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VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS IN ESTONIA. THE MODEL OF THE 19th CENTURY

The era of voluntary associations in Europe began with the disintegration of the long-established estate system and growth of the "Third Estate", the educated strata (*das Bildungsbürgertum*), and the publicity. Of course, the history of voluntary or quasi-voluntary associations actually dates back thousands of years — if we define an association in a loose sense, just as a form of advancing people's common endeavours.¹ But it was only when the preconditions mentioned above took shape that the real expansion of the voluntary associations began as a special form of the interaction of man and society, contributing to the functioning of the society in various areas. It could not have taken place without a considerable amount of freedom of action or choice. One had to have the option to choose the form of co-operation with other individuals for the sake of some common purpose. Only in such a case the principle of the voluntary association in its real sense could function, making it possible for "persons from different estates, different occupations and different religious backgrounds to establish equal, horizontal communication..."². Industrial revolution with all its consequences and — politically — the French revolution constituted the general background for the boom and increasing social impact of the voluntary associations.

In the following, a preliminary scheme of the emergence, development and functions of the voluntary associations in Estonia in the 19th century, will be presented. The main idea is to compare these processes among the Baltic-German and Estonian population, respectively, as far as the different preconditions, cultural contacts, economic position, and social structure of both groups are concerned. There are not too many case studies one can rely upon. The more thoroughly studied period in this sense is the era of National Awakening of Estonians in the 1860s and '80s; in the monographs and papers by such authors as Fr. Tuglas, H. Kruus, R. Põldmäe, O. Ibius, E. Karu, A. Raendi, and others, valuable data can be found. Yet, the systematic study into the activities and social role of Baltic-German and Estonian societies has only begun.

In Estonia, in the late 18th century, began the period of the eclipse of serfdom, and our country, belonging to the backward East-European region, appeared to be an area of sharp socio-economic and cultural contrasts. On the one hand, the modernization of the society proceeded with an ever increasing speed. The big estates of the Baltic-German nobility, seized by the common whirl of the money economy, began to produce for the market. Likewise, the impact of the cultural life in Germany proper and the modern spiritual trends in Europe were strong. So,

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¹ *Siiisäinen, M.* Four studies on Voluntary Associations in Finland. Jyväskylä, 1989, 2—3.

² *Stenius, H.* Frivilligt, jämlikt, samfällt. Föreningsväsendetes utveckling in Finland fram till 1900-talets början... . Helsingfors, 1987, 373.

among the richer and privileged strata of society, a new style of life and wider intellectual interests began to take shape; these people also began to take active part in the public life.

On the other hand, Estonia belonged to those regions where the serfdom and several restrictions, regulations, and privileges for different strata of society were particularly strict, and this determined the human relations for a very long time. The disintegration of the estate system was very slow, although the old order was already on the decline. The cleft between different social strata was deep, and the native Estonian population — mostly peasants with no rights or those belonging to the lowest orders in the towns — had little possibility for social mobility upwards. The German language was regarded as a token of the higher social status and the Estonian (or Latvian) as that of the lowest. The local administration was firmly in the hands of the mostly conservative Baltic-German nobility corporations (*die Ritterschaften*) and the guilds of the merchants in the towns. It was not before the middle of the 19th century that the new agrarian laws laid the basis for a transition to the money economy in agriculture. Due to this and to the effects of industrialization and urbanization, new opportunities of social careers appeared for Estonians, too.

Until then, the social activity of Estonian peasants was mostly limited to classical feudal peasant unrest: there was little or no choice of movements or associations a peasant could join of his own accord. As predecessors of voluntary associations, the congregations of the Herrnhut brethren may be mentioned. This religious movement reached its peak in Estonia in about 1830—'50s.³ Another act of free will can be found in the proselytism of 1840s, when thousands and thousands of peasants in South Estonia joined the Greek-Orthodox Church in the futile hope of being granted a piece of land as a reward.⁴ Also, there were some choirs, founded by pastors or rural parochial school-teachers.⁵ In social intercourse and entertainment, old forms belonging to the traditional oral peasant culture prevailed. A more modern phenomenon was, perhaps, the pub — an analogue for a club for rural and urban lowest classes. Vital for the life and work of peasants was the co-operation inside the family, the household, and the village community, regulated by several customs and oral prescriptions.

I

It is natural that the modern association movement in the Baltics was initially sustained by the German élite, who accepted the socio-cultural life of Germany as a model. Of course, even in the case of privileged social strata the freedom of action was far from absolute, for they, too, were prisoners of the estate system, which determined their behaviour. All the same, as they possessed the material as well as spiritual riches, they had a greater freedom of choice than the comparatively poor, uneducated and unprivileged, that is, Estonians and Latvians.

There were several factors that contributed to the rise of interest for new forms of collaboration of individuals within the framework of one's estate and also between different social strata.

³ *Philipp, G.* Die Wirksamkeit der herrnhuter Brüdergemeine unter den Esten und Letten zur Zeit der Bauernbefreiung. Köln; Wien, 1974, 205—273.

⁴ *Kruus, H.* Talurahva käärimine Lõuna-Eestis XIX sajandi 40-ndail aastail. Tartu, 1930.

⁵ *Põldmäe, R.* Esimene Eesti üldlaulupidu 1869. Tallinn, 1969, 12—20.

During the age of Enlightenment, it became fashionable to be educated and informed about the world, also to participate in public affairs or amateur cultural activities. Though the Baltic noblemen had actually serious economic difficulties, and the towns were not particularly prosperous, there was more money around by this time and more leisure as well. The communication with Germany became ever more intense. As Indrek Jürjo has pointed out, in the era of Enlightenment the Baltic Provinces belonged, culturally, to the northeast-European communication system and here the same forms of cultural associations were known as those in Germany: reading societies, public libraries, clubs, coffee-houses, and Freemasons' lodges.⁶ The same refined style of life was cultivated by the noblemen in their often luxurious big houses in the countryside as well as by the urban higher social strata, as everywhere else in Europe.

Germans' public and private cultural activities thrived during the first half of the 19th century. In all the towns, clubs were founded that acted as centres for "civilized" social intercourse, entertainment and also reading and other cultural activities. They were visited by the representatives of different German social estates. Besides, special music societies, following the example of Germany, mostly for the advancement of male choral-singing, called *Liedertafel*, *Liederkrantz*, *Männergesangverein*, etc. expanded. Cultural activities were also enhanced by the societies of the philanthropic aims and the associations of the artisans, *Handwerkervereine*, favoured also by other strata of society, even by the nobility. Estonian and Livonian noblemen spent a considerable part of the year in towns, participating there in the intensive art, music, and theatre life that characterized Baltic towns in the 19th century.⁷

Thus, one of the important factors contributing to the emergence and successful development of the voluntary associations among the Baltic-German higher strata was a spiritual need resulting from a general rise of the educational level and the refinement of their style of life under the impact of the culture of Germany.

One of the preconditions for this was the establishment of a strong local intelligentsia. More and more young men were trained at the universities in Germany, and more and more young men immigrated from Germany to the Baltics, being employed as teachers in gymnasia, as domestic tutors, pastors, etc.⁸ With the reopening of Tartu University in 1802, a new impetus for the blossoming of all the spheres of local cultural life appeared. But although Tartu became the main centre for training local youth, this fact did not result in provincialism in any respect; the immigration of intellectuals from Germany continued to a rather great extent, and the local youth, having finished their classes in Tartu, usually continued their studies for some time at German universities.

Due to the continuing close relations with Germany proper, the impact of German Romanticism, German Nationalism, and the national-cultural movement in Germany was ever so strongly felt in the Baltics. Its result was the interest towards one's own ethnical identity, acting as an incentive for historical and cultural studies. Learned societies concerned with the past of the provinces and also with the culture of the indigenous people, began to flourish.⁹ The first ones of such were the Curonian Society for

⁶ *Jürjo, I.* Lesegesellschaften in den baltischen Provinzen im Zeitalter der Aufklärung. Teil I. Zeitschrift für Ostforschung, 1990, Heft 4, 540—571; Teil II. Zeitschrift für Ostforschung, 1991, Heft 1, 28—56.

⁷ See *Loodus, R., Keevallik, J.* Kunstielu Eestis 19. sajandil. Tallinn, 1990, 3—35.

⁸ *Tering, A.* Akadeemiline kultuur Eestis 17.—18. sajandil. A manuscript at the Institute of History, Estonian Academy of Sciences.

⁹ *Weiss, H.* Die historischen Gesellschaften. — In: *Rauch, G. von* (Hrsg.). Geschichte der deutschbaltischen Geschichtsschreibung. Köln; Wien, 1986, 121—140.

Literature and Art (*Kurländische Gesellschaft für Literatur und Kunst*, Jelgava 1815), Estonian Society in Kuressaare (*Arensburger Estnische Gesellschaft*, Kuressaare 1817), and Estonian Learned Society in Tartu (*Estnische Gelehrte Gesellschaft in Dorpat*, Tartu 1819). These were the pioneers. Their successors on the territory of Estonia (letting alone Riga and Jelgava) were two strong societies, activities of which were crucial for the advancement of the humanities: Learned Estonian Society in Tartu (*Gelehrte Estnische Gesellschaft bei der Kaiserlichen Universität Dorpat*), founded in 1838, and Estonian Literary Society in Tallinn (*Estländische Literarische Gesellschaft*), founded in 1842.

The enthusiasm for research work, uniting the professional and amateur scholars, was common to all these societies. They acted as centres for collaboration of intellectuals irrespective of their social status or ethnic origin. Among the founders of the "Learned Estonian Society" were born Estonians Friedrich Robert Fählmann and Dietrich Heinrich Jürgenson, both acutely conscious of their ethnic origin. During the second half of the 19th century, some active patriots — participants and even leaders of Estonian national movement — were active in this organization. So, the estate principle increasingly receded. It may seem that the learned societies could have also turned into the instruments for blending the nationalities and cultures. Yet this did not take place. The learned societies mentioned above, as well as their younger sisters founded in small Estonian towns during the second half of the 19th century, remained German and acted first and foremost as instruments for self-identification of Baltic Germans. The activities of the Baltic-German learned societies were vital for the advancement of Estonian national humanities; however, the development of the Estonian culture in general took a separate course and from the 1870s on, new national literary and learned organizations emerged.

In the establishment of the Baltic-German intelligentsia and the formation of its mentality, the crucial role belonged to the students organizations, corporations, regarded, by the way, as democratic institutions by many a Baltic-German author. In Tartu, after a long struggle between the supporters of the principle of one unitarian organization for all the students (*Burschenschaft*) on the one hand and the division of the students according to the localities they came from on the other, the latter gained victory, and corporations were, in 1855, legally acknowledged. To the outside world, the corporations seemed to be aristocratic and exclusive. Yet, within the organization, strict hierarchy of older and younger students prevailed over the social background; in principle, all were brothers, and close friendly relations of members of a corporation from different social strata lasted as long as they lived. In this sense, the corporations did act as disintegrative factors as regards the estate barriers. They were typical for a society where education and professional skills, and not estate privileges, began more and more to determine the prestige and the position of a man in the society. On the other hand, the corporations were most effective means for the reproduction of the cultural identity of the Baltic-German Provinces and the self-identification of the intellectuals, symbolizing their "togetherness", their community.

One of the factors contributing to the collaboration of individuals and the emergence of new associations was the need for the reorganization of the economic management of the estates of the big landowners, the introduction of agricultural innovations. Adapting to the money economy was not an easy task. Germany and other Western countries presented a model difficult to imitate, because a large part of the Baltic nobility, living beyond their means, had fallen increasingly into debt. One of the first results of the recognition of the common interests was the establishment

of the "Livonian Public Benefit and Economic Society" (*Livländische Gemeinnützige und Ökonomische Sozietät*). It was founded in Riga in 1792, and was later transferred to Tartu. This organization, joined afterwards by agricultural societies of the big landowners of a more local character, turned into the leading centre for agricultural studies and the rationalization of the agriculture, being also concerned with the improvement of agrarian relations. It existed until 1939.¹⁰

As we do not possess yet enough concrete data about the association movement among Baltic Germans during the 19th century, we are not able to give a final answer to the question of the interaction between the modern principle of voluntary association and the nobility-dominated self-government of the provinces, which can be characterized as still a "pure form of feudal representative Öffentlichkeit".¹¹ It did not represent any other stratum than the immatriculated noblemen.

But it seems that there was actually no antagonism, which is quite logical. Although always loyal to the Russian throne and active as servants in Czarist administration and the army, Baltic Germans, whether noblemen or not, carefully guarded their cultural as well as political individuality. They could not be too sure they could retain their advantageous political position for ever, because they constituted only a very small minority in countries with an ethnically different population, being thus dependent on the graciousness of the Emperors of the autocratic metropolis. Beginning with the 1830s, the feeling of instability was enhanced by the centralizing tendencies revealed by the government of Nicholas I and the Slavophile, anti-German attitudes in Russian publicity. The reaction was the increase of nationalism among Baltic Germans. In such a situation the existing form of self-government — the Baltic *Landesstaat* was supposed to act as the main guarantee for the identity of local Germans, and it was supported by different social strata.

Though limited in number, Baltic Germans still managed to create a rather comprehensive network of various types of voluntary associations. Nearly all kinds of organizations existing in Germany proper and in civilized Europe in general, were represented. Of course, there were considerable exceptions: as there was no political freedom in Czarist Russia, no political parties or popular political movements could emerge here either during the 19th century. It is true that the Baltic nobility corporations, the *Ritterschaften* with their diets may be looked upon as organized political force — there were "liberals" and "conservatives" within the *Ritterschaften*, but these terms cannot be interpreted in the modern European sense. Liberalism meant support to reforms in the field of agrarian relations or self-government, mostly quite moderate.

It may be interesting to note that the Baltic-German intellectuals themselves were well aware of the great significance of their voluntary associations in the 19th century. For example, the well-known journalist and art critic Leopold von Pezold regarded the societies, *Vereine*, as the manifestations of the initiative and self-support of people acting as the guarantees for the material and cultural progress. They were, in his words, the motivating force of political life, constituting "states in the state", organs of one and the same organism. Thus, the learned Baltic journalist did not see any controversy between the "official" state (self-government) organs and the free associations. According to Pezold, the well-developed network of organizations, based on purposeful voluntary work, was the

¹⁰ Engelhardt, E. D. von, Neuschäffer, H. Die Livländische Gemeinnützige und Ökonomische Sozietät (1792—1939). Köln; Wien, 1983.

¹¹ Jansson, T. The age of associations. Principles and forms of organization between corporations and mass organizations. A comparative Nordic survey from Swedish viewpoint. — Scandinavian Journal of History, 1990, 13, 325.

most characteristic feature of the Baltic society.¹² Pezold was right: to maintain themselves, Baltic Germans, as a small minority, needed various types of organizations, beginning with the philanthropic associations and funds for mutual assistance and finishing with learned societies concerned with scientific research work, or big agricultural societies concerned with the advancement of economy.

It is a paradox that the main function mentioned — the preservation of the identity and the political position of Baltic Germans as the ruling minority, was intrinsically interwoven with a virtually contradictory function of the German voluntary organizations — the modernization of the society. The modernizing function was jeopardized by the loyalty to the estate institutions, originating in Middle Ages. But it was far from being suppressed and acted successfully in economic as well as cultural fields.

II

Culture is contagious. The case of Baltic Germans demonstrates that the social need for voluntary associations was stimulated by the cultural impact of Europe. Baltic Germans imitated Germany; having the option, Estonians and Latvians began to copy the Baltic-German model of voluntary organizations close at hand. Of course, very soon the essential difference was revealed: while the Baltic-German associations were by the very essence of their main function “defensive”, the Estonian organizations were “offensive”. Consciously or unconsciously, they were, or became, the instruments contributing to the social mobility of Estonians and their cultural advancement.

This “aggressive” movement of voluntary associations could not begin before the social mobility of Estonians had reached a certain level and the opportunities for free activities of the individuals had considerably grown in number. It did not happen before the 1860s, when the Estonian peasant — the former serf — began to turn into a modern small landowner, and the industrialization, the advancement of the trade, transport, etc. contributed to the increase of the choice of occupations and the territorial mobility of the population. The demographic changes should also be noted: the number as well as the proportion of the native Estonians increased rapidly. A network of rural folk elementary schools with Estonian as the language of instruction spread all over the country; the general literacy of Estonians, achieved at by the end of the 19th century, was also one of the preconditions for the participation of the common people in the public life now becoming a reality also for the indigenous people of the Baltic provinces. Naturally, the second half of the 19th century was still only the transitional period, and the old ruling social strata maintained their positions. The way of Estonians belonging to the lower strata of the society towards freedom, welfare and European education was slow, handicapped in many a sense. The more the individual initiative as well as collaboration, associated activities of individuals, were needed.

In the 1860s, along with loosely associated groups of intellectuals-patriots in St. Petersburg and Tartu, first Estonian music societies with the registered statutes in Tallinn and Tartu, emerged. They were founded after the model of German *Männerengesangvereine* with a largely subconscious wish to demonstrate that Estonians, too, can “do something” and can be “like Germans”. Due to the nationalist feelings, enhanced by active patriots, these societies gradually became consciously nationalistic.

¹² Pezold, L. von. Schattenrisse aus Revels Vergangenheit. Reval, 1901, 49.

A typical example is the well-known "Vanemuine": founded in 1865 with the modest intention to present an opportunity for civilized entertainment for the lower middle class in Tartu, it turned into an arena for patriotic agitation for Estonian intellectuals.¹³ In 1870s, music societies were founded in all the Estonian towns; in 1880s, they began to flourish in the countryside, although the Czarist authorities were far from eager to grant licences for such associations.¹⁴ There was, of course, a mass of the choirs and orchestras, functioning without any licences at rural schools. Choir-singing, introduced by the German model, appeared to be a convenient means to express one's national feelings. Due to the activities of the societies and choirs, the modest wish "to be like Germans" was replaced by the proud demonstration of one's national self-consciousness; national values propagated by the intellectuals — the love for "fatherland", the high esteem for one's mother tongue and the folk culture in general, etc., were accepted by the masses. The tradition of song festivals was established. The music societies, and beginning from 1889, the temperance societies, also served as a basis for educational work; at meetings, festivities and evenings of various societies, educational speeches were held; reading habits were encouraged and libraries were founded. From 1880s, amateur theatre performances became popular, too.

Copying the German societies, the Estonian ones actually had in many a sense similar functions as the German reading societies at the end of the 18th century — they served as means for cultural self-expression and advancement.

From the 1870s, the domination of the nation-building function of the Estonian societies became quite evident. In this sense, first of all two all-Estonian organizations were have to be mentioned.

One of them was the so-called Alexander School Organization. As all the schools in Estonia, except the rural elementary schools, used German as the language of instruction, a large-scale campaign was launched by the Estonian patriots to found a higher folk school with Estonian as the language of instruction. The intention of the founders seems to have been extremely modest; the curriculum they envisaged for the school hardly corresponded to that of a secondary school. But it was the idea of the mother-tongue school in itself that was important — it became something of a symbol of the national emancipation of Estonians. A wide-scale organization consisting of a network of local committees all over Estonia directed by a central board in Tartu, was founded with the purpose to raise the funds for the school (100 000 roubles were needed). The campaign was a success; donations from all the Estonian social strata were a testimony that mass participation in the national movement had begun. In some 15 years, the capital required for the foundation of the school was gathered. The plenary meetings of the board and the local committees in Tartu provided a forum for the discussion of the national and cultural problems; here different opinions and aspirations for the leading role in the national movement collided. The debates, often personal and ugly, were actually a preparation for Estonian political life. Along with the proceeding of Estonian journalistics, the Alexander School Organization forums were a testimony to the emergence of Estonian publicity at the end of the 1870s and the beginning of the 1880s. In line with the beginning Russification policy by the government of Alexander III in the 1880s, the practical goal of the founders has not been reached: the Estonian Alexander School opened its doors in 1888 as a higher elementary school with

¹³ Põldmäe, R. «Vanemuise» selts ja teater 1865—1880. Tallinn, 1978.

¹⁴ See also Karu, E. On the development of the association movement and its socio-economic background in the Estonian countryside. — Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis — Studia Baltica Stockholmiensa, 1985, 2, 271—282.

Russian as the language of instruction. Yet, the nation-building mission of the organization has been carried out; its contribution to the rise of national consciousness of Estonians was crucial.¹⁵

The role of another all-Estonian cultural organization of the 1870s was analogous — the Society of Estonian Literati (*Eesti Kirjameeste Selts*), founded in 1872. This society, the major support for which came from the rural schoolteachers, turned into a recognized centre of cultural work. More limited in scope than the Estonian Alexander School organization, its cultural contribution to the Estonian nation-building was essential. The activities of the society were directed towards the advancement of the Estonian literary language, the introduction of the so-called new orthography, the promotion of Estonian educational literature and folklore.¹⁶

The society of Estonian Literati was actually the first Estonian national learned society, although hardly in the full sense of the word. The Learned Estonian Society, also in Tartu, may have served as a model. But there was still another model that had inspired Estonian patriots. In 1865, Friedrich Reinhold Kreutzwald, the author of the epic "Kalevipoeg" and a recognized authority for Estonians, wrote to the young patriot Jakob Hurt that there was hardly any hope the Learned Estonian Society would do anything in favour of the culture of Estonians; "if we want to influence people, we have to have a society like the Finnish Literary Society in Helsinki that lives and works for the people".¹⁷ Kreutzwald himself was a Correspondent Member of this society from 1855. During the following years, the model of Finnish socio-cultural development, including the example of voluntary association movement, became ever more popular. By the way, the foundation of the temperance societies, too, was inspired by Finland.

There was one more national learned society that emerged during the second half of the 19th century — the Society of Estonian Students (*Eesti Üliõpilaste Selts*), registered in 1883, also concerned with cultural studies. Actually the nationally-minded Estonian students wanted to found a corporation, *Vironia*, but due to the opposition of the German students organizations and their central board (*Chargierten-Convent*), they had not succeeded.

During the second half of the 19th century, the scale of Estonian voluntary organizations in spite of their relatively large number, did not reach the dimension of that of the local Germans. However, there was one obvious parallel besides the mentioned similarities — it was the foundation of agricultural societies. The same need for the rationalization of the agriculture and adaptation to a market economy that made the German big landowners found their first agricultural associations, now led the Estonian small landowners to collaboration. From 1870, first Estonian agricultural societies were founded (Tartu, Viljandi, Pärnu; later on, societies in Võru, Põltsamaa, and Tallinn emerged). It was interesting that the Czarist authorities mostly rejected the applications for the foundation of agricultural societies; their attitude changed only at the very end of the 19th century, when a new boom of the foundation of such societies began.

The main intention of these societies was to offer advice for the rationalization of the agriculture or to co-operate in buying seeds and new tools; agricultural exhibitions were organized. Furthermore, it very soon appeared that the ambitions of Estonian agricultural societies were wider: the farmer and journalist Carl Robert Jakobson, President of the

¹⁵ *Kruus, H.* Eesti Aleksandrikool. Tartu, 1939.

¹⁶ *Tuglas, Fr.* Eesti Kirjameeste Selts. Tallinn, 1957.

¹⁷ Fr. R. Kreutzwald to J. Hurt on January 17, 1865. — In: Fr. R. Kreutzwaldi kirjavahetus, VI. Tallinn, 1979, 88.

societies of Pärnu and Viljandi in the 1870s, regarded the agricultural associations as hotbeds for an "Estonian policy" in the future and, in his speeches, he voiced political equality of Estonians and Baltic Germans. As a result, campaigns against the privileged big landownership were launched and the relations with the German agricultural societies became strenuous.¹⁸

Thus, along with their immediate economic functions, the Estonian agricultural societies, too, acted as the instruments for nation-building.

The Russification policy during the end of the 1880s and in the first half of the '90s was, of course, a hard blow to the cultural development of Estonians (as well as Baltic Germans). But it did not dwarf the advancement of it altogether. As to the voluntary associations, they were not banned, and although the applications for new organizations were often rejected, a considerable part was accepted, and actually the number of the national voluntary organizations constantly increased. Favoured by the officials were the temperance societies, and this was one of the reasons for the expansion of this type of organizations in Estonia in the 1890s. During this decade, new kinds of voluntary associations began to spread among Estonians: associations for mutual assistance, first national fire brigades in some localities, associations of the artisans, first sports societies.

In 1900 Petr Rutsky, a Czarist official, published, on the basis of official information, a survey of the Estonian, Latvian, and German organizations in the Livonian Province; according to him, there were altogether 1241 various associations in the year 1899. It is quite a big number. The existence of an immense number of different organizations and associations for all the social strata, the highest and the lowest, for all the ethnic groups, for all the professions and occupations etc. is the characteristic feature of the Baltic provinces as compared to other parts of Russia, writes Rutsky.¹⁹ He was right, of course.

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The era of voluntary associations in the case of the Baltic Germans began in the second half of the 18th, in the case of the Estonians in the 1860s. The progress of association movement depended on the degree of freedom and education the different ethnic groups possessed, and on the social structure of the population. Along with these basic factors, the impact of neighbouring cultures was clearly pronounced, too. Baltic Germans copied the German model, Estonians copied that of the Baltic Germans, although the impact of the Finnish model was vital, too. In a sense, the processes that went on in the Baltic-German community at the end of the 18th and at the beginning of the 19th centuries, were repeated by Estonians in the 1860s and '70s. Of course, there were considerable differences. The German population consisted of upper and middle strata of the society, they had already a strong intelligentsia, they were, as a rule, economically secured, and they had a bottomless "store of spiritual goods" in the form of German culture comfortably at hand.

The Estonians were, during the whole second half of the 19th century, poor and mostly lower class or lower middle class, there was only a small group of intellectuals with university education, the tendency for Germanization was still alive. But the Estonian population was very mobile, their absolute number as well as their number in proportion increased constantly. Striving for self-fulfilment, they were apt to accept the nation-

¹⁸ See *Ibius*, O. Balti mõisnike katsed eesti põllumeeste seltside sõltuvuses hoidmiseks XIX sajandi teisel poolel. — Eesti TA Toim. Ühisk., 1966, 4, 403—417.

¹⁹ Общества Лифляндской губернии. Составитель по официальным данным Петр Рущкий. Рига, 1900, 1.

alistic ideas that appeared to be a strong impetus for the social and cultural advancement. The voluntary associations acted as a means for it, turning into effective instruments for nation-building. In the case of Baltic Germans, the voluntary associations were first of all the means for their self-preservation as a special ethnic group with a special political position and cultural individuality; in the case of Estonians, they were the first instruments for national emancipation. But in both cases, they served as instruments for the modernization of the society, contributing to the participation of different social strata in public affairs.

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OMALGATUSLIKUD ORGANISATSIOONID EESTIS: 19. SAJANDI MUDEL

Artikkel on katse anda esialgne ülevaade omaalgatuslike ehk vabatahtlike organisatsioonide tekkest ja arengust Eestis 18. sajandi lõpust 19. sajandi lõpuni. Meie kirjanduses nimetatakse selliseid ühendusi tavaliselt seltsideks. Siinses kirjutises on selte käsitletud kui indiviidide vabale valikule, teadlikule koostööle ja aktiivsele osalemisele tuginevaid ühendusi, mille sotsiaal-kultuuriline ning poliitiline tähendus 18. ja 19. sajandi Euroopas järjest kasvas. Püüdes kõrvutada baltisaksa ja eesti seltsiliikumist, ei ole pretendeeritud absoluutse kehtivusega üldistustele, sest paljude seltsitüüpide ja üksikorganisatsioonide puhul on uurimused veel puudu. Eestis on kõige enam uuritud ärkamisaja organisatsioone (Fr. Tuglas, H. Kruus, R. Põldmäe, E. Karu, A. Raendi, O. Ibius jt.). Nii baltisaksa kui ka eesti seltsiliikumise süstemaatiline vaatlus ja vabatahtlike organisatsioonide mitmekülgse sotsiaalse tähenduse selgitamine on siiski alles algusjärgus.

Artiklis on peatähelepanu pööratud seltside tekketingimustele ja — mõningate põhitähtsusega seltsitüüpide tegevuse ja eesmärkide põhjal — sotsiaalsetele funktsioonidele võrdlevalt baltisaksa ja eesti rahvastikugruppides. On osundatud kultuurimõjude olulisele tähendusele ning seatud küsimus seltside kui moodsale ühiskonnale omase inimeste koostöövormi ja vanaeuroopaliku seisusliku süsteemi suhtest. Püsis ju see süsteem Baltimail üsna visalt. Baltisaksa lugemisseltside ja muude kultuuriseltside, teaduslike ning põllumajanduslike ühenduste ja üliõpilaskorporatsioonide tegevuse põhjal on tehtud järeldus, et baltisaksa seltsiliikumine aitas oluliselt kaasa mõningate eluvaldkondade moderniseerumisele ja eri seisustest isikute koostööle, eitades seega kehtivat seisuslikku korda. Samas kohanes see liikumine siiski olemasoleva korraga ja toetas kohalikkude eksklusiivset, aadlikorporatsioonide kätes olevat amavalitsust. See oli tingitud vajadusest säilitada enda kui demograafilise vähemuse majanduslik-poliitiline positsioon ja kultuuriidentiteet. Hästiarenenud baltisaksa seltside võrk vastas oma struktuurilt enam-vähem euroopa mudelile. Kaasaegsete poolt käsitati seda kui lokaalse saksa kultuuri ja Balti eripära tähtsaimat komponenti.

Eestlaste, peamiselt talupoegadest koosneva põlisrahva seas said omaalgatuslikud organisatsioonid selle sõna ülaltoodud mõttes hakata arenema alles suure sotsiaal-majandusliku murrangu alguses, seega 1860. aastail. Sajandi esimese poole osas võib rääkida vaid omaalgatuslikkuse algetest (vennastekogudused jm.). Alles sajandi keskpaiga ja 60. aastate alguse seadusandlus andis võimaluse eesti talupoegade kujunemiseks vabadeks väikeomanikeks; industrialiseerimine, kaubanduse ja transpordi areng töid kaasa eesti rahvastiku mobiilsuse ja võimaldasid vaba indiviidi uuelaadse aktiivsuse. Nüüdki oli see piiratud poliitilise surve ja õigusetuse tõttu; tsaarivalitsuse tsentraliseerimistaotlused ahistasid nii sakslasi kui ka eestlasi, kutsudes ühtlasi esile suurema kultuuriaktiivsuse ja vastupanu oma identiteedi säilitamiseks, seega ka vajaduse omaalgatuslikkuse ja uute meediumide järele, mille kaudu end avaldada. Eestlastele oli nakkav saksa seltsiliikumise eeskuju, ent peatselt sai inspireerivaks teguriks ka soome kultuurilise arengu mudel. Jälgides 19. sajandi teisele poolele omaste põhiliste seltsitüüpide (muusikaseltsid,

Aleksandrikooli organisatsioon, Eesti Kirjameeste Selts, karskusseltsid, Eesti Üliõpilaste Selts, põllumeeste seltsid) arengu põhjal nende funktsioonide evolutsiooni, osundatakse rahvast kujundava funktsiooni domineerimisele. Baltisaksa ja eesti organisatsioonide sulandumist ei toimunud, ehkki võimalus ju oli.

Nii baltisakslaste kui ka eestlaste puhul oli tahe ja vajadus omaalgatuslikuks ühinemiseks ja koostööks 19. sajandil väga tugev ning kandis märgatavaid vilju laialdase seltsidevõrgu kujunemise näol. On loomulik, et põhirahvastiku vähemate majanduslike võimaluste, vähema valikuvabaduse ning tagasihoidlikuma haridustaseme tõttu ei saanud 19. sajandi teise poole jooksul eesti seltsidevõrk veel igakülgset välja areneda. Alus oli aga loodud. Soov ühineda oli eri rahvastikugruppide puhul erinevalt motiveeritud: sakslaste puhul oli peamotiiv säilitada oma positsioon ja kultuuriidentiteet, eestlaste seltsiliikumine oli kujundav, loov ja agressiivne.

Эа ЯНСЕН

ДОБРОВОЛЬНЫЕ АССОЦИАЦИИ В ЭСТОНИИ: ОБРАЗ XIX ВЕКА

В статье дается предварительный обзор истории возникновения, развития и социальной роли обществ — добровольных ассоциаций среди прибалтийско-немецкого и эстонского населения в XIX веке. Добровольная ассоциация или общество понимается как особая форма общения людей, базирующаяся на сотрудничестве и взаимодействии свободных индивидов по их собственной инициативе. XIX век в Европе был веком торжества принципа самопомощи и саморегуляции общества, противоположного феодальной регламентации.

Высшие немецкие слои в Прибалтике стали добровольно объединяться в ассоциации уже во второй половине XVIII века. На основе анализа некоторых основных типов обществ автор статьи приходит к выводу, что социальная роль прибалтийско-немецких ассоциаций была явно двойственной. С одной стороны, они, являясь формой сотрудничества свободных индивидов из средних и высших слоев, содействовали слову старой сословной общественной системы, упорно сохранявшейся в Прибалтике, и поддерживали сословно-корпоративное самоуправление дворянства; с другой стороны, они способствовали модернизации или «европеизации» обществ в экономическом и культурном смысле.

Потребность к объединению среди коренного населения, т. е. эстонского крестьянства, пробудилась только в 1860-е годы в связи со сломом прежних общественно-хозяйственных отношений. С принятия новых аграрных законов в середине XIX века началось «перетекание» эстонского крестьянства в слои свободных собственников и наемных рабочих; развитие промышленности, торговли и транспорта способствовало изменениям в социальной структуре эстонцев и вызвало заметную социальную мобильность именно коренного населения. Границы свободной деятельности индивида значительно расширились. В ситуации социального неравенства и политического бесправия только в единении эстонский народ видел путь к достижению экономической и культурной эмансипации.

В 1860-е годы первыми были учреждены музыкальные общества, позже — сельскохозяйственные, общества трезвости и т. д. Форма деятельности этих обществ была различной, но содержание работы было подчинено одной цели — сплочению эстонского народа и формированию в нем чувства национального самосознания.