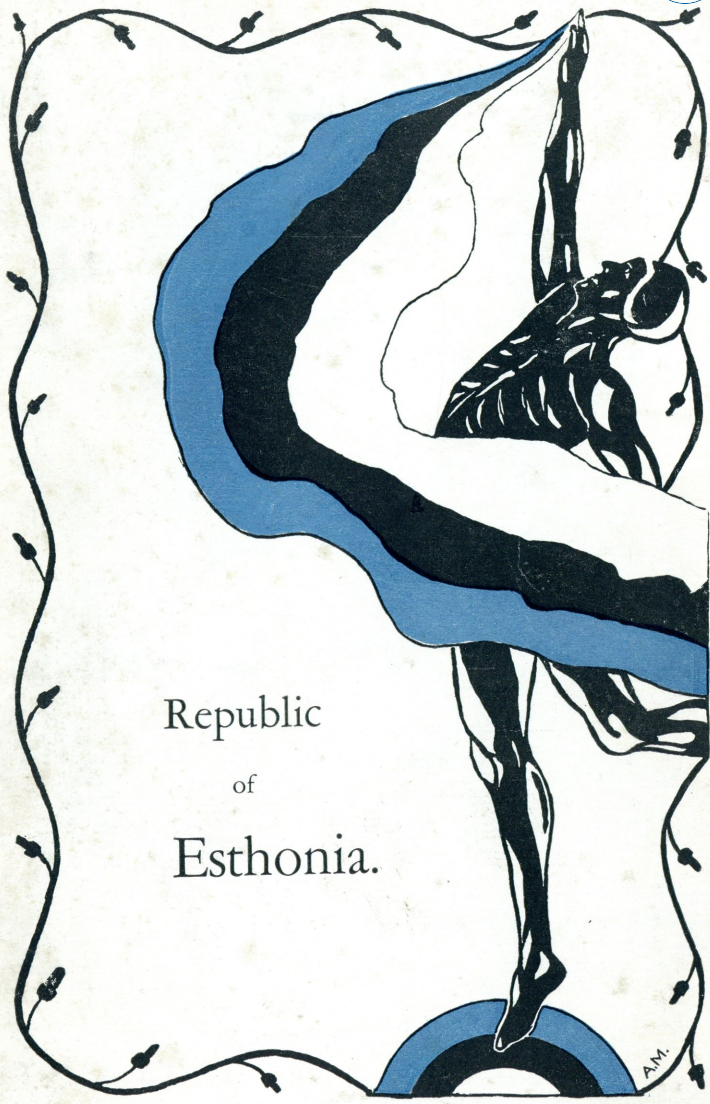


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Republic
of
Esthonia.

A.M.



"The time will come . . ."

is the prophetic prediction at the end of the "Kalevipoeg", the Esthonian epic poem. The time has come, and the spirit of Esthonia again asserts itself. The gloom which cast a shadow over Esthonia in the past is gone. As a nation, Esthonia is now free to develop her ideals.

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RAAMATUKOGU

5218

FACTS ABOUT ESTHONIA

Compiled by HANS LEOKE

New York, March, 1923.

Republic of Esthonia

(EESTI)

LOCATION—BOUNDARIES

The Republic of Esthonia (Eesti), is located in the north-western part of Europe at a latitude of 57°28' to 59°42', and longitude 21°45' to 28°20'. Bounded: North by the Gulf of Finland, East by Soviet Russia, West by the Baltic Sea and part of the Gulf of Riga, and South by Latvia.

AREA AND POPULATION

Esthonia covers an area of 47548 square kilometers (about 18,000 square miles). Its extreme length is 220 miles and breadth 140 miles. The country though small is larger than Switzerland, Belgium, or Denmark. Density of population is 23.4 to sq. km.

In addition to the territory covered by the mainland, Esthonia numbers among her possessions, many islands. The larger are Saaremaa (Oesel), Hiiumaa (Dago), Muhumaa (Moon), and Vormsi. Esthonia comprises the former Russian Government of Estland, the northern part of Livland, the northwestern part of the Pskoff government, and islands. The territory is divided into eleven districts, i. e. Harju, Lääne, Järva, Viru, Saaremaa, Pärnu, Viljandi, Tartu, Valga, Võru and Petseri.

Of the total area, 22.9% is under cultivation, 24.5% meadowland, 17.5% pastures, 20.1% forests and 15.0% bogs and waste land.

According to census taken December 1922, the population was 1,110,538, comprising 95% Esthonians and 5% Germans, Russians, Jews, Finns, Swedes and Letts. Of this population 27.6% live in the cities.

GEOLOGICAL STRUCTURE AND TOPOGRAPHY

Geologically, Esthonia is a moraine plain, formed of layers of limestone, sandstone, and clay belonging to the Cambrian, Silurian and Devonian formations. The strata of the Cambrian formation known as "glint" are close to the surface in northern Esthonia, forming a steep bluff near the Gulf of Finland. In the central part of the country this formation is covered with limestone and sandstone of the Silurian formation, while farther south the layers lie much deeper and the soil is much more fertile.

There are many lakes which dot the landscape, the largest of which is Lake Peipsi on the Eastern frontier. The length is 150 kilometers.

The depth of the surrounding sea averages 70 meters, along the coast under 20 meters.

The general height above sea level in the western part of the country is 10 to 30 meters. In the eastern part 120 to 300 meters. The northern part, although high, is level, while in the southern part, there are many low hills, the highest of which is "Munamägi" height 324 meters. In former years these hills were used as fortresses and the many picturesque ruins remaining appeal in their beauty to the tourist. The more well known are Haapsalu, Rakvere, Viljandi, Helme, Tartu, Otepää, Paide, Pölsamaa. Also many others.

Botanically and zoologically, Esthonia is similar to the northern belt of the United States.

NATURAL RESOURCES

The natural resources of Esthonia are minerals, forest and waterpower:

Oil Shale lies in strata along the steep northern coast and has been found to be of very good quality. One of its most important by-products is dye-stuffs. Dye of great value is being extracted from this shale, and on further experimentation, promises to develop into an important industry. In addition to the naphtha from which petrol is made, the shale contains benzine, turpentine and several other oils in sufficient quantities to make their extraction a paying commercial proposition. The shale is also used for firing pur-

poses and has proven to be a very fine substitute for coal. It is now being utilized in distilleries, gas factories, cement factories, locomotives, steamships, smitheries and for any kind of heating.

Vast areas of moorland contain a supply of turf sufficient to satisfy the needs for many hundred years.

Large forests, chiefly of coniferous trees (fir and pine) and mixed partly with foliaceous trees, cover 20% of the entire area of Esthonia. These forests supply the demands of the factories and also allow a surplus for export. A great quantity of the timber is converted into wood pulp and writing paper of fine quality. Some also used in the manufacture of matchwood. According to the peace treaty with Russia, February 2, 1920, Esthonia received a concession of one million desj. (2,700,000 acres) of forest land.

The waterfalls in Esthonia, adjacent to principal cities, can be utilized for generating electric current in excess of 100,000 HP. At present the Narva Rapids in the Narova River, supplies electric power to the City of Narva. A project is now being developed to utilize the power of the Narva Rapids for supplying the entire country with electricity.

CLIMATE

Situated in the North Temperate Zone, and affected considerably by the influence of the Gulf Stream, the climate of Esthonia is especially favorable for Agriculture. The year is divided into four seasons of equal length. This section of the Baltic Sea is not affected by the tides although the atmospheric conditions and winds cause a movement up to three meters. Precipitation is about the same throughout the year, although in summer the rain-falls are not as frequent as in other seasons. In winter months the temperature ranges from plus 32 to minus 4 degrees Fahrenheit, and in Summer months from plus 59 to plus 95 degrees. The atmospheric pressure is about normal.

CHIEF CITIES

Tallinn, (Reval) the capital of Esthonia was founded in the year 1219 by the Danish King Valdemar, who realized the future value of a point of support on the shore of the

east sea. The Esthonian name Tallinn, means City of the Danes. This port is protected from the winds. Its harbor is large and deep, and free from ice, being accessible for large vessels all year around, owing to the use of ice-breakers. Its berthing capacity is great, and it possesses facilities for trans-shipping goods directly from ships to warehouses and railways. Electric cranes have been installed for this purpose. Direct railway communication has been established with Petrograd, Moscow, and Riga. The population is 123,500.

Tartu (Dorpat) is a picturesque town founded in 1030. Its university is the oldest in Europe, founded in 1632 by the King of Sweden, Gustav Adolphi. Tartu was a member of the Hansa League. Today it is the educational centre of Esthonia. Population is 50,000.

Pärnu (Town of Lime Trees) is a popular seashore resort, and also carries on a lively sea trade with Western Europe. Population is 18,500.

Narva, noted for its cotton, flax and woolen industries, is situated on the river Narova, whose rapids generate a sufficient supply of electric power for the town and factories.

Baltiski (Baltic Port) has a natural harbor on the deep Gulf of Baltiski, 33 miles east of Reval. It has a depth along the coast of 30 ft. This has been declared a free port by the Esthonian Government, and has been enlarged to meet the increased demands.

Valk, important railway centre, on the Latvian border.

Haapsalu is a seaport and bathing resort.

Rakvere and *Viljandi* are both known for their beautiful, historical old ruins.

Kuressaare (Arensburg) is situated on the southern shore of the Island of Oesel. Its mud baths form the chief attraction.

Võsu, *Mereküla*, *Hungerburg*, *Klooga*, *Rannamõisa*, and *Loksa* are attractive to tourists, mainly for their wonderful scenery and bathing beaches of fine white sand.

COMMERCE—TRANSPORTATION

The Esthonian ports have become very important for foreign and Russian Transit Trade. The irregularity of the extensive coast line, results in the natural formation of many bays and fine harbors, including Haapsalu, Rohuküla, Kuressaare, Loksa, Kunda, and Tartu on the mainland. The larger harbors which are accessible all the year around are

Tallinn, Pärnu, and Baltiski. These ports serve not only Esthonia, but also Northern and Central Russia, and Western Siberia, due to the fact that the Russian port of Petrograd is ice-bound in winter. Because of the superior conditions of navigation and the efficiency of railway communication, Tallinn and Baltiski have many advantages over the other ports of the Baltic Sea. These two ports are accessible all year around, due to less hindrance from ice; also by the total lack of fogs, which minimizes the risks of navigation. They are kept open for trade during the winter season by the use of ice-breakers. The following schedule shows comparative nearness to Russian cities, and also the number of months when ports are ice-bound.

	Petro grad	Rybinsk	Moscow	Peteli bisk	Months ICE
	(Miles)				
Tallinn	228	574	594	1,679	0-2 thin
(Esthonia)					
Baltiski	258	604	624	1,709	0-1 thin
(Esthonia)					
Riga	414	651	570	1,777	3 ½-4 strong
(Latvia)					
Hango	351	720	685	1,830	2-2 ½ thin
(Finland)					
Helsingfors ..	292	660	626	1,780	4-4 ½ strong
(Finland)					
Petrograd (Russia)					5-6 strong

Since the establishment of Esthonia as an independent state, commerce has been steadily increasing.

In the interior of the country trading takes place on the periodical markets, where the country population makes its provision and sells farm products.

The commercial establishments of the country are divided into several classes, according to their financial standing. Firms of the first class only, are permitted to carry on foreign trade.

The chief exports are flax, linseed, paper, wood pulp, and spirits.

The chief imports are coal, iron, steel, and machinery.

The Esthonian Merchant Marine comprises 708 ships.

During the first ten months of 1922 Esthonian Naval Administration registered 130 ships under the Esthonian flag. Most of these ships were built on the shores of Pernau. The comparative number and tonnage of vessels entering Port of Tallinn follows:

1920	2975 vessels	293,803 tons
1921	3862 "	689,682 "
1922	4621 "	839,065 "

At the present time there are few ships going direct to Esthonia from the United States ports, but regular sailings are established between Esthonia and the following countries: England, France, Germany, Sweden, Denmark, and Finland.

All important Esthonian ports have rail connection with Russia, Germany, France, and surrounding countries. According to Peace Treaty with Russia, Esthonia has obtained preferential option on a concession for construction and exploitation of a direct line from Tallinn to Moscow. Preparations for its building are under way. International sleeping cars are provided on trains making direct connections between Tallinn-Riga-Kalkuni, Kalkuni-Warsaw, Warsaw - Berlin - Paris - Ostende, Riga-Eydkuhnen-Berlin-Paris-Ostende-Lyons.

Esthonia's aerial service is developing, and at the present time she has a greater number of planes in comparison with the population than many countries in Europe. Periodical flights have been arranged daily for mail and passenger service.

Bus service is becoming very popular. Due to the territory being so small, busses have been found to be advantageous for short hauls.

In the interior transportation of merchandise, etc, is effected by means of horse-driven carriages. For passenger service, stations have been established at certain intervals, and coaches may be hired for making trips from one station to another.

The rivers and lakes also furnish a means of transportation.

The post, telegraph and telephone service in Esthonia is very efficient. New post offices and telephone offices are being opened continually, to take care of the increasing re-

quirements. An automatic telephone central station has been installed at Tallinn. Esthonia has joined the Madrid Postal Union and has entered agreements for an international exchange of mail and packages. Arrangements have been made for the direct exchange of parcel post, facilitating delivery between Esthonia and the United States.

RUSSIAN TRANSIT TRADE

Since the dawn of history the importance of the Baltic Shores was realized by seafaring and trading peoples. For many centuries this has formed the connecting link between Eastern and Western trade and culture. The section of the Baltic shore known as Esthonia, forms the main gateway to Russia. Esthonian ports play an active part in the Russian transit trade, especially while Russia's outlet to the Baltic Sea, the Port of Petrograd, is closed during the winter months, by ice. In accordance with Peace Treaty, Russia has been given free access to Esthonian ports, and Transit trade is steadily increasing. Since the war, Esthonia has had the lion's share of this trade, and in 1921 60% of Russian trade passed through Esthonia. Comparative figures show the trade for 1920—28,000 tons, 1921—214,000 tons and first ten months of 1922—328,000. The further development on Russia's concession to Esthonia for building a direct railway line from Tallinn (Reval) to Moscow, will facilitate this trade. The increasing figures indicate that transit trade with Russia will be, although not vital, a great factor in Esthonian commerce.

INDUSTRIES

Agriculture

The chief occupation in Esthonia is agriculture, which is conducted along scientific lines. In spite of the naturally poor soil, the crops are good. Much food is exported because production exceeds the requirements for supplying the population.

The growing of flax is engaged in extensively and has, from the beginning, played a great part in the economic life of Esthonia. Previous to the war, the export of flax was about 20,000 tons a year. During the war this industry

declined considerably. During the past two years this branch of agriculture has been given more attention. To improve the preparation of flax, the Ministry of Agriculture contemplates offering courses for instructors, in 1923. Flax is exported chiefly to France, Great Britain, Finland, Germany, and Sweden. The best quality flax seeds are sold abroad, the poorer being used for the manufacture of oil. In 1920, 5,200 tons of flax were exported. Esthonian flax is famous and in western Europe is known as Petseri or Võru flax.

In the northern part of Esthonia potatoes are cultivated very successfully. The soil is rich in lime and produces crops of good quality. A great quantity of potatoes is consumed in the distillation of spirits. Besides the manufacture of spirits, potatoes are also being used in the making of potato flour, potato syrup and potato chips; the latter being used extensively by large farmers as food for cattle.

Due to the climatic conditions, the cultivation of rye and barley, in preference to other grains, is engaged in extensively.

Fishing

The Fishing Industry plays an important part in the economic life of Esthonia, nearly five percent of the population being thus engaged. Her coast line extending over 1000 kilometers, her many lakes and streams furnish a plentiful supply of fish. Lake Peipsi (5,300 square kilometers) is one of the largest lakes in Europe. The yearly catch aggregating 56,000 metric tons, comprises Baltic Herring, Sprats, Smelts, and products of seal fishery. The Baltic Herring and Sprats are caught along the coast by fixed and drift nets and by a special kind of large trap net. Almost the entire catch of Sprats is prepared with spices and is generally known in the trade as "Kilo of Reval", as the Esthonian capital Tallinn, was formerly known as Reval. Kilo is a fine delicate hors d'oeuvre, and is exported in large quantities. Salmon is caught at the mouths of numerous rivers and is generally fine in quality and of large size, often weighing over seventy pounds. Much of this is exported to Sweden and Denmark. Esthonian Eel is caught in large quantities, and is chiefly consumed, smoked. When canned in oil or vinegar it makes a most tasty relish. To England the export of live eels is managed without dif-

faculty. The fishing fleet consists of 200 motor boats and 9000 other fishing craft.

Textile

The manufacture of cotton, cloth, linen, and rope is carried on extensively. On the banks of the Narova River, in the city of Narva, is one of the largest cotton factories in the world.

Paper

A vast portion of the timber from the forest lands is being used in the manufacture of paper and wood pulp.

Breweries and distilleries

The distillation of spirits is carried on to a great extent and forms an industry of some importance. Potatoes which are grown in large quantities, are used for this purpose.

Oil Shale

Oil shale and oils distilled from the shale, as well as dye-stuffs extracted from the shale, is an industry of increasing importance. The oil shale is sometimes called Kukersite, because of the name of the place (Kukers), where it was first discovered. In 1920 the total production of oil shale was about 56,000 tons,—in 1921, 116,000 tons, and in 1922, 163,600 tons. Several concerns who have been given the privilege of exploiting certain areas, are now carrying on operations extensively. Up until February 1, 1923 there were leased for a long period (50 years) 26,623 hectares of land. Besides there were given 11,823 hectares on condition that contracts can be cancelled in three years. A total of 44,700 hectares was given for research work. Total land leased was 83,146 hectares.

Cement

The cement industry is developing greatly, because of the large quantities of raw materials now available for this purpose. The largest cement factories are the Port-Kunda Cement Co. and the Aseri Cement Co.

Turf, Shipbuilding, Glass, Leather, and Chemical industries are worthy of mention.

MONETARY SYSTEM

At the time of the formation of the Republic there were in the State Treasury only 200,000 German Ost Marks. The larger loans were made by private banks and the Finnish Govt. According to the peace treaty with Russia, on February 2, 1920, Esthonia received fifteen million gold roubles. During the early days of independence, Russian, German, Finnish, and "Eastern" money circulated in the country. By the law of May 2nd, 1919 an independent unit of value, the Esthonian Mark, was introduced to take the place of the former various monetary units, and as a result the monetary system was unified and regularized. Esthonian currency has been stable for the past two years. Present rate of exchange 340 to the dollar.

In July 1922 the gold reserve of Esthonia was: In Russian gold coins 11,155,532.50 roubles. In gold bars 75,527,500 Est. Marks (about \$7,000,000). The amount of paper money in circulation on Jan. 1, 1923 was 2,519 Emks. secured by gold reserve of 2,442 million Emks. In December 1922 besides the state bank, there were in operation, 20 joint stock banks, 4 private banks, and 107 smaller, cooperative banks, and Savings and Loan Ass'ns. The total amount on deposit in banks is about two and a half billion Emks.

In December 1922, the first metal currency was put in circulation, consisting of one, three and five mark denominations. The Treasury contemplates the minting of silver currency, to be put in circulation during 1923.

DEBT

During the short period of self-government Esthonia has succeeded in paying many of her debts. The external debts of Esthonia, on January 1, 1923 were as follows:

U. S. A. Government	\$14,517,868.
American Relief Commission	2,127,614.
Great Britain	£251,000.
France	fr. 6,581,944.
Denmark	D. Kr. 463,930.
British Admiralty	

External debt equal to 5317 million Emks., or \$15. per capita. According to peace treaty with Russia, Esthonia is not responsible for any Russian debts.

BUDGET

The budget for 1923 was presented to the State Assembly as follows:

The proposed expenditures amount to 6,180,524,000 Esthonian marks. The deficit is 31,000,000 marks less than that of last year and amounts to 180,000,000 marks, (3 percent of budget), exclusive of operation funds, (402,000,000 marks), and is covered by credit operations and current loans. Budget was accepted with a few slight changes. Since 1919 deficit has dropped from 90 to 10 percent.

Revenue

Chief Sources:	1921	1922	1923
Indirect Taxes	45%	41%	34%
State Enterprises	32%	37%	33%
Direct Taxes	13%	18%	17½%

Expenditures

Chief Items:			
National Defence	27½%	27%	26%
Transportation	16%	16%	25%
Administration	16%		

RELIGION

There is no church established by the Government. Freedom of worship is permitted to all inhabitants. However, for many generations the greater part of the population has belonged to the Evangelic-Lutheran Church. Other faiths represented in a small way are—Roman Catholic, Jewish, Greek Orthodox, Adventist and Baptist.

In February 1923 a plebiscite called for free religious instruction in the schools. Instruction in any certain denomination not compulsory, and entirely at the option of the student.

EDUCATION

The standard of popular education in Esthonia is very high, there being practically no illiterate adults. The

University of Esthonia is at Tartu (Dorpat). It was founded in 1632, and is the oldest in Europe. At present it has a enrollment of 3500 students. At Tallinn there are engineering, naval, and commercial academies.

Primary education is free and compulsory for all residents. The constitution of Esthonia gives equal privileges to all residents regardless of nationality. The public school law provides for education to foreigners in their mother tongue, and makes it possible for them to continue their education in that language. All persons residing in Esthonia have the privilege of entering the University regardless of nationality.

HISTORY

The Esthonians forming a branch of the Finno-Ugrian group of the Ural-Altai family, were known as a free nation, located on their present site as early as the fifth and sixth centuries. At that time they were noted sea rovers and pirates, outrivalling the Scandinavians, whose myths relate how the Vikings always returned with plenteous plunder and how the Esthonians in turn, ravaged the land as far as Sigtuna, the Swedish capital.

In the beginning of the thirteenth century the Christian Crusaders began their conquest for this territory. After long resistance by the Esthonians, the Crusaders succeeded in conquering, and the people were forced to become slaves. They remained serfs for seven hundred years, under the rule of the Danes, Germans, Swedes, Poles, and Russians. For over a hundred years the Esthonians fought repeatedly for liberty, and in the year 1343, massing all their forces together, they made one final stand to regain their freedom, but were beaten. Military predominance was then established for the Teutonic Order. However, the spirit of independence and the yearning for liberty and national self-expression was not crushed by the Germans, who only succeeded in making them more stubborn. Instead of destroying their patriotism, they intensified it and increased their hatred for the tyrannical barons. The younger generations were told in the scanty hours the serfs had for leisure, of their past independence, of the glorious adventures and of the bravery of their forefathers, and pointed out the need of continuation. Their language and legends

remained, although their war songs disappeared, and their folksongs became full of melancholy which even at the present time, characterizes their music.

The only bright period in Esthonian history was during the Swedish rule 1629-1710, when the Swedish Government endeavored to improve the condition of the people. At this time the University of Tartu was founded. This period is still referred to as "the good Swedish Times". The oppression of the German Barons was considerably suppressed, and their right to issue sentence of death over the peasants was taken away. In the year 1710, Esthonia fell into the hands of the Russians who ruled for two hundred years. During this period the German landowners who had recovered privileges lost during Swedish rule, tyrannized and oppressed the Esthonians intolerably.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Russian Czar granted the native serfs their freedom, but all property remained in possession of the barons. As the peasants had no land, they were forced to work for the benefit of their former masters. A few of the land owners permitted the natives, during their spare time, to clear and cultivate small tracts of waste land for their own use. This was hard and strenuous work. Not until about 1860 were laws enacted which gave the Esthonians the right to buy their own land for themselves. Only then were they able to begin to derive the benefits from their work. However, during the ensuing fifty years, the privileges of the Barons remained unchallenged and laws were not enforced for the protection of the weaker classes. Various attempts to interest the Russian Czars in the deplorable conditions of the Esthonian people were frustrated and punished severely by the Barons. For each step taken upward, the Esthonians had to struggle against the Russians and Germans.

Prior to 1917, the Central Government was in the hands of the local Baronial Landtags. When the Czarist Government was overthrown, the Russian Provisional Government, in the Spring of 1917, permitted the Esthonians to elect a National Council or Diet, on the basis of universal suffrage. After the collapse of the Russian Provisional Government, in the Autumn of 1917, and the setting up of the Soviet Government, the Esthonian Diet declared itself to be the sovereign power, and on February 24, 1918, declared Esthonia to be an independent democratic republic.

Realizing that their rule over the Esthonians was at an

end, the German Baltic Nobility agitated a union with Germany, and called on Germany for troops to defend them. No sooner had Esthonians got rid of Bolsheviks than German troops occupied the country, and again they were placed at the mercy of the barons. German requisitions took the form of armed robbery. The German language became compulsory. Esthonian schools were closed. At the outbreak of the revolution in Germany, the troops evacuated, leaving Esthonians suffering severely from their requisitions and plundering, and unarmed to defend themselves against the advancing Bolshevists. The Germans, not being able to hold Esthonia, preferred it to pass into the hands of Bolsheviks, rather than to let the Esthonians organize themselves.

The invasion of Esthonia by the troops of Russian Bolsheviks in November 1918, involved Esthonia in war with Soviet Russia. Supported by her friendly neighbors, Finland and the Allied States, particularly by Great Britain, Esthonia succeeded in expelling the enemy from her territory.

While the Esthonians were protecting themselves against the Bolshevik invasion, new German troops "Landeswehr", with the Baltic Barons in the background, were organized supposedly to fight the Bolsheviks. However, it soon became apparent what their real intention was. Bitter fighting ensued with the defeat of the "Landeswehr", by the Esthonians.

At about this same time attempts were made by the Russian "North Army" to restore the former order in Russia. This army kept the Bolsheviks busy in Northwestern Russia for a while, but soon retreated over the Esthonian frontier, thus exposing this section to bolshevik attacks. However, the Esthonians succeeded in stemming the advances of the Bolsheviks.

Russia concentrated great forces against the Esthonians, but all attempts to break the resistance were in vain. Esthonia's peace treaty with Russia was signed at Tartu, February 2, 1920. By this treaty Russia recognized Esthonia's sovereignty over the land and people of Esthonia. Esthonia was admitted as a member to the League of Nations in September 1921. She was officially recognized by the United States as an independent republic on July 27, 1922, and is now recognized *de jure* by all the principal powers of the world.

PRESENT GOVERNMENT

The Esthonian Constituent Assembly elected by universal, equal, direct and secret voting with proportional representation met on April 23, 1919, confirmed the decision of the Esthonian Diet that Esthonia should be an independent democratic Republic and passed the Constitutional Law of Esthonia. This law has been in operation in Esthonia since December 20, 1920, in accordance with which the Constituent Assembly has been succeeded by the permanent legislative body, the State Assembly, consisting of 100 members elected by the people for a period of three years. Women as well as men over 20 years of age have the privilege of voting.

The State Assembly passes laws, fixes the budget, state revenues and expenditures, and renders decisions regarding loans and other matters on the basis of the constitution.

The Republic Government executes the governing power and consists of the State Head (Riigiwanem) and Ministers appointed by him.

The State Head represents the Esthonian Republic, leads and unifies the activities of the Republic Government, presides over the meetings of the Government, and is authorized to interpellate any particular Minister. He has not the power of veto.

State Head—John Kukk.

Chairman of Assembly (Parliament) Konstantin Päts.

Foreign Minister—Alexander Hellat.

The Esthonian flag is represented by three horizontal stripes colored blue, black, and white, which symbolizes: Under the Blue sky, on the Black soil, works the Esthonian toiler in a White robe.

LAND REFORM

At the beginning of the 13th century the entire land of Esthonia was taken from the people and they were forced to work for nearly seven centuries as slaves for their conquerors. The oppression under which they lived during this period is well set forth in the declaration of Land Councillor Baron Rosen to the Russian Government in 1735, that,

“Peasants belong body and soul to the landowner and are his property. They may not own anything themselves,

but only gather property for their lord, who disposes of everything according to his desire.

"Taxes and the degree of the peasants' slavery are decided by the landowner according to his wishes, there being no limit to the landowners' power in this respect.

"The landowners have unlimited power to punish their peasants, against which no appeal can be made by the latter."

Not until the middle of the nineteenth century was it possible for Esthonians to own property, and even then, the land which became their property was practically waste land, for which they paid the highest prices. Up until 1919 the best portions of the land were in possession of a small number of "Baltic Barons". Due to the impregnable position of the large landowners there was an ever-increasing shortage of land, with no possibility of the landless population acquiring even small holdings.

At the time of the Russian Bolshevik invasion, the Esthonian provisional government called for volunteers to defend their country, and promised to force a more just distribution of the land. The object of the Land Reform Law was not revenge, but to create small farms in place of the large estates. The demand for small holdings was so great that no fewer than 50,000 applications for land were received during the time the Agrarian Law was under debate in the Constitutional Assembly.

Under the Land Reform Law, the land was to be parceled out to landless citizens of the Esthonian Republic who had the necessary qualifications for the management of their holdings, and large estate owners were to be reimbursed for the land and stock expropriated according to its valuation. Officers and soldiers of the Esthonian army were to be given the preference to the allotments, and settlers given the benefit of government loans for establishing themselves. During 1920, 1921 and 1922 about 22,000 small farms were distributed, averaging 40 to 55 acres. Land taken over by the Government during this period totalled 5,799,119 acres. A considerable portion of this expropriated land is under government supervision. The Ministry of Agriculture has undertaken the task of improving unused land by irrigation and drainage.

The practicability of this law is shown by the fact that the distribution of land has helped the people to recover from the losses sustained in their war of liberation. The land

utilized for farming is producing an oversupply of food-stuffs which are being freely exported.

In passing the Agrarian Reform Law, the Government of Esthonia acted only in accordance with the wishes of the people of the nation who were awaiting this opportunity for seven long centuries.

ESTHONIAN LANGUAGE & LITERATURE

The Esthonian language belongs to the Finnish group of the Ural-Altaiic Division. It is rich in vowels and is one of the mildest in Europe.

Because of the unfavorable conditions under which the Esthonian people lived, and their domination by foreign powers, the development of their literature was very slow, and practically no original or national literature, (excepting religious) appeared until the beginning of the 19th Century. The first book was published some 300 years ago. The first newspaper was established in 1821, although earlier attempts had been made.

Esthonian literature possesses an epic poem, the "Kalevi-poeg" which has been translated into many foreign languages. It has been analyzed in hundreds of articles and books in the chief literary languages of the world and has been compared with the great epic poems of the Greeks—the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey". The author of the "Kalevi-poeg" was Frederic Reinhold Kreutzwald. The "Kalevi-poeg" relates the life and legend of an ancient King of Esthonia. It describes his various characteristics, his heroism, his struggles against enemies and other mysterious powers, his efforts for the good of his people, his ruin as a result of errors made, and finally, his return to free his people.

Esthonian folk-lore is extremely rich. A collection made by Dr. J. Hurt, published in 1906 consisted of 40,500 popular songs, 8500 tales, 75,000 proverbs, 37,000 riddles. Besides this collection, over 15,000 folk melodies have been preserved in a permanent form by a society of Esthonian students. Collection of Prof. M. E. Eisen comprises some 40,000 riddles and a whole series of fairy tales. The gathering of folk-lore is being continued and the collection is being greatly enlarged.

Esthonian National Museums have been established for the preservation of national arts. National theatres: "Vanemuine," at Tartu, and "Estonia," at Tallinn, financed

by popular contributions at the time of suppression, have played an important role in the last decades and form lasting monuments of nationalistic expression. The end of the 19th century is not very remarkable from a literary standpoint, but the number of authors grew rapidly. The last few decades were during the period of Russification. The Russian authorities prohibited the teaching and use of the Esthonian language even in the schools. The National Literary Society was compelled to disband. Attempts to suppress the language implanted a wide-spread and deep pessimism in the literature. After the Revolution of 1905, the national idea grew more and more in the minds of the people, and literature gained expression through the youth of the country. In 1905 a group of writers known as "Noor Eesti" (Young Esthonia) was formed with the object of raising the standard of Esthonian culture, on the model of the more advanced European literatures. The Esthonian Literary Society (Eesti Kirjanduse Selts) was established in 1906 with more definite popular aims, and now contains over one thousand active members.

The principles of the pathfinders of Esthonian poetry, art and music were to create beauties that emanated from the soul of the people. Thus Esthonian folk-lore from the beginning has been simple, direct and true to the ethnographic traits of the people. Ancient Esthonians were dreaded pirates. This pirate spirit is still alive in the present generation, but in a different form. It is the spiritual and not the physical piracy which has survived.

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INFORMATION FOR TRAVELLERS

Passports must be viséd by local Esthonian representative.

Transit visas are valid for forty - eight hours only. Regular visas for longer periods. Those desiring to remain in Esthonia longer than vise permits must register at Police Station in Reval, Dorpat, or Narva (if staying in those cities). In country places, register with the district authorities. In registering, foreigners are required to fill in a question list and attach two photographs. This applies to persons over 12 years of age. Registration fee is fifty marks. Notice of departure should be given also to these authorities. Foreigners remaining at health and summer resorts during period between May 1st and September 15th are free from residence charge. Also members of excursions not exceeding a period of two weeks.

Articles for personal use are free from duty. For the convenience of travellers, automobiles, motorcycles, etc. can be brought in free of duty for personal use, for a period not exceeding three months.

International sleeping cars are provided on trains making direct connections between Tallinn (Reval)-Riga-Kalkuni (Griva), Kalkuni-Warsaw, Warsaw-Berlin - Paris - Ostende, Riga-Eydkuhnen-Berlin-Paris-Ostende-Lyons. Travel from Reval to Berlin takes about 68 hours.

The Travellers Bureau (Eesti Reisibüroo), Tallinn, will furnish detailed information regarding hotels, agencies, and points of interest to travellers arriving there, upon their request.

At present there are very few ships going direct to Esthonia from the United States, but through tickets are sold by several steamship companies. Regular sailings are established between Esthonia and the following countries: England, France, Germany, Sweden, Denmark and Finland.

American Consulate at Tallinn (Reval), Charles Albrecht, Consul.

American Minister to Esthonia—Frederic Coleman.

Esthonian Representative in the United States—Hans Leoke, Acting Consul.

Detailed information regarding Esthonia can be obtained at the

ESTHONIAN CONSULATE,
38 Park Row, New York City.

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