

THE ANATOMY
OF INDEPENDENCE

INTRODUCTION

N. Karamzin divided history of people into three kinds, depending on the ways of retrieving the materials: the first one is the modern kind, where the basic source is an eyewitness of events; the second kind is the one which is based on the data close in time to the events being described; the third type makes the kind of history which is taken from historical sources and monuments of the past.

The present collection of articles is based on all three kinds of history. The authors of the articles were direct participants and eyewitnesses of the events. However, in some of the articles the basis of the research was not only personal memoirs, but also numerous materials from periodicals, documents and materials issued by the state bodies of authority and public associations, data of sociological polls of the population and a few other sources.

All the researchers are renowned scholars of Tartu University, including:

Victor Palm – professor, a chemist, an academician of the Estonian Republic, one of the initiators of the foundation of the People's Front of Estonia (PFE), a co-chair of the Interregional Deputy Group at a Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR.

Michael Bronstein – professor, an economist, an academician of the Estonian Republic, a participant of a Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR and the Supreme Council of the USSR.

Leonid Stolovich – professor, a philosopher, the author of many well-known works on aesthetics.

Rein Veidemann – professor, a philologist, a journalist, Head of the Department of Estonian Literature, one of the initiators of the foundation of the People's Front of Estonia.

Rafik Grigorjan – doctor of philosophy, a senior lecturer, Head of the Division of Civic Studies at Narva College of Tartu University; from 1997 to 1999 and from 2002 to 2003 – an adviser to the

Minister of Population of Estonia, one of the initiators of the foundation of the PFE.

Igor Rosenfeld – doctor of philosophy, a journalist, Head of «Kripta» company, who used to be a member of the People’s Front of Estonia.

The collection is entitled «An Anatomy of Independence». Its authors set the task of shedding some light on the unknown pages of the history of «singing revolution», which is polyhedral, complex and does not accept a one-sided, selective approach.

A part of the non-Estonian population also participated in the restoration of independence of the Estonian state. Together with the Estonians they actively struggled for the common freedom and a better future. However, their activities have not found much reflection in historical works of the Estonian historians; nor have they been mentioned in numerous periodic editions and in the chronical-documentary films about the the events of «singing revolution». Furthermore, following the existing stereotypes, non-Estonians have been considered to be the opponents of the independence, «the fifth column of the Soviet Empire». Such a one-sided approach will by no means promote interethnic dialogue, mutual understanding and integration of the society.

The historical creation of the people freed from the stereotypes of the past is the basis of integration. One of the purposes of integration is the change in the approaches to the problem of non-Estonians – replacement of the attitude «non-Estonians as a problem» by the approach «non-Estonians as a resource, as a potential for development».

However, these changes in the psychology and behaviour of the people do not occur automatically; it is necessary to form a positive image of the «non-Estonian born». This has a significant importance in education of the new generation of people in the spirit of tolerance and mutual understanding.

The authors have expressed their understanding of the problems of «singing revolution» and shown their approach to the process of restoration of independence and statehood in Estonia. They do not claim the all-round and complete coverage of the given topic, trying only to attract the attention of scholars, politicians, teachers and public at large to the issue. The researchers are convinced that there

can and should exist different interpretations of the history of «singing revolution» and of the period of restoration of independence.

The collection contains certain divergences in the opinions of the authors, which is only natural.

We hope that the materials of the given collection of articles will be of interest to scholars, experts in interethnic relations, historians and teachers – to those who are interested in the history of «singing revolution» and restoration of independence of the Estonian state.

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Editors

THE UNKNOWN PAGES OF «SINGING REVOLUTION»

Rafik Grigorjan

The author, being a participant of the events, tells about those dramatic times when the destiny of Estonia was decided, using concrete facts. The researcher focuses his attention on this theme for the reason that until now nobody has given those events any consideration and they have been undeservedly forgotten.

For the past 15 years dozens of books have been published, a considerable number of articles, monographs, master and doctoral theses have been written, all devoted to the times of «Singing Revolution» and restoration of independence of Estonia. However, in the bulk of works, the names non-Estonians, as well as their activities and their role in this process, hardly get any mention. Their faces have also disappeared from the chronicle-documentary films which were shot at that period of Estonian history.

Among the Russian-speaking figures, only those who were members of «International Movement» and OSTK are widely represented, i.e. those activists who participated in the protest actions against the sovereignty of Estonia. As a result of such a selection, there was established a rigid stereotype, according to which the Estonians «struggled for their independence, and the Russian-speaking population, being the Kremlin agents, the «fifth column», interfered with this process in every possible way».

The new perestroika and glasnost course chosen by M. Gorbachov and those who shared his ideas created a new climate in public and political life of the country. Using concrete examples, the article shows what huge role in the awakening of consciousness of the people of Estonia played non-Estonian intellectuals, such as Rem Blum, Michael Bronstein, Vladimir Brehov (Saal), Pavel Bogdanov, Rafik Grigorjan, Arthur Kuznetsov, Juri Lotman, Ceslav Lustsik, Vladimir Murk, Ilja Nikiforov, Anatoli Petukhov, Pavel Reifman, Igor Rosenfeld, Leonid Stolovits, Aleksandr Shegedin and many others.

On Rem Blum's initiative, the Club of «Friends of Perestroika» was established at Tartu University in 1987. In April 1988, R. Blum, A. Kuznetsov and R. Grigorian joined the Tartu initiative group for creation of the People's Front of Estonia.

Already by the First Congress of the People's Front of Estonia (PFE), all the above named representatives of the non-Estonian intelligencia, as members of the PFE, together with Estonians, had been struggling for common freedom. The People's Fronts gave prime attention to problems of sovereignty of the Republics, as well as to protection of national languages and cultural values.

As the general Oleg Kalugin testified, on the initiative of the KGB, as a counterbalance to the People's Fronts, «International Movements» were organized in Estonia as well as in some other Republics. The Movements functioned at factories, mainly, at military plants and those factories that had an all-union importance. Their aim was to protect the conservative Soviet values and make everything possible to block the actions of the People's Fronts.

Both movements were open for all inhabitants of Estonia. They were not built by the national principle. A lot of members of the People's Front of Estonia were non-Estonians; on the other hand, Estonian nationals joined the International Movement, some of whom formed the leadership: Arnold Sai, Lembit Annus, Valter Toots. Academician Gustav Naan, professor N. Hutt and others were among the supporters of the International Movement. The article presents the main contradictions between these mass movements.

The establishment of Committees of Estonian Citizens (Civil Committees) in 1990 and their uncompromised position in the national question aggravated the already stained ethnic relations in the Republic.

That was how the split in the People's Front began. The non-Estonian members of the Front felt more and more alienated. Many of them did not accept the nationalistic standpoint of the Civil Committees, nor did they share the views on the fate that the Committees had prepared for the Russian-speaking population in the future Estonian Republic. As a result, the social base of International Movement began to extend because of an influx of Russian-speakers, at the same time the social base of the People's Front shrank.

On 1–2 July, 1989 a Conference for Russian sections of the PFE was held in Narva. Following the Conference's decision, the work

of the PFE members in various audiences became more active. Numerous meetings, assemblies, conferences were organized not only in Estonia, but also beyond its borders. The Russian-speaking intellectuals wrote different popular articles in the newspapers and magazines, participated in radio and TV broadcasts. R.Blum, R.Grigorjan, V.Palm, E.Golikov and many others went to visit Moscow, Minsk, Yerevan, Baku, Leningrad, Sverdlovsk, Riga, Vilnius and other cities in order to explain the situation in Estonia. That was extremely important for the external support, as the central mass media presented facts in a distorted way. The article contains the data on dynamics of the growth in support of the idea of Estonian independence among non-Estonians from 1989 to 1991. The data show that in 1989 the independence of Estonia was supported only by 5% of non-Estonians, on referendum in March of 1991 – 37%; however, by the moment of restoration of independence, i.e. by August 20, 1991, half of non-Estonian population supported independence.

Any unbiased observer will agree that the growth from 5% in 1989 up to 55% in 1991, within a span of slightly longer than two years, testifies to the revolutionary change in the consciousness of non-Estonians in the question on restoration of Estonian independence. These data deny the myth, which has been duplicated by the media and some Estonian politicians, that all Estonians were in favor of independence of Estonia, whereas the Russian-speaking population was against it. At the end of the day, the choice was made by an individual, rather than by an ethnic nationality. The events depicted in the article have already become history and every historian will interpret them in his/her own way. As far as the direct participants of those events are concerned, time will probably tell who was right.

SERVING FOR THE NATIONAL INTERESTS OF ESTONIA IN MOSCOW

Michael Bronstein

The author of the article is a well-known scientist-economist, who played a significant role in the post-war successful development of the Estonian agriculture. He also was an active participant of the events at the end of 1990, being a People's Deputy of the USSR, and then, beginning from 1991 served as an adviser on economic issues at the Estonian Embassy in Moscow.

Elected for the first Congress of the People's Deputies of the USSR, he was a participant of a number of important Commissions at the Supreme Council of the USSR, the chairman of the market sub-committee. In the first representative Soviet body, the author stood up for reforms, for a greater independence of Estonia and the Baltic states as a whole. He also played an immediate role in the general negotiations on the status of Estonia and the Baltics in Moscow. According to the author, the supporters of the liberal wing of the Communist Party as well as the then leaders of the People's Front «undertook the whole burden of the search of intermediate ways for the revival of the Estonian state and realization of the difficult negotiations in Moscow».

The author tells about the support from the Russian democrats, which they rendered to Estonia during the complex process of implementation of the reforms, in particular, at the time of deploying military forces in the Baltics at the beginning of 1991. A major role played B. Jelzin's arrival in Tallinn in January 1991 and recognition of independence of the Baltic countries by the democratic Russia. «The first country in the world to recognize the integral right of Estonia for state independence both in January 1991 and in February 1920, was Russia».

On the eve of the August coup of 1991, M. Bronstein participated in a Deputy Commission engaged in defining the status of the

Baltic Republics in the frameworks of «Novoogarevo» process. In addition to the planned «Novoogarevo» agreement of August 1991, the Commission also prepared the first documents confirming new relations between Russia and Estonia signed by M. Gorbachev before his trip to Foros. M. Bronstein was the supporter of preservation of the common market space and transformation of the USSR on the basis of the EU model.

After the coup, after disintegration of the USSR and restoration of the Estonian Republic, together with the Ambassador Juri Kahn the author worked as an adviser on economic issues at the Embassy of Estonia to Russia for 4 years. The author urged to use the favorable situation in Estonia as a bridge between the West and the East. He also was a direct participant of the preparation of the first economic agreements between Estonia and Russia – in particular, of the contract about free trade and transit, which at the time brought the Republic essential economic benefits and helped to avoid considerable economic losses.

FROM MEMOIRS

Viktor Palm

In his memoirs, the author, Professor of Chemistry at Tartu University, a member of the Estonian Academy of Sciences, an active participant of the events, describes the times of the initial period of «perestroika» in Estonia – 1987-88, and formation of the People's Front of Estonia.

V. Palm specifies the role of the so-called «shestidesiatniki» (the sixties' generation) – the representatives of critically thinking intelligentsia aspiring to democratic changes in the Soviet society during the process of reforms, at Tartu University in particular. He describes the role of this part of intelligentsia in forming the People's Front, at the first stages representing a unity of democrats of different nationalities.

The author differentiates between the People's Front and the National Front, describes the first steps of the People's Front movement, which was among the first ones to have appeared on the territory of the former USSR, the relations of the new organization with the Russian population, including the workers at the enterprises of an allunion importance, where the so called «International Movement» was functioning actively. The author also tells about the support of the democratic forces in Estonia by Moscow democrats – in particular, Juri Afanasjev. The author presents a number of bright episodes from the critical epoch.

Later on V. Palm played a significant role in the activities of the first legal Soviet opposition – an Interregional Deputy Group – having become one of the cochairmen of the Group alongside with academician Sakharov and Boris Yeltsin.

«THE TARTU COURIER».
MEMOIRS OF A MEMBER OF THE EDITORIAL BOARD

Leonid Stolovich

The essay tells about the activities of the newspaper of the Russian section of the People's Front of Estonia «The Tartu Courier» in the period from June 1, 1989 to April 1990. The author of the memoirs was a member of the editorial board, heading the literary-art department. The department enlisted such outstanding people within «The Tartu Courier» as poets D.Samoilov, L.Mochalov, N.Slepakova, V.Mikushevich, playwright A.Volodin, philosopher-aesthete J.Borev, historian R.Medvedev, literary critic and culturologist J.Lotman, literary critic B.Jegorov, publicist P.Karp.

The memoirs tell about publications in the newspaper, the polemics around them and the exciting times at the end of the 80's – beginning of the 90's. The participation of the People's Front in the process which was historically necessary as a waiver of the stagnant totalitarian system, the system which had been choking everything living and, eventually, suffocated itself, is fully recounted in the memoirs. The printed editions of those years provide a most valuable material for a researcher of the social processes at the end of the 20th century. For the participants and the witnesses of the events, however, that was not just history...

**ABOUT THE ROLE OF REPRESENTATIVES
OF SPIRITUAL ELITE OF THE LOCAL
RUSSIAN POPULATION AND OTHER NATIONALITIES
IN ESTONIAN SOCIETY AND CULTURE**

Rein Veidemann

Professor of Estonian Literature at Tartu University Rein Veidemann suggests estimating the place and the role of the Russian-speaking intellectuals in the Estonian cultural space in a new light.

In his opinion, in spite of the fact that any national culture at the beginning is formed through opposition to other cultures, later, at a more mature stage of development, it begins to appreciate the contribution of other ethnic groups. «Any nationalism is welcomed so long as it is accompanied with the universal right and democratic understanding of society».

As the author points out, not only the role of the representatives of the neighbouring Baltic nations (Kristjans Barons and Kristjans Valdemars) in the Estonian culture has already been re-estimated, but also that of the Baltic Germans (e.g. Ea Jansen, Kristiina Ross, members of the famous Baltic Keiserling's family). The renown representatives of the Russian culture, connected with Estonia both in distant past – such as writers Dahl, Zhukovski, Veressajev, Sologub, – and in relatively recent times, should not make an exception. Here we also mean the representatives of a number of peoples of the former USSR, who studied and worked in Estonia and at Tartu University in particular. They were not so closely attached to the Soviet background.

R. Veidemann tells about his acquaintance with the prominent figures of the «Russian part» of Tartu University in the 1970's, including professor of Russian Literature Juri Lotman and his faculty colleagues, professor of philosophy Rem Blum and like-minded people, who made democratic and intellectual opposition to the regime,

and who played an important role in forming the People's Front of Estonia at the end of the 1980's.

Unfortunately, as the author remarks, the intellectual potential of this part of intelligentsia has remained unclaimed on the part of the revived Estonian state. Together with them, however, Estonian left-central intellectuals were also pushed to the periphery.

Nonetheless, in R.Veidemann's opinion, there is a hope for change in the situation, when the «foam» raised by historical cataclysms calms down and the true contents of the events come on the foreground.

**NATIONAL QUESTION IN ESTONIAN
«LEFT-DEMOCRATIC» PUBLICISM
AT THE END OF 1980 – BEGINNING OF 1990**

Igor Rosenfeld

The article considers the interaction of various political forces in the period of «Perestroika» in Estonia from 1987 to 1991. It shows that the conservative forces of the administrative-command system were the main reason for the failure of the reforms in the former USSR and eventually for the disintegration of the state. Those forces managed to break the evolutionary development of the country.

Contrary to the theory of «inevitable collapse» of the USSR, the author asserts that there was a scenario of «positive» reform of the Soviet system, which could have been essentially less painful for the peoples of the formerly allied states. The given variant of development could have been carried out, had Moscow centre conducted politics of reforms more consistently and purposefully and in good time had supported not the Imperial and Stalinist International Movements as well as conservative groups of local Communist parties, but reformist Communist parties and moderate elements of the People's Fronts in national formations.

