

ESSAY

Toomas Hiio. About our One-Hundredth Jubilee and its Commemoration in the Pre-war Period

This essay reflects on the celebration of Estonia's 100th anniversary and finds parallels between the history of Estonia's statehood and the history of other (Eastern) European countries, born or re-established in 1918. Even though attempts have been made to see the birthday of the Estonian state on other days, primarily 15 (28) November 1917, when the Estonian Provisional Provincial Assembly declared itself the highest authority in Estonia, the contention between the supporters of Jaan Tõnisson and Konstantin Päts has proceeded throughout the history of Estonia's independence on this background – 24 February has been considered Päts's day. Yet in the era of the restoration of Estonia's independence, the concept of a so-called "third republic" was also in the air, which would have given some sort of legitimacy to the ESSR as well as a part of the history of Estonian statehood. Thenceforth a closer look is taken at the commemoration of the Republic of Estonia's independence days in 1928, 1933 and 1938, and also in 1943 after the occupation of Estonia. The commemoration of independence days always brings to the forefront Estonia's values at the time of the commemoration, and by comparing these three anniversaries, we see the rapid alteration of these values over a brief period of time.

ARTICLES

Ivar Leimus. The Estonian Horse – A Strategic Commodity in the Middle Ages

The horse was the primary means of transport and labour in the Middle Ages. According to Livonian sources, horses can conditionally be divided into 3-4 groups according to their price – cheap, moderately priced, expensive and very expensive. Work and draught animals prevailed amongst the cheaply priced horses, also including some carriage horses, but these were admittedly mostly for lower class travellers. Moderately priced horses were used mostly for travel purposes. More expensive horses were also used for travel to meetings, conferences and negotiations, but in such cases the men sitting in the saddles were gentlemen who belonged to the city's elite. Yet this kind of animal was also a suitable gift for some more distinguished person. The more

expensive steeds nevertheless circulated primarily amongst the nobility. The most expensive horses, which were primarily stallions, were given as gifts to especially high-ranking persons, but nobles also used them.

Livonia's location at the line where the western and eastern cultural spaces met made Livonian horses a strategic commodity. For this reason, the authorities tried in every possible way to restrict and regulate their export. Only the cheaper horses were allowed to be exported. In troubled times, their export across the eastern border was completely prohibited.

Surviving sources allow the reconstruction of the procedure for exporting horses from Livonia. After purchasing a horse, a Russian had to appear with it before either the commander of the Teutonic Order or the commander of the fortress in Tallinn, or before the bishop's bailiff or the town hall bailiff in Tartu. The official gave the Russian a certificate stating where the horse was from, what its price was and what the Russian's name was. A special stamp was used to stamp an imprint (teken) on the certificate. This service, which can be considered a kind of customs duty, cost a mite. In the border town of Narva, a Russian had to appear before the bailiff or the commander of the castle and present the horse together with the certificate. Only the officials of Narva had the right to allow horses to be taken out of the country. Thereafter someone was sent to escort the Russian across the border to Russia together with the horse. For this the Russian had to give the escort a Russian silver coin – a dena.

Jaak Valge. The Road to the Second Referendum: a Parade of Misguided Decisions

A referendum on amending the constitution was held in Estonia on 13-15 August 1932. The draft act to amend the constitution worked out in the Riigikogu (Estonian parliament) was extremely narrowly defeated in the referendum. The issue of amending the constitution that had become the object of sharp political conflict made political relations even more acute under conditions of economic crisis, and subsequent developments created the possibilities for a coup in March of 1934. Even though there were other breaking points thereafter right up to 12 March 1934 where a different kind of development could have secured the preservation of democracy, the removal of the question of constitutional amendment from the agenda would have meant the end of confrontation on this theme.

This article examines the course of the debate on the draft act to amend the constitution and its political background in order to establish those questions that, if they had been resolved differently, would have meant the approval of the draft bill in the referendum.

The first step that could have given the political process a more positive direction would have been the earlier devaluation of the Estonian kroon. This was not done due to the ignorance of the Riigikogu's political parties. A second mistake was dragging out the question of amending the constitution – under conditions of economic difficulties and alienation – and as its result, the number of voters who could potentially vote against the amendment grew. The main reason for dragging this question out was evidently the fact that members of the Riigikogu were afraid to lose their seats. The third reason was wrong political decisions in the course of debating the question, like the inclusion in the referendum act of the obligation to vote, and the failure to involve in the debates the extra-parliamentary political force – the War of Independence veterans' movement, – which had acutely raised the constitutional question. Fourthly, the reason the draft act was defeated was the uncompromising attitude of the socialists who were not in favour of constitutional amendments. The fifth reason was the uncompromising attitude of the War of Independence veterans. The difference between their demands and the draft act drawn up in the Riigikogu was not so fundamental that it should have given rise to such acute and massive counterpropaganda on their part. And the sixth reason was the half-hearted propaganda disseminated by the parties in favour of the draft act before the referendum.

This is a parade of misguided decisions from the standpoint of all the participating parties, whereas not one of them wanted the result with which the process culminated – the loss of democracy. All of these reasons could have been changed and if even one of these six really had changed, Estonia's history would very likely be different.

Teele Saar. A Line of Work of Decisive Military Importance. The Activity of the J. Telliskivi & A. Saarna Shipping Company 1942–1944

The economic situation in Estonia under the German occupation has hitherto been rather cursorily researched. Germany's economic interests (the oil shale industry, agricultural

production, and supplying the Eastern Front) and the activity of German limited partnerships in Eastern territories have attracted the lion's share of the attention. The Economic and Transportation Directorate (from 1 June 1942 onward the Economic and Finance Directorate) of the Estonian Self-Administration began operating in September of 1941. Its main field of activity became the restoration of Estonia's economy. This article focuses on one part of this task – the restoration of Estonia's commercial shipping, answering the question of how the building of new ships was organised and how this was connected to Germany's wartime economy. This research topic has been approached at the microhistorical level, taking a closer look at the activity of one shipping company – J. Telliskivi & A. Saarna – in the interval 1942–1944.

Estonia's merchant marine was in third place among the countries of the Baltic Sea in terms of tonnage per thousand inhabitants prior to the Second World War. Only 10% of this remained by the autumn of 1941 when the Germans captured Estonia's territories. The restoration of the merchant marine was set as a priority task in the restoration of Estonia's economy during the German occupation. Germany's own merchant marine had also suffered extensive damage since the beginning of the war, for which reason a large-scale merchant marine building programme was initiated in 1942, which prescribed the building of ships in both Germany and the occupied territories.

In 1942, two to five-member shipping companies began the construction of 55 wooden motor sailers on the Estonian coast. Wood was used because metal was difficult to obtain due to wartime conditions. A year later, the German *Hauptausschuss Schiffbau* (Chief Commission on Shipbuilding) designated the building of motor sailers built in Estonia to be of military importance, which extended to Estonia's shipping companies the same kinds of rights and concessions as for the shipyards included in the shipbuilding programme started up in 1942.

The J. Telliskivi & A. Saarna Shipping Company started building a motor sailer 21 metres long and 7 metres wide in the autumn of 1942. The revival of the enterprise that operated in the 1920's and 1930's was presumably hoped for initially. The fact many of the enterprise's previous shareholders and workers associated themselves with this undertaking is evidence supporting this presumption. Later, a constant shortage of resources haunted the shipping company, lead-

ing to difficulties in acquiring materials and in keeping up with the production schedule. Yet on the other hand, the recognition of the shipping company as a line of work of military importance gave its workers the chance to obtain purchasing permits with larger rations for consumer goods and foodstuffs. Working for the shipping company also allowed workers subject to conscription to postpone their military service or exempted them from service altogether.

Regardless of the fact that shipbuilding had been declared a line of work of decisive military importance and necessary resources had to be channelled into it, only one ship was completed by the autumn of 1944. The construction of most of the ships remained unfinished and the number of ships under construction had dwindled to less than 40. The main reason why the shipbuilding plans did not come to fruition was the lack of resources and the exploitation of Estonia's economy emanating from the needs of the Eastern Front.

Jaan Undusk. Jaan Kross's Failed Attempts to become a Soviet Writer. The years of exile 1951–1954

Only sporadic light has been shed on the beginning of Jaan Kross's development as a writer. According to the understanding that remains current to this day, his creative work was rather episodic before the mid-1950s, creating the impression that Kross emerged on the Soviet Estonian literary scene with a "big bang" just when he was given a dignified opportunity to do so for the first time: namely during the political thaw that followed the condemnation of Stalin's personality cult, when his first collection of poetry entitled *Sõerikastaja* (Coal Refiner, 1958) was published. Closer examination nevertheless indicates that Kross already tried to make his way into the literary world considerably earlier already and in an altogether different way than it later turned out.

Kross's correspondence from his period of forced Siberian exile (which was first meant to be lifelong) in the settlement of Aban in Krasnoyarsk krai, where he lived in 1951–1954 after his time in the prison camps, sheds new light on the history of his creative work: letters to and from his mother and his first wife Helga Pedusaar-Kross, who remained in Tallinn, correspondence with his second wife Helga Roos and with the art historian Villem Raam, who both were also exiled in Siberia. The letters to Kross's mother from the communist activist Alma Vaarman, who was one of Kross's fellow exiles in Aban and had been sent to Siberia for a second time already, are also of

interest. Yet in this and the subsequent two issues of *Tuna*, the joint correspondence of Kross and Vaarman with the Stalinist literary critic Huko Lumet, who lived in Tallinn, will be published, along with Kross's letters to Vaarman in Siberia in 1954 when he himself was already back in Estonia. These letters are found in the Estonian National Archives (Tallinn), the Estonian Cultural History Archive (Tartu), and in private collections.

It becomes apparent from his correspondence with the abovementioned people that it was precisely during his years in Siberian exile that Kross became aware once and for all of his calling as a writer and tried to settle in to the working style of the professional man of letters – this, of course, to the extent to which it was possible alongside the hard physical labour he had to engage in for his daily bread. He had graduated from the University of Tartu as a lawyer and taken a job there as a specialist in international law but his juridical diploma was useless in Siberia. He had to come to grips with the fact that exiles stay in Siberia for the rest of their lives, or at least for a very long time. The only way to feel like a human being and to keep himself in spiritual and intellectual shape was to read as much as possible (books were sent from Estonia) and to work on writing: to translate from foreign languages, to compose critical texts, and to fulfil his own belletristic ambitions. The two years he spent living with A. Vaarman, who looked after Kross as if he were her own son, fostered this pursuit. Kross also tried to publish his work in Estonia by way of H. Lumet but predictably, nothing came of these efforts.

Kross's correspondence provides incentive to seek the creative work from his Siberian period, much of which has been preserved in manuscript form. The more important original texts on which he had worked in Siberia were the novel in verse *Tüit Pagu* about the transformation of a former bourgeois member of a students' fraternity into a member of socialist society (A. Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin* served as the example for its form), a socially critical play on an American theme entitled *Marc Edfordi kaitsekõne* (Marc Edford's Defence), and the long poem *Gameš*. None of these were published or put on stage. When he was already back in Tallinn, he received a commission in the autumn of 1954 to write a long poem about the "uprising" of 1 December 1924, actually the attempt to overthrow the government of Estonia plotted by the Soviet Union. Yet this work entitled *Pojad* (Sons) was not published either because editors were afraid of Kross as a former political prisoner.

Kross was later even thankful to the editors for thwarting his attempts to fit in to the trivial system of Stalinist literature. Yet he would not have needed to feel shame about his works later in retrospect because there is a strong humanist aspect in all of these works and they are professional in their form.

DOCUMENT AND COMMENTARY

Jaan Kross's Correspondence with Alma Vaarman and Huko Lumet in 1951–1954

Compiled and commented on by Jaan Undusk.

Peeter Kaasik. What Did the 36th Estonian Front Defence Battalion Do in Novogorodok?

The 36th Front Defence Battalion evidently has the most colourful history of all the Estonian armed units that fought in the German Army during World War II. Among other things, the battalion's fighters have been accused of participating in the mass murder of Jews that took place on 6 and 7 August 1942 in the area of Novogorodok in Byelorussia, in the course of which about 5,000 Jews were allegedly killed. Neither historians nor different law enforcement authorities have succeeded in finding any authentic documents concerning the participation of the 36th Battalion. Essentially the only concrete evidence of the battalion's presence in the Novogorodok area at the time of the mass murder is the report of 16 August 1942 submitted to the head of the Ostland *Ordnungspolizei* (Order Police) by the *Ordnungspolizei* liaison officer Gierhake attached to the 36th Battalion. There is no mention of the murder of Jews in the report, instead pointing out that the battalion was engaged in combat against partisans. The alleged participation of the fighters of the battalion in the mass murder emerges from only the investigation files of the Estonian SSR Ministry of State Security, which are of somewhat dubious value as historical sources and are unfit for use as "incriminating evidence" from the standpoint of present-day states based on the rule of law. It is very unlikely that some of the battalion's fighters or units participated directly in the mass murder, but it cannot be ruled out that its participation was indirect because a few recollections have also been found indicating that the battalion's units were used among other things for guarding Jews as well. In summary, it is not possible to prove or disprove anything due to the absence of sources and the discrepancies in

the existing information. Matters associated with the 36th Defence Battalion have thus developed into more a question of faith.

Estonian Film Archives, Ivi Tomingas: The Horse in the Army, at the Farm, as a Mount

CULTURAL HISTORY ARCHIVE

Marin Laak. Literature's Soldiers in the First World War: the Correspondence of Johannes Vares-Barbarus and Johannes Semper in 1911–1917

Estonian literature underwent a radical innovation before the Second World War and arrived at the level comparable with other European literatures. Modernisation started with the activities of the groups Young Estonia (1905–1915) and Siuru (1917–1920) and continued by following the footsteps of German expressionists and the group Clartè. The 1920s have proved to be one of the most democratic periods in the history of the Estonian Republic, when heated discussions gave birth to several national structures for supporting literature and culture, which have been continuously active up to present day: Estonian Writers' Union (1922), literary magazine *Looming* (1923), Estonian Cultural Endowment (1925). This period has been documented in the correspondence between Johannes Vares-Barbarus (1892–1946) and Johannes Semper (1890–1971), containing, all in all, 670 letters. This is a mostly private exchange of ideas between two friends and classmates. Although the letters were not intended for publication, preparations for issuing them as a textual critical publication were started already in the 1970s.

The present article publishes the first 12 letters from 1911–1917, when the friends were located geographically far from each other. Semper was studying Romance and German philology at the Petersburg University and Vares-Barbarus had entered the Faculty of Medicine of the Kiev University. He participated in WWI and the War of Liberation as a military surgeon and later worked as a physician in Pärnu up to 1939. Vares-Barbarus's fate was determined by his collaboration with the Soviet occupation powers in 1940, when he became the head of the puppet government, led by Moscow. The poet, who became involved in political affairs, committed suicide in 1946, which is still covered with a veil of secrecy. The voluminous private correspondence of the two writers is a unique and reliable biographical record and historical document.