutions in the Baltic Provinces, thus preparing the way for revolution.⁶ As an explanation for the differences between the Latvian and Estonian areas of the Baltic region, he made two basic points, one of which has not stood the test of time while the other one has. The first argument, obsolete and inadequate by modern standards of historical scholarship, was based on an alleged difference in national character. Into the sick Latvian national body (*Volkskörper*), as he put it, came the "poison of social democracy," resulting in "mass psychosis" during the revolution. The Estonians, however, did not fall victim to the false promise of revolutionary socialism because "the Estonian is by nature conservative, a sober empiricist and a *Realpolitiker*," who would not let himself be seduced by the "fantastic utopia" of social democracy in contrast to the "fanciful" and easily "adaptable" Latvian. It is perhaps not surprising that writing in the first decade of the 20th century, Transehe-Roseneck added a "racial" dimension, as he called it, to the argument: the Estonians were Finno-Ugric, the Latvians "Litho-Slavic." On the other hand, Transehe-Roseneck's second point – the widespread organization of social democracy in the Latvian areas – identified an important factor that still serves as a beginning for an explanation of the differing experiences in the two halves of the Baltic Provinces.⁷

The background to the early penetration of the social democratic movement in southern Livland and Kurland must be seen in the more rapid economic development of this region in comparison to the northern areas. One of the most significant consequences of this expansion was the explosive growth of the city of Riga, already reaching 282,000 inhabitants by 1897 and nearly doubling again to 518,000 by 1913. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries the pace of Riga's industrial growth was among the most rapid among urban areas in the entire Russian Empire, as the number of factory workers in the city tripled in the decade of the 1890s alone.⁸ As a result of this socioeconomic modernization Riga became especially fertile ground for the penetration of socialist ideas, mainly from Germany, by the early 1890s. Radical Latvian intellectuals such as Jānis Rainis also traveled to Western Europe to become better acquainted with the work of the German Social Democrats and the Socialist International. In the Latvian areas the radical activists, who were part of the New Current (*Jaunā strāva*) movement in the 1890s, found an

⁶ **Transehe-Roseneck, A. von.** Die lettische Revolution, I, 150.

⁷ **Transehe-Roseneck, A. von.** Die lettische Revolution, I, V; II, 174, 397–398. The argument on differences in national character was later seconded by **A. von Tobien**. See his *Die livländische Ritterschaft in ihrem Verhältnis zum Zarismus und russischen Nationalismus*, 2 vols. Riga, G. Löffler, 1925; Berlin, Walter de Gruyter, 1930, II, 215.

⁸ **Plakans, A.** *The Latvians: A Short History*. Stanford, Calif., Hoover Institution Press, 1995, 108; **Krastiņš, J. et al.** *Rīga 1860–1917*. Riga, Zinātne, 1978, 51; **Henriksson, A.** *Riga: Growth, Conflict, and the Limitations of Good Government, 1850–1914. – The City in Late Imperial Russia*. Ed. M. Hamm. Bloomington, Ind., Indiana University Press, 1986, 180.

important outlet in the Riga newspaper *Dienas Lapa* (The Daily Paper), edited by Rainis in the first half of the 1890s, in which a guarded Marxist critique of existing social conditions was able to be expounded. Despite a crackdown in 1897 the spread of socialist ideas continued among the expanding working class and intelligentsia, and they also began to penetrate the Latvian countryside.⁹ In contrast, the significant spread of socialist ideas in the Estonian areas lagged about a decade behind, as Tallinn, the largest city in the northern half of the Baltic Provinces, remained small in comparison to Riga (64,600 in 1897).¹⁰

The highly developed nature of the organizational network of the Latvian Social Democratic Workers' Party (LSDWP), by far the leading socialist group in the Latvian areas, has been well documented. The long years of preparation beginning in the early 1890s finally resulted in the formal establishment of the LSDWP in June 1904 when it could already claim a membership of 2,500. A year later at its Second Congress in June 1905 the number of members had grown to 7,000, and by the time of the October Manifesto in 1905 this figure jumped to 18,200, including 7,200 based in Riga.¹¹ What is especially noteworthy is that this large number of members was widely distributed throughout southern Livland and Kurland, including both the smaller cities and the rural areas. During 1905, rural membership in the LSDWP remained significant with about 45 percent of the total in the summer months and 30–35 percent at the end of the year, suggesting that the previous years of agitation and educational activity were now paying off. It has been calculated that at the end of 1905 there were LSDWP circles, the party's primary unit of organization, in 36 percent of the rural townships (Lat. *pagasti*) of southern Livland and Kurland. In the southern half of the Baltic Provinces the Latvian Social Democratic Union, a rival left-wing organization that took a strongly federalist position, achieved a membership of about 1,000 during 1905, but played a minor role in comparison to the dominant LSDWP.¹² In the Estonian case the social democratic movement only came into its own during 1905 itself, especially during the height of the revolution in the final months

⁹ **Kalniņš, B.** The Social Democratic Movement in Latvia. – Revolution and Politics in Russia. Ed. A. Rabinowitch, J. Rabinowitch, L. Kristof. Bloomington, Ind., Indiana University Press, 1972, 134–136; **Br. O.** Taistelut Itämerenmaakunnissa. – Valvoja, 1908, 28, 621–622.

¹⁰ **Raun, T. U.** Estonia and the Estonians, updated 2nd ed. Stanford, Calif., Hoover Institution Press, 2001, 272.

¹¹ **Kalniņš, B.** Social Democratic Movement, 136, 138–139; **Ames, E. O. F.** The Revolution in the Baltic Provinces of Russia: A Brief Account of the Activity of the Lettish Social Democratic Workers' Party by an Active Member. London, Independent Labour Party, n.d., 22.

¹² **Pulķis, A.** Rural Organizations of the Latvian Social Democratic Labour Party in the 1905–1907 Revolution. – Die baltischen Provinzen Russlands zwischen den Revolutionen von 1905 und 1917. (Quellen und Studien zur baltischen Geschichte, 4.) Ed. A. Ezergailis and G. von Pistohlkors. Cologne, Böhlau, 1982, 117; **Pistohlkors, G. von.** Die Ostseeprovinzen unter russischer Herrschaft (1710/95–1914). – Deutsche Geschichte im Osten Europas. Baltische Länder. Ed. G. von Pistohlkors. Berlin, Siedler, 1994, 420, 423; **Plakans, A.** The Latvians. – Russification in the Baltic Provinces and Finland, 1855–1914. Ed. E. C. Thaden. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1981, 262.

of the year. In mid-December the organizations of the Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party (RSDWP) in the Estonian areas had about 1,000 members, mainly in the industrial centers of Tallinn and Narva. The federalist Estonian Social Democratic Workers' Union (ESDWU), established only in August 1905, grew rapidly to perhaps 10,000 members in both the urban and rural areas by the start of December.¹³

Because of the more advanced economic development in the Latvian areas, class differences were more sharply felt, especially in Riga where substantial Latvian (127,000 persons in 1897) and Baltic German (67,000 in 1897) populations lived side by side.¹⁴ Since Riga clearly remained the stronghold of the Baltic German bourgeoisie, this situation meant that the rising Latvian middle class was correspondingly weaker, and it is striking that the Baltic German urban elite was able to hold on to political power in Riga's municipal government in the late tsarist era in spite of the rapidly expanding Latvian numbers. These conditions created considerable social frustration, and the Latvian–German antagonism appears to have been especially strong in this Baltic metropolis.¹⁵ When the Latvian bourgeoisie finally began to organize politically in the freer conditions of 1905, it proved to be fragmented among several competing groups (the Latvian National Party, the Latvian Constitutional Democratic Party, and the Latvian Democratic Party) and unable to speak with a strong voice. In addition, since the LSDWP had a huge head start in organizational work and agitation, the middle-class parties found it difficult to compete with its message.¹⁶ In contrast, in northern Livland, Jaan Tõnisson's Estonian Progressive People's Party – the hegemonic bourgeois force in southern Estonian areas – was able to serve as a strong counterweight to the only recently emerged social democracy.¹⁷

Although it may well not be possible to document in any definitive way, it seems likely that the historical relationship between Latvians and Germans was more troubled and inimical than the one between Estonians and Germans in the Baltic Provinces. The much more pervasive church disturbances in Kurland and southern Livland alluded to above suggest a deeper level of ethnic antagonism in that part of the region.¹⁸ In addition, Baltic German memoir literature, particularly by those individuals who spent considerable time in both halves of the Baltic

¹³ **Karjahärm, T., Pullat, R.** Eesti revolutsioonitules. Tallinn, Eesti Raamat, 1975, 105; **Speek, P.** Aruandest Eesti Sotsiaaldemokraatliku Tööliste Partei arengu ja revolutsioonilise tegevuse kohta. – Pünased aastad. Mälestisi ja dokumente 1905. aasta liikumisest Eestis. Ed. H. Kruus. Tartu, Eesti Kirjanduse Selts, 1932, 239–240.

¹⁴ **Trojnitskij, N. A.**, ed. Pervaya vseobshchaya perepis' naseleniya Rossijskoj Imperii, 1897 g., 89 vols. St. Petersburg, Tsentral'nyj Statisticheskij Komitet, 1899–1905, XXI, 78–81.

¹⁵ **Seraphim, E.** Aus der Arbeit eines baltischen Journalisten 1892–1910. Riga, 1911, 108.

¹⁶ **Lindemuth, M.** Die lettischen Parteien und ihre Programme. – Baltische Hefte, 1969, 15, 75–86; **Henning, D.** Letten und Deutsche. Aspekte einer schwierigen Nachbarschaft. – Nordost-Archiv (Neue Folge), 1996, 5, 259–260.

¹⁷ On Tõnisson, see **Raun, T.** Estonia and the Estonians, 81–86.

¹⁸ **Pistohlkors, G. von.** Deutsche Geschichte, 420.

Provinces, provides some insight into this question. For example, Paul Schiemann, who lived in both Tallinn and Riga in the early 20th century, confirms that the opposition to the patronage rights of the Baltic German nobility to name the Lutheran pastors in their locality was especially strong in the Latvian areas. He also makes the striking observation that Baltic Germans in Estland and northern Livland, nobles and burghers alike, readily learned and used Estonian while in Kurland and southern Livland only those who absolutely had to (pastors, estate owners, and rural officials) could speak Latvian fluently. In the cities as well, he claims, the Baltic German command of the Latvian language was either poor or non-existent. Schiemann does not offer an explanation for this state of affairs, but suggests that it would need to be the subject of special research focused on this question.¹⁹ It is also possible that the higher level of violence in Kurland and southern Livland was related to the larger German presence and visibility in this region, as I have suggested elsewhere. It is noteworthy that there were four times as many Germans in the southern half (132,000) as in the northern half (33,000) of the Baltic Provinces, and the German proportion of the total population in the Latvian areas was close to three times larger than that in the Estonian ones (9.3 percent versus 3.5 percent).²⁰ Thus, as the process of modernization deepened in the second half of the 19th century, it is likely that the mixture of ethnic tensions and social antagonism took on a more volatile form – both in the cities and the countryside – in the Latvian areas of the Baltic Provinces.

A key question in assessing the events of 1905 is the origins of the violence that actually took place. The leadership of the main revolutionary parties in the Baltic Provinces, i.e., the LSDWP in Kurland and southern Livland, the Estonian Social Democratic Workers' Union (ESDWU) in northern Livland, and the Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party (RSDWP) in Estland, did not advocate the use of violence or terror as a general policy.²¹ The strongest revolutionary party in the Baltic Provinces, the LSDWP, was very conscious of the danger of the Latvian areas moving too far ahead of developments in the Russian Empire as a whole, thus compromising the chances for revolutionary success. A revolution in the Latvian lands alone was correctly seen as a theoretical and practical impossibility. As 1905 progressed, the LSDWP increasingly faced a situation in which the spontaneous and often violent activism of the Latvian masses, especially in the rural areas, threatened to become uncontrollable. Seemingly against its better judgment, at the Congress of Rural Delegates in Riga in November, the party felt compelled to place itself in front of the movement to reorganize rural self-

¹⁹ **Schiemann, P.** *Zwischen zwei Zeitaltern. Erinnerungen 1903–1919.* Lüneburg, Nordland, 1979, 59, 71. Such a “besondere Untersuchung” has yet to be undertaken.

²⁰ **Raun, T. U.** *Revolution of 1905*, 455, 462–463; **Trojnitskij, N. A.** *Pervaya vseobshchaya perepis'*, XIX, 78–81; XXI, 78–81; XLIX, 42–43.

²¹ **Jürisson, M.** [Mihkel Martna] *Punased aastad Eestis 1905–1906. Eesti revolutsioonilise liikumise ajaloolised ja majanduslikud põhjused.* St. Petersburg, Tulevik, 1907, 187–188; **Kalniņš, B.** *Social Democratic Movement in Latvia*, 139.

government in the Latvian areas, thus departing from its all-Russian strategy for the revolution.²² In Riga and the other urban centers, where its organizational base was the strongest, the LSDWP was able to keep in check the desire for an armed uprising which surely would have proved abortive, given the balance of forces.²³ For his part, Peeter Speek, the leader of the ESDWU, pointedly denied the efficacy of terror or violent means and stated that robbery, arson, and murder had nothing in common with social democracy, although “it was not the task of the proletariat or its social democratic representatives to defend ‘order’ in a bourgeois world.”²⁴

There is little question that the ineptness of the tsarist authorities in dealing with the unrest contributed to magnifying the violence that occurred during 1905. Perhaps most strikingly, when martial law was declared in each of the Baltic Provinces (August 6 in Kurland, November 22 in Livland, and December 10 in Estland), the tsarist regime lacked the military means to enforce it, and in view of the increasingly tense atmosphere that prevailed in 1905, this situation invited a violent response from some elements of the population. In Estland martial law ushered in the “days of horror” (*Schreckenstage*), as the Baltic Germans termed them, involving the only massive wave of destruction during the entire year in the Estonian areas. The efforts of leading social democrats such as August Rei managed to restrain the more enlightened workers of Tallinn from “speaking Latvian,” i.e., burning and destroying the manors in the province by following the Latvian example, but as Tiit Rosenberg has suggested, an emotional response, perhaps fueled by a kind of powerless anger, led less informed workers and some peasants to violence. Paul Schiemann argues that the “disciplined social democrats” withdrew from the bands as soon as they realized that the only goals were “robbery and arson,” leaving the field to the *Lumpenproletariat*.²⁵ Otherwise, violence was held in check in the northern half of the Baltic Provinces, certainly in large part because most leading social democrats found it counterproductive and bourgeois leaders like Tõnisson condemned it as a means of struggle for change.

²² **Longworth, J. G.** The Latvian Congress of Rural Delegates in 1905. New York, Northeast European Archives, 1959, 23–24, 38–39, 41, 52–53, 90; **Ģermanis, U.** Oberst Vacietis und die lettischen Schützen im Weltkrieg und in der Oktoberrevolution. Stockholm, Almqvist & Wiksell, 1974, 54.

²³ **Bleiere, D. et al.** Istorija Latvii, 64; **Wittram, R.** Drei Generationen. Deutschland–Livland–Russland 1830–1914. Göttingen, Deuterliche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1949, 320–321. On the issue of an armed uprising in the Latvian cities, see the three-part article by **Bērziņš, J.** Bruņotas sacelšanās problēmas Latvijas pilsētas 1905. gada revolūcijā. – Latvijas Vēstures Institūta Žurnāls, 1992, 4, 74–90; 1993, 1, 63–76; 1993, 2, 46–68.

²⁴ **Speek, P.** Aruandest Eesti Sotsiaaldemokraatliku Tööliste Partei arengu ja revolutsioonilise tegevuse kohta, 245–246.

²⁵ **Rei, A.** Mālestusi tormiselt teelt. Stockholm, Vaba Eesti, 1961, 64–65, 71; **Rosenberg, T.** Krasnye gody v Estonii. – Sovetskaya Estoniya, January 23, 1990, 4; **Schiemann, P.** Zwischen zwei Zeitaltern, 74.

A focus solely on violence, however, is an inadequate index of participation in the Revolution of 1905. A more meaningful standard is activism, i.e., various forms of political and social mobilization, and by this measure the differences between the two halves of the Baltic Provinces proved to be much smaller. An early form of political mobilization in 1905 was the petition campaign that began after the February 18 ukase permitting the submission of reform proposals to the tsar “by private persons and institutions concerning improvements in the state organization and the betterment of the people’s existence.”²⁶ Clearly thrown off balance by the widespread unrest since Bloody Sunday, the tsarist regime made a serious miscalculation and effectively legalized the emerging debate on sweeping change in the country. The formulation and discussion of memoranda and petitions for change, including extensive participation at the grass-roots level all over the Estonian areas, had a powerful educational impact on the population, helping to raise its political consciousness to a new level of awareness.²⁷ Although the first major petition from the Baltic Provinces came from some 200 Latvian intellectuals in April, the overall level of mobilization and impact generated by the campaign was greater in the Estonian areas than the Latvian ones, largely because the LSDWP did not actively support it. The party remained ambivalent about cooperating with the bourgeoisie in this matter, and at the II LSDWP Congress in June, it called off participation in the petition campaign. In contrast, all Estonian political forces, both non-socialist and socialist, and the major newspapers (*Postimees* [The Courier] and *Uudised* [The News] in Tartu as well as *Teataja* [The Herald] in Tallinn) strongly supported this effort, lasting about six months altogether, and rightly recognized it as a unique opportunity for promoting their goals.²⁸

The most significant manifestations of political mobilization in both halves of the Baltic Provinces in 1905 were the two major congresses held at the height of the revolution in November: (1) the Latvian Congress of Rural Delegates in Riga on November 19–20, and (2) the All-Estonian Congress in Tartu on November 27–29. Under the chaotic conditions that prevailed during this year of upheaval, it is fair to say that neither congress could offer an accurate reflection of public opinion. The methods for delegate selection were by no means democratic, and an apparently large number of non-delegates participated in the Latvian congress.²⁹ Nevertheless, both congresses raised issues and concerns that had been debated all year and adopted important sets of resolutions that were widely distributed, serving to mobilize public opinion even more. The holding of these congresses demonstrated highly comparable levels of activism by both Latvians and Estonians.

²⁶ **Ascher, A.** *The Revolution of 1905. Russia in Disarray.* Stanford, Calif., Stanford University Press, 1988, 112–113.

²⁷ **Raun, T. U.** 1905 as a Turning Point in Estonian History. – *East European Quarterly*, 1980, 14, 328, 331.

²⁸ **Longworth, J. G.** *Latvian Congress*, 21–26; **Benz, E.** *Revolution von 1905* (1), 99, 110; *Teataja*, March 3, 1905, 1; *Uudised*, May 13, 1905, 1.

²⁹ **Longworth, J. G.** *Latvian Congress*, 79.

If anything, the impact of the All-Estonian Congress may have been somewhat larger for the following reasons: (1) the broader range (the Latvian congress focused overwhelmingly on rural concerns) and more detailed nature of the published Estonian resolutions than was the case with those of the Latvian congress, and (2) the split into two wings, meaning that two sets of resolutions with differing emphases – those of the Bürgermusse and Aula meetings – competed for public support in the still turbulent atmosphere of the remaining “Days of Freedom.”³⁰

A major contrast in political mobilization between the two halves of the Baltic Provinces occurred in the realm of local government in the rural townships (Lat. *pagasts*, Est. *vald*, Ger. *Gemeinde*, Russ. *volost'*), the key administrative institution in the peasant countryside. In the Latvian case, as we have seen, the rural population showed uncommon activism already early in 1905, certainly in part because of the LSDWP's long-term organizational efforts in the countryside. It also seems clear that the Latvian rural intelligentsia played a major leadership role: for example, 42 percent of the rural schoolteachers in Kurland and 31 percent of those in southern Livland were involved in revolutionary activity.³¹ Above all, the goal of replacing the traditional local governments by democratically elected executive (Lat. *ričības*) committees became the major focus of the Latvian grassroots rural movement in 1905. It is striking that fully 97 percent of the *pagasti* in Kurland and 94 percent in southern Livland elected such executive committees in the course of the revolutionary year, and a large proportion did so even *before* the Congress of Rural Delegates in November – 45 percent of the rural townships in Kurland and 33 percent in southern Livland. At that congress the only resolution actually adopted was a mandatory one, requiring all rural townships to elect executive committees by December 10.³² Thus, in the Latvian areas this process acquired a massive momentum that culminated in the weeks following the Congress of Rural Delegates.

In contrast, in the Estonian areas, where the rural mobilization proceeded more slowly, this issue never became a central concern. At the All-Estonian Congress the Bürgermusse resolutions called for democratically elected local governments only as a goal, not a demand, while in the Aula resolutions the demand for the establishment of “revolutionary self-government” in both rural and urban areas was only one among many. In his memoirs Karl Ast, a leading young social democrat who gave numerous speeches in the countryside explaining

³⁰ **Krastiņš, J. et al.** *Revoljutsiya 1905–1907 gg. v Latvii. Dokumenty i materyaly*. Riga, Latvijas Gokosudarstvennoe Izdatel'stvo, 1956, 164–168; Tartu Ülemaalse Rahvaasemikkude Kongressi Bürgermusse koosolekute otsused and Tartu Ülemaalse Rahvaasemikkude Kongressi Aula koosolekute otsused. – Punased aastad, 220–230.

³¹ **Švābe, A.** *Latvijas vēsture 1800–1914*, 2nd ed. Uppsala, Daugava, 1962, 645.

³² **Berziņš, V. et al.** 20. gadsimta Latvijas vēsture, I: Latvija no gadsimta sākuma līdz neatkarības pasludināšanai 1900–1918. Riga, Latvijas Vēstures Institūta Apgāds, 2000, 366; **Benz, E.** Die Revolution von 1905 in Estland, Livland und Kurland (2). *Acta Baltica*, 1991–92, 29–30, 149–150; **Bilmanis, A.**, comp. *Latvian–Russian Relations*. Washington, D. C., Latvian Legation, 1944, 34–35.

the Aula resolutions, notes that his standard message advocated the takeover of rural self-government only “under certain circumstances” – clearly not a call to swift action. Finally, it should be recalled that an Estonian congress of rural representatives, parallel to the Latvian one held in Riga, never had a chance to meet in 1905 since the congress planned for Estland in December was preempted by the establishment of martial law in Tallinn. Thus, although the disparity in this matter between the two halves of the Baltic Provinces remains striking, the factors noted above provide a partial explanation for the fact that in Estland and southern Livland only a little over 10 percent of the rural townships actually reorganized their administrative structure through democratic elections during 1905.³³

With regard to social mobilization the experience in the two halves of the Baltic Provinces was quite comparable. Perhaps the most ubiquitous form of unrest displayed during 1905 in both urban and rural areas was the strike, most often involving economic demands, but at times also political ones. Already at the beginning of the year the three Baltic Provinces were among the leaders in the strike movement. In January, for example, Livland ranked fifth, Estland seventh, and Kurland eighth among the provinces of the Russian Empire with regard to participation in industrial strikes. This trend continued throughout the entire year, as can be seen from data on the rate of repeated striking in the 50 provinces of European Russia in 1905: Kurland ranked first, Livland second, and Estland fifth (behind St. Petersburg and Grodno provinces).³⁴ From the example provided by the cities the wave of strikes gradually spread to the countryside. Another typical form of social mobilization was the formation of trade unions which became possible in the freer atmosphere following the October Manifesto. Once again aided by the organizational experience of the LSDWP, the trade union movement in the Latvian areas took off quickly during the “Days of Freedom.” In November 1905 in Riga, for example, trade union membership already reached 15,000. They included not only industrial workers, but also artisans (e.g., tailors and cobblers) and members of the intelligentsia (e.g., teachers and musicians). In comparison, the Estonian areas also displayed much activism in the establishment of trade unions, most notably in the larger cities of Tallinn (including unionization of the police) and Tartu, as documented, for example, by numerous reports in *Teataja* in November and early December 1905.³⁵

In conclusion, it should be stressed that the Revolution of 1905 took both the tsarist government and the Baltic German elites by surprise. Failing to comprehend

³³ **Kruus, H.** Punased aastad, 223–224, 227; **Rumor, K. A.** Aegade sadestus. Olusid, iseloomustusi, hinnanguid, 2 vols. Lund, Eesti Kirjanike Kooperatiiv, 1963–1965, II, 256; **Benz, E.** Revolution von 1905 (2), 172.

³⁴ **Benz, E.** Revolution von 1905 (1), 51; **Amal'rik, A. S.** K voprosu o chislennosti i geograficheskom razmeshchenii stachechnikov v Evropejskoj Rossii v 1905 godu. – Istoricheskie zapiski, 1955, 52, 162.

³⁵ **Bleiere, D. et al.** Istoriya Latvii, 63; **Rosenberg, T.** Krasnye gody. – Sovetskaya Estoniya, January 10, 1990, 4; **Lepp, M.** Mälestused, I: 1905. a. romantika. Tartu, 1922, 73; **Ames, E. O. F.** Revolution in the Baltic Provinces of Russia, 38.

the massive social changes brought about by industrialization and modernization, the authorities were neither prepared for a revolutionary upheaval nor for the forms that it took.³⁶ Nevertheless, the ruling elites, both in St. Petersburg and in the Baltic region, were greatly aided by the fact that 1905 was the *first* revolution in the Russian Empire, and under the circumstances the forces for change were highly fragmented as they pursued various agendas in trying to solve the broad range of political and social problems the country faced.³⁷

In the Baltic Provinces the greater level of violence in the southern half was clearly related to its more advanced economic development and the earlier rise of a strong social democratic movement, focused above all in Riga, but also broadly present in the countryside. However, social factors also played an important role in this difference. The Latvian–German historical relationship was more troubled and hostile than the Estonian–German one, and social tensions were heightened by the confrontation in Riga and the larger German presence in the southern half of the Baltic Provinces. In this situation spontaneous violence was more likely to occur. On the other hand, if the focus is shifted to activism, i.e., political and social mobilization in various forms, the experience of the two halves of the Baltic Provinces proved to be much more comparable. With regard to such key phenomena as the petition campaign to the tsar, the national congresses held in November, the strike movement, and the creation of trade unions, the Latvians and Estonians displayed similar levels of engagement. One major contrast in political mobilization, however, was the much more sweeping reorganization of rural government in the Latvian areas, a result of the earlier mobilization of the Latvian countryside as well as a more single-minded focus on this specific issue throughout 1905.

³⁶ **Wittram, R.** Drei Generationen, 314; **Bosse, H.** Die gläserne Wand. Der lettische Mensch in der deutsch-baltischen Literatur.– Journal of Baltic Studies, 1986, 17, 337.

³⁷ **Ascher, A.** Revolution of 1905. Russia in Disarray, 343.

VÄGIVALD JA AKTIIVSUS 1905. AASTA REVOLUTSIOONI AJAL BALTI PROVINTSIDES

Toivo U. RAUN

On keskendutud võrdlevalt kahele võtmeküsimusele Balti provintside kahes osas 1905. aasta revolutsiooni käigus: 1) vägivald, st isikuvastased rünnakud ja eraomanduse hävitamine; 2) aktivism kui poliitiline ja sotsiaalne mobiliseerumine. On selge, et vägivald oli palju suurem Kuramaal ja Lõuna-Liivimaal kui Eestimaal ja Põhja-Liivimaal, näiteks mõrvatud sakslaste hulga, mõisaomandi hävitamise ja baltisakslaste ning tsaarivõimu esindajatega relvastatud kokkupõrgete osas. Varasem baltisaksa ajaloolaste selgitus, mida seostatakse lätlaste ja eestlaste

rahvusliku iseloomu erinevusega, ei vasta praegusaja teaduse tasemele. Läti puhul oli sotsiaaldemokraatial oluline roll. Tänu Riia kiirele arengule tööstuskeskusena hakkas sotsialistlik ideoloogia Läti aladel palju kiiremini levima kui Eesti aladel ja juba 1905. aasta jooksul oli Läti Sotsiaaldemokraatlik Töölispartei (LSDTP) loonud tiheda organisatsioonilise võrgustiku, mis hõlmas ka maapiirkondi. Lisaks sellele olid klassierinevused teravamad ja rohkem killustunud Läti kodanlus suutis radikaalsele vasakpoolsusele vähem vastukaaluks olla kui näiteks Jaan Tõnisson Põhja-Liivimaal. Lõpuks on piisavalt tõendeid, et etnilised suhted Läti aladel, eriti Kuramaal ja Riias, olid vaenulikumad kui Eesti aladel.

Kui võrrelda aga elanikkonna aktiivsust, on erinevused Balti provintside vahel tunduvalt väiksemad. Üks 1905. aasta varajase poliitilise mobiliseerumise vorme oli palvekirjade kampaania, mis algas 18. veebruari ukaasiga, millega lubati esitada tsaarile reformiettepanekuid. Selles aktsioonis ilmneb, et Eesti alad näitasid tegelikult kõrgemat mobiliseerumise taset, osalt sellepärast, et LSDTP ei toetanud aktiivselt seda kampaaniat. Novembris peetud rahvuskongressid Riias ning Tartus olid väga sarnased ja osutasid nii eestlaste kui lätlaste hästi võrreldavale aktiivsusele. Revolutsioonilises ja segases olukorras ei saanud kumbki kongress olla avaliku arvamuse täpne mõõt, kuid mõlemad peegeldasid selgelt suure osa elanikkonna aktiivset osalust. Üks suuremaid erinevusi poliitilise mobiliseerumise korral seisnes põhjapoolsete aladega võrreldes palju ulatuslikumas maaomavalitsuste ümberkorraldamises Balti provintside lõunapoolses osas. Seda kontrasti võib peamiselt selgitada Läti maaelanikkonna kiirema mobiliseerumisega. Sõjaseisukorra väljakuulutamise tõttu ei tulnud näiteks Eestimaa maasaadikute kongress kunagi kokku. Sotsiaalse mobiliseerumise aspektist oli olukord kahes regioonis küllaltki võrreldav. Eestimaa linnatöölise streikidest osavõtt oli juba jaanuaris suur ja jätkus umbes samal tasemel kui Liivimaal ja Kuramaal 1905. aasta jooksul. Ametiühingute organiseerimine, mis sai võimalikuks pärast oktoobrimanifesti, hoogustus mõlemas Balti provintside osas. Kui osavõttu mõõta pigem aktiivsuse kui vägivaldailmingute kaudu, kaovad erinevused Läti ja Eesti alade vahel suurel määral.