

ON THE EVE OF A NEW CULTURAL CHANGE

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The modernization of the Estonian society began as late as in the second half of the 19th century, and there were serious barriers on the way of the indigenous peasant population towards integration into modern European culture and its Nation-building. The "Europeanization" of the Estonians could easily mean Germanization or Russification. Yet the modernization processes of the Estonian society during the period mentioned began to proceed at an ever increasing speed. In the paper presented, the modernization of Estonian national culture is traced by the example of the national press, which reflected most adequately the evolution of the Estonian public sphere and the Nation-building process.

With the beginning of the 20th century the era of rapid modernization covering all the spheres of social life set in in Estonia. This period has sometimes been called the era of second National Awakening of Estonians. By this, usually the political awakening of Estonians and the start of the State-Building phase of Estonian National Movement has been meant. But one may also notice a fundamental break in the sense of the cultural development of Estonians — a change that seemed to have taken place somewhat unexpectedly and was in the eyes of contemporaries even confounding if compared with the assumed rural petty-bourgeois and "peaceful" character of Estonian culture until then.¹ A group of young intellectuals called *Noor Eesti* (Young-Estonia) and their strivings to participate in everything modern in European thought and art styles has usually been mentioned as best signifying the break. In actual fact, the rapid progress of the "Europeanization" covered all the fields of cultural activities of Estonians and without doubt a new type of culture was emerging in Estonia which corresponded to the type that existed in other European countries including now the young or renewed national cultures in eastern and central Europe.²

We may explain the break by several processes and factors that were characteristic of the beginning of the 20th century: a more liberal atmosphere in czarist Russia as a whole, and particularly the liberating effect of the Revolution of 1905; the industrial growth in Estonia at the turn of the centuries and the advancement of social stratification of the Estonian population; the general spiritual change in Europe by this time, and so on and so forth. Yet the question of the "preparation" of the change, that is, the question of the meaning of the cultural

¹ Kallas, A. *Noor-Eesti. Näopildid ja sihtjooned*. Tartu, 1921, 10 ff.

² Jansen, E. Estonian culture — European culture in the beginning of the 20th century. — In: Loit, A. (ed.), *The Baltic Countries 1900–1914*. Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis. Studia Baltica Stockholmiensia, 5:1. Centre for Baltic Studies, Uppsala, 1990, 315–320.

evolution of Estonians that preceded the stormy progress at the beginning of our century, also remains. Now, what was the level of Estonian culture on the eve of the change mentioned?

It is well known that there were serious barriers on the way of Estonians towards national and cultural emancipation, that is, towards integration into European literary culture. The Estonian population was most mobile in the era of industrialization and urbanization in the second half of the 19th century, but their social careers mostly stopped on the lower-middle steps of the social ladder. The birth of the national intelligentsia was a slow process, hampered by the poverty of Estonians. The old estate system with the nobility and its corporations (*die Ritterschaften*) at the top was still preserved and the majority of Estonians legally belonged to the unprivileged mass of peasants'. The Russification policy starting from the mid-1880s dealt a severe blow on the only mother tongue educational institution Estonians had — the rural elementary school. However, this process did not stop the spread of literacy among Estonians; yet the general level of education, if compared with the Baltic German higher strata, remained low. Thus, the reception of spiritual riches of Europe could not be intensive or wide-spread yet.

Still, it seems that we have somewhat underestimated the modernization of Estonian society and its culture during the second half of the 19th century. We have not yet traced, step by step, the trends of evolution in various socio-cultural spheres up to the end of the century. There are, of course, exceptions: for example, the evolution of Estonian literature from Friedrich Reinhold Kreutzwald to Eduard Wilde is relatively well known, and judging by that, the modernization process of culture is evident. More thoroughly studied, from various aspects, are the years of the "honeymoon" of Estonian National Awakening; the 1860s—70s until the beginning of the 1880s, much less the years of Russification from the second half of the 1880s until the middle of the 1890s and the re-elevation of the Estonian nationalism in late 1890s. Then there are some case studies on the national voluntary organizations, newspapers, campaigns for the collection of folklore, etc. that testify not only to the continuation of cultural activities of the people, but even to an increase in the number of various cultural undertakings and the participation of Estonians in these. Though suppressed, the national spirit was alive. At some stage the politicization of Estonian National Movement was stopped in the process of Russification, but not the movement itself — it was alive in local cultural initiatives and in the active support the readers gave to the press in the Estonian language, also in mass undertakings, such as the singing festivals in 1890s.

In dealing with the years of Russification, there is also the good survey by Toivo U. Raun we can rely upon.³ He has — without prejudices or bias of any kind — discussed the actual ambiguous consequences of the administrative and cultural Russification and its repercussions among the local population. But there are still masses of documents, beginning with the materials of senator Manassein's revision, and innumerable files of press, also correspondence, memoirs, etc. waiting for a more comprehensive study.

In the following, an attempt is made to trace the advancement of some aspects of culture, first of all of the press as a medium of culture and a mirror of the development of the society during the second half of the 19th century.

³ Raun, T. U. The Estonians. — In: Thaden, E. C. (ed.). The Russification of the Baltic Provinces and Finland 1855—1914. Princeton, 1981.

Even as late as in the second half of the 19th century one could not be sure that the integration of Estonians into the European literary culture did actually mean the emergence of a new original national culture. The "Europeanization" did not necessarily mean the "Estonianization" of the local culture. Beginning with the times of the abolition of the serfdom at the start of the 19th century, several public debates took place amongst the Baltic German intellectuals concerning the question whether the free Estonian and Latvian peasants would maintain their ethnicity or not in the process of "civilization". There were nice liberal men, such as, for example, the well-known enlightener and friend of peasants Garlieb Merkel, who declared that it would not be any particular disaster if the Latvian or Estonian peasants be Germanized.⁴ The strong tendency of spontaneous Germanization among emancipating Estonians and Latvians seemed to support these points of view "Germanizers". The assimilation was in fact a wide-spread process first and foremost among the Estonian petty-bourgeois parvenus in the towns, but also among petty officials and intelligentsia with the higher education. It did not stop during the whole of the 19th century, even in the years of Russification. A large group of the so-called semi-Germans (*Halbdeutsche*, *kadakasaksad* in Estonian) emerged, though ridiculed in Estonian literature which was taking shape in these years. The manner of thought of Baltic Germans as well as Estonians was still influenced by the surviving estate system, the estate barriers, though education and personal ability began to play an ever more important role in the Baltic society, too. The German snobbery of a petty-bourgeois kind was rooted out from the psychology of Estonians not earlier than during the first decades of our century, and even then the process has not been too quick or complete.

As far as Baltic Germans are concerned, it seems that during the second half of the 19th century, they persisted in their belief that the Germanization of Estonians and Latvians was inevitable; though this view, being a general opinion was not shared by all the prominent intellectuals. The German Nationalism and the real progress of culture in Germany proper, also the progress of the united German state, largely contributed to the perseverance of such a position. Moreover, the emergence of an Estonian and Latvian elite was now evident, so it was generally believed that it would be Germanized sooner or later. In the 1860s and '70s the Estonian National Movement gained strength and at the end of the '70s already the slogan "equal rights" was on the agenda. It was rejected by the politicians who belonged to the Baltic German nobility as well as liberal intellectuals and the appearance of a new social force was not acknowledged. The cultural activities of Estonians of a national turn, the volume of which increased year by year, seemed to have been looked upon as innocent leisure entertainments of the lower strata of the population.

Meanwhile, the Russian Slavophile nationalists began to voice the desirability of the Russification of Estonians and Latvians. Juri Samarin and others tried to convince the Russian public opinion and the high czarist officials that only some agrarian rearrangements were needed, coupled with the spread of Russian language and propagation of Greek Orthodoxy, so that the intrinsically pro-Russian Estonian and Latvian peasants would join the "great Russian family". During the reigns of Nicholas I and Alexander II they had no serious impact on government policy, but the situation changed in the 1880s. No "helping hand"

⁴ Provinzialblatt für Kur-, Liv- und Estland, 1829, 5. Dez.

was offered to the local peasants in the sense of improving the agrarian relations, but in general, Samarin's proposals and ideas now became the guidelines of the governmental policy. Inspired by J. Samarin, the almighty Konstantin Pobedonostsev, also prince S. Shakhovskoi, the governor of Estonian province, and others were all convinced that promoting Orthodoxy was the main means by which the Baltic Provinces could be united with the rest of the Empire. Actually this means, as well as the Russification of the schools, missed its aim. T. U. Raun, analysing the complex consequences of the Russification policy, came to the conclusion that it had a short-term negative impact in the areas of education, the national and local cultural movements, journalism and political thought, but that in the final sense "... far from transforming Estonians into Russians, the effect of Russification was to heighten the sense of national identity among the Estonian population".⁵

Trying to reduce the power of the nobility corporations and the hegemony of German culture in the Baltics, the czarist officials became aware, step by step, of the existence of the "third force" — the Estonian and Latvian nationalism. In 1886 the governor of Livonian province general M. Zinoviev — judging by his confidential report to the Emperor — had still the impression that the Estonians and Latvians were "like children".⁶ In 1891, Zinoviev expressed the opinion that "it would be ill-advised to promote the Ests and Letts too much and to give them an independent existence". In 1892, Alexander III himself characterized the nationalist movements in the Baltics as "undesirable" (although not yet "dangerous").⁷ But already the same year, prince S. Shakhovskoi wrote in one of his innumerable reports to the Minister of Internal Affairs about the existence of a "patriotic party" among Estonians, directed by the idea of national and even something like political self-determination.⁸ He was right, of course.

II

Despite the unfavourable conditions, out of the efforts of the old-time Estophiles directed to educating Estonian peasants, and the strivings of the patriotic intellectuals of the 1860s to awaken the national feeling and the social activity of Estonians, a new system of communication media was born, based on Estonian language. This language was still looked upon as a *Bauernsprache* and it had no official rights except on the level of the rural township self-government of the peasants. Due to the Russification, its social playground was still more narrowed down. But along with the official sphere there was the private sphere of the society at the "grass-root level"; on the basis of this, the communication in Estonian and the corresponding media widened their social scope more and more.

The crucial role of the mode and means of communication in a cultural change was revealed in its full extent in Estonian society of the second half of the 19th century. Let us remind some data. An all-Estonian network of rural elementary schools with Estonian as the language of instruction, promoted by the Lutheran church and supported by the nobility corporations, was the basis for the general literacy of Estonians and the expansion of "print culture". The book production by an ever increasing number of printing plants as well as publishers

⁵ Raun, T. U. *The Estonians*, 340—341.

⁶ Tobien, A. v. *Die livländische Ritterschaft in ihrem Verhältnis zum Zarismus und russischen Nationalismus*. Riga, 1925, 158.

⁷ Haltzel, M. *The Baltic Germans*. — In: Thaden, E. C. (ed.). *The Russification of the Baltic Provinces and Finland 1855—1914*. Princeton, 1981, 197.

⁸ Из архива князя С. В. Шаховского, III, С.-Петербург, 1910, 261—262.

increased from an average 35 books in a year in the 1850s to 242 in a year in the 1890s; also a network of bookshops and public libraries was established. The crucial role in the participation of Estonians in European ideas, mentality and general knowledge belonged to the advancing national press as well as all kinds of voluntary organizations.

For the effectual functioning of the new communication system, patriotically minded intellectuals, as leading brains, were needed. Despite the Germanization tendency, Estonian national intelligentsia began to come into its own. In 1860s and 70s, its numbers began to grow. Because of lack of special studies we do not possess very exact data about this process. According to some calculations, there were at the Tartu University, during the 1860s—70s, 79 students of Estonian origin; during the 1880s—90s — 313. In these decades, some young men and even some women, began to be trained also at high schools or institutions in St. Petersburg (mainly musicians and artists), also in Riga and Moscow. Up to the end of the century the number of Estonians with high school or gymnasium education remained small and even these had to seek for work opportunities, in many a case outside Estonia. Nevertheless, they had the will and skill to participate in the promotion of Estonian literature, press and public life in general.

As regards the press as an instrument and mirror of modernization, then the start of Estonian regular national journalism about the middle of the 19th century was not very promising. The pioneer of it, *Perno Postimees*, founded by the parish clerk, schoolmaster and writer Johann Woldemar Jannsen in 1857, was still a typical Estophile *Volksblatt* with a clerical air. The editor chatted with his readers in a familiar way about the foreign countries, the imperial family, curious happenings all over the world, etc. The main idea penetrating the writings on the pages of *Perno Postimees* was that of the Enlightenment era: it tried to inculcate that Estonians, too, were human beings and able to learn. J. W. Jannsen was a great admirer of education, science and technical progress of his age, when "... ships sail without sails and cars run without horses".⁹ He meant the railway, of course. The news in *Perno Postimees* were not new, but the rural reader with a narrow mental horizon could get now systematic information about different countries and different peoples in the world, about the technical and industrial progress. Jannsen also "smuggled in" nationalist ideas and denounced the spontaneous Germanization of Estonians.

Due to the negative attitude of the high czarist officials towards the foundation of popular issues for common men, the progress of Estonian national press was quite slow in the 1860s—70s. A breakthrough in the sense of the volume as well as the character of Estonian press took place only in the years 1877—1882 when during 5 years 6 new newspapers were founded. It was a critical time in many a sense. Russia was in the state of a political crisis and the constitutional monarchy seemed to be close at hand. Liberal and conservative ideas and strivings collided in Russia proper as well as in the publicity of the Baltic Provinces. The Baltic German nobility discussed hotly the possible reform of their self-government. In the Baltic towns, the introduction of the new urban law brought along something like democratic elections and an outburst of public life. The national feelings and hopes for reforms favourable to the indigenous peoples ran high among Estonians.

No wonder that just in these years an Estonian newspaper appeared, more modern and daring than its predecessors. For a brief period, due to the absence of a special Estonian censor, the Estonian newspapers

⁹ *Perno Postimees*, 1858, 30. apr.

did not feel the oppression of the censorship as severely as in the previous period and the following years. The new newspaper, *Sakala*, published in the years 1878—82 by the educationalist, farmer and leader of several national organizations Carl Robert Jakobson in the provincial town Viljandi, voiced reforms and not only human rights, but also civil rights of Estonians. His newspaper's attitude towards the estate system and Baltic nobility was most critical. The editor of *Sakala* appealed consciously to the public opinion of Estonians and tried to shape it by establishing a common public opposition to the Baltic Germans. Trying to "politicize" the Estonian national movement by a demand of a share in the self-government of Estonian and Livonian Provinces and the abolition of the privileges of the nobility, *Sakala* intentionally cultivated polemics with Baltic German and more modest or conformist Estonian newspapers, often adopting hard and harsh expressions. As until then the Estonian National Movement had been concentrated mainly on cultural goals with only a veiled political background, *Sakala* caused something of a shock to the Baltic German as well as Estonian publicity, and a division of Estonian National Movement took place. It seemed that a ruthless struggle for the positions in the self-government had begun, in which both sides, the Estonian and the Baltic German, appealed to the czarist government and tried to find in the central power an ally. Baltic German officials did it mostly by intrigues behind the scene. As to the Estonian National Movement there was also a struggle for power inside it between the reformist "party" of Jakobson and the supporters of the old-type *Kulturnationalismus* with the brilliant scholar and pastor Jakob Hurt at its head. The division of the National Movement seemed tragical for many a contemporary, because the emancipation of the Estonian nation had only begun. Actually, it may be looked upon as a normal phenomenon, being a sign of the modernization of Estonian public life, a step towards real political life. A testimony to this were also the debates between Estonian and Baltic German newspapers.

But the process of politicization was soon stopped. It was as if forgotten in those years of elevation that one lived in an autocratic state without any civil rights for common men. The ruler of this state was not just a nice good "father of people" (*riigi-isa* — "father of the state" according to a stereotype Estonian term), which image was cultivated by the bureaucracy and official press. In 1881, Alexander II was killed by the terrorists and, after Alexander III ascended the throne, the conservative elements in Russia gained their victory. In the middle of the 1880s, total political reaction set in and already in 1882 tighter regulations were imposed on press.

Regarding the Estonian press before the reaction had set in, one peculiarity of its development more has to be mentioned: already from the times of Jannsen's *Perno Postimees*, the Estonian editors appealed to the readers, asking for contributions and it actually always did find response. The enthusiastic reception of the press became a tradition among Estonians. Of course, the shock caused by *Sakala* had brought to the editor a lot of enemies, yet he still got more friends, contributors and correspondents.

III

To comprehend the whole jeopardizing effect of Russification upon the modernization of Estonian cultural life — or public life in general — more detailed studies about the newspapers, societies, the evolution of ideas etc. are needed.

The idea, shared by many an Estonian historian and other humanitarians, has been that already in 1882—83 a decline of Estonian National Movement set in. This impression is based, first of all, on the monographs of Estonian classics Friedebert Tuglas and Hans Kruus, which treated the fate of two all-Estonian organizations that played the leading role in the National Movement in the 1870s.¹⁰ These were the Society of Estonian Literati (*Eesti Kirjameeste Selts*) and the so-called Alexander School Organization the goal of which was the foundation of a secondary school with Estonian as the language of instruction. It was a mass organization; the idea of mother tongue education became most popular among the Estonians of different strata and occupations. At the beginning of the 1880s, both organizations became victims of the division of the National Movement and personal conflicts of its leaders; as a result of mutual denunciations, czarist officials began to meddle with the affairs of both associations.

The negative effect of the strict censorship regulations starting with the year 1882, was soon felt in journalistics, with great force. There were four newspapers which began to play the leading role in Estonian public life: in Tallinn — *Virulane* edited by Jaak Järv, and *Valgus* edited by Jakob Kõrv. Both these men had been the co-editors of Jakobson's *Sakala*, so they presumed to be spiritual heirs of this highly popular newspaper. By the way, *Sakala*, too, continued to exist, but only as a typically local newspaper. As popular as *Virulane* and *Valgus* were two newspapers in Tartu: *Eesti Postimees*, edited by Karl August Hermann, and *Olevik*, edited by Ado Grenzstein. The new censor of Estonian literature Eugen Jannsen began to put into practice the regulations of 1882¹¹. It seems that *Virulane*, a newspaper of a more pronounced democratic turn than the others, suffered most of all because of the cuts in the texts of the articles and the news; but the other newspapers also felt that the "narrow gate" of the censorship had become narrower than ever. The Estonian press, traditionally loyal to the czar now began to stress its loyalty and its love for the "father of the state" ever more. Particular eagerness in this respect was displayed by J. Kõrv in *Valgus*.

There is one more moment that might support the concept of the decline of Estonian public life and the press in particular: it was the fact that the division by ideas now became confused, and the polemics often degenerated into petty personal attacks that filled a large part of the columns of the newspapers. The personal characteristics of the editors now became an object of mutual attacks; their origins, education and mental abilities were laughed at. It was not any exceptional or a criminal case when an editor called his colleague an imbecile or an idiot.

Nevertheless, despite the pettiness and absurdity, a testimony to a still comparatively low level of political culture or "press culture", the Estonian journalistic of those years was also a testimony to the continuation of a vivid public life and, along with servile and primitive loyalty to the czar, a mediator of modern political ideas. We may qualify as modern first and foremost the high opinion of the role of the press in the society the Estonian editors had; they were well aware of the meaning of journalism in West European countries where it was already considered to be the "fourth estate". As an example may serve a leading article by K. A. Hermann in *Eesti Postimees* of 1883:

¹⁰ Tuglas, Fr. *Eesti Kirjameeste Selts*. Tartu, 1932; a new edition: Tallinn, 1957; Kruus, H. *Eesti Aleksandrikool*. Tallinn, 1939.

¹¹ Issakov, S. Tsaarivalitsuse tsensuuripoliitikast Eesti ajakirjanduse suhtes 19. sajandi teisel poolel. — In: *Läbi kahe sajandi*, Tallinn, 1971, 124.

he stressed the authority and huge circulations of the newspapers in the United States, England and France. In Estonia, wrote K. A. Hermann, the circulations were only about 3000, yet he felt that in all likelihood the newspapers may have in the nearest future some 20 000—30 000 readers.¹² K. A. Hermann and A. Grenzstein in *Olevik* discussed the meaning of such terms as “freedom”, “democracy”, “party”, etc. K. A. Hermann, who, as an editor, was renowned for his loyalty and modesty, has actually extolled the “will of the people” and “majority democracy”.¹³ The conflicts and elections in Estonian national organizations served as an impetus for such discussions in those years. As to *Virulane*, this paper is well-known for featuring the labour movement — a modern phenomenon in Europe. In the eyes of the censors all such ideas were actually “contraband”. But as the respective censors did not find attacks in *expressis verbis* against God, Emperor or the high and mighty in general, they evidently did not give much thought to the actual intentions and positions of the editors, particularly when, as it often was the case, it was the foreign countries that were being discussed.

All the Estonians' newspapers at the beginning of the 1880s were banner-bearers of reforms and Estonian nationalism. The national feelings and ideals were expressed as “strongly” as in the famous *Sakala*. More modest in this respect was *Valgus*, edited by J. Kõrv. As to the reforms, the centralization of the administration and the intention of the czarist government to curb the privileges of the Baltic nobility were greeted as positive, so was also the revision carried out in the Livonian Province by senator N. Manassein. Actually this was a preparation for Russification. Yet, Estonian newspapers of that time or Estonians in general did not believe that cultural Russification would be undertaken.

The year 1888 appears to be a watershed. The number of Estonian newspapers and magazines was 15 in 1887 (without supplementary issues) — a number big enough for those times. In their prospects from the end of 1887 all the main Estonian newspapers except *Valgus* had declared their nationalistic character and aims. But in 1888, *Virulane* was banned and J. Järv deported from Estonia. As J. Järv himself has said, this was due to the “spirit of freedom” as expressed by *Virulane*, but also due to intrigues and denunciations. Though concrete evidence is missing, there are hints that the denounciators were J. Kõrv, for whom *Virulane* in Tallinn was a rival, and Juri Truusmann, an Orthodox Estonian, Magister of Theology and the censor of Estonian literature in Tallinn from 1885. J. Kõrv and J. Truusmann were the main informers of the governor of Estonian province, prince Shakhovskoi. For him, they were most valuable as the representatives of an assumed “Russophile party” among Estonians. Anyhow, Shakhovskoi admitted that this “party” was very small.¹⁴

J. Kõrv, one of the richest men among the citizens of Tallinn, was a modern editor in this sense that in his case the commercial thinking, and not a belief in a mission, seemed to prevail. He became a consistent supporter of Russificatory reforms in all the areas including the Russification of the schools; he extolled all the steps of the czarist government in a manner of a most disgusting servility. He was not a brilliant journalist. Nevertheless *Valgus* was widely read; its circulation at the beginning of the 1890s was 8 000—10 000. It may be explained not so much by the sensational materials *Valgus* contained¹⁵ than by the

¹² Eesti Postimees, 1883, 22. juuni.

¹³ Eesti Postimees, 1883, 8. juuni.

¹⁴ Из архива князя С. В. Шаховского, III, 261.

¹⁵ Raun, T. U. The Estonians, 334.

seeking of information by the growing Estonian population of Tallinn. Along with the news from Russia, Baltic Provinces and foreign countries, *Valgus* presented local news reflecting the everyday life in Tallinn. Encouraged by the attitude of S. Shakhovskoi, he also continued to criticize the agrarian relations in the spirit of *Sakala* and late *Virulane*.

After the ban of *Virulane*, the Estonian newspapers were most cautious. But they were sincere in their support of the centralizing reforms carried out by the government — the implementation of the Russian police and the system of justice, also the institution of peasant supervisor in 1888—89. All the newspapers also continued to request the implementation of the self-government system according to the Russian model — zemstvo, in the hope that it would curb the power of the Baltic German nobility corporations and widen the chances of Estonian population to participate in the self-government of the Provinces. Actually this perspective was one of the reasons why zemstvo was never implemented in Baltic Provinces — czarist government tried to cut the wings of the Baltic Germans, but it did not want to promote the Estonian or Latvian element either. Thus, the enthusiasm of Estonian editors for zemstvo cannot be looked upon as an expression of servility or a pro-Russian attitude. The czarist officials did not like the idea of an all-class body where Estonians, Latvians and Germans acted together.¹⁶ As one of the counter-reforms implemented by the czarist government a law from 1890 reduced the participation of peasants in zemstvo in favour of the nobility. Yet the request for zemstvo maintained its popularity among Estonian editors, including Jaan Tõnisson, a journalist representing the revival of Nationalism in Estonia from the second half of the 1890s.

Advocating administrative reforms, the Estonian editors turned down the linguistic Russification, although, to understand this, one often has to read between the lines. For all the Estonian editors except J. Kõrv, were cautiously nationalistic. At the beginning of the 1890s, A. Grenzstein, the editor of *Olevik*, also began to voice Russification. He was a learned man (an educationalist trained in Vienna) and a talented journalist, but of an unbalanced character and apt to intrigues and denunciations. His *Olevik* was quite popular; Grenzstein always made a point of publishing materials about the cultural progress of Estonians and contributions by his innumerable correspondents on local cultural activities. Yet in 1893—94, he began to support the idea that the future belonged to the big Roman, German and Slavonic families of peoples; in his opinion small nations had to join one of those. According to him the Slavonic family was the most convenient refuge for Estonians. A. Grenzstein also expressed the view that Nationalism had in no way contributed to the welfare of Estonians. It was the irony of history that in the same year when A. Grenzstein began to voice assimilation, Alexander III and the most ardent Russificator, prince Shakhovskoi both died. The Russificatory policy was not pursued any longer with previous vigour.

Although the playground of Estonian journalistic was curtailed in the years of Russification, a certain growth in its volume may still be noticed. K. A. Hermann, using the licence of the old *Perno Postimees*, founded in Tartu in 1886 a new newspaper *Postimees*. From the year 1888, it was published thrice a week, and from 1891, *Postimees* was published as the first Estonian daily. It was an important step towards the modernization of Estonian press. As a sign of progress also the

¹⁶ Haltzel, M. *The Baltic Germans*, 159.

increase of the circulation of newspapers could be mentioned, now, amounting to 6 000—10 000 copies. While evaluating these figures, one has to bear in mind that one copy of a newspaper was in those times always read by several people or even several families. In regard to the size of Estonian population, the number of titles as well as the circulations were impressive indeed, and there is no doubt that the press had established itself as a social institution and as an inevitable component of the everyday life of Estonian people — mostly lower strata of the society. And this is again a sign of the modernization of Estonian socio-cultural life.

A testimony to the active reception of the newspapers is also — or still more — the constantly increasing number of the contributors and correspondents of the newspapers. During the years of Russification, *Olevik* and *Eesti Postimees*, later on *Postimees*, seemed to have been most popular. The editorial post of these newspapers has not been preserved, but judging by the published contributions, the main problem the contributors as well as the editors themselves were interested in, was the spiritual progress of Estonians. The dominant topics of local news sent in by the contributors were education, the activities of the local societies, choirs, libraries, orchestras, theatre troupes, the distribution of newspapers, etc. Of course, it was not possible to publish contributions of a political turn or critics of social or economic conditions — if such were written at all. But on the other hand, the advancement of education and national culture as a whole had really a crucial role in the Estonian society of those times, acting as instruments of the preservation of the national identity and means of self-fulfilment for Estonians.

To illustrate the progress of Estonian journalistic from the end of the 1850s until the end of the century, it is worth the while to compare the newborn *Perno Postimees* of 1857 with its successor *Postimees* of 40 years later, with the young lawyer Jaan Tõnisson as its editor. Instead of a humble clerically-biased *Volksblatt* we find a big modern newspaper with an editorial or several leading articles, columns for Home, Russian and Foreign News, special columns for Finland and Latvia and local news from Tartu and Tallinn; telegrams from the Russian Telegraph agency. *Postimees* of the 1890s had a mass of contributors all over Estonia and Estonian intellectuals of various political colours and specialities acting as correspondents. The events of international life were discussed in a competent, matter-of-fact way. J. Tõnisson was well informed about the social life in Russia, and liked to discuss the economic, especially financial problems and, of course, as a lawyer, legislation of the big state. The request for zemstvo was still on the agenda. Ever more the interest for Finland, already from the 1860s a model for Estonian patriots, was revealed. Politically still suppressed, J. Tõnisson's *Postimees* often used to express its political sympathies by referring to Russian newspapers.¹⁷

Due to the liberalization of the political atmosphere, in the following years J. Tõnisson had the opportunity to express his political sympathies, nationalistic and liberal-economic views more freely. It appeared that the programme of *Postimees* was based on the concept of a nation as holding the highest value in society; the emphasis was placed on national unity and sovereignty. And it was also a normal phenomenon that along with *Postimees* as the most influential newspaper of these times, at the beginning of our century a new newspaper was founded in Tallinn, representing a different concept of the social development and

¹⁷ See also: Lauk, E. Jaan Tõnissoni ajakirjanduslikust tegevusest 1892—1908. — Keel ja Kirjandus, 1994, 3, 133—144.

the meaning of national unity. It was *Teataja*, founded by another young lawyer, Konstantin Päts. The polemics between these two newspapers was an overture to the awakening of Estonian political life.¹⁸

IV

The line of development pursued by the Estonian national press was also characteristic of the advancement of voluntary organizations of Estonians. As a means of the social and cultural progress and a promotion of the participation of common men in public life, they were as important as the press.¹⁹

Again, the beginning was modest: in the 1860s, in Estonian towns music societies were founded, following the German model. They were meant for the proper entertainment of the lower strata of the population in the towns. Their evolution was a complicated process — a struggle with economic difficulties, Germanization tendencies, the lack of the habits of “civilized” behaviour, etc. Yet, step by step, the “nationalization” of Estonian music societies began, the first example being the well-known *Vanemuine* in Tartu — in a centre where young Estonian intellectuals eager to propagate nationalistic ideas, were gathered. Actual breakthrough set in at the beginning of the 1870s. The peasant agricultural societies emerged, meant for the promotion of Estonian farmers in the new world of money economy, but turning into centres of nationalistic agitation. Thanks to the conscious endeavours of Estonian patriots, in the 1870s big, all-Estonian national organizations emerged, acting as a basis for the National Movement. The role of the two main associations mentioned above, the Society of Estonian Literati and Alexander School organizations, in awakening the national consciousness of Estonians and acting as instruments of Nation-Building, cannot be overestimated. And when in the 1880s, due to the division and conflicts among the leaders, these organizations declined, the expansion of local music societies and, from the end of the 1880s, the temperance societies came into being. In these societies, several forms of cultural activities were cultivated; along with choir singing, orchestra music and temperance propaganda, educating speeches were delivered, libraries were founded, amateur theatre performances were organized. Thus, “insignificant” as they seemed, the innumerable local societies in the years of Russification acted as instruments for the preservation and further advancement of national self-consciousness and the belief in spiritual progress of Estonians. Their activities were reflected and supported by the national press. The czarist officials continued to look upon the Estonian societies as centres of civilized entertainment for lower strata. We do not know, actually, how “innocent” the Estonian societies were and what the people actually talked about at the meetings. Anyhow, unpolitical as they were, they contributed to the habits of Estonians to participate in the public life.

In the “worst” years of Russification, also big cultural campaigns took place, embracing Estonians from all the corners of the country, in the towns and in the countryside. These were the mass campaigns of collecting folklore and Estonian dialects organized by Jakob Hurt and Matthias Johann Eisen that were presented to the Estonian public-

¹⁸ About the development of Estonian press in general, see also: Hoyer, Sv., Lauk, E., Vihalemm, P. (eds.). *Towards a Civic Society. The Baltic Media's Long Road to Freedom*, Tartu, 1993, 67–96.

¹⁹ A short survey of the voluntary associations may be found: Jansen, E. *Voluntary associations in Estonia. The model of the 19th century.* — *Proc. Estonian Acad. Sci. Humanities and Social Sciences*, 1993, 2, 115–125.

ity as "important work for the benefit of our Fatherland". Which means that these actions had a pronounced nationalistic character, although, by the czarist officials, they were considered to be just modest scholarly efforts. In the 1890s, also the tradition of all-Estonian singing festivals that was started in the year 1869 but was slumbering in the 1880s, was revived. Under the pretext of celebrating the dates related to the rule of the Russian emperors, the three singing festivals in Tallinn and Tartu in the 1890s carried along masses of Estonians and acted as demonstrations of national unity.

There is actually one more institution worth mentioning that contributed, along with the activities of the societies and big campaigns and actions, to the participation of Estonians in the public affairs — the peasant rural township self-government based on the law from the year 1866. And it is difficult to say what was more important for the promotion of public life — the big campaigns or singing festivals that brought along a temporary rapture, or the tedious everyday activities connected with self-government, if only at the lowest level. In town municipalities, the role of Estonians was still small.

As in the case of the press, in the national organizations the differentiation of the views, suppressed in the years of Russification, was again revealed in a more liberal atmosphere of the late 1890s. As an example may serve the only intellectual organization the Estonians had in those years — the Society of Estonian Students in Tartu. As we know, the study of humanities and also Nationalistic ideas and feelings were cultivated in this society. Its aim was also to rescue for the Estonian culture the young men at the Tartu University who were inclined to Germanize. But it was also characteristic that there was a division in this society, at first between those who supported the Baltic German-student corporation spirit, and the patriots of the type of J. Tõnisson, theologian and historian Willem Reiman and others, who supported the "pure" national spirit. Along with this, at the end of the 1890s, and "outward" opposition to the society developed among the students of Estonian origin: Konstantin Päts, Jüri Jaakson and others made an attempt to found a new, more leftist Estonian students organization which would strive, as they declared, for a more free and open atmosphere than that in the "old" society of Estonian students.

The divisions and collisions of ideas among the emerging Estonian intelligentsia and the Estonian people in general as reflected by the national press and organizations were evidently a normal phenomenon and a sign of modernization.

The evolution of the Estonian press and voluntary organizations during the second half of the 19th century is a testimony to a relatively rapid progress towards the "total victory" of a national literary culture of the European type and also towards the civil society. It was jeopardized by the power of the Baltic German nobility corporations and the intrigues of the nobility politicians against the Estonian National Movement, and the Russification policy by the czarist government. But the "participation process" could not be stopped. It reflected the step-by-step modernization of the Estonian society and prepared the basis for the fundamental break in political life as well as in Estonian national culture at the beginning of our century.

It was not possible to discuss all the various aspects of the socio-cultural change in this short paper. A further thorough study of the change of the way of life of the people is needed; on the other hand, we need a history of the ideas of those times in regard to the reception of European ideas by Estonians and the mediating role of Baltic Germans by this.

UUE KULTUURIMURRANGU EELÖHTUL

Ea JANSEN

Eesti kultuuripildi ja avaliku elu järsku muutust euroopastumise suunas 20. sajandi algul (nähtust on sedastanud nii omaaegsed publitsistid kui ka hilisemad uurijad) võib seletada sellele ajamomendile iseloomulike protsesside ja sündmustega, nagu suure tööstusliku tõusu ja eestlaste sotsiaalse stratifikatsiooni edenemisega, 1905. aasta revolutsiooniga ning vaimuelu teisenemisega kogu Euroopas. Ometi pidi murrangul olema ka eellugu eesti ühiskonnas endas. 19. sajandi teisel poolel toimunud moderniseerumisprotsessi eesti ühiskonnas on mõneti alahinnatud. Tõepoolest pidurdasid seda mitmed tegurid, eelkõige eestlaste õigusetus ja balti aadli domineerimine majanduslikus ja sotsiaalses mõttes, raskendatud juurdepääs paremale haridusele ja tsarismisurve. See tõttu püsis kaua oht, et eestlaste integreerumine Euroopa kirjakuultuuri toimub kas saksastumise või venestumise teel. 1880. aastal alanud aktiivse venestamispoliitika tõttu reaktatsioonile siirdunud tsaarivalitsuse poolt hakkas reaalsuseks saama ka viimane oht. Venestamisaja tegelik mõju eestlaste avalikule elule on veel üksikasjalikult uurimata.

Et selgitada moderniseerumise ulatust, on vajalik uurida eelkõige kommunikatsioonisüsteemi, sest igasugune kultuuri ja avaliku elu muutmine algab nimelt sellest. Saksastumise ja ka venestumise piduriks said emakeelele tuginevad kommunikatsioonikanalid, mis kujunesid välja 19. sajandi teise poole kestel. Tähtsaimad meediumid, mis eestlaste avalikku elu ja rahvuse kujunemist määratlesid, olid ajalehed ja seltid. Need jäid püsima ka venestamisajal, kui emakeelne kooliharidus peaaegu täiesti kaotati. Artiklis on vaadeldud eesti ajakirjanduse, mõnevõrra ka omaalgatuslike ühenduste evolutsiooni.

Umbes 20 aastat pärast eesti pideva perioodika sündi jõudis eesti ajakirjandus teatud politiseerumiseni; seda iseloomustasid avalikule poliitikaelule tüüpilise nähtusena terav poleemika baltisaksa ajalehtedega ja ka mõttevahetused eesti ajakirjanduses endas 1870. aastate lõpul ja 1880. aastate algul. Tegu oli eesti avalikkuse tekkega, mille puhul on loomulik eri vaadete võitlus. Sellest ajast peale olid eesti ajakirjanduse tunnusjoonteks rahvuslik agitatsioon, moodsate poliitiliste ideede propageerimine (seda tsensuuri suhtes salakaubana ja vualeeritult), samuti reforminõuded eestlaste õigusliku emantsipatsiooni huvides (neid aga esitati väga truualamlikus rüüis). Eesti ajalehetöötajatele ja rahvusliku liikumise juhtidele oli kuni 20. sajandi alguseni omane lojaalsus tsaarivõimule. Vastuolu selle ja rahvusliku vabanemise või üldse demokraatlike ideede vahel veel ei taibatud.

Kurvaks veelahkmeks kohalikule ajakirjandusele oli aasta 1888, mil suleti vabameelseim eesti ajaleht «Virulane». Sellest ajast andsid tsensuur ja venestussurve end ikka teravamini tunda. Enamik eesti ajalehti säilitas rahvusliku meelsuse. Toetati küll tsaarivalitsuse administratiivseid reforme, mis võinuksid piirata balti aadli võimu, kuid mitte assimileerimispoliitikat. Oli väheseid erandeid. Eestimaa kuberner S. Sahhovskoi kirjutas, et «russofiilide partei» eestlaste seas on väga väike. 1894. aastast venestushoog nõrgenes taas; kümnendi teisel poolel algas eesti ajakirjanduse taaspolitiseerumine ja ilmnis konflikt poliitiliselt mõõduka rahvusluse ja sotsiaalradikaalse suuna vahel. Märgata on Euroopa sotsiaalpoliitiliste ideede kasvavat mõju.

Eesti ajakirjanduse moderniseerumise ilminguks tuleb pidada ka tema mahulist kasvu, samuti mõjukuse tõusu. Uute väljaannete asutamise kõrgaeg oli aastail 1878—1882; venestamisajal küll uusi väljaandeid juurde ei tulnud, ent tiraažide suurenemine osutab ajakirjanduse

кui sotsiaalse institutsiooni kindlustumisele. Selle mõjust eestlaste seas räägib ka ajalehede kirjasaatjate ja korrespondentide suur arv. Nende sõnumid ja materjalid käsitlesid ülekaalukalt kultuurielu linnades ja maal. 1891. aastal võis ilmuma hakata esimene eesti päevaleht. Eesti pressi progressi illustreerib võrdlus estofiilse ja valgustusliku, üksnes rahvusliku agitatsiooni sümptomeid ilmutava «Perno Postimehe» ja tema järeltulija, J. Tõnissoni toimetatud «Postimehe» kui moodsa, asjaliku, haritud lugejale määratud päevalehe vahel 40 aastat hiljem.

Eestlaste omaalgatuslike ühenduste evolutsioon 19. sajandi teisel poolel on mitmeti analoogiline ajakirjanduse omale, seda ennekõike seltside kui rahvusliku agitatsiooni ja erinevate ideevoolude kokkupõrgete kollete puhul. Seltside kaudu hakkas avalikus elus osalema ikka enam ja enam eri ühiskonnakihtidest eestlasi.

НАКАНУНЕ НОВОГО КУЛЬТУРНОГО ПЕРЕЛОМА

Эа ЯНСЕН

Крутой поворот культурной и общественной жизни Эстонии начала XX в. в сторону европеизации (явление, отмеченное публицистами и исследователями как того, так и более позднего времени) можно объяснить влиянием важнейших процессов и событий того периода: промышленным подъемом, революцией 1905 г., расхождением эстонцев и духовным преобразованием Европы. Но тем не менее не следует забывать, что к этому повороту подвело и само развитие эстонского общества. Процессы модернизации этого общества во второй половине XIX в. еще не получили должной оценки. До сих пор недостаточно изучены побудительные мотивы принять западную модель развития и те препятствия, которые мешали продвижению вперед. Тормозом, в частности, служили бесправие эстонцев, засилие прибалтийских дворян в экономической и социальной сферах, ограниченный доступ к полноценному образованию, гнет царизма. Над эстонским обществом долгое время висела опасность интегрироваться в культуру Европы через германизацию или через русификацию. Последняя опасность обернулась реальностью после 1880 г., когда реакционное царское правительство активизировало процесс русификации. Влияние русификаторской политики царизма на общественную жизнь эстонцев тоже до сих пор подробно не изучалось.

Чтобы понять масштабность модернизации, необходимо исследовать систему коммуникации, так как именно здесь в первую очередь фиксируется любое изменение в культурной и общественной жизни. Автор статьи выбрала для анализа важнейшие коммуникационные каналы — эстонскую периодическую печать и, попутно, эстонские добровольные общества (seltsid) — и рассмотрела их в развитии во второй половине XIX в. Печать и общества стали духовными корнями и основой становления нации, а также сыграли роль заслона на пути германизации и русификации. Сохранились эти коммуникационные каналы на эстонском языке и в период русификации, когда во всех типах школ было введено обучение на русском языке.

Первые эстонские национальные газеты, основанные в конце 1850-х годов, были скромные «народные издания» поучительной направленности. Спустя 20 лет, в конце 1870—1880-х годов, эстонская пресса достигла определенного уровня политизации. На страницах периодических изданий выдвигались требования реформ, равноправия эстонцев с прибалтийско-немецкими высшими слоями, шла острая полемика с прибалтийско-немецкими газетами, сталкивались различ-

ные точки зрения, важное место занимали вопросы национальной агитации и даже пропаганды модных политических идей, хотя и в завуалированной форме из-за цензуры. Эти выступления формировали общественную мысль и гласность. Однако до начала XX в. редакторы газет и руководители национального движения оставались лояльными к царской власти. Они еще не поднялись до осознания непримиримых противоречий между самодержавием и демократическими устремлениями национального движения.

Печальной точкой отсчета для местной прессы стал 1888 г., когда власти закрыли самую свободолобивую газету «Вирулане». Цензура все беззастенчивее вторгалась в жизнь прессы и общества. Многие эстонские газеты выступали в поддержку административных реформ царского правительства, видя в них средство ограничить власть прибалтийских дворян, но противостояли политике культурной ассимиляции. Хотя были и исключения. Эстляндский губернатор С. Шаховской писал, что «партия русофилов» существует, но она малочисленна. С 1894 г. натиск русификации слабеет.

В оставшиеся до конца столетия годы эстонская пресса пережила новую волну политизации. На ее страницы выплеснулся конфликт между умеренными националистами и социал-радикалами; настроениями умов овладевали европейские социально-политические идеи.

О модернизации эстонской печати свидетельствует также рост числа изданий, пик учреждения которых пришелся на 1878—1882 гг., а также рост спроса на них читателей. В период русификации новых газет и журналов не прибавилось, но выросли их тиражи, что говорит об укреплении периодической печати как социального института. Расширился круг корреспондентов, освещавших в основном культурную жизнь города и села. В 1891 г. смогла увидеть свет первая эстонская ежедневная газета.

Прогресс эстонской прессы можно наглядно видеть, сравнивая две газеты — «Перно Постимез» («Пярнуский почтальон») конца 1850-х годов и ее преемницы «Постимез» («Почтальон») конца 1890-х годов, выходившей под редакцией Я. Тыниссона. Если первая играла просветительскую роль, то вторая отвечала новым требованиям дня, носила деловой характер и пользовалась спросом у образованного круга читателей.

Эволюция эстонских добровольных обществ во второй половине XIX в. повторила путь эволюции прессы, особенно это касается тех обществ, которые были очагами национальной агитации и местом столкновения разных идейных течений. Благодаря прессе и обществам все больше эстонцев из различных слоев становились вовлеченными в общественную жизнь и причастными к принятию решений.