

MART KULDKEPP

Estonia Gravitates Towards Sweden:
Nordic Identity and Activist Regionalism
in World War I



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PRESS

Department of Germanic, Romance and Slavonic Languages and Literatures,
Faculty of Philosophy, University of Tartu, Estonia

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Last but not least, I would like to mention the special thanks I owe to historian Kaido Jaanson for having made freely available in Estonian Historical Archives his collected materials on Kesküla (EAA.5377). The unrestricted access I have had to these documents and copies of documents has helped me immensely.

Rather than any final word on the subject, I hope this thesis will merely be a first step towards a much more comprehensive study of activist regionalism in the Baltic Sea Area. Nevertheless, may it be judged as it stands, with its merits and deficiencies, and followed up by anyone interested in this fascinating topic as I have been.

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LIST OF PUBLICATIONS INCLUDED IN THE DISSERTATION

Article I:

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Article II:

Kuldkepp, Mart. 2012. “Grundbesitzer aus Estland”: Activist Regionalism in the Baltic Sea Area in 1916, *Ajalooline Ajakiri*, 1/2, 137–165.²

Article III:

Kuldkepp, Mart. 2013. Intriiigid, provokatsioonid ja iseseisvuse süünd: Eesti välisdelegatsioon ja Aleksander Kesküla, *Ajalooline Ajakiri*, 3, 321–374.³

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ABSTRACT

The main aim of this dissertation is to investigate how its two objects of research – Estonian Nordic identity and the World War I-era Estonian activist regionalism – were related to each other. More particularly, it is a study of how the idea of Estonia's Nordic identity took form in the context of early Estonian nationalism (Article I), what kind of political expression it found in the activities of Aleksander Kesküla and other Estonian activists during World War I (Article II), and finally, how this period of wartime “émigré intrigue” failed to be integrated into “official” Estonian foreign politics and diplomacy, emerging in 1917–18 (Article III).

However, rather than providing exhaustive empirical answers to these questions, the more important outcome of this study is their formulation: the creation of a factual and interpretative basis for making them relevant and answerable. This is reflected in the fact that much of the overview article of this dissertation is allocated to a presentation of a unified theoretical framework, best applicable to the concrete objects of research. The theoretical concepts discussed include nationalism, regionalism, practical region-building and activist regionalism.

In the course of this study, I demonstrate the existence of a connection between the two themes of the dissertation – Estonian Nordic identity and Estonian activist regionalism – in the years of World War I, and, not least, account for the existence and historical importance of these phenomena themselves. The more particular conclusions of the study can be worded as follows.

During the decades previous to the World War I, the idea of Estonian Nordic identity developed and acquired importance as an integral part of the discourse of Estonian nationalism. It had both cultural and political implications which later made possible its use as a region-building resource in the regionalist project of Aleksander Kesküla.

The regionalist project of Kesküla, what I refer to as “Estonian activist regionalism”, was aimed at the creation of a strong Nordic federation including Estonia and led by Sweden. In its goals and rhetoric, it gave a political (if only paradiplomatically so) expression to the idea of Estonian Nordic identity. In this thesis, this is exemplified by a study of the “Grundbesitzer episode”.

The suspicious nature of Kesküla's activities during the war, as well as the issues of legal incompatibility between his protodiplomatic activities, and the paradiplomatic efforts of the first Estonian foreign delegation (1918), led to him being disowned by other Estonian politicians.

This meant that Kesküla's project ultimately failed. However, it provides an interesting example of early paradiplomatic activities (preceding the declaration of Estonian national independence) with the aim of furthering Estonian national interests – which were seen to be “Nordic” in nature. Understanding this war-time project is important for a better understanding of the imagination of early Estonian nationalism as a whole. But it should also be said that the cultural

basis of Kesküla's political project still exists: the idea of Estonia's Nordic identity has persisted. Since then, there have also been many other expressions of Estonia's desire to "gravitate towards Sweden".

I. ESTONIA GRAVITATES TOWARDS SWEDEN: THE OVERVIEW

I.1 The Aims of the Study

The phrase of propaganda from which I have derived the title of my dissertation, “Estland gravitierte stark an Schweden”, is quoted in a 1918 brochure by Swedish activist Carl Sundbeck to characterize the situation just two years earlier, when hopes were supposedly running high in “leading Estonian circles” that Estland and Ingermanland would once again be united with Sweden (Sundbeck 1918: 13). Without doubt, these “Estonian circles” that Sundbeck mentions hark back to the activities of Estonian exile politician Aleksander Kesküla and others who had stepped up in the blaze of World War I to argue for the unorthodox idea that Estonians were a people naturally belonging to *Norden* – just as the Finns and all the peoples of Scandinavia – and should therefore be politically (re-)united with them in a powerful Nordic federation.

On one level, this dissertation is a study of several historical processes: how the idea of Estonia’s⁴ Nordic identity⁵ took form in the context of early Estonian nationalism (Article I), what kind of a political expression it found in the activities of Aleksander Kesküla and other Estonian activists during World War I (Article II),⁶ and, finally, how this period of wartime “émigré intrigue”,⁷ having compromised itself with a multitude of morally, politically and legally questionable aspects, failed to be integrated into the “official” Estonian foreign politics and diplomacy, emerging in 1917–18 (Article III).

On another level, however, it is clear that the answers I am presently able to give to those questions are still far from exhaustive. Rather, it is their formulation itself; the construction of the factual and interpretative basis for making them relevant and answerable, that is the more important outcome of this study. This is also reflected in the fact that most of this overview article is allocated to a presentation of my theoretical framework: an attempt to conceptualize the objects of my research – Estonian Nordic identity and Estonian activist regionalism – in a way that is sensitive to the empirical data, has sufficient

⁴ Here and henceforth, I am using the word “Estonia” as a shorthand meaning “the territory settled overwhelmingly by ethnic Estonians, encompassing the province of Estland and the northern part of the province of Livland, as well as the islands off the coast of Estland”. When talking about the provinces of Estonia and Livonia, I will use the German/Swedish names Estland and Livland. When referring to the post-February revolution autonomous Estonia or the interwar-era Republic of Estonia, I will try to make this clear from the context.

⁵ For stylistic reasons, also referred to as “the Scandinavian connection”, “the Estonian-Scandinavian connection”, “Estonian “Nordicness””, “Estonian Scandinavism” and so on.

⁶ What I call Estonian activist regionalism, exemplified in the “Grundbesitzer episode” of spring 1916.

⁷ This apt description for similar phenomena has been used by Alfred Erich Senn (Senn 1967).

explanatory power and is non-presentist in its emphasis.⁸ As a part of my theoretical toolkit, I also present certain new terms, such as “mnemopolitics” and “activist regionalism”.

Anything approaching a complete empirical study of the problems of Estonian Nordic identity and activist regionalism, however, will still have to be a work for the future. What I hope to achieve here on the empirical level is a theoretically well-grounded and factually sound pilot study.

The main body of this dissertation consists of three articles that have been previously published in scholarly journals (Chapter 2: Article I–III). To that, I have added the present overview article (Chapter 1). Here, the three articles are summarized and the connections between them are elaborated, my theoretical concepts defined in a more unified way, and finally, the more important general conclusions outlined. This dissertation also includes a source publication of documents relating to Article II, the so-called “Grundbesitzer texts” (Chapter 4).

As the last part of this introduction, I would like to present a preemptive defense of sorts, realizing that my interest in the overambitious plans of adventurous individuals can raise questions among my readers. Therefore, worded as a question to myself: why do I consider these topics to be important, seeing that the plans I am interested in never became reality? To this, my reply would be as follows.

The nature of nationalist success narratives is often such that alternative paths towards future, once imagined and perhaps seriously aspired to, are obscured in memory after they lead to dead ends for one reason or another. This is exemplified in the fact that the independent Republic of Estonia, declared on February 24, 1918 and recognized *de jure* for the first time in February 2, 1920, has, post-factum, been habitually regarded as the only rightful and even inevitable result of Estonian national endeavors.⁹ This, however, does not mean there were no other ways the national aspirations of Estonians could have borne fruit.

My dissertation is an attempt to take a non-presentist look at one of these ways, traceable in certain cultural traditions and events that preceded the discursive perpetuation of Estonian independence. It was a development that began with the appearance of the idea of Estonian Nordic identity in the

⁸ I. e., in a way that reflects their historical and contemporary context – rather than their political importance for the present. About the so-called “fallacy of presentism” among historians, see Fischer 1970: 135–40.

⁹ In fact, outright, non-federative Estonian national independence was probably not seriously considered by most Estonian nationalists at all before the end of 1917. Even if it was, it was most likely not regarded as very desirable due to the obvious weaknesses of a small, isolated Estonian state. Even though trust in the Estonians’ ability to be bearers of statehood has doubtlessly increased since, it can still be said that anything approaching “autarkic” concept of Estonian independence has to this day never become the goal of mainstream Estonian nationalism. Although different Estonian political parties did agree to aim for Estonian independence in late 1917, it was a tactical move, a counter-measure to the then-imminent German occupation. For a discussion of what “independence” as a political goal meant for Estonians in 1917–18, see Kalmo 2014.

Estonian nationalist discourse, and led, during World War I, to concrete attempts – especially those of Aleksander Kesküla – to invest this cultural identity with political content, taking advantage of the complicated international situation. Perhaps, if circumstances had proved more favorable, these efforts might have resulted in a wholly different scenario for Estonian statehood: a territorially larger Estonia as an autonomous member in a strong Nordic federation led by Sweden. However, the circumstances (not least those of Kesküla's own making) were ultimately against it, and his grandiose wartime plans, not particularly feasible to begin with (to put it mildly), swiftly became totally irrelevant as the war ended.

I believe that my attempt to seriously investigate this forgotten path towards future (an attempt which is neither completed nor exhausted with this thesis) is worth undertaking, because it is in line with what I consider the most important goal of a historian: to fight against “the parochialism of the present”;¹⁰ i. e. the false impression that things have always been as they are, or at least were inevitably poised to become what they became. In other words, a move towards a more nuanced understanding of the imagination of Estonian nationalism is a valuable goal in itself, if considered from this level of abstraction, no matter whether one in hindsight judges Kesküla's plans as realistic or not.

At the same time, this non-presentist justification is not even strictly necessary. For even though forces beyond Kesküla's control led to the failure of his far-reaching political goals, the idea of Estonian Nordic identity did persist as an integral part of Estonian nationalism, and has in the last hundred years produced many other attempts to bring about closer political contacts between Estonia and Scandinavia.¹¹ In this long-term view, my study of the concrete events during World War I, is simply one case study, an example of a much wider identity tradition in which many Estonians, believing in the Estonian-Scandinavian commonality, still participate. Most of them, however, have of course not proven to be adventurous or visionary enough to take action in order to try and make the imagined Estonian-Nordic community a real one.

¹⁰ This concept was introduced by Joseph Richmond Levenson in 1965 and the explanation of its meaning is best left to Levenson himself: “Absolutism is parochialism of the present, the confusion of one's own time with the timeless, a confusion of the categories of reasonable and rational. This is the confusion one fosters when he judges other times by his own criteria, without acknowledging that he himself, not the culminator of history but the latest comer, has only what his subjects have – ideas, aesthetics, morality that may be reasonable, pleasing, commendable in his own day and age, but not surely rational, beautiful, mandatory as transhistorical absolutes. No one has the norm of norms.” (Levenson 1965: 87).

¹¹ For a study of its effects and influence in the interwar years, see Kuldkepp 2010.

1.2 The Present Study and Previous Research

Any particular importance or usefulness of this thesis depends, of course, on the needs and interests of my readers. However, the aspects of it that I myself consider to be new, original contributions to historical research can be summarized as follows.

On a basic level, much of it (especially Articles II and III) is based on Estonian, Swedish, Finnish and other archival materials that have until now been unused or underused by historians. Thanks to extensive archival research, I can now draw attention to a multitude of previously neglected sources, making them available for the scrutiny of other researchers and thus adding to the body of historical knowledge. These include, for example, the “Grundbesitzer texts” published as an appendix to this volume.

More importantly, all three articles presented here are at the same time the first article-length scholarly forays into their respective areas of study.

Although there has been some previous research done on the myth¹² of “the good old Swedish times” (see below), the geopolitical aspect of Estonian nationalism’s engagement with Scandinavia has not previously been given any sort of in-depth treatment, nor has there been any other general overview over the genesis of the Estonian-Scandinavian connection as a whole (Article I). The Ploompuu-Kesküla “Grundbesitzer episode” of wartime propaganda in 1916 (Article II) has previously not been dealt with at all, outside of a short mention in an article by Kaido Jaanson.¹³ Similarly, the treatment of Kesküla’s conflict with the first Estonian foreign delegation (Article III) and his wartime relations with other Estonians at all, has previously been mostly restricted to superficial and often inaccurate references in interwar-era history writing and the memoirs of the members of the foreign delegation.¹⁴

Therefore, the articles presented here not only constitute steps forward in the study of these problems, but are also the first to subject them to any serious attention at all.¹⁵

The same could be said about the thesis as a whole. Its two overarching subjects – Estonian Nordic Identity and the wartime movement of Estonian activist regionalism (a term I have, admittedly, coined myself) – have never before been considered together, with the exception of some hints to that end in

¹² “Myth” understood positively: rather in the meaning of “a traditional story” than “a widely held false belief”.

¹³ See Jaanson 1990: 965–966.

¹⁴ See the relevant references in Article III: 321–322, 338. A fragmentary account more close to the truth, based on a multitude of hints gleamed from a whole array of different printed sources is also found in Jaanson 1990: 967–968. There is also a forthcoming commented source publication of Jaan Tõnisson’s report from 18.02.1918 (a document which includes information about his contacts with Kesküla): Kuldkepp 2014b.

¹⁵ Of course, it might be contested whether such questions are at all worth drawing attention to. I have defended my choice in doing this in the last part of the previous subchapter.

articles by Aleksander Loit and Kaido Jaanson.¹⁶ Neither has Aleksander Kesküla's Estonian-Scandinavian regionalist project, which constitutes the larger background to Article II, until now received any focused attention outside of scattered references in biographical articles about Kesküla (see below), and a translation into Estonian of his 1916 manifesto to the III Conférence des Nationalités in Lausanne (see Kesküla 2000 [1916]).

No less significant of an innovation, at least for my own purposes, is the theoretical apparatus that I have developed for my study, presented below in detail. There, I relate the concepts of nationalism and regionalism to each other in a way that is useful for my research, and also suggest new terms such as mnemopolitics (a complement to geopolitics) and activist regionalism to make sense of the subjects at hand. In this volume, the theoretical apparatus functions as a unifying framework for the three articles, but hopefully it can be put to more extensive use in the future.

At the same time, of course, there are many more narrowly focused antecedents to my research. I have referred to them in the articles, but I will also enumerate the most important ones below.

My basically constructivist and ethno-symbolist understanding of the ideology and movement of Estonian nationalism derives from Hayden White's "metahistorical" theory of history writing (1973),¹⁷ Benedict Anderson's constructivist theory of nationalism (2006)¹⁸ and Anthony D. Smith's ethno-symbolist approach to nations and nationalism (1991, 1999, 2005).¹⁹ In addition, it has been influenced by Jaan Undusk's ideas about the development of Estonian national history writing (2002) and Eva Piirimäe's typology of Estonian nationalism studies (2009). The way I relate nationalism to regionalism owes much to Marko Lehti's (1998), Andrew Hurrell's (1995), and Iver B. Neumann's (1994) constructivist theories of regionalism. The concepts of proto- and paradiplomacy originate from the work of political scientists Iñaki Aguirre (1999) and Ivo D. Duchacek (1986, 1988). Nevertheless, I would claim the substantial part of the theoretical work to be my own, including all of its possible deficiencies.

The question of the "good old Swedish times" and its relationship to the Estonian nationalist imagination and history writing has previously, if in a more

¹⁶ See e. g. Kaido Jaanson's article on Aleksander Kesküla's world view (Jaanson 2002) and Aleksander Loit's overview article on plans to re-unite Estonia with Sweden, covering the period from the time of the end of the Great Northern War up until 1918 (Loit 2009).

¹⁷ That is, regarding history writing as primarily "writing", subject to the conventions of literature, rather than a neutral medium through which historical facts are mediated. See sub-chapter 1.4.

¹⁸ The most important and best-known claim Anderson makes is that a nation is an "imagined community", i. e. not a real one, based on immediate connections between its members (such as e. g. a family), but one with an "imagined" collective identity that has been constructed and disseminated by nation-builders. For the way I make use of this perspective on nations, see sub-chapter 1.5.1.

¹⁹ That is, arguing that the roots of national identities lie in the pre-national "ethnic" symbols which are instrumentalized in the nation-building process. See sub-chapter 1.5.1.

cursory manner, been treated by historians Evald Blumfeldt (1934), Margus Laidre (1994), Aleksander Loit (2002) and Kristi Kukk (2005). In connection with the interwar era, I have also previously written on the subject myself (Kuldkepp 2010). Other relevant literature on various aspects of Estonian nationalism is too numerous to mention.

The importance of the activities of Aleksander Kesküla has been recognized among historians since Werner Hahlweg's (1957) and Z. A. B. Zeman's (1958) publications of German archival materials relating to German support for the Russian Revolution. Since then, there has been a relatively large amount of research done regarding Kesküla's role as a mediator between Germans and Russian Bolsheviks, particularly concerning the issue of "German money" that Lenin supposedly received (for an overview, see e. g. Senn 1976: 87–88). Of particular importance is the work of Michael Futrell, the only historian who managed to interview Kesküla while he was still alive (Futrell 1963).²⁰

More general studies of Kesküla's career are somewhat lacking. A convenient, although short overview is found in an article by Olavi Arens (1991). A more detailed, but also more fragmentary biography can be reconstructed on the basis of a multitude of articles by Kaido Jaanson.²¹ There is also a thorough account of Kesküla's wartime role in the German-organized *Liga der Fremdvölker Russlands* by Seppo Zetterberg (1978). A thorough, book-length study of Aleksander Kesküla's wartime career that would not focus solely on his contacts with the Bolsheviks, however, remains a major *desideratum* of Estonian history writing. This present thesis, with its in-depth treatment of only two episodes connected to his activities (Articles II and III) is still far from filling this gap.

1.3 Introduction to the Articles

This section is meant to serve as an introduction to the three articles which form the main part of my thesis. In the following, I will briefly introduce their most important contents and attempt to fill out the most significant contextual gaps between them in order to create a coherent narrative.²² I will not, however, summarize the articles in a lengthy manner similar to what I will do below with my theoretical points, as this would only entail needless re-writing of the texts themselves.

As a way of general introduction, I would say that my research can be characterized as a combination of political and cultural history. This means that

²⁰ For a fairly comprehensive bibliography of works relating to Kesküla's role in German contacts with Lenin, see Smele 2003: 380–383.

²¹ See Jaanson 1990, 2000, 2002, 2003a, 2003b, 2004, 2005a, 2005b. As pointed out in the acknowledgements of the present study, Kaido Jaanson has made freely available for other researchers most of his collected materials on Kesküla: EAA, Kaido Jaanson (EAA.5377).

²² This is especially the case with respect to Article II which needs to be contextualized in reference to the entirety of Kesküla's regionalist program, as well as to the particular wartime situation that made possible his rise to a position of influence.

I suggest cultural explanations for political developments and – vice versa – political explanations for features of cultural identity. For example, instead of dismissing Aleksander Kesküla and other Estonian activists as mere adventurers or agents of one or several foreign powers (as has often been done),²³ I attempt to understand their political activities and goals as expressing and trying to enact a central feature of Estonian nationalism: the idea of the Nordic identity of Estonians. Conversely, I regard this cultural identity itself to be an important and integral feature of the Estonian nationalism as a political ideology and movement, rather than just a product of romanticism or wishful thinking. Thus, I consider the development of Estonian Nordic identity and the appearance of the wartime political movement of Estonian activist regionalism to have been a part of the same discursive²⁴ process, where the latter can be seen as a more limited, radicalized continuation of the former.

In Article I (Kuldkepp 2013a), I map and analyze the genesis of this idea of Estonian Nordic identity in the context of Estonian nationalism in the 19th and early 20th centuries, focusing on the time previous to World War I. I argue that the notion of Estonian Nordic identity took shape in the discourse of Estonian nationalism during decades previous to World War I and that its origins can be best explained by reference to the inner dynamics of the Estonian nationalism, particularly the nature of the pre-national ethnic components that Estonian nation-builders had at hand – one of which was the popular memory of the “good old Swedish times”.

In the beginning of the 20th century, this popular myth was integrated into the burgeoning Estonian nationalist history writing. There, it became imagined as a period of justice and education, and, in particular, the time when the Estonian peasants could enjoy effective royal protection against the arbitrariness of their immediate overlords, the Baltic German nobility. The Nordic identity of Estonia that was constructed through this history writing was above all cultural, based around the idea that the Sweden of the 17th century had been the real *Kulturträger* in Estonia – not the ancestors of the Baltic Germans in the 13th – and that this positive Swedish legacy had somehow remained and been kept alive in Estonian minds and souls.

But this was an identity that also had political implications. Already in pre-national Estonian folk stories and legends about the “good old Swedish times”, one can often see something approaching a prophetic dimension – the hope that, in some way, the good Swedish times would be coming back.²⁵ As this pre-national perspective on Scandinavia²⁶ with its cultural and latent political aspects was integrated into the discourse of early Estonian nationalism, it not only became one of the central tenets of Estonian national history writing, but

²³ See Article III: 321.

²⁴ For an explanation of what I mean by “discourse”, see the relevant footnote in chapter 1.5.1.

²⁵ See Article I: 323.

²⁶ I argue that in Estonian imagination, Scandinavia was in particular identified Sweden (Article I: 321).

also reinforced (and was reinforced by) the contemporary geopolitical thinking that saw the Estonians' geopolitical position as a particularly dangerous one, open to the aggression of the neighboring peoples and states. The only state throughout history that was regarded by these nationalist thinkers to have been neither aggressive towards Estonians (such as, above all, Germany and Russia) nor powerless (or disinterested) to help them, was Sweden: imagined as historically benevolent towards its Estonian peasant subjects and, in some way, expected to be still carrying on its 17th century regional great-power legacy in the form of revanchist interests on the eastern side of the Baltic Sea.

The implications of this image for the Estonian national future were obvious enough – if not clearly stated – and can be summarized as follows: the goal of Estonian nationalism, and thereby, of the Estonian nation, would be the restoration of the lost Estonian-Scandinavian connection. Or, put in the words of Aleksander Kesküla: “Die skandinavischen (= gross-schwedischen) Interessen der Esthen sind nicht ein Produkt der Schwäche, sondern eine Folge der nationalen Kraft.”²⁷

On the basis of these mnemo- and geopolitical developments²⁸ in Estonian nationalism, the idea of Estonia's cultural and political connection to Scandinavia had become its innate feature. And furthermore, its implicit political ambition of eventually turning “back” to Sweden, as a way of escaping the German-Russian force field, made the Estonian Nordic identity available as a resource that could be and would be used in future regionalist projects.

This is where my argument in Article I concludes. Before continuing with a summary of Article II, I will provide some background information that helps to explain the relationship between the two.

It was first after the outbreak of World War I, that the political implications of Estonian Nordic identity acquired any real importance. This happened as a direct consequence of the new international situation created by the Europe-wide war.

At a time when the future of multinational empires was at stake, the elites of many of Russia's subject nations began to entertain the possibility that the war might lead to Russia being defeated, and perhaps, as a result, also dismembered along its national lines. Such a perspective was obviously not without its dangers, but it also held a certain opportunity – the chance of influencing the outcome of the events in a way that would ultimately benefit the respective nationality more than the maintaining of the *status quo*.²⁹ Without doubt, it was

²⁷ “The Scandinavian (=Great-Swedish) interests of Estonians are not a consequence of weakness, but a result of national vigor.” See KB, Otto Järtes Efterlämnade Papper, L78:5, “Ueber die Unterdrückung der Russen durch die Esthen”. Published in this volume as 4.4.

²⁸ Meaning the investment of history and geography with political meaning. See the sub-chapters 1.5.1 and 1.5.2 below.

²⁹ Certainly, this possibility was driven home by German successes in the early part of the war, as well as the Russification policy that had intensified in the previous decades. Information on these subjects can be found in any general histories of respectively World War I and Estonia.

a good idea to be prepared for the possibility of Russian defeat. Maybe it would even make sense to hasten it by disobedience to the central authorities, sabotage, covert cooperation with the enemy or the like. Even though such questions could not, for obvious reasons, be discussed openly, it is certain that this pattern of thought was just as familiar for Estonian nationalist leaders as it was for e. g. the Poles or the Finns.³⁰

But however clear their common anti-Russian interests, there were also differences between the ambitions and outlooks of the various nationalities. In the minds of the Estonians, the most likely outcome of Russia's defeat was Estonia's annexation by Germany. This could be expected to be the natural course of events, given that the Baltic Sea Provinces were still dominated by their historic Baltic German nobility which was clearly sympathetic to the German side, and, what is more, conducting active annexationist propaganda in Germany.³¹ At most, Estonians could have expected a degree of cultural autonomy under German protection, but much more probably, outright German rule in Estonia would have meant the enactment of a Germanization policy replacing that of Russification, something that was certainly not regarded as an improvement over the *status quo*.

For the mainstream of Estonian nationalism, therefore, these concerns initially led to a policy of passively "waiting out" the results of the war. Still, this was coupled with a degree of cautious preparations for the future (above all, attempts to organize national Estonian troop detachments in the Russian army), because, as the great nationalist leader Jaan Tõnisson put it, "[t]he great war will not simply leave for us a hard legacy to carry, but will also create in our land a general situation which will make possible for us to bravely work for the aim of securing our future, as long as we have the necessary willpower."³²

Nevertheless, not all Estonian nationalists were as cautious as Tõnisson. In Tallinn, opposition to the Russian administration was much stronger in circles around Konstantin Päts and Jaan Poska, leading to a degree of German-friendliness, and even sympathies for the idea of a common front with Russian revolutionaries.³³ Jakob Ploompuu and Hindrik Prants, the wartime Estonian

³⁰ For an enumeration of the representatives of various Russian subject nationalities (including the Estonians) who sought contact with Germany, see Zetterberg 1978: 41–58. An episode illustrating how such concerns could be acted out through paradiplomatic steps is the topic of Article II.

³¹ I. e. propaganda meant to accomplish the annexation of the Baltic Sea Provinces to Germany. In many cases the émigré Baltic Germans were also advocating the settlement of German peasants in the Baltic Sea provinces as a way of solving the national question for good. About Baltic German propaganda in Germany, see e. g. Lenz 1982 and the references therein.

³² Tõnisson 2010 [1914]: 430. About the attempts to organize national Estonian army units, see Laaman 1964 [1936]: 60–64.

³³ See Laaman 1964 [1936]: 64.

emissaries to Sweden, who had contacts with German-friendly Finnish activist circles, came from this Tallinn milieu.³⁴

An even more radical voice was the exile politician, Aleksander Kesküla, who had previously made himself known as one of the leaders of the 1905 revolution in Estonia. He, too, believed that Russia would be and should be defeated, both due to the strength of its enemies and its own inner weaknesses. At the same time, however, he thought that there might be a way of influencing Germany in the direction of not annexing the Baltic Sea provinces outright. His preferred positive alternative consisted of trying to persuade the German government towards respecting the pro-Scandinavian interests of Estonians. This meant that, instead of annexation, Germany would have allowed Estonia to form some kind of a union with German-friendly Sweden.³⁵

In his own words, Kesküla's "minimal program", as he called it, was Estonian autonomy (in either Russia or Germany). His "maximal program", as he put it in January 1915, was "the consolidation of the Northern European cultural circles from Schleswig to Ural".³⁶ For Estonians with their "Great-Swedish" national interests, this meant their cultural and political (re)integration into the "Northern cultural sphere" through the creation of an independent Estonia as a member of a strong Nordic federation also including Finland (and perhaps some other territories further to the east, certainly Ingermanland) and led by Sweden. This new region was to be built on shared historical traditions and common security and economic interests, and would forever keep Russia at bay from Europe.³⁷

Already in September 1914, Kesküla made contact with German diplomacy and started his energetic paradiplomatic activities to bring this goal about. At the same time, he embarked on a similar mission in Sweden, trying to make the former motherland of Estonians recognize its ancient obligations and future prospects in the East.³⁸ Most immediately, this meant that Sweden had to enter the war on the German side, participate together with Germany in a joint attack on Russia, and occupy the Estonian territory, thereby once again liberating the

³⁴ About Ploompuu and Prants, see Article I: 329–330. The case of Ploompuu is also the topic of Article II.

³⁵ Even if not very explicitly, this program is already outlined in Kesküla's first letter to the German government from September 10, 1914: Kesküla to German government 10.09.1914: PAAA, Wk, 11c, secr. Bd. 1, p. 113. See also Jaanson 2004: 16.

³⁶ See Kesküla's telegram to Swedish General Staff 12.01.1915: KrA, Generalstabén, Utrikesavdelningen, E I d, Vol 2, Röda nummer 903.

³⁷ Any detailed reconstruction of the nuances and the development of Kesküla's program(s) is a task that has to be undertaken separately. However, it is clear that at least the perspective of Estonia's union with Sweden is already present in his earliest contacts with the Germans (see Article II: 158). The lengthiest and best-known exposé of Kesküla's regionalist aims is found in his memorandum to the III Union des Nationalités conference in Lausanne (Summer 1916). See Kesküla 1918 (particularly pp. 19–20).

³⁸ This goal naturally linked up with the goals of the Swedish activist discourse, about which see the sub-chapter 1.5.3 below, as well as Kuldkepp 2014a.

Estonian peasants who, as Kesküla claimed, still considered themselves “Swedish prisoners in Russia”.³⁹

For Kesküla’s wartime propaganda, the idea of Estonian Nordic identity and its various manifestations, both cultural and political, were a valuable resource. References to the “Good old Swedish times” and the Scandinavian-related geopolitical interests of Estonians abound in his wartime writings, as do calls for Sweden to take up its nature-given historical mission.⁴⁰ However, if my previous arguments about the idea of Estonian Nordic identity hold true, there is no reason to doubt Kesküla’s sincerity in presenting these Estonian Scandinavian interests as real, even if he was probably exaggerating them out of their rightful proportions.

In fact, I would claim that at least in his Scandinavism, Kesküla was an honest Estonian nationalist. His basic outlook on the Estonian-Scandinavian question was probably shared by many others.⁴¹ Jaan Tõnisson, for example, who was certainly no friend of Kesküla, can also be counted among the supporters of the idea of a Baltic-Nordic union.⁴² It is similarly telling that the members of the foreign delegation headed by Tõnisson (see below) never criticized Kesküla for his Nordic ambitions, all the while he was castigated for his suspicious contacts with the Germans and the Entente.⁴³

All the same, it is nearly impossible to say how widespread such ideas and hopes among Estonians actually were, and whether there was any truth in Kesküla’s claims about the existence of a patriotic organization in Estonia working for a re-unification with Sweden.⁴⁴ However, there certainly are some hints to that end. In October 1915, Captain H. L. Lagerlöf reported the following to the Swedish General Staff, having returned from a study trip to Russia:

Rörande stämningen inom Estland har jag hört uppgivas följande. Esterna sägas, på samma gång som de hata ryssarna, hysa ganska bittra känslor gent emot tyskarna. Vid en tysk operation i Estland skulle de därför förhålla sig passiva. Komme däremot svenskarna, skulle esterna med entusiasm ställa sig på deras sida. Orsaken till dessa gent emot svenskarna vänskapliga känslor skulle vara att

³⁹ See KB, Otto Järtes Efterlämnade Papper, L78:5, “An die Patrioten Schwedens” (Beilage). Published in this volume as 4.2.

⁴⁰ For examples, see Article II and the appendix (especially 4.2 and 4.3) in this volume, as well as Kesküla 1918 [1916].

⁴¹ This is part of my justification for not simply writing about Kesküla’s private ideas, but having created the notion of “Estonian activist regionalism”. For other reasons, see subchapter 1.5.3 below.

⁴² See e. g. his famous speech at Estonian Maapäev on September 7, 1917: Article III, 326–327.

⁴³ On the foreign delegation’s attitude towards Kesküla, see Article III: 334–335, 345–346.

⁴⁴ See Kesküla’s letter to German government from September 10, 1914: Kesküla to German government 10.09.1914: PAAA, Wk, 11c, secr. Bd. 1, p. 113. See also Jaanson 2004: 16.

söka däri, att det svenska tidevarvet i folkmedvetandet framstår såsom det gyllene, då rätt skipades i landet.⁴⁵

Kesküla's regionalist project lasted throughout the war. In the course of it, he showed himself to be as flexible as he was ambitious. He changed sides several times, cooperated with nearly anyone whom he regarded as useful,⁴⁶ and was not averse to twisting the truth in ways that suited him. Certainly, the particularities of his plans were adjusted as the changing times demanded. In a way, his flexibility reflected the flexibility of early Estonian nationalism as a whole, willing to consider different scenarios and, at least to a degree, gather to different interests.⁴⁷

These activities of Kesküla constitute the background to Article II (Kuldkepp 2012), where I present a more detailed case study of one propaganda undertaking in Stockholm in the spring of 1916, when Kesküla had the unexpected luck of meeting and teaming up with a non-émigré compatriot, book publisher Jakob Ploompuu from Tallinn. Ploompuu had secretly arrived in Sweden, claiming to have been sent by one "patriotic organization" in Tallinn in order to present the grievances of Estonians at the Ford peace conference, and to investigate the possible outlooks of Sweden entering the war on German side and occupying Estonia. He did not stay in Sweden for long, and soon returned home after a short period of intensive cooperation with Kesküla.

In the article, I try to determine the probable authorship and expected audience of the so-called "Grundbesitzer texts" (signed by one "Grundbesitzer in Esthland" or similar) that were the fruits of their cooperation. Considered in the background of Ploompuu's and Kesküla's known activities, it seems that they overwhelmingly bear the signs of the latter's influence and should be seen in the context of Kesküla's regionalist project that has been outlined above. This is especially evident in the text titled "An die Patrioten Schwedens" which

⁴⁵ "Concerning the mood in Estonia, I have heard the following. Estonians, at the same time as they hate Russians, are said to have quite bitter feelings against the Germans. In the case of a German operation in Estonia, they would therefore remain passive. However, if the Swedes came instead, they would join their side with enthusiasm. The reason for these Swedish-friendly feelings is supposed to be found in the fact that the Swedish period appears in the consciousness of the people as the golden era when the land was subjected to the law." KrA, Generalstaben, Utrikesavdelningen, E I d, Vol 4, Röda nummer 1836. However, it cannot be ruled out that Lagerlöf was in some way influenced by Kesküla's propaganda and that he had actually "heard" these statements in Stockholm, rather than in Estonia. For other examples of pro-Swedish sympathies among Estonians during the war, see Article I: 328–330.

⁴⁶ This included Russian Bolsheviks in exile, Estonian, Finnish, Ukrainian, Lithuanian and various other emigrants, the diplomats of Germany and Entente, Swedish authorities, American peace activists (see Article II) and so on.

⁴⁷ Kesküla's wartime opportunism was later used against him by the first Estonian foreign delegation headed by Jaan Tõnisson (see Article III: 345). Tõnisson himself, however, was (with good reason) not at all safe from similar accusations of German-friendliness, and Kesküla put these to good use (Article III: 341, 344, 369).

includes a multitude of geopolitical and mnemopolitical arguments in support of the idea of Estonian-Scandinavian connection, and attempts to incite “Swedish patriots” (actually Swedish activists) to take up their historical mission and actively intervene on the other side of the Baltic Sea.⁴⁸

At the same time, as is also mentioned in Article I (329–330) the “Grundbesitzer episode” itself constitutes evidence that Estonian activist regionalism was not simply something only confined to Kesküla’s own person. As demonstrated in the activities of Ploompuu, there were also other private politicians intent on making known the Scandinavian interests of Estonians. This makes the “Grundbesitzer episode” particularly interesting in Kesküla’s long career of regionalist propaganda. Although I have argued in the article that the “Grundbesitzer” moniker of the preserved texts seems mostly to have been used as Kesküla’s mouthpiece, there is no doubt that Ploompuu was also acting on his own volition.⁴⁹

This concludes the argument of Article II. Subsequently, I will present some background information to Article III, serving as a link between Articles II and III.

Resolute, energetic and, in some ways, highly successful⁵⁰ as Kesküla was, his activities were nevertheless sustainable only under the special wartime conditions. In a way, these were uniquely geared towards giving a person like him the opportunity to acquire considerable influence. He had (and even more, claimed to have) good contacts with both Russian revolutionaries residing abroad, as well as the representatives of Russia’s various non-Russian subject nations. For Germany and other enemies of Russia, such contacts were highly valuable, as their skillful use offered the tantalizing possibility of cheaply and effectively weakening Russia – or even taking it out of the war altogether – by encouraging its revolutionary and separatist movements. This is also what was accomplished in 1917, when the Germans facilitated Lenin’s journey back to Russia.⁵¹

For the Entente, after he switched sides, Kesküla could provide very useful intelligence on Germany and its war aims, as well as, again, about the complicated situation in Russia. For neutrals such as Sweden, he could give information on both sides of the belligerents, which made him probably one of the

⁴⁸ Article II: 153–158; 4.2 in this volume.

⁴⁹ This dissertation also includes a publication of the source texts in question, included here as an appendix to the main body of the thesis (3.1–3.4).

⁵⁰ In particular, he played an important part in German *Revolutionierungspolitik* towards Russia, especially by mediating the German government’s contacts with Lenin (see e. g. Senn 1976: 87–88).

⁵¹ About the German *Revolutionierungspolitik*, see e. g. Fischer 1959. Another account, integrated into a comprehensive study of German war aims, is found in Fischer 1964. About the role of private persons representing the suppressed nationalities of Russia who were employed as German agents (such as Kesküla), see Katkov 1968.

most important agents in the service of the Swedish General Staff during the war.⁵²

What brought about Kesküla's downfall was a combination of factors. Ironically, one of the main causes for it was the fact that his "minimal program" had succeeded (whether, to any degree, thanks to him, is still an open question). Soon after the February revolution in Russia, Estonia had achieved political autonomy in its ethnographic borders and had been able to elect its first representative body, the Temporary Diet or Maapäev/Maanõukogu, dominated by Estonian nationalist politicians. Although Maapäev was dissolved by the Bolsheviks soon after the October Revolution, it managed to send abroad – first of all to Scandinavia – its own protodiplomatic representatives, the so-called foreign delegation, headed by Kesküla's old rival Jaan Tõnisson (see Article III: 330–331).

Article III (Kuldkepp 2013b) is a case study on the unfolding conflict between Kesküla and the first Estonian foreign delegation. The roots of this conflict can be said to have been in personal antagonism,⁵³ various differences of political opinion, and, ultimately, in the different legal basis of doing "diplomacy" at all. The latter issue crystallized during Tõnisson's and Kesküla's second meeting in Stockholm in the question of whether Estonian diplomacy should be conducted "in connection with Estonia" (Tõnisson) or not (Kesküla).⁵⁴ This legal issue was simultaneously also a question of power and seniority, as Kesküla demanded a leading role in the Estonian foreign representation, something that Tõnisson, an official representative of Maapäev, naturally refused to concede to him.

The resulting conflict subsequently led to mutual accusations, making the split between the two men complete and insurmountable. Some months later, in June 1918, the members of the foreign delegation publicly denounced Kesküla in Swedish newspapers and at Stockholm's foreign legations as having no right to represent anyone but himself. As they by that time half-knew, half-assumed, Kesküla had during the war compromised both himself and Estonian national endeavors as a whole with his many and various kinds of suspicious activities and contacts.⁵⁵ Therefore, he had to be rejected from the outset of independent Estonian politics, lest he do any more damage to the national cause. To this action, revenge soon followed, as Kesküla began to take steps in order to encourage the latent inner tensions inside the delegation. Some months later, the first foreign delegation fell apart. Very likely, this happened partially as a result of Kesküla's intrigues.

In the article, my focus is on the form of Kesküla's activities (in addition to their content, treated in Article II), as I contrast his "paradiplomatical" efforts

⁵² I have only recently located documents demonstrating the extent of Kesküla's contacts with the Swedish authorities, which, until now, have been totally unknown for scholarship. I hope to treat this issue more thoroughly in future work.

⁵³ In large part dating long back to the Russo-Japanese war and the revolution of 1905.

⁵⁴ Article III: 340.

⁵⁵ See Article III: 345.

with the “protodiplomacy”⁵⁶ of the foreign delegation, trying to provide a nuanced analysis of their essential difference⁵⁷ that led to Estonian politicians disowning Kesküla and turning him into a bitter enemy of the interwar-era Republic of Estonia.

As the war drew to its end, more factors turned against Kesküla. Ultimately, he was forced to return to Switzerland, where he had, in September 1914, once started his grand political intrigue.⁵⁸ The members of the first Estonian foreign delegation, however – with the lone exception of Ferdinand Kull, who, in hindsight, perhaps suffered the most due to Kesküla’s intrigues in 1918 – went on to become esteemed and successful Estonian diplomats and politicians.⁵⁹

To conclude this section, I will briefly turn to the overarching themes of this study.

The topic of Estonia’s Nordic identity primarily binds together Articles I and II. Of these, Article I provides the idea-historical background to the genesis of Estonian-Scandinavian discourse, conceptualizing it theoretically and bringing examples of its use previous to the war. Article II, in turn, serves as an example of how the rhetoric of Estonian Nordic Identity was employed by Kesküla (and Ploompuu) in the context of the “Grundbesitzer episode”, as well as an example of Kesküla’s working methods more generally. In the same article, Kesküla’s activist regionalist project is also described somewhat more broadly.⁶⁰

In Article III, I take the political theme one step further and consider the dismissive response that Kesküla’s wartime activities elicited from the official Estonian foreign delegation in 1918. I will also describe the ways Kesküla attempted to take revenge and manipulate his compatriots, ultimately discrediting himself even further and ensuring he would never receive any recognition in the interwar era Republic of Estonia. After surviving all wartime intrigues, the demise of his ambitious project was brought about by the Estonian protodiplomats who – slowly but surely – proved to be more successful, depriving their paradiplomatic competitor from any real basis for further activities in the name of the Estonian people.

The demise of Kesküla’s influence and his regionalist project, however, did not, of course, mean the demise of the Scandinavian-oriented regionalist interests of the Estonians altogether, and there have been many later attempts to render them into political reality.⁶¹

⁵⁶ About these concepts, see sub-chapter 1.5.2 below.

⁵⁷ This was not at all self-evident in 1918 – even for a foreign diplomat well-versed in the Baltic situation, there must have been almost no way of predicting how the Estonian question would ultimately turn out.

⁵⁸ For a short summary of Kesküla’s fate in 1918 and 1919, see Arens 1991: 35.

⁵⁹ See Article III: 324.

⁶⁰ See Article II: 156–158.

⁶¹ About the Estonian-Swedish discourse during the interwar years, see Kuldkepp 2010. Some examples are also found in Article I: 331–333.

I.4 A Methodological Note on History Writing

The fact that history writing entails both “history” and “writing” is immediately obvious, even if the exact relationship between the two can be debated. If one wants to emphasize the “writing” of it, it is possible to go as far as agreeing with Hayden White that history is simply “a verbal structure in the form of a narrative prose discourse” (White 1973: ix). But even if one finds this definition to be reductionist, it has to be accepted that whatever the underlying historical facts, the creation of a historical work is always a deeply transformational process. History writing does not merely mediate history, it also interprets, and, by virtue of that, also creates history, at least as far as our understanding of it is concerned. Every historian has to constantly draw lines of connection, fill gaps and make educated guesses about anything and everything he or she decides to include (or exclude) in the historical narrative. Consequently, history writing can never be wholly transparent with regard to the past, and the past can never be fully represented in history writing *wie es eigentlich gewesen ist* (Ranke 1824: vii). Furthermore, the past can never wholly escape the prejudices of the writer’s own time: history writing is always an ideologically and politically charged activity, even if not intended as such, and, not least, a poetic one, subject to the changing conventions of literary art.

These or similar points have been widely recognized for a long time, in large part due to Hayden White’s influential book “Metahistory” (White 1973) and the more general “cultural turn” in humanities that it represents. My purpose here, however, cannot be to defend or discuss the implications of these ideas at any length, important as they are. In particular, the question of the relationship between emplotment and truth in historiography (see e. g. Vann 1998: 156, Kansteiner 1993), that has fueled much of the criticism against White, can be left aside for better treatment elsewhere. For whatever the intricacies of the relationship between the “truth” of history and its narrative representation, it seems clear that history writing at the very least always carries a pretense of objectivity, making it therefore fundamentally different from fiction proper. Whether it bears out this pretense – or is even at all able to do so – is another thing.

The pragmatic difference between fiction and fact in writing has been explained by Paul Ricoeur in terms of implicit contracts between the narrative and its reader. While reading a novel, the reader is expected to suspend his or her disbelief for the sake of enjoying an interesting story. When reading history, on the contrary, the reader should retain a critical eye to the truthfulness or at least plausibility of the text, because he or she expects to be related true statements about events that have actually happened (Ricoeur 2006: 261).

I would like to enter into a similar contract with my own hypothetical reader: one that would encourage active and thoughtful response to both the subject of my writing and my writing itself. For there is always more than one possibility of interpreting “historical truth” (whatever that is), and what I am presenting here is certainly just one way of how my sources can be made to make sense. It

is, however, a way that I find intriguing and convincing, and a way that might have some value beyond the concrete tasks I have at hand.

In order to facilitate such an active response, I must attempt to make my research as accessible as possible in spite of the inherent obstacles outlined above. This, in turn, means both introspection and communication: first, becoming aware of the implications of my thinking, and secondly, trying to make these implications explicit for others. Therefore, it is essential that I outline the theoretical assumptions that have guided the way I work.

1.5 Theoretical Concepts

The following lengthy section (1.5.1–1.5.3) is intended as an integrated summary, and – where necessary – the expansion of the theoretical points which I have presented in articles I, II and III.⁶² For a better understanding of my theoretical arguments and how they are applied, the articles themselves can also be consulted. I do not intend to add anything substantially new to what is already found there, and neither is my purpose to provide anything approaching a comprehensive overview or full theoretical treatment of all the various problems relating to the notions of nationalism, regionalism etc. My aim is merely to give a general theoretical recapture that would tie different parts of my study together, making it a more coherent whole, and, above all, provide suitable tools for further analysis of similar issues. The most important concepts I will subsequently discuss include nationalism and regionalism, mnemopolitics, geopolitics, para- and protodiplomacy, and activist regionalism.

1.5.1 The “Inner” Approach to Nationalism and Regionalism

My understanding of the highly complex idea of the “nation” is based on the definition by Anthony D. Smith, which states that a nation is “a named human population which shares myths and memories, a mass public culture, a designated homeland, economic unity and equal rights and duties for all members” (Smith 1991: 43). Drawing on Smith’s definition, I define national identity as a certain kind of emotionally engaging collective identity built on shared cultural symbols such as common language, history and geographical area) and political goals (such as autonomy or independence). Nationalism, then, is the ideology and movement aiming to promote and (re-)vitalize this collective identity, even if its more particular forms and goals may vary.

Theories of nationalism are usually classified under the tripartite division of primordialism/perennialism, modernism and ethnosymbolism, reflecting diffe-

⁶² Same or similar issues are also explored in Kuldkepp 2010, Kuldkepp 2014a and elsewhere.

rent standpoints about the ancientness or modernity of nations.⁶³ My allegiance is to the ethno-symbolist approach, most familiar from the works of Anthony D. Smith (e.g. Smith 1991, Smith 2005). This means that I am going to place the ethnic origins of Estonians as a group in the pre-19th century era – thus presupposing the existence of some sort of a pre-national collective identity – while assuming that the pre-national shared cultural symbols and political goals (or “ethnic components”, as this term is used in Smith 1991: 62) necessarily underwent a process of transformation and instrumentalization (“nation-building”) through which they were turned into symbols of national identity proper.

Unlike the modernist family of theories, ethno-symbolism is not particularly concerned with establishing the historical conditions that have to be fulfilled for nations or nationalism to appear. Rather, its analytical focus is on what Eva Piirimäe has called the “inner” or “self-reflective” aspects of nationalism (Piirimäe 2009: 178). These aspects, as enumerated by Smith, include the processes of self-definition, myth- and memory-making, territorialization, development of public culture, and legal standardization, all of which combine and reinforce one another (Smith 2005: 97–98). Collectively, these processes can be labeled “nation-building” and people furthering them called “nation-builders”.

I am primarily interested in the interplay between the first three of these aspects, which I consider to be the most essential ones for my identity-related purposes: self-definition, myth- and memory-making and territorialization.

The idea of self-definition has two components to it. Firstly, it implies that the impulse of nation-building has to originate, or has to be believed to originate, in the prospective nation itself, not outside of it: nation-building must be perceived as “awakening” rather than “colonialism”. This makes it natural that all suitable pre-national ethnic components would be used to their fullest in nationalist rhetoric in order to anchor the nationalist project in the pre-national ethnic identity. Secondly, self-definition is concerned with defining and delimiting the borders of the nation in various ways, assuring its uniqueness and difference from others.

Myth- and memory-making means primarily the construction of a national past, often emplotted as a long heroic struggle of survival against threatening enemies, having culminated or being expected to culminate in a victory (e. g. the national awakening and/or the (re)gaining of independence). I will refer to the arguments by which such a narrative is constructed as “mnemopolitical”, i. e. relating to the investment of history with political meaning.

Territorialization means the creation of linkage between identity and territory, the most important goal of it being to recreate the feeling of nativeness

⁶³ In short, the primordialist/perennialist explanation argues that the nations are ancient, reaching long back in history (this might also be called the nationalist explanation), while the modernist explanation claims they are modern (i. e. having their origins primarily in the 19th century). The ethno-symbolist approach is in some sense a compromise between the two, stating that the nations themselves came into being in the modern times, whereas also stressing the crucial importance of their pre-national “ethnic” roots (see Article I: 314).

on a more abstract level – causing people to identify with the whole of the nation state or the settlement area of the national community, rather than only with the more immediately graspable localities (village, town, province).⁶⁴ This is important for several reasons, not least in order to secure the inner strength of the national community, enabling it to mobilize itself for collective efforts (especially war), and to resist the danger that local sympathies would override the national ones.

At the same time, nationalist territorialization need not stop on the properly national layer of collective identification. Often, it also extends into what might be called cultural and political foreign orientation, it promotes feelings of kinship with other nations that are perceived as close to one's own for reasons that can be cultural (especially linguistic), historical (having a common past) or geostrategic (e. g. having a common hereditary enemy). This foreign orientation can in turn be made source of a regional identity based on the national one (see below).

As is the case with territorialization on the national level, regional territorialization is also especially important with reference to security interests. Therefore, I will call this type of arguments “geopolitical”, i. e. linking questions of territorialization with perceived increase or decrease in collective security.

Nation-building is foremost a discursive process.⁶⁵ This means that the national identity is imagined and disseminated by nation-builders through writings and speeches calling for national awakening, spreading knowledge of the national past, defining the nation's future tasks and so on.⁶⁶ The primary way that this discourse operates is by highlighting certain “ethnic components” (while others are possibly suppressed), transforming them in various ways, and investing them with moral and political significance, compelling people to accept them as integral to their own individual identities. For example, in a nationalist text, the national language can be singled out as an object of importance, then upheld to some (perhaps puristic) standard of correctness, and finally made a moral and political issue, as the author points out how the (correct) language usage is essential to the well-being and sustainability of the nation as a whole.

The outcome of such discursive processes is the nation itself: an imagined community built on shared cultural symbols and political goals (see Anderson

⁶⁴ In the words of Smith, all nationalists “seek to acquire any territory. They want their “homeland”, that is, an historic territory which their people can feel is theirs by virtue of a convincing claim of possession and efflorescence sometime in the past” (Smith 1999: 219).

⁶⁵ My understanding of the concept of discourse is simple, meaning any stream of intertextually-linked utterances grouped around a common theme, carried by the same ideology and/or somehow unified by authorship. The discourse of Estonian nationalism, for example, therefore amounts to everything said by Estonian nationalists about the Estonian nation from a nationalist point of view. For slightly more discussion on the notion of “discourse” and how my simple understanding of it differs from e. g. Foucault's much more abstract ideas, see Kuldkepp 2010: 10–11.

⁶⁶ In addition to such discursive activity, the nationalist project can also be supported by other kinds of political action, such as paradiplomatic negotiations.

2006: 6–7). This does not, however, mean that the construction of national identity would cease at some point. Rather, as long as nationalism persists as an ideology and movement, identity construction is an ongoing process that continues regardless of whether the nation has already become a reality (wherever one wishes to draw that line). No identity is fully stable in time – not even a national identity, which has its eyes mostly turned towards the past, and can thus be described as inherently conservative.

But even in the present, nation-building is never wholly single-minded. Perhaps especially in earlier stages of the nationalist movement, the goals of the nationalists are often considerably more flexible than often apparent in hindsight: e. g. the nationalists might be striving for independence but willing to accept autonomy, or seeking political unification with kindred people but willing to accept unofficial cultural cooperation. Once one scenario proves to be more successful, however, others are naturally obscured or even forgotten.

One of the strengths of the “inner” approach to nationalism is that it does not make the eventual political achievements of the nationalist movement the sole criterion of what it sees as worth studying. In particular, hints at other, divergent imagined pasts and paths towards the future can be salvaged by careful analysis of the nationalist discourse. This makes it also particularly appropriate for the study of Estonian “Nordicness”. As this internationally ambitious idea has never been accepted to any significant degree by anyone outside of Estonians, there is little to be said about its real political or socio-economic manifestations. However, by considering the genesis of this idea as a process in which some earlier Estonian ethnic components – particularly the idea of the “Good old Swedish times” – were being transformed into important national(ist) symbols, it is possible to understand why this identity has persisted, and why there have been repeated attempts, not least in our own days, to give it some kind of political expression.⁶⁷ As long as Estonian nationalism remains relevant as an ideology and movement, the dream of the Estonian-Scandinavian connection can be expected to survive and go on.

What distinguishes the idea of Estonian “Nordicness” from some other examples of Estonian nationalist myth-building is that it implies a foreign orientation, or, in other words, it has a regionalist affinity: a desire to move culturally and politically closer to nations other than itself.

A proper framing of this point requires some conceptualization of the relationship between the notions of nation and region. This is immediately difficult to accomplish because the words “region” and “regionalism” can be used to designate widely different phenomena. The only universally applicable definition of “region” seems to be a negative one: a region is a territorial unit that does not equal the state.⁶⁸ Instead, it can be sub-state (a smaller distinct area

⁶⁷ This is the topic of Article I in the present study.

⁶⁸ About this so-called negative definition of regions and regionalism, see Piirimäe & Andresen 2012, 4–5.

inside a state, such as Norrland), supra-state (consisting of several states, such as Scandinavia) or trans-state (encompassing parts of several states, such as Sápmi).⁶⁹

As a way out, it has been suggested by some scholars, e. g. Andrew Hurrell, that instead of working with one broad overarching definition, a more detailed categorization of different kinds of regions and regionalism might be adopted. One of the categories Hurrell thus proposes is “regional awareness and identity”, explained as “the shared perception of belonging to a particular community”. In this awareness-and-identity sense, a region is something akin to a nation: an identity resting on “mental maps whose lines highlight some features whilst ignoring others”, so that e. g. the common culture and history of the region are defined against some external “other” which might be understood as a security threat or a cultural challenge (Hurrell 1995: 39–41). Hurrell also describes what scholarly study of such regionalism would look like:

Discussions of regional awareness lay great emphasis on language and rhetoric; on the discourse of regionalism and the political processes by which definitions of regionalism and regional identity are constantly defined and redefined; and on the shared understandings and the meanings given to political activity by the actors involved. (Hurrell 1995, p. 41)

This is very close to what the “inner” approach to the study of nations and nationalism tries to accomplish, with its interest in the dynamic processes of self-definition, myth and memory-making, territorialization etc. In fact, nation-building and region-building can be described in very similar theoretical formulations (see Neumann 1994: 58–59), their only main difference being that nationalist movements tend to be seen as having the creation of a nation state as the ultimate objective, whereas a region, a product of regionalism, is dependent on the idea of the state but never equals it (as pointed out above).⁷⁰ Region-building, just as nation-building, makes use of perceived common symbols (relating to e. g. the imagined region’s common culture, history or security interests) and is similarly discursive in nature. As put by Neumann: “regions are written and talked to existence” by region-builders “who as part of some political project, imagine a spatial and chronological identity for a region, and disseminate this identity to others” (Neumann 1994: 59).

Not only in theory, but also in practice, the processes of nation-building and region-building can be very much intertwined. This is especially true if some regionalist project can be regarded as an outgrowth of a nationalist discourse, meaning that the basic nationalist impulses of national self-definition, myth-

⁶⁹ I avoid the better-known terms “sub-national”, “supra-national” and “trans-national” in order to avoid confusion with the ethnic meaning of the word “nation”.

⁷⁰ The concern with the state characteristic to the study of nationalism makes a retroactive distinction between nationalism and regionalism as territorializing movements partly anachronistic, since this distinction contains hindsight knowledge about what has led to the establishment of a sovereign state and what has not.

and memory-making and territorialization have taken on additional layers that extend beyond the properly national level. A similar point has been made by Marko Lehti, who states that many nationalist discourses, in addition to maintaining the most important principle that the nation in question is cohesive (and therefore different from others), also exhibit a secondary desire to be integrated into a larger community of nations, an “imagined community” on its own right, as the term is used by Benedict Anderson (Lehti 1998: 28; Anderson 2006: 6–7):

The basic discourse [of nationalism] is a process where national borders – symbolic and concrete – are defined and redefined against otherness and this otherness defines the sameness of one’s own milieu. Everyone belongs to one and only one nation according to this discourse. To be alone in the world, is, however, sometimes too hard a situation for small nations. They need friends, a larger group to which they could belong, and the creation or imagination of such a group is also a part of the national construction. (Lehti 1998, p. 28)

Because an imagined community is defined by Anderson as both *sovereign* and a *community*, a bearer of both “the gage and emblem of freedom” and “deep, horizontal comradeship” (Anderson 2006: 6–7), this amounts to implying that the regional layer has significance to all aspects of national identity: the imagined cultural benefit of having a foreign connection converging with an imagined political benefit. If we accept this argument, it is possible to explain why it is an (arguably) deep-rooted feature of Estonian nationalism that Estonians should view themselves as part of a wider group of nations – only in this way, they can make complete their cultural identity and secure their freedom.⁷¹

This is not to say that there is no difference between national and regional identities. What makes the properly national dimension special among the many potential layers of collective identification, is that it is emotionally particularly involving: the nation demands the primary allegiance of the people, it is what makes them “to die and kill for the sake of strangers” (Langman 2006). National identity is therefore also exclusivist *vis-à-vis* other national identities: everyone can only belong to one nation (see e. g. Lehti 1998: 28) and, by implication, be a citizen of only one nation state. (Supra-state) “regional”, on the other hand, designates territorial identities above state level – not excluding the possibility that one of these layers might be properly national, and others, too, perhaps “national” to some lesser degree. In this sense, “national” should be regarded as a subset of “regional”. However, as far as the regional discourse can be regarded as an outgrowth of the national one, nationalism must still be regarded as the primary ideology and movement, and a necessary pre-requisite for that kind of regionalism to appear.⁷²

⁷¹ For examples, see Article I: 318.

⁷² Note that this distinction is primarily a heuristic one and does not mean that the national identity would (or could) have to be “ready and done” before the regional identity can start to develop. In reality, they are very much parallel processes.

Building on these theoretical points, I will use the term regionalism in my study to mean an ideology and movement aiming to unite politically heterogeneous, but geographically somewhat contiguous territories into a culturally, politically and/or economically unified supra-state region with its own particular identity. This identity can be regarded as an outgrowth of one or several constituent nationalist projects, and is buttressed by them, but is itself transnational. If it is based on several nationalist projects at once, there must be some common symbolic underpinnings shared by all of them: an understanding of cultural similarities, common history or, perhaps most importantly, a common threat from an extra-regional “other” that can be a different region or an unfriendly state. This idea of “nationalist regionalism”, using *Norden* as an example, has been characterized by Ole Wæver as “pooling of nationalisms”.⁷³

Consequently, such regionalism can, but does not have to entail imperialism/colonialism. In fact, if the national discourses of its imagined constituent parts are similar enough for true pooling of nationalisms to occur, the region can be built on a wholly voluntary basis. At the same time, in the imagination of region-builders, there is probably still a hierarchy among prospective members of the region, one or several of which are invested with the practical task of consolidating of the region, while others are attributed a more passive role. For example, in the discourse of Estonian activist regionalism, Sweden was imagined as the consolidator and leader of the region, while Estonians were regarded as a more passive, limited in their regionalist activism to inciting the leader to take up its historical mission.

A conceptualization of what such region-building, based on the principle of the pooling of nationalisms, would look like in practice, is the topic of the following sub-chapter.

1.5.2 A Theory of Practical Region-Building

For a regionalist project to have a chance of success, it needs region-builders: individuals who will initiate the project and put an effort into furthering it. Similar to nation-builders, their work entails the use of discursive resources in order to construct a regional identity, which will then be used as a point of reference in calls for political unification in a real sense.

The discursive resources used by region-builders are basically similar to ethnic components used by nation-builders. The importance of the processes of self-definition, myth- and memory-making and territorialization still applies. However, there are two caveats. If the prospective region is imagined as a pooling of nationalisms, its symbols must be perceived as having relevance to more than just one nationalist discourse. Secondly, nation-building is a primary, and region-building a secondary identificatory process. This means that region-

⁷³ About the idea of “pooling of nationalisms” in a Scandinavian context, see Wæver 1992: 88.

building uses symbols that have already undergone transformation in the process of nation-building.

Myth- and memory-making on the regional level entail above all the instrumentalization of relevant features in national histories, especially narratives of previous instances of similar regional consolidation. These are used as compelling precedents to motivate new calls to action, proceeding from the assumption that nations have to “act in the spirit of their history”. As was the case with nation-building, I will refer to such arguments as “mnemopolitical”.

Region-builders also territorialize the new region in reference to common security concerns. In this case, region-building in a certain area is motivated by the supposed need to create an economic, military and/or political counterweight to some geographically close extra-regional “other” which is perceived as a threat. The new region is expected to act as a bulwark, protecting its members (and perhaps others, even the rest of the continent) against the perceived menace. I will call these types of arguments “geopolitical”.

Even if fundamentally different – one emphasizing the lessons of history, the other the advantages and disadvantages of geography – the two types of resources are always intertwined. Geopolitical security concerns are illustrated by historical example, while the “other” takes on a threatening presence in historical memory. This happens on both national and regional levels of identity construction. To bring an example: as the pre-national ethnic myth of “the good old Swedish times” became converted to an important feature of Estonian historiography and thereby national identity, it also influenced in turn thinking about Estonian geopolitics and what was imagined could be done to secure the cultural development and political freedom of the Estonian nation against Russia and Germany. In the project of Estonian activist regionalism, these geo- and mnemopolitical features of Estonian nationalism were then linked with what was perceived as similar traits in Swedish and Finnish nationalism, making the need for the imagined region’s political consolidation a logical conclusion.

Mnemopolitics and geopolitics form the rhetorical basis of regionalist discourse. But in addition to that, there is also a third and different kind of a discursive resource, helpful in investing the project with a sense of urgency and thus bringing it closer to being realized. This might be called “the window of opportunity”: the argument that some point in time is particularly favorable for an attempt of translating some imagined regionalist construction into political reality. The appearance of this window-of-opportunity argument has primarily to do with perceived advantages of the international situation, but can also reflect e. g. an increase in the region-builders’ individual prominence, which makes it possible for them to be more effective in “disseminating this imagined identity to others”. Discursively, this understanding of the window of opportunity is usually realized by region-builders suggesting that immediate and resolute action is needed – otherwise it would be too late or everything would be lost.

In the following, I am going to try to apply this practical theory of region-building on the activities of Aleksander Kesküla as a region-builder and Estonian activist regionalism as a regionalist discourse in World War I.

The aim of Kesküla and other Estonian activists during the war was to create a politically integrated supra-state region including Scandinavia (above all, Sweden), Finland and Greater Estonia (consisting of the provinces of Estland, and partially, Livland and Ingermanland). This regionalism was primarily an outgrowth of Estonian nationalism, but tried to base itself on a pooling of nationalisms, conceding the role of the regional consolidator to Sweden.

In the course of this project, Kesküla and others used mnemopolitical and geopolitical arguments based on certain features in the discourse of Estonian nationalism in order to argue for a common identity for the whole Scandinavian-Finnish-Estonian region, imagined to be based on a pooling of nationalisms. A window of opportunity to make this regionalist construction a political reality was seen to have appeared in World War I, an unprecedented event disrupting existing power balances and setting the international system in flux.

By many, the war was recognized as a chance for small nations to influence their own future. For Kesküla and some other Estonian nationalists, this, in turn, meant the possibility of giving political expression to a potential regional identity that had been developing in the discourse of Estonian nationalism during the decades previous to the war. This was the idea that Estonians were a Nordic people, belonging to the Northern “cultural sphere” together with the Finns and the Scandinavians by virtue of common culture, history, and security interests.

Building on this latent identity, Kesküla initiated in 1914 a project of wartime propaganda based on mnemo- and geopolitical arguments – such as referring to the “Good old Swedish times” and the need to keep the expansive state of Russia at bay in the Baltic Sea area – with the aim of accomplishing the separation of Estonians from Russia and the creation of a strong, Swedish-led Nordic federation with Estonia as one of its members.

This, like all nationalist and regionalist projects, was discursive in nature. However, it was not public, except partially after the Russian revolution of February 1917, which allowed for less caution in such matters. Still, both before and after February 1917, public speeches and published texts played only a minor role in furthering it. Most of Kesküla’s propaganda activities took place, if not underground, then at least privately. Above all, this included making contacts with influential people, trying to impress and influence them in various ways, and hoping, with their help, to sway the public opinion. But there was also a darker side to his work: manipulating and discrediting political enemies, thwarting similar attempts against himself and his companions, gathering and distributing intelligence in cooperation with various secret services, and even facilitating outright sabotage and terrorism.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ About the latter, see Jaanson 2004: 30.

At least the more innocent of these activities were similar to those of any diplomats or politicians. However, such comparison also outlines their essential difference. What Kesküla and other similar private politicians lacked was any official legitimization to represent anyone but themselves. This means that Kesküla's claims of speaking in the name of the majority of Estonians were essentially groundless. Neither could such legitimization be obtained, for it would have had to have been provided by the institutions of the Russian state; the state where the Baltic provinces belonged. From an official Russian point of view, however, such "region-building" amounted to high treason and national separatism, which was the whole reason why such activities had to be conducted covertly.

This does not mean Kesküla and other similar persons were necessarily rejected by the foreign powers and influential individuals whom they approached. In fact, Kesküla was extremely successful in making valuable contacts and gaining influence in spite of being nothing more than a private person. Largely, this was due to the unique situation of multinational empires warring against each other in the era of blooming nationalism. This meant that the belligerents had a natural interest in supporting separatist and revolutionary movements behind enemy lines, movements which were hoped would be capable of disturbing the inner peace and thus hurting the respective state's performance in the war. Whatever the more concrete aims of revolutionaries or separatists, they would be supported for that sole reason.

Kesküla, who claimed to represent both Russian Bolsheviks and Estonian separatists, was therefore doubly useful to Germany. By gaining excellent contacts in Germany, he also became useful for the Entente. And even Sweden, a state not participating in the war, was not averse to accepting the valuable intelligence that such a well-connected person was able to provide. All of these powers could also render some useful favors in return, which Kesküla used to further his own regionalist project. In short, for a capable and adventurous person, the Great War opened up very real possibilities to influence international politics. However, as soon as the wartime interests of the belligerents waned and the legitimization issue became urgent, he would lose this ability very quickly. This is what also happened to Kesküla.

Ernest Satow has famously defined diplomacy as "the application of intelligence and tact to the conduct of official relations between the governments of independent states, extending sometimes also to their relations with vassal states" (Satow 1932: 1). This makes it obvious that the activities of Kesküla cannot be called "diplomatic" in the traditional sense of the word. Although he certainly employed intelligence and tact (rather than, say, military force), he nevertheless emphatically did not represent the government of any independent state. At the same time, he should not be considered for that reason a mere agent, adventurer or "*Hochstapler*", as has often been done.⁷⁵ Rather, I would label the activities of his and other similar private politicians as

⁷⁵ For examples, see Article III: 321, 339.

“paradiplomatic”, in contrast to both real diplomacy and what in hindsight might be called “protodiplomacy”.

The latter term (protodiplomacy) was first used by Ivo D. Duchacek to describe the separatist activities of a potentially sovereign state, which has some sort of an authoritative body that sends abroad its representatives (or uses some already existing international connections) on a mission to prepare ground for future statehood:

Global protodiplomacy is a term that may be used to describe those initiatives and activities of a non central government abroad that graft a more or less separatist message onto its economic, social and cultural links with foreign nations. In such a context, the regional/provincial parent authority uses its trade/cultural missions abroad as protoembassies or protoconsulates of a potentially sovereign state. Such missions may be sometimes viewed and treated by the recipient foreign government in a similar fashion. (Duchacek 1986: 248)

Following Duchacek’s definition, it can be said that protodiplomatic efforts need to be legitimate at least to a degree – even if not representing a sovereign state, the protodiplomatic missions have to have the mandate of some regional/provincial authority. Secondly, the notion includes certain presumption of what is to “come after”: protodiplomacy is characteristic of a “potentially sovereign state”, which implies that it needs to be followed at some stage by “real” diplomacy (otherwise, the “proto-” prefix would make no sense).

Therefore, the members of the first Estonian foreign delegation of 1917–1918, bearing the credentials of the Temporary Diet of Estonia (Ajutine Maanõukogu) can be considered a protodiplomatic mission, as I have done in Article III. Aleksander Kesküla, however, lacking any kind of official credentials whatsoever, not having been entrusted with any mission by any official body, and, finally losing his influence when the idea of Estonian independence slowly began to gain traction, was certainly no protodiplomat.⁷⁶ In his case, “paradiplomacy” would be a better concept to use.

Duchacek uses the word paradiplomacy to refer to “trans-sovereign” international relations that are not aimed at the creation of a sovereign state, but are “primarily concerned with economic, social and cultural issues” (Duchacek 1988: 12–13; 22). Iñaki Aguirre, however, has extended the meaning of the notion as follows:

⁷⁶ Unless it is taken into consideration that he had been a delegate at the All-Estonian Congress (Aulakoosolek) in Tartu, in November 1905; a fact that he referred to in the beginning of his wartime career. See: Kesküla to German government 10.09.1914: PAAA, Wk, 11c, secr. Bd. 1, p. 113. See also Jaanson 2004: 16. In addition, while contacting Germany for the first time, he rather vaguely claimed that in Estonia, there was some kind of “organization to prepare for the re-unification with Sweden”, which he claimed to represent. This was probably a mystification. Kesküla to German government 10.09.1914: PAAA, Wk, 11c, secr. Bd. 1, p. 113.

“Paradiplomacy” could [...] mean any kind of *non-governmental international activity of non-state actors* including transnational corporations, international labour organizations, religious communities, NGOs, international lobbies, mass-media industry, transcultural artistic movements, scientific organizations, outstanding individuals, which could be broadly labeled “diplomatic” because they actually operate, to use Der Derian’s key philosophical concepts, a “mediation” between mutually “estranged” or “alienated” realities, such as civil societies and international governmental organizations, artists and foreign policy-making, scientists and international public opinion. This non-state “diplomacy” will, of course, essentially be a non-governmental “diplomacy”, even if it will have to cope with *states* in the international arena. (Aguirre 1999: 196–197)

Following Aguirre, the activities of Kesküla can therefore be described as paradiplomatic, given that he was an „outstanding individual“ whose wartime activities, although lacking any kind of real legitimation, were nevertheless resemblant of diplomacy – if diplomacy is understood in an abstract, non-legalistic way, as done by e. g. James Der Derian.⁷⁷

It is interesting to remark that according to Kesküla’s friend Adolf Gasser, he was not himself averse of calling himself something along similar lines:

Wie einst der deutsch-baltische Baron von Patkul um 1700, so hat der Esthe Kesküla zur Zeit des Ersten Weltkrieges nachweislich die grosse Weltpolitik zu beeinflussen und mitzugestalten vermocht und pflegte sich selber gerne als “Privatdiplomat”, “graue Eminenz” und “Anti-Patkul” zu bezeichnen.⁷⁸

But as always, there are many explanatory contexts to every historical process. I have now tried to describe at some length, how Kesküla’s regionalist project can be conceptualized to have been an outgrowth of the Estonian nationalist discourse. In the following, I will put his activities in yet another historical context, which explains why this regionalism was purported to be based on a pooling of nationalisms and why I have chosen to label it as “Estonian activist regionalism”.

⁷⁷ About Der Derian’s ideas about the nature of diplomacy, see Der Derian 1987a and Der Derian 1987b.

⁷⁸ “As once the Baltic German Baron von Patkul around 1700, the Estonian Kesküla can be shown to have influenced and shaped the world politics in the time of World War I. He liked to refer to himself as a “Private diplomat”, the “gray eminence” or “Anti-Patkul”.” (Gasser 1983 [1964]: 217). Patkul was clearly an important figure in Kesküla’s thinking. It is interesting to note that he habitually referred to the annexationist propaganda of the Baltic Germans as “Patkull-istische”, equating their desire for the Baltic Sea Provinces’ annexation to Germany with Patkul’s treacherous contacts with Russia. For an example of Kesküla evoking Patkul in such a manner, see e. g. the information he gave to the Swedish General staff in January 1916: KrA, Generalstab, Utrikesavdelningen, E I d, Vol 5, Röda nummer 2055. The self-designation “Anti-Patkul” thus follows naturally from his opposition to the Baltic German annexationism.

I.5.3 A Note on Activist Regionalism as a Transnational Movement in World War I

I will conclude my theoretical overview with a short account of yet another historical context (in addition to the discourse of Estonian nationalism) that is important to understanding the regionalist project of Kesküla and others during the war. Even though this study only deals with a small, Estonian facet of the transnational activist movement, it is still necessary to point out the significance of this wider cooperation. However, this topic cannot be comprehensively treated in the present study and I hope to be able to return to it much more fully in the future.

I use the term “activism” in a particular historical sense, derived from contemporary usage in Finland and Sweden. There, it was employed to designate certain kinds of radical patriotic movements and ideologies during World War I.

In Finnish context, the notion of “activism” was originally used to refer to the covert movement, recruited mostly among the Swedish-speaking upper class and student circles in Helsinki, which developed from the turn of the century onwards with the goal of organizing active resistance to Russification policies in Finland. Early on, it also had international implications, as its leaders (above all Konni Zilliacus) made contacts with enemies of the Russian state, including Russian revolutionary parties, Japan during the Russo-Japanese war, and even Sweden, the previous ruler of Finland, expected to have revanchist feelings towards Russia.⁷⁹

During World War I, the second wave of Finnish activism attempted to take advantage of this new window of opportunity in order to achieve Finland’s liberation from Russia with the help of Sweden, Germany, or, most preferably, a joint action of both. As a way of thanks, Finnish activists such as Herman Gummerus, Fritz Wetterhoff, P. H. Norrmén and others expected Finland to enter into some sort of a close political relationship with Sweden after the war, which would have included common Swedish-Finnish military forces and common foreign policy.⁸⁰ Therefore, it can be said that Finnish activism had regionalist goals that were similar to those of Kesküla, as far as the political connection to Sweden was concerned.

In Sweden, the term “activists” was used to refer to the nationalist circles that aimed to overturn Swedish foreign policy during World War I by making it abandon what it was regarded as shameful neutrality, and returning to the spirit of the heroic Sweden of the “Great Power Era” when it had been a regional

⁷⁹ On the Finnish activists’ contacts with Russian revolutionaries and Japan, see e. g. Kujala 1980 and 2005. Their attempts to incite the Swedish General Staff to anti-Russian military action are described in a letter from Jonas Castrén to Harald Sohlman: KB, Gösta Mittag-Lefflers papper, L62: 13, Castrén to Sohlman [undated].08.1914.

⁸⁰ On the second wave of Finnish activism more generally, see e. g. Hyvämäki 1958: 277–278, Lauerma 1968. The regionalist plans of the activists are cursorily described in Norman 1991: 339–340. The most significant memoirs of the Finnish activists’ work in Stockholm are those of Herman Gummerus (1927).

great power and a worthy opponent to Russia. The possibility of entering the war as an ally of Germany was seen by Swedish activists such as Adrian Molin, Otto Järte, Rudolf Kjellén, Gösta Mittag-Leffler and others as the opportunity to re-conquer Finland, humiliate Russia and to reclaim Sweden's naturally given leading position in *Norden*. As a side issue, the question of the Baltic provinces' possible reunification with the former motherland also surfaced, but paled in importance with the Finnish and Åland questions.⁸¹ Nevertheless, there was a fundamental commonality between Kesküla and the Swedish activists: a shared dream of heroic Sweden as a future leading power in the Baltic Sea area.

The Swedish activists, building on common anti-Russian and pro-Finnish sentiments, naturally cooperated with Finnish activists who were represented in Stockholm by a substantial exile community. A particularly important aspect of this cooperation were joint attempts to influence Germany.⁸² At the same time, the commonalities between the movements were undermined by some essential differences of opinion, e. g. regarding the outlook on the nature of Finland's post-war political fate, which led to mutual suspicion and accusations.⁸³

There was also at least one Estonian – Aleksander Kesküla – who can be considered an activist, part of the same general movement. Of course, this moniker does not do whole justice to the whole of his aims and activities. But he, too, initially tried to make Sweden join the German cause, carry out its historical mission of liberating Finland and Estonia, and take leadership in some sort of a Swedish-Finnish-Estonian union. In 1916–1917, as he became convinced that Germany would not be successful in the war, he switched his allegiance first to England and then to France, trying to make use of their interests in order to reach similar aims.⁸⁴

Kesküla belonged to the activist network also in a very practical sense, as he resided for long periods of time in Stockholm and kept in touch, at least from the autumn of 1915 onwards, with Finnish and Swedish activists – even though these relationships probably became somewhat strained after his break with Germany.

Another justification for the use of the term “Estonian activism” is that, although rare, there are instances of its attested contemporary use in close connection with Kesküla. For example, the phrase “Estonian activists”

⁸¹ For a much more comprehensive overview of the regionalist aims of Swedish activism, see Kuldkepp 2014 and Oredsson 1993. Their ideas themselves are best exposed in Järte et al 1915. Of memoirs of Swedish activists, the most significant account is that of Adrian Molin: KB, Adrian Molins efterlämnade papper. L0046:16A, “Aktivismens historia 1914–1917” (1932).

⁸² Germany actively cooperated with both movements, not least through German diplomatic representatives in Sweden (but not including the minister of Germany for the most part of the war, Hellmuth Lucius von Stöedten). About the contacts of Swedish activists with the Germans, see Jonas 2014, Schubert 1981, Carlgren 1962, Anderson 1965: 154–155. For the same about Finnish activists: Pakaslahti 1933 and 1934, Apunen 1968.

⁸³ See Kihlberg 1961: 21–22, Norman 1991: 339–340.

⁸⁴ For a short overview of Kesküla's political biography during the war, see e. g. Arens 1991: 30–34 and the sub-chapter 1.3 in this volume.

("Estoniska aktivister") was used as a statement of self-identification in the title of a letter stamped with the stamp of Kesküla's "Estonian Bureau" and sent most likely by Kesküla's henchman Oskar Elevant to the Swedish activist Otto Järte in January 1919.⁸⁵

An even more telling example comes from an unpublished book on Russia and the world war, authored by Danish socialist Alfred Kruse, a once-time protégé and "Vertrauensmann" of Kesküla. The manuscript was completed in 1917 in Copenhagen but most of its contents were written in Stockholm in 1915–1916.⁸⁶ Not only remarkable for its wording, the following passage – bearing a more than obvious mark of Kesküla's influence – is also a good contemporary evidence for the truth of my argument about the connection between Estonia's Nordic identity, and the movement of Estonian activist regionalism:

Ingen kan derfor påstå, at det estiske folk og endnu mindre det lettiske har germanske sympatier, endsige – som Rohrbach påstår – tyske af væsen. Med større sandhed kan man påstå, at det estiske folk i de senere år har vist stærke skandinaviske sympatier. Medens den tyske midteuropæiske kultur er den fremherskende i Kurland, har den yngre opadstræbende estiske kultur sluttet sig til den skandinaviske kulturudvikling. Selve tanken om et nærmere forhold mellem Skandinavien og østersjøprovinserne er imidlertid af ældre datum, idet allerede den svenske statsmand Axel Oxenstierna gjorde sig til talsmand for et svensk dobbeltmonarki, bestående af en germansk og en turansk del med hovedstæder i Stockholm og Narva. Snævre krese af det estiske folk har benyttet denne tanke som udgangspunkt for en speciel estisk aktivisme, som har søgt tilknytning til den svensk-finsk-tyske aktivisme – en national separatisme, der har set Estlands fremtid afhængig af oprettelsen af et stort nordisk statsforbund, omfattende foruden Danmark, Norge og Sverige også Finland og de baltiske folk, realiseret gennem et definitivt nederlag for Rusland.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ KB, Otto Järtes efterlämnade papper, L78:5 "Estoniska aktivister till svenska aktivister", 24.01.1919.

⁸⁶ For a detailed study about Kruse's relationship to Kesküla, see Futrell 1963: 119–151.

⁸⁷ "Nobody can therefore claim that the Estonian people, and even less the Latvians have Germanic sympathies, not to speak of being – as Rohrbach claims – German in nature. With more truthfulness, one can claim that the Estonian people has under recent years shown Scandinavian sympathies. Whereas the German Middle-European culture is dominant in Courland, the younger, ambitious Estonian culture has attached itself to the Scandinavian cultural development. The idea itself, of a closer relationship between Scandinavia and the Baltic Sea provinces, is, however, of older origins, as already the Swedish statesman Axel Oxenstierna argued for a Swedish double monarchy, consisting of a Germanic and a Turanian part with capitals in Stockholm and Narva. The narrower circles of the Estonian people have used this idea as a point of departure for a special Estonian activism that has sought contact with the Swedish-Finnish-German activism – a national separatism that sees Estonia's future as dependent on the establishment of a great Nordic federation, encompassing in addition to Denmark, Norway and Sweden also Finland and the Baltic peoples, realized through a definitive defeat of Russia." ABA, Alfred Kruse, Kasse 15. Alfred Kruse. "Rusland og verdenskrigen", pp. 107–108.

As already evident from the quote above, Kesküla brought into the activist movement a uniquely Estonian perspective. What made him unlike most of his deeply German-oriented Swedish and Finnish counterparts, was that although Kesküla was more than willing to cooperate with German authorities, he was at the same time also deeply wary of Germany and especially Baltic Germans, the oppressive nobility in his native land. This meant that he was willing to accept German support when he thought he had common interests with Germany, but easily changed sides when this was no longer the case. Similar opportunism regarding Germany was also characteristic of other Estonian emigrants who cooperated with Kesküla (or, in some cases, can be considered his agents) such as Oskar Elevant and Gustav Paju,⁸⁸ as well as some non-emigrant Estonians visiting Scandinavia who did the same (such as Jakob Ploompuu, featured in Article II).

Estonian activism can thus be defined as a movement and ideology during the First World War, based on the idea of “becoming active” or “taking our fate in our own hands” in order to bring the Estonian question to the international arena, hoping to secure thereby a better national future for Estonians. More concretely, this meant realizing the regionalist project of seeking a political connection to Scandinavia, especially Sweden, instead of either Russia or Germany. Most naturally, however, the notion should be employed to denote such activities of Kesküla and other Estonians with known and stable contacts with Swedish and Finnish activist circles.

What Finnish, Swedish and Estonian activists had in common, justifying the use of the same denominator, and making Kesküla’s project one based on a pooling of nationalisms, were their basic regionalist aspirations: the dream of the demise of Russia and of the new rise of Greater Sweden liberating and taking leadership of its once-lost territories. These regionalist aspirations built on a common stock of geo- and mnemopolitical discursive resources, the most important of which were the common anti-Russian security interests, common historical memories of the previous “Swedish time” in the Baltic Sea area, and the common understanding of the wartime being a chance to make this regionalist dream come true.

In short, what makes activism especially interesting as a kind of regionalism was that it was not a simply Swedish imperialist project. The important mnemopolitical axiom of Sweden’s historically motivated leadership and the geopolitical axiom of the Russian menace were shared across this transnational movement.

As the plans of the activists mostly came to naught, they have not attracted much scholarly attention, but from the perspective of the history and typology of regionalist ideas, they still have certain significance. Above all, activism provides an interesting case-study of how Baltic Sea regionalism could be constructed solely on shared national ambitions, subsequently taking on a transnational significance. Swedish *stormaktsdrömmar* (“great power dreams”),

⁸⁸ About Elevant and Paju, see Jaanson 2003a.

Finnish ambitions of liberation from Russia, and Estonian memories of “the good old Swedish times” all came together in the shared image of the future post-war Baltic Sea region, consolidated and led by the heroic Sweden.

I.6 General Conclusions and Reflections

In the present overview, I have stated the aims of my study and have introduced and summarized the three articles which form the main part of my thesis. I have also extensively outlined my theoretical assumptions and arguments, in the expectation that this would make my study a coherent whole and be useful in future work.

I hope I have been able to convincingly demonstrate the connection between the two themes of my dissertation – Estonian Nordic identity and Estonian activist regionalism – and, what is perhaps not altogether trivial, have convincingly accounted for the existence of these phenomena themselves.

The format of a dissertation based on articles, published over several years, makes it by nature difficult to achieve very tight integration of its constituent parts – at least not without very extensive (and perhaps not altogether necessary) meta-commentary. At the same time I still think that it has its obvious merits (better distribution and availability of the articles; more varied feedback to the author already before the submission of the thesis), which I hope will have outweighed this disadvantage.

The more particular conclusions of my study can be worded as follows.

During the decades previous to the World War, idea of Estonian Nordic identity developed and acquired importance as an integral part of the discourse of Estonian nationalism. It had both cultural and political implications which later made possible its use as a region-building resource in the regionalist project of Aleksander Kesküla.

The regionalist project of Kesküla, intended to result in the creation of a strong Nordic federation including Estonia and led by Sweden, gave political (if only paradiplomatically so) expression to the idea of Estonian Nordic identity. In this thesis, this is exemplified by a study of the “Grundbesitzer episode”.

The suspicious nature of Kesküla’s activities during the war, as well as the issues of legal incompatibility between protodiplomatic and paradiplomatic ways of doing politics, led to him being disowned by the first Estonian foreign delegation in 1918 and a sharp split created between him and other Estonian politicians.

Due to the conflict with the foreign delegation – and also because the end of the war ended the unique situation that had allowed him to gain any political influence in the first place – Kesküla’s regionalist project ultimately failed. This, however, does not mean there have not been or would not be any more attempts for Estonia to “gravitate towards Sweden”. On the contrary, the Scandinavian-oriented regionalist aspirations of Estonians can be expected to continue as long as Estonian nationalism persists.

As stated in the beginning of this overview, however, these conclusions are not exhaustive. Although I touch upon their main points, my dissertation is not a full empirical study of either the Scandinavian theme in Estonian nationalism, or the political activities of Kesküla and the movement of Estonian activist regionalism in World War I. Its focus is above all theoretical and preparatory; it presents case studies rather than a comprehensive treatment; and it facilitates further inquiry into the questions it raises, rather than providing definitive answers.⁸⁹

Therefore – more important than the particular conclusions that can be drawn on the basis of my articles – I would consider the main result of my work to be the theoretical construction I have developed (1.5.1–1.5.3). There, the themes of nationalism, regionalism, practical region-building and activist regionalism as a transnational movement are related to each other in a way that has come into being in constant dialogue with my empirical research, is uniquely crafted for my purposes, and will doubtlessly be useful and applicable in the future.

I would like to conclude by expressing my hope that this thesis will contribute towards a better understanding of the underlying causes and effects of an Estonian-Nordic discourse, especially in the context of World War I, but also in a wider sense, leading on to more curiosity in and more research about the more imaginative aspects of Estonian nationalism, and – last but not least – more suspicion against the parochialism of the present.

⁸⁹ There is much indeed that could be added to my analysis of the Scandinavian connection in Estonian nationalism (Article I), especially in regards to better contextualization vis-à-vis the Finnish connection (as well as Estonian attitudes towards Russians and Germans). The same holds true about the short “Grundbesitzer episode” analyzed in Article II, which is but a small slice of the whole of Kesküla’s regionalist activities during the war. Finally, even the conflict between Kesküla and the Estonian foreign delegation (Article III) needs some additional treatment. What I present in my article, is merely the delegation’s side of the story. Many of my statements there about Kesküla’s actions and motivation are still conjectural, and must be corroborated in future work.

I.7 References

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2.ARTICLES

3. SUMMARY IN ESTONIAN

Eesti kaldub Rootsi poole: põhjamine identiteet ja aktivistlik regionalism Esimeses maailmasõjas

Doktoritöö peamine eesmärk on selgitada seoseid selle kahe uurimisobjekti vahel, milleks on Eesti põhjamine identiteet ja Esimese maailmasõja aegne Eesti aktivistlik regionalism. Täpsemalt selgitades on tegemist uurimusega sellest, kuidas Eesti põhjamine identiteet varase Eesti rahvusluse osana välja kujunes (Artikkel I), millise poliitilise väljundi see leidis Aleksander Kesküla ja teiste eesti aktivistide tegevuses Esimese maailmasõja ajal (Artikkel II) ja lõpuks, kuidas Kesküla maailmasõjaaegne “emigrandiintriig” jäi lõimimata tekkiva Eesti Vabariigi välispoliitikasse ja diplomaatiasse, mis hakkas välja kujunema aastatel 1917–1918 (Artikkel III).

Artiklites, mis doktoritöö moodustavad, antakse neile spetsiifilistele küsimustele üksikasjalikud vastused. Ent töö teine, vähemalt sama oluline tulemus on vastavate küsimuste formuleerimine ise: faktilise ja tõlgendusliku aluse rajamine, mis muudab need asjakohasteks ja vastatavateks. Seetõttu on suurem osa doktoritöö kokkuvõtvast avaartiklist pühendatud küll otseselt artiklitel põhineva, kuid siinkohal paremini ühtlustatud teoreetilise raamistiku kirjeldusele, mis muudab eksplitsiitseks autori teoreetilised eeldused ja annab võimaluse sarnast uurimistööd tulevikus kergema vaevaga jätkata. Benedict Andersoni, Anthony D. Smithi, Marko Lehti, Andrew Hurrelli, Iver B. Neumanni ja mitmete teiste rahvuslus- ja regionalismiteoreetikute töödest inspireeritud mõistete seas, mille üle seal arutletakse, on natsionalism (rahvuslus), regionalism, praktiline regiooni-konstrueerimine ja aktivistlik regionalism. Neid mõisteid seostatakse omavahel viisil, mis on kohandatud just käesoleva teema ja uurimisobjektide analüüsi tarbeks.

Töös kasutatud metodoloogiline lähenemine kujutab endast kombinatsiooni poliitilisest- ja kultuuriajaloost, mis tähendab, et poliitilisi arenguid on püütud seletada kultuuriliste faktorite kaudu ja vastupidi. Uuenduslik on püüe mõista Aleksander Kesküla ja teiste Eesti aktivistide Esimese maailmasõja aegset poliitilist tegevust varase Eesti rahvusluse ühe aspekti – Eesti põhjamaise identiteedi – väljendusena. Ühtlasi on sama identiteeti töös vaadeldud kui varase Eesti rahvusluse jaoks ülimalt olulist, lausa olemuslikku joont, mida pole ka tagasivaates kohane kõrvale heita tühja fantaasia või soovmõtlemisena (vt Artikkel I).

Nii teoreetilise kui empiirilise suunitlusega uurimistöö varal (suur osa doktoritööst põhineb varem teaduslikult käsitlemata või vähekaasitletud arhiivimaterjalidel) on käesolevas uurimuses näidatud, et dissertatsiooni kahte uurimisobjekti, Eesti põhjamaist identiteeti ja Esimese maailmasõja aegset Eesti aktivistlikku regionalismi võib vaadelda sama diskursuse kahe arenguetapina, kusjuures aktivism kujutas endast varasema diskursuse kitsamat, poliitiliselt radikaliseerunud järge. Ühtlasi on juhitud tähelepanu nende väheuuritud nähtuste olemasolule üldse ja tõstetud esile nende ajaloolist tähtsust, seda eriti

nn. mitte-presentistlikust vaatenurgast. Viimane tähendab seda, et kuigi Kesküla ja teiste aktivistide Esimese maailmasõja aegsed plaanid ei viinud tingimata konkreetsete tulemusteni, pakuvad need siiski huvi näitena varase Eesti rahvusluse poliitilisest kujutlusvõimest ja ambitsioonidest.

Töö sisu ja selle tulemusena tehtud kitsamaid järeldusi võib kokku võtta järgnevalt.

Esimesele maailmasõjale eelnenud aastakümnetel kujunes Eesti rahvusliku diskursuse ühe keskse osana välja Eesti põhjamaise identiteedi idee. Artiklis I on väidetud, et selle idee päritolu ja olulisust on kõige paremini võimalik seletada varase Eesti rahvusluse sisemise dünaamika ja selles kasutatud „etniliste komponentide“ olemuse kaudu. Eriti tähtsat rolli selle tekkes mängis rahvalik müüt „vanast heast Rootsi ajast“, mis 20. sajandi algusaastatel integreeriti varasesse Eesti rahvuslikku ajalookirjutusse. Ajalooteostes hakati kujutama „vana head Rootsi aega“ mnemopoliitiliselt, hariduse ja õigluse ajastuna, mil asutati koole, levis kirjaoskus ning eesti talupojad olid varasemast paremini kaitstud oma isandate, baltisaksa mõisahärrade omavoli eest. See Eesti põhjamaisuse idee, mida konstrueeriti ajalookirjutuse kaudu, oli eeskätt kultuuriline ning põhines arusaamal, et Rootsi – mitte aga baltisakslaste esivanemad – oli olnud Eesti alade tõeline *Kulturträger*, ning see positiivne Rootsi pärand oli eestlaste meeles ja vaimus juba 17. sajandist peale kuidagi püsima jäänud.

Eesti põhjamaisuse ideel olid samas ka oma poliitilised aspektid. Juba prenatsionaalsetes rahvajuttudes ja muistendites Rootsi aja kohta on näha teatavat prohvetlikkust: lootust, et kunagised vanad head ajad tulevad uuesti tagasi. Kui see prohvetlikkus integreeriti varasesse Eesti rahvuslusse, kombineerus see ühtlasi samal ajal tekkiva geopoliitilise mõtlemisega, mis kaldus kontseptualiseerima eestlaste maad ohtliku piirialana Lääne ja Ida vahel, „teiste rahvaste jalus“. Selles kontekstis nähti Rootsit ainsa riigina läbi ajaloo, mis oli eestlasi aidanud, ning millele eestlased võisid võib-olla loota ka tulevikus, kuivõrd oli arvata, et Rootsi peab jätkuvalt oluliseks oma revanšistlikke huve Läänemere idakaldal.

Kirjeldatud idee implikatsioonid Eesti rahvusliku tuleviku seisukohalt olid ilmsed: Eesti eelistatuim rahvuslik siht pidi olema Põhjasõjas kaotatud Eesti-Skandinaavia ühenduse taasloomine (tasub märkimist, et selleks sihiks ei olnud vähemalt kuni 1917 aastani Eesti rahvuslik omariiklus, mida peeti ilmselt täiesti ebarealistlikuks).

Need Eesti põhjamaisuse idee poliitilised aspektid said muutuda mingikski reaalpoliitiliseks alternatiiviks aga alles Esimese maailmasõja puhkedes, kui rahvuslastele avanes esmakordselt tõsiseltvõetav väljavaade, et juhul, kui Venemaa sõjas lüüa saaks, võiks sealsetel rahvusvähemustel, sh eestlastel, tekkida võimalus vihatud emamaast lahku lüüa. Rahvuslikult meeletatud eestlastele olnuks samas veelgi enam vastumeelne Venemaa lüüasaamise loogiline tagajärg: Läänemereprovintside annekteerimine Saksamaa poolt, mille heaks tegid tõhusat propagandat eksiilis viibivad baltisakslaste esindajad.

See tähendas, et Eesti rahvuslike ringkondade enamik jäi sõja ajal passiivseks ega püüdnud mõjutada selle tulemusi, näiteks Venemaa vaenlastega

koostööd otsides. Ent leidis ka üksikuid rahvuslasi, kes arvasid, et olukorda tuleb aktiivselt ära kasutada. Nende seas silmpaistvaim oli 1905. aasta revolutsiooni ajal tuntuks saanud, hiljem Venemaalt Šveitsi põgenenud Aleksander Kesküla. Kesküla pidas Venemaa sõjas lüüasaamist paratamatuks ja vajalikuks, kuid arvas, et Saksamaad on võimalik veenda eestlastega asustatud alasid mitte annekteerima, vaid hoopis respektierima eestlaste Skandinaavia-sõbralikke huvisid. See tähendas, et Saksamaa pidanuks Eestile võimaldanud mingit laadi autonoomia unioonis saksasõbraliku Rootsiga.

Juba sõja algusjärgus võttis Kesküla ühendust Saksa diplomaatiliste ringkondadega ning asus Saksamaal ja Rootsis tegema propagandat ja looma kontakte oma plaani teostamise heaks. Oma esmaste eesmärkidena nägi Kesküla ette revolutsiooniliste meeleolude õhutamist Venemaal, mis pidanuks kergendama Rootsi sõttaastumist Saksamaa poolel ning ühist Saksa-Rootsi rünnakut üle eestlastega asustatud territooriumite Venemaa pealinna suunas. Eestis oleks selle tulemusena pidanud algama Rootsi okupatsioon, mis pärast sõja lõppu viinuks eelpool mainitud püsiva poliitilise ühenduse, tugeva põhjamaise föderatsiooni loomiseni. Sinna oleksid pidanud lisaks Eestile ja Rootsile kuuluma ka Soome ja teised Põhjamaad. Põhjustel, mida on töös lähemalt selgitatud, nimetan ma Kesküla poliitilist projekti „Eesti aktivistlikuks regionalismiks”.

Kesküla sõjaaegses propagandas oli äärmiselt tähtis koht Eesti põhjamaisuse temaatikal, sh viidetakse eestlaste hulgas levinud rootsisõbralikele meeleoludele ning Eesti ning Rootsi ühistele Vene-vastastele geopoliitilistele huvidele. Pole põhjust kahelda Kesküla siiruses neid seisukohti väljendades; minu hinnangul oli ta vähemalt selles osas samavõrra ehtne eesti rahvuslane, kui tema poliitilised vastased nagu Tõnisson (kes 1917. aastal mõnevõrra sarnaste Põhja Liidu-plaanidega avalikkuse ette tuli).

Käesolevas dissertatsioonis on Keskülale iseloomulike retooriliste strateegiate näiteks toodud nn. Grundbesitzeri episood 1916. aastast (vt Artikkel II, mille pikem eestikeelne kokkuvõte on leitav artikli enda lõpust), Selle käigus tegi Kesküla koostööd teise eestlase, umbes sarnasel eesmärgil 1916. aasta kevadel salaja Rootsi saabunud Tallinna kirjestaja ja raamatukaupmehe Jakob Ploompuuga. Ploompuu tegevus on ühtlasi ilmekaks näiteks, et Eesti aktivistlik regionalism ei piirdunud ainult eksiilpoliitik Kesküla ja tema üksikute lähemate emigrantidest kaastööliste ringkonnaga, vaid sarnased meeleolud olid vähemalt mingil määral levinud ka Eestis.

Sõja vältel vahetas Kesküla mitu korda poolt, muutis eesmäärke ja taktikat, muretses uusi ja hülgas vanu koostööpartnereid. Sõja jooksul suutis ta saavutada nii Saksa kui Entente'i diplomaatilistes ringkondades suhteliselt mõjuka positsiooni, kuid see sai võimalikuks ainult tänu sõja ajal valitsenud erakordsetele oludele ning sõja lõppedes osutus Kesküla tegevus jätkusuutmatuks. 1918. aasta alguses, kui Skandinaaviasse jõudsid tekkiva Eesti Vabariigi esimesed ametlikud välisesindajad eesotsas Jaan Tõnissoniga, viis Kesküla sõjaaegse tegevuse kahtlane maine, nagu ka õiguslik kokkusobimatus tema paradiploomaatilise tegevuse ja välisdelegatsiooni protodiplomaatiliste sammude vahel, viisid selleni, et

teised Eesti poliitikud ütlesid temast lahti (pikemalt selle kohta vt eestikeelsest Artiklist III). Edaspidi sai Keskülast eluaegne Eesti Vabariigi vaenlane.

Kesküla suurejooneline poliitiline projekt seega kokkuvõttes ebaõnnestus. Sellegipoolest kujutab tema tegevus endast huvitavat näidet varaste (Eesti rahvusliku iseseisvuse väljakuulutamisele eelnenud) paradiplomaatiliste sammude kohta, mille eesmärgiks oli edendada Eesti rahvuslikke huve. Viimaseid pidas Kesküla loomulikult „põhjamaisteks”. Tema regionalistliku projekti mõistmine on oluline, et paremini mõista varase Eesti rahvusluse ideoloogiat. Samuti tuleb juhtida tähelepanu asjaolule, et Kesküla projekti kultuuriline baas eksisteerib jätkuvalt: Eesti põhjamaisuse idee elab edasi. Hilisemast ajast võib tuua palju teisi näiteid Eesti soovist „kalduda Rootsi poole”.

4. APPENDIX: THE GRUNDBESITZER TEXTS

A description and analysis of the following texts is found in Article II in the present volume, which should also be consulted for information about questions of source criticism (see Article II, especially pp. 144–146).

Underlining, as well as handwritten marginal notes (most likely added by Kesküla, as evident from handwriting) are retained and indicated in the text. My own comments are formatted in italics and added between brackets.

4.1 An die “Neutrale Friedenskonferenz” in Stockholm

Kungliga Biblioteket, Otto Järtes Efterlämnade Papper, L78:5

Der Krieg hat bereits lange genug gedauert, um aus dem Kräfteverhältnis der Beteiligten ungefähr berechnen zu können, wie sein Ende sich herausstellen würde. Alle Anzeichen deuten darauf hin, dass die gegenwärtige Situation sich nicht mehr viel ändern kann. Die Zentralmächte können wohl noch siegend vorwärtsdringen, können vielleicht Paris und Petersburg einnehmen – jedoch ist es nicht denkbar, dass sie die vereinigten Kräfte der Entente völlig besiegen können – etwa so, wie man in früheren Kriegen den Gegner vollständig niederwerfen konnte. Zur Zeit haben es die Zentralmächte mit viel stärkeren Gegnern zu tun, als am Anfange des Krieges, und wenn auch die Russen noch viel mehr nach dem Osten und die Franzosen nach dem Westen sich zurückziehen, so bleiben sie doch noch widerstand fähig, da sie hinter ihrer Front ununterbrochen neue Kräfte zuziehen können, während die Zentralmächte von ihrer Basis sich entfernen müssen, was ihre Lage nicht erleichtert.

Anderseits wieder, wenn sich das Kriegsglück der Entente zuwenden würde, so dass sie so stark würden, dass sie die Offensive der Zentralmächte zum Stillstand bringen oder aber die Zentralmächte zurückdrängen konnten – so kann man doch niemals dieses Uebergewicht als so gross annehmen dass es wirklich die deutsche Kraft völlig vernichten könnte. Wir können es uns vorstellen, dass der Deutsche im Verzweiflungskampfe der Defensive nicht weniger geschickt sein würde, als in der siegesbegeisterten Offensive. So konnten wir aus den bisherigen Erfahrungen schliessen, dass einen entscheidenden Sieg keine der kriegführenden Seiten zu erhoffen hat und dass vielleicht beide Seiten bereits selber zu dieser Ansicht gekommen sind, dass jedoch die Kampfeskunst es ihnen nicht gestattet, andere davon irgendwie ahnen zu lassen.

Wir können glauben, dass alle kämpfenden Völker von der fruchtbaren Kraftanspannung erschöpft sind – ausser etwa England, welches vielleicht am eigenen Leibe, im eigenen Lande am wenigsten die Schmerzen des Weltkrieges zu spüren bekommen hat und deshalb vielleicht noch Jahre lang aushalten konnte. Doch soll England bedenken, dass seine Verbündeten, Russland oder Frankreich von der Schwäche übermannt werden können vom Bündnisvertrage

zurückzutreten – um so mehr, falls von den Zentralmächten günstige Angebote gemacht werden.

Gerade eine derartige Wendung der Dinge wäre für England die schlimmste, und dazu sollte auch in England nicht mehr der Wille fehlen je eher desto besser einen ehrenvollen Frieden zu schliessen.

Der ehrenvollste Frieden wäre aber derjenige, welcher im weitesten Umfange dem Gerechtigkeitsgefühl der Völker entsprechen würde.

Der letzte grössere Krieg in Europa, der russisch-türkische Krieg, wurde so beendet, dass die eroberten Länder nicht der Sieger erhielt, sondern die Eingeborenen der okkupierten Länder. Der Sieger erhielt von dem Kriege nicht eine der Kraftverausgabung entsprechende Entschädigung. Diese Form des Friedenschlusses wurde damals weit in der ganzen Welt als recht und billig anerkannt.

Nun hat der Krieg bereits so viele Kraftanstrengungen gekostet, dass auch von den kämpfende Seiten kaum jemand auf eine entsprechende Entschädigung hoffen dürfte. Und was die eroberten Länder betrifft, so gehören sie nach der oben angeführten Rechtsauffassung den Eingeborenen des Landes.

Deutschland und seine Verbündeten sollten ihre eroberten Ländereien den Völkern dieser betreffenden Ländern überlassen, mit der Bedingung, dass auch alle andere Staaten ihre eroberten Länder den Eingeborenen überlassen werden. Das bedeutet Home rule für alle unterdrückten Völkerschaften.

Die Mächte haben bisher die unterworfenen Völkerschaften blos[s] unterdrückt und ausgebeutet. Sie haben den unterdrückten Völkern gegenüber nur Rechte gehabt, aber von nun an sollten sie denselben gegenüber auch die Pflichten zu erfüllen beginnen. Jeder Staat, der unterworfenen Fremdvölker hat, soll ihnen ein vollständiges Recht auf die Bildung garantieren (Kulturrecht), d. h. dass jeder Staat gegen die unterworfenen Völkerschaften kulturell verpflichtet ist (Kulturpflicht).

Jedes unterworfenen Volk, so oder klein es auch sei, soll in den Grenzen seiner Nationalität ebensoviele eigensprachliche Staatsinstitutionen, Gerichte, Schulen etc. mit den entsprechenden Beamten und Funktionären haben, wie es proportionell die herrschende Nationalität besitzt.

Der Staat ist verpflichtet für jede unterworfenen Nationalität ebensoviele Professuren im Vergleich zu seiner zahlenmässigen Grösse zu schaffen, wie es die herrschende Nationalität besitzt; ebensoviel auf die nationale Kunst und sonstige Kulturinstitutionen, wie es proportionell zum Besten der herrschenden Nationalität geschieht.

In den national gemischten Gebieten wird nach der Majorität verfahren, jedoch besitzt die Minorität das Recht, sich in besondere Gemeinden zusammenzuschliessen, welche das Recht auf eine proportionelle Staatsunterstützung haben.

Die Organisation der Sache wird einem internationalen Gericht übergeben oder es wird den gegenwärtig neutralen Staaten das Recht der Kontrolle überlassen

Eine Behauptung unter welcher Begründung sie auch auftreten sollte, als ob die Kleinvölker nicht genügend lebensfähig wären, gilt nicht; das beweist am klarsten die kulturelle Entwicklung des finnischen Volkes im Laufe eines überraschend kurzen Zeitraumes.

Gegenwärtig wird von den unterworfenen Nationalitäten kulturell eine unverhältnismässige Kräfteanspannung gefordert. In Russland z. B. und auch in so manchen andern Staaten können die Kinder der unterdrückten Nationalitäten weder das Einmaleins noch sonst irgend eine andere Kenntnis erwerben, bevor sie nicht die Sprache der herrschenden Nationalität erlernt haben – eine Tatsache, welche für die unterworfenen Völkerschaften eine schreckliche Kraftvergeudung und Hemmung der kulturellen Entwicklung bedeutet. Ausserdem wird den kleinen Nationalitäten ein furchtbares Unrecht bei der Rechtsprechung in den Gerichten des herrschenden Volkes, in den Kunstbestrebungen etc. zugefügt.

Den unselbständigen Kleinvölkern muss im kulturellen Konkurrenzkampfe die Bewegungsfreiheit für eine freie Konkurrenz auf kulturellem Gebiete zugestanden werden, in dem alle kräftevergeudenden Zwangsverpflichtungen gegenüber der herrschenden Sprache verschwinden müssen. In den Volksschulen sei der Lernzwang der fremden herrschenden Sprachen verboten, in den Mittelschulen aber sei die Sprache der herrschenden Nationalität ein ähnliches obligatorisches Lehrfach wie die sonstigen unumgänglichen neuen Sprachen.

Man stelle sich doch vor, was die Erlernung einer fremden Sprache als Arbeitsleistung in Geld umgerechnet pro Kopf ausmacht und man summiere diese Kraftanstrengungen für die Millionen von Personen, welche zwangsweise eine fremde Sprache erlernen müssen – und zwar zum Zweck des Wiedervergessens, da nur ein verschwindend geringer Prozentsatz der bodenständigen Bevölkerung in der Richtung des erlernten Sprachgebietes auswandert oder diese Sprache sonstwie nützlich anzuwenden in der Lage ist, dies um so mehr als die Volksschule ja doch keine ausreichende Kenntnis der fremden Sprache zu geben in der Lage ist.

Erst wenn man sich diese ganze unnütze Kraftvergeudung in Geld umgerechnet vorstellt, erhält man ein ungefähres Bild davon, unter wie schweren Lasten die unterworfenen Völker seufzen müssen und ist man vielleicht auch in der Lage zu verstehen, warum bei den unterdrückten Völkern auch an einen eventuellen Ausgang des Weltkrieges Hoffnungen knüpft, von diesem Drucke befreit zu werden.

Die Aufstellung dieser Forderungen in die Friedensbedingungen würde die allergrössten Verpflichtungen Russland auferlegen; was vom Standpunkte der bisherigen Entwicklung der kriegserischen Ereignisse ganz natürlich wäre, da Russland nun einmal im Kriege die grössten Niederlagen erhalten hat, in nationaler und politischer Hinsicht den grössten Unterdrücker darstellt und in kultureller Beziehung den allerminderwertigsten Rang unter den grossen imperialistischen Militärmächten einnimmt.

Deutschland würde zum Lohne dafür die Sympatien aller befreiten Nationalitäten Russlands erwerben. Obwohl Deutschland den Krieg nicht für diesen

Zweck geführt hat, so würden diese Sympatien der deutschen Industrie und dem Handel unter allen Nationalitäten Russlands die Wege öffnen und dadurch auch materiellen Ersatz für die Kriegsausgaben bringen.

Oesterreich würde die Ehre gewinnen, Russland gezwungen zu haben, seine Nationalitätenverhältnisse nach oesterreichischem Muster ordnen zu müssen.

In politischer Hinsicht würden die beiden Zentralmächte einen breiten neutralen Ländergürtel zwischen sich und den aggressiven gross-russischen Imperialismus und Militarismus gewonnen haben, welcher letztere nicht nur Süd-, Mittel-, und Nord-Europa, sondern über Skandinavien bereits auch die Britischen Inseln bedroht und infolgedessen unseren Weltteil in der nächsten Zukunft neuen kriegesischen Schrecken entgegenführen kann.

England proklamierte sich am Anfange des Krieges für den Vorkämpfer für die Freiheit der kleinen Nationalitäten. In der obigen Form würde das Selbstbestimmungsrecht der Nationalitäten auf breitester Grundlage zur Geltung gebracht worden, womit England einverstanden sein könnte, ebenso wie das republikanische Frankreich. Mit dieser Formulierung der Friedensbedingungen würde auch nicht historische Tradition der Friedensbedingungen berührt werden, wonach dem kulturell Rückständigsten die grössten Einbussen zu Teil werden.

Auf diese Weise würden die Fragen Polens, Finlands, der früheren schwedischen Ostseeprovinzen – Esthland, Livland, Ingermanlands – und Elsass-Lothringens ihrer Lösung einen guten Teil näher gebracht werden; es würden auch Richtlinien für eine endgültige Lösung der diversen Balkanfragen gegeben sein.

Dem deutschen Volke muss eine seiner Kraft und Kultur entsprechende Stellung gegeben werden, jedoch nicht auf Kosten der Territorien der angrenzenden kleinen Nationen.

Die deutsche Industrie und Handel haben in den letzten Jahrzehnten glänzende Beweise ihrer Entwicklungsfähigkeit gegeben; infolgedessen muss auch der deutsche Arbeiter die Möglichkeit erhalten auch fernerhin entsprechend seiner Arbeitsleistung sich entwickeln zu können und dafür einen gebührenden Verdienst zu erlangen. Derartige Zollgrenzen, welche die deutsche Industrie mit Erstickungstode bedrohen sollen, sind undenkbar, da in einem solchen Falle ein Frieden gar keinen Zweck hätte und der deutsche Arbeiter gezwungen wäre, den Krieg bis zum Tode oder bis zum Endsiege weiter zu führen. Ein Volk, das von seiner Lebenskraft und Entwicklungsvermögen die besten Beweise geliefert hat, kann doch nicht mit dem Erstickungstode bedroht werden und zwar blos für das Verbrechen dass bei ihm in gleichem Masse mit der Arbeitsgeschicklichkeit auch die kriegesische Geschicklichkeit gewachsen ist und dass es die Hindernisse seiner weiteren Entwicklung genau wie es bisher auch alle andern Völker getan haben, auf die archaische Weise mit den Mordsinstrumenten aus dem Wege räumen will.

Daraus folgt, dass man Deutschland beim Friedensschlusse Handelsverträge geben muss, welche seiner Entwicklung entsprechend sind. [Marginal note: D. h. auf Kosten Russlands!]

Ebenso muss Deutschland diejenigen afrikanischen Kolonien zurückerhalten, deren tropischen Produkte für seine Industrie unumgänglich sind.

Dafür tritt Deutschland von Belgien zurück, wo schon vorher die Volksdichte ausserordentlich gross war und woher das deutsche Volk keinen neuen Entwicklungsspielraum für sich erwarten kann.

Deutschland gibt Polen die Freiheit wieder und überlässt die Ostseeländer ihren Ureinwohnern: den Esten und den Litauern. Aus diesen Gebieten haben viele Eingeborene wegen der verkehrten russischen Agrarpolitik auswandern müssen, welche gerne in die Heimat zurückkehren wollen. Auf jeden Fall ist das ein unerhörtes Unrecht, wenn man die Urbevölkerung welche ihr Land liebt, zwangsweise zur Massenauswanderung verurteilen will, wie dies die russische Regierung in Kurland, Litauen, Polen und der Ukraina tat und wie es einige politische Kreise Deutschlands in den Ostseeländern zu tun projektieren.

Es erscheint unmöglich, einen Landerwerb Deutschlands auf Kosten anderer Völker zuzulassen, während gegen eine Erweiterung der industriellen und kommerziellen Rechte Deutschlands in fremden Ländern weniger einzuwenden wäre. Damit hätte dann Deutschland die Gelegenheit seine kulturelle Ueberlegenheit immer in freier Ko[n]kurrenz zu bestätigen.

England hat die deutsche Handelsflotte beinahe vernichtet und damit seinen Konkurrenten im Seehandel stark geschwächt. Die Engländer sollten sich mit dem gehabten Erfolg zufrieden geben und durch die Geschicklichkeit ihres Seehandels in der Zukunft beweisen, ob sie immer noch der ersten Stelle wert sind.

Und während sich nun der Krieg überhaupt bankrott erklärt hat, ist es klar, dass wie er auch enden sollte, der Krieg auch dem Sieger nicht mehr eine den Aufwendungen entsprechende Entschädigung bringen kann – wie es wenigstens noch in den Raubkriegen einer älteren Zeit der Fall war, wo der Krieg wenigstens den Sieger für seine Auslagen entschädigte. Daher müssen in die Friedensunterhandlungen einbezogen werden: die allgemeine Aufhebung des Krieges, die Ausscheidung der Militärbudgete aus den Staatsvoranschlägen und die Bildung eines allgemeinen Schiedsgerichtes.

Als Ausgangspunkt der Friedensunterhandlungen könnte dann vielleicht dienen:

1. Die Garantie des Selbstbestimmungsrechtes oder zum Mindesten einer Home rule für alle unterdrückten Völker, und zwar mit dem Zusatzw dass eine Aenderung nur mit der allgemeinen Zustimmung der Mächte möglich ist. [*Marginal note: Zu 90% gegen Russland gerichtet*]
2. Passende Handelsverträge für Deutschland; die Befreiung der Meere und des internationalen Handels.
3. Afrikanische Kolonien für Deutschland.
4. Restitution Belgiens, Serbiens und Montenegros mit Berücksichtigung der Vlämischen, der Makedonischen und der Albanischen Fragen. [*Marginal note: schöne Restitution!*]
5. In Elsass-Lotringen und Polen entscheidet die Stimmenmehrheit unter neutraler Kontrolle, über die Staatszugehörigkeit der Bevölkerung.

6. Die Aufhebung aller nationaler und religiöser Unterdrückung und die Entscheidung solcher Fragen und Reibereien nicht mehr als innerpolitische sondern internationale Angelegenheit.
7. Die allgemeine Abrüstung, Abschaffung der Militärbudgete und Schaffung eines höheren internationalen Schiedsgerichte.

Die unterdrückten Völker ersuchen Sie, Ihre einflussreiche Stellung und vorhandenen Kräfte für einen Frieden auf angedeuteter Grundlage zu gebrauchen – gegenwärtig oder wenigstens späterhin wenn, nach dazu eine passende Gelegenheit finden würde.

Der obige Vorschlag kommt aus Estland, wo die Bevölkerung bereits seit 200 Jahren durch den Druck einer fremden und barbarischen Macht in ihrer kulturellen, nationalen und sozialen Entwicklung verhindert und in Fesseln gehalten wird. Da die Heimat dieses zähen und lebensfähigen Volkes die früheren schwedischen Ostseeprovinzen mit der Verwandlung in einen Kriegsschauplatz bedroht werden, so hat der Unterzeichnete, ungeachtet der Schwierigkeiten und Gefahren mit denen die Ueberreichung dieser Zeilen verbunden ist, sich persönlich an Ihre Organisation gewandt, um durch Ihre Vermittlung die Bestrebungen, Leiden und Wünsche seiner Mitbürger mitzuteilen.

Stockholm, März 1916.

[Following text handwritten, A. Kesküla's hand:]

Unterzeichnet "Ein estnischer Grundbesitzer und Mittelständler"

Von dem Betreffenden im März der amerikanischen Friedenskonferenz in Stockholm persönlich überreicht. Der Verfasser hielt einen erläuternden Vortrag in einer spez. Sitzung der „Friedenskonferenz“, wobei er die russische Unterdrückungspolitik in den früh. schwed. Ostseeprovinzen anklagte. „Wir wären bereit das Schicksal Belgiens zu erdulden – nun als Preis für eine nationale Volksschule“, sagte er unter and. gefragt, auf welcher Seite der Kriegsführenden die Sympatien der Bevölkerung der früh. schwed. Ostseeprovinz. wären – auf russ. od. deutscher – erklärte er: „Weder auf seiten Russlands noch auf seiten Deutschlands; die einzige auswärtige Macht, auf deren Seite unsere Sympatien stehen, ist Schweden, der für die Hebung unseren Nationalen, kulturellen, sozialen Lage viel getan hat. Die „Neutrale Friedenskonferenz“ versprach sich der Angelegenheit anzunehmen, die neutr. Länder über die Bestrebungen der Esten zu informieren.

Der vorliegende Bericht ist im engl. übersetzt & nach Amerika geschickt worden.

Der Verfasser, der eine grosse Familie (6 Kinder) und Vermögen im Estland hat, ist geheim über die schwed.-russ. Grenze gekommen u. ebenso wieder zurück gegangen. Er befindet sich nun wieder zu Hause, in folgedessen der Bericht (& die ganze Angelegenheit) ruhig veröffentlicht werden kann.

A. K.

[The following „Beilage“ to this text is found in PAAA: Gesandtschaft Bern 11, Varia III, 1, L248822–4]

II. Beilage.

Anmerkung des Uebersetzers.

Es handelt sich hier um einen esthnischen Grundbesitzer aus den früheren schwedischen Ostseeprovinzen Russlands. Der Betreffende ein Familienvater im reifen Alter (nicht ganz 50 Jahre) – ist in seiner Heimat ein sehr geachteter Mann und hat zu wiederholten Malen bei seinen Mitbürgern nationale und politische Vertrauensposten bekleidet. Die Auffassungen die er in seinem Memorandum kundgibt, vertreten die Ansichten eines grösseren Kreises des esthnischen Mittelstandes, von denen der Betreffende beauftragt wurde diese Denkschrift der Friedenskonferenz zu überreichen. Der Autor der Denkschrift begründete einige Thesen betreffend die nationale Unterdrückung in Russland in einem lä[n]geren mündliche Vortrag vor einem ad hoc versammelten Extra-Sitzung der Konferenz, welche seine Ausführungen mit grosser Sympathie aufnahm. Der rote Faden, der durch die Wünsche und Hoffnungen der unterdrückten Nationalitäten geht ist: 1) Friede. (wofür sollen sie sich eigentlich schlagen?) 2) nicht Friede schlechthin, sondern ein befreiender Friede.

Wie stark der russische Druck auf den unterdrückten Völkerschaften lasten muss, illustriert die Bemerkung, die der Referent einem der Delegierten gegenüber tat, welcher ihn um die Stellung seiner Konnationalen zur deutschen Invasion in Belgien fragte. Der Referent erwiderte wörtlich: „Unsere Unterdrückung ist so gross, dass wir gerne das Schicksal Belgiens auf uns nehmen würden, wenn uns als Preis dafür blos die nationale Schule garantiert werden könnte...“ Da der Mann selber mobiles und immobiles Eigentum in der Stadt und auf dem Lande besitzt, also durch eine Invasion nebst den damit verbundenen Schlachthandlungen immerhin in Mitleidenschaft gezogen werden könnte, ist die geäusserte Meinung sehr bezeichnend für die Unhaltbarkeit der Zustände in Russland. Nach den Sympathien der Bevölkerung gefragt, teilte der Esthländer mit dass dieselben weder den russischen Unterdrückern noch den ev. deutschen Eroberern gehören, die Misswirtschaft des deutsch-baltischen Adels im Lande und die Masslosigkeiten der Alldeutschen in der deutschen Oeffentlichkeit haben bewirkt, dass bei der esthnischen Bevölkerung Deutschland gegenüber ein starkes Misstrauen besteht. Man wünscht jedoch keine „Vernichtung“ Deutschlands und wie der Schlagwörter alles heissen, mit denen die russische Presse überfüllt ist; man befleissigt sich einer aktiven Neutralität gegenüber den Kriegführenden, deren Spitze jedoch verständlicherweise gegen die russische Unterdrückungspolitik gerichtet ist. Von allen auswärtigen Mächten gehören die Sympathien der esthnischen Bevölkerung allein Schweden, dessen grossartige Kultur und Sozialpolitik zum Besten der früheren schwedischen Ostseeprovinzen Esthland, Livland und Ingermanland noch im Volksgedächtnis fortlebt.

Soweit die Ausführungen des Referenten vor der „Neutralen Friedenskonferenz“. Zur Zeit befindet er sich ruhig in seiner Heimat, ohne dass es der russischen Regierung gelungen wäre, seine Reise zu entdecken oder seine Person festzustellen.

Wie man sieht – unter den unterdrückten Völkerschaften Russlands herrscht jedenfalls eine weit nüchternere Auffassung über diesen gegenseitigen Vernichtungskrieg der Grossstaaten als bei der nationalrussischen Oligarchie diverser Parteischattierungen.

Wir dürfen wohl annehmen, dass es weit besser um den Frieden stünde, wenn die Unterdrückten 60% des russischen Nationalitätenstaates den eigenen Willen verwirklichen könnten. Vielleicht wäre uns dann dieser Krieg überhaupt erspart geblieben...

4.2 An die Patrioten Schwedens

Kungliga Biblioteket, Otto Järtes Efterlämnade Papper, L78:5

In den früheren schwedischen Ostseeprovinzen hat man vom Anfange des Weltkrieges an mit grosser Spannung erwartet wann wohl Schweden in den Krieg eingreift. Im Hinblick auf die Bedrohung welche der russische Drang nach dem Atlantischen Ozean mit sich brachte, hielt man es für natürlich dass Schweden einen bessern Moment für die Sicherung seiner Lage nicht mehr erwarten konnte. Und während die Deutschen an der Ostfront die russische Macht brachen, fingen die esthnischen Volksmassen immer lebhafter an alte Sagen und Ueberlieferungen von einer siegreichen Wiederkehr der schwedischen Armeen zu wiederholen und ernst zu nehmen.

So z. B. wird erzählt, dass Karl XII. auf dem Rückzuge aus Livland die Schlitten- oder Wagendeichsel zerbrochen wären. Der König soll nun selber die zerbrochene Deichsel am Wegesrande in die Erde geschlagen haben mit den Worten: „Wenn dieser noch einmal ein Baum wird, dann kommen die schwedischen Armeen nach Livland zurück.“ Wirklich soll das Holz Wurzel geschlagen haben und nun wird an der Landstrasse zwischen Dorpat und Fellin ein riesiger zweihundertjähriger Baum gezeigt, der aus der zerbrochenen Schlitten- oder Wagendeichsel Karl XII. entsprossen sein soll.

Ueberhaupt ist Karl XII. einer der populärsten – wenn nicht die allerpopulärste geschichtliche Persönlichkeit in Esthland.

Eine andere Sage welche gegenwärtig unter dem esthnischen Landvolke eifrig erzählt wird, lautet, dass in der Nähe Hapsals während des grossen nordischen Krieges ein Prophet gelebt habe von welchem man unter anderen Prophezeiungen die folgende auch erzählt: er habe sich ein Haus gebaut welches noch gegenwärtig stehen soll und dabei den Aus[s]pruch getan haben, dass dieses Haus solange stehen wird, wie die russische Herrschaft über dieses Land. Dann käme eine deutsche Herrschaft, welche nur 70 Tage dauern würde und dann würde das Land endlich wieder an Schweden kommen.

Derartige Sagen sind aus der Sehnsucht der Volksmassen heraus nach den früheren besseren Zuständen entstanden. +)

Unter der russischen Herrschaft wurde nämlich der esthnische Bauer in die schlimmste Leibeigenschaft hinuntergedrückt – nach dem als die schwedische Regierung die Lage des Bauernstandes bedeutend erleichtert und gehoben hatte. In der Volksseele dauerten die Erinnerungen an die „gute schwedische Zeit“ fort und diese Erinnerungen waren so lebhaft dass man noch gegenwärtig von irgendwelchem Bauer der in einer abgelegenen Gegend unter besonders günstigen Bedingungen wirtschaftet, den Ausdruck gebraucht: „Nun er hat ja dort noch alte schwedische Rechte.“

Ausser solchen Sagen hat das Volk auch historische Kenntnisse darüber dass in der schwedischen Zeit die Grundlagen der Entwicklung einer esthnischen Kultur gelegt wurden, die ersten Bücher in der esthnischen Sprache wurden auf Kosten des schwedischen Staates gedruckt, während die russische Regierung die esthnische Schule, Litteratur und Kunst auf alle Weise zu hemmen und zu verfolgen sucht. Als charakteristisches Beispiel kann man anführen mit wievielen Schwierigkeiten die Erlaubnis zum Bau des esthnischen Theaters in Reval erlangt wurde; als mit dem Bau begonnen wurde, verlangte man dass die feierliche Grundsteinlegung in russischer Sprache stattzufinden habe, ohne im geringsten danach zu fragen dass das nationale Ehrgefühl der Esthen ebenso zart sein dürfte wie bei Engländern oder Schweden. Infolgedessen musste man natürlich auf die feierliche

+) Beide Sagen sind übrigens lange vor dem Weltkriege aufgezeichnet worden und befinden sich unter den Manuskripten der grossen folkloristischen Sammlung „*Monumenta Estoniae antiquae*“ von Dr. Hurt; sie werden zur Zeit in Helsingfors aufbewahrt. D. Ü.

Grundsteinlegung verzichten obgleich riesige Volksmengen aus allen Teilen des Landes sich zu diesem Zwecke versammelt hatten und alle Vorbereitungen zum Fest getroffen waren. Und diejenige Person, von welcher dieses unerwartete Verbot ausging, war nicht irgends ein ungebildeter Subalternbeamter sondern der Gouverneur von Esthland, also der Repräsentant der russischen Regierung im Lande, der später zum Senator avancierte.

Dieses kleine Beispiel könnte illustrieren wie wenig Gutes die Esthen von der russischen Regierung zu erwarten haben und dass deswegen die Niederlagen der Russen im Weltkriege die Esthen in keiner Weise unangenehm berühren können.

Aber dessen ungeachtet betrachtet man die siegreich vordringenden deutschen Armeen keineswegs als Retter sondern als eine noch grössere Gefahr. Uns ist es bekannt wie die Deutschen mit ihren unterworfenen Nationalitäten in Lothringen, in Schleswig und in Posen umgehen, deswegen wagen auch die allergrössten Optimisten von den Deutschen nichts Gutes zu erwarten.

Ferner hat der deutsch-baltische Adel des Landes dafür gesorgt, dass man die Deutschen als Erbfeinde betrachtet. In Schweden dürfte es nicht unbekannt sein, dass es der deutsch-baltische Adel war der die früheren schwedischen Ostseeprovinzen unter die russische Herrschaft gebracht und zum Dank für diesen

Verrat an unserem Lande, am schwedischen Staat, und daran was man gegenwärtig so oft als europäische Kultur bezeichnet, die Leibeigenschaft in ihrer schlimmsten Form durchführen konnte. Der baltische Adel hat es verstanden dank seiner ausserordentlich engen Beziehungen zur russischen Regierung bis zum heutigen Tage eine privilegierte Stellung zu behaupten, die sich auf derart feudale Vorrechte stützt wie sonst nirgends in Europa. Die grosse Mehrheit unseres Volkes befürchtet, dass mit der deutschen Herrschaft auch die Privilegienwirtschaft des baltischen Adels befestigt wird.

Bisher betrachtete man die Entwicklung der Situation mit der beruhigenden Annahme, dass wenn auch die deutschen Armeen in die früheren schwedischen Ostseeprovinzen einbrechen sollten dann schon auch Schweden zur Sicherung seiner Zukunft am Kriege teilnehmen würde, und wir im Falle eines Sieges, der ja im Hinblick auf die Machtmittel Deutschlands sicher zu sein scheint, eine gerechte und neutrale Regierung bekommen würden.

Im März vorigen Jahren schickte Unterzeichnetet an den schwedischen Generalstab und an Herrn Dr. Sven Hedin eine Denkschrift +) in Bezug darauf was für ein Manifest die schwedische Regierung im Falle eines Krieges in populärer Form an die Bevölkerung der früheren schwedischen Ostseeprovinzen veröffentlichen müsste. (dass Schweden den Krieg nicht begonnen habe um etwa Deutschland zu helfen, sondern dass es dazu wegen der Sicherung seiner Lage und seiner Zukunft gezwungen worden ist und dass in diesem Falle Schweden mit den kleinen Nationalitäten der Ostsee gemeinsame Interessen und gemeinsame Ziele zur Sicherung der nationalen Zukunft hat.)

Nun aber drohen die Deutschen im Frühling bereits über die Düna zu kommen und wir in Esthland haben die Sache so verstanden, dass Schweden nicht entscheidend mitmachen will, und dass die Esthen vielleicht in die Lage kommen werden die verachtete russische Ungerechtigkeit mit der unbeliebten deutschen Herrschaft vertauschen zu müssen. Diese Tatsache ist die Ursache dass wir uns von neuem an Schweden wenden, mit der Ueberzeugung, dass Schweden doch nicht bis zum Ende als passiver Zuschauer bleiben kann, dem es ganz gleich ist, wie sich die Lage in den Ostseeländern gestalten würde. Es kann doch für Schweden unter keinen Umständen gleichgültig sein, wie das Schicksal dieser Völker sich gestalten wird, zu deren Kultur es einmal den Grund gelegt hat. Deswegen wäre es ganz natürlich, dass Sie in dem Falle, wenn die deutschen Armeen in die früheren schwedischen Ostseeprovinzen eindringen würden, Ihren per-

+) mit der Unterschrift: Die Sache selbst.

sönlichen Einfluss und Beziehungen zum Schutz der Esthen gebrauchen würden. In den Wirbeln des Krieges kann im Lande viel geschehen was man nicht immer mit bösem Willen sondern mit Unkenntnis erklären kann. Die oberste Kriegsleitung [*Marginal note: in diesem Falle – die Deutsche*], falls sie richtig orientiert wäre, könnte von sich aus durch Kundgebungen, aufrichtige

Versprechungen und Zusagen viel zur Verminderung der beiderseitigen Missverständnisse beitragen.

Während der Bewegung des Jahres 1905 wurden sowohl von den Deutsch-Balten wie von den Russen falsche Nachrichten und falsche Meinungen über die Esthen in die Welt geschickt. [*Marginal note:* vgl. Bernhard Rives v. Aino Kallas & die bezügl. Veröffentlichungen der Balten] Eine unparteiische Beurteilung hat nicht stattgefunden und niemand im Auslande hat die Esthen verstanden. Dasselbe, nämlich dass man uns nicht richtig verstehen würde, haben wir auch jetzt im Kriegswirbel zu befürchten und deshalb suchen wir unparteiische Hilfe von Schweden, wohin uns die Traditionen die in unsere Volksseele eingewurzelt sind, lenken. Falls Schweden seine Neutralität bis zum Ende des Krieges nicht verlassen wird, so hätte es doch vielleicht hoffentlich bei den Friedensbedingungen mitzureden. Wäre es nicht natürlich, dass Schweden von den Alliierten für seine Neutralität Kompensation verlangt. Schweden hat vielleicht deshalb nicht in den Krieg eingegriffen, weil Russland versprochen hat, seinen Drang nach dem Atlantischen Ozean einzustellen. Wäre es dann nicht natürlich, dass man zum Beweise dieses von Russland eine vollständige Autonomie für alle Kleinvölker verlangt, welche gegenüber der schwedischen Küste wohnen, eine Homerule deren Veränderung nur mit der Zustimmung aller Mächte möglich wäre.

Auch im Falle eines deutschen Sieges dürfte es Schweden nicht gleich sein, was für ein Schicksal die Länder und Völker erwartet, welche mit ihm geschichtliche Zusammenhänge haben. Da wäre es unserer Ansicht nach wieder durchaus natürlich, dass man die früheren schwedischen Ostseeprovinzen nicht bedingungslos Deutschland überlassen sollte, sondern dass die schwedische Regierung während der Friedensunterhandlungen alles macht was möglich, damit den Esthen in ihrem Lande ein möglichst grosses Selbstbestimmungsrecht verbliebe.

Es wäre wohl sicher wegen der schwedischen Interessen selber notwendig, dass seine Seegrenzen nicht von allen Seiten Grossmächten und Schweden irgend welche lebensfähige Völker mit eigenartiger Kultur und eigener Regierungsform bestehen würden.

März 1916

Ein esthnischer Patriot, Grundbesitzer in Esthland.
(Uebersetzung aus dem Esthnischen).

Beilage.

Der Verfasser der vorliegenden Denkschrift war bereits im März 1915 in derselben Angelegenheit in Stockholm, fand aber keinem Anschluss, da er keine Verbindungen hatte. Er soll mit Hilfe eines Uebersetzungsbureaus (!) eine politische Denkschrift verfasst haben welche er per Post an den Kgl. Schwedischen Generalstab und an Herrn Dr. Sven Hedin sandte. Wie der Inhalt dieser Denkschrift in der schwedischen Uebersetzung ausgefallen ist konnte der

Verfasser, welcher Deutsch schlecht, und Schwedisch gar nicht kann, nicht beurteilen, Seinen Namen u Adresse konnte er aus begreiflichen Gründen gleichfalls nicht beifügen. Die betreffende Denkschrift soll er mit den Worten „Die Sache selbst“ unterzeichnet haben. Der Inhalt der Denkschrift ging von der felsenfesten Ueberzeugung der estnischen Landbevölkerung aus, dass die schwedische Kriegserklärung an Russland eine Selbstverständlichkeit und nur noch eine Zeitfrage sei. Sie nahm daher Bezug darauf, was für ein Manifest die Königliche Regierung in diesem Falle in populärer Form an die Bevölkerung der früheren schwedischen Ostseeprovinzen veröffentlichen müsste. (Dass Schweden den Krieg nicht begonnen habe um etwa Deutschland zu helfen, sondern dass es dazu wegen der Sicherung seiner Lage und seiner Zukunft gezwungen worden ist und dass in diesem Falle Schweden mit den kleinen Nationalitäten der Ostsee gemeinsame Interessen und gemeinsame Ziele zur Sicherung der nationalen Zukunft hat).

In der naiven Unbeholfenheit dieses Schrittes spiegelt sich das geschichtliche Elend der vergessenen transbaltischen Irredenta Schwedens – oder wie sie sich selber mit einem lapidaren Ausdruck der älteren Bauerngeneration Esthlands bezeichnet: „Wir sind schwedische Gefangene in Russland“.....

Nicht minder vielleicht spiegelt sich darin das gegenwärtige politische Elend Nord-Europas wieder, dessen führende Macht von seiner welthistorischen Mission – die politische Konsolidation des nord-europäischen Wirtschafts-Kulturkreises – nicht zu wissen und nichts wissen zu wollen scheint.

Der Uebersetzer.

4.3 Entwurf eines politischen Programmes für den Fall eines Einmarsches deutschen Armeen in das Land der Esthen

Kungliga Biblioteket, Otto Järtes Efterlämnade Papper, L78:5

Dass man die siegreichen deutschen Armeen von Seiten der unterdrückten Völkerschaften Russlands nirgends als Retter bejubelt hat, wie man seiner Zeit in ganz Europa die Armeen Napoleon's empfing, dass man im Gegenteil seitens dieser Völkerschaften feindschaftliche Gefühle zeigt; die Ursache dieser dürfte wohl auch der deutschen Armeeführung bekannt sein.

Zu Beginn des napoleonischen Siegeszuges war eine für alle Welt akzeptable Befreiungsparole proklamiert worden, welche ihren Einfluss erst dann verlor, als dahinter der Ehrgeiz und der Eigennutz Napoleon's deutlich sichtbar wurden. Mit dem Siege der deutschen Armeen ist aber der Welt keine grosse Idee proklamiert worden. Im Gegenteil – man hat einen deutschen Sieg so verstanden, dass dieser Sieg einzig und allein „alles für die Deutschen, alles für Deutschland“ mit sich bringt. [*Marginal note:* vgl. die folgende Reichstagsrede] Daher kommt es dann auch, dass wenn auch die Grenzvölker Russlands von der Regierung in kultureller und ökonomischer Hinsicht furchtbar unterdrückt

wurden, diese Völker die deutschen Sieger doch nicht als Retter betrachteten, sondern gegen dieselben sogar feindlich gesinnt waren. Es war ihnen bekannt, dass Deutschland mit seinen unterworfenen Völkern: den Dänen, den Polen hart verfahren war. Und weil man wusste, dass die Deutschen geschickter sind als die Russen, so befürchtete man von ihnen ei[g]enen noch schlimmeren Druck. Deshalb zeigten die Litauer eine feindliche Gesinnung und darum bilden die Letten ihre Volkskriegsbataillone.

Die Esthen betrachteten die Sache etwas nüchterner. Die esthnische Tagespresse ermahnte das Volk soweit es irgend möglich beim Einmarsch der Deutschen im Lande zu bleiben und nicht nach Russland zu fliehen: „Die Deutschen sind keine Kannibalen“. Dafür wurde die esthnische Presse von den russischen Zeitungen der Illoyalität verdächtigt.

Den Esthen ist es unverständlich, warum die Deutschen, welche sonst in ihrem eigenen Lande alle Kräfte restlos in den Dienst des Krieges einzuspannen verstehen, auch nicht den Versuch machen, die Sympathien der Grenzvölker Russlands zu gewinnen, indem sie ihnen die ersehnten Freiheiten proklamieren und grössere Entwicklungsmöglichkeiten anbieten würden als sie es unter der russischen Regierung haben.

Um unnütze Kraftvergeudung und Feindschaftsausserungen zu verhüten, müssen die Deutschen beim Einmarsch in das esthnische Gebiet etwa ein folgendes Manifest in der Volkssprache und mit der Allerhöchsten Unterschrift veröffentlichen:

1. Das Privateigentum der friedliche Bevölkerung bleibt unangetastet.
2. Wenn für die Armee etwas requiriert wird, dann für denselben Preis, wie man ihn in Deutschland den deutschen Unterthanen zahlt.
3. Wenn irgend Jemand Unrecht geschehen ist, so sind Einrichtungen vorhanden wo man klagen und wo man weiter klagen kann.
4. Der Landesbevölkerung deutschen Stammes werden neben der esthnischen Urbevölkerung keinerlei Privilegien gegeben werden.
5. An der Selbstverwaltung des Landes nehmen vorderhand teil alle Steuerzahler. Vorläufig bis zu einer neuen besseren Organisation – jedermann der Grösse seiner Steuersumme gemäss.
6. Die Hüter der Ordnung werden vom Volke selber gewählt.
7. Im ganzen Lande wo die Esthen wohnen hat die deutsche Sprache neben der esthnischen keine Vorrechte. Die Rechtsprechung in Sachen der Esthen wird in esthnischer Sprache organisiert.
8. Die Volksschulen werden für die Esthen mit esthnischer Sprache eingerichtet. Mittelschulen mit esthnischer Sprache werden ebensoviele sein wie sie proportional der Volkszahl auch die Deutschen besitzen und in der Universität Dorpat wird den Esthen das Recht auf die Hälfte aller Professuren reserviert.
9. Den Esthen wird eine vollständige Autonomie in den Grenzen der früheren schwedischen Ostseeprovinzen Esthland, Livland und Ingermanland garantiert. Die Selbstverwaltung fusst auf dem allgemeinen Stimmrecht

und hat dieselben Rechte wie sie der finnische Landtag in der konstitutionellen Periode Finnlands hätte.

10. Wenn das estnische und finnische Volk mit Majoritätsbeschluss sich an Schweden anschliessen wollen, so wird Deutschland dem keine Hindernisse bereiten.

Sobald diese Versprechungen im Volke bekannt werden, werden alle vernünftigen Menschen ihren ganzen Einfluss gegen jede feindselige Aeusserungen ausüben. Es wird im Lande eine gute Ordnung aufrechterhalten damit die Armee es nicht nötig hat, ihre Kraft auf die Aufrechterhaltung der Ordnung zu vergeuden und es wird fleissig Ackerbau getrieben um die Ernten zu steigern. Nach der Veröffentlichung eines solchen Manifestes werden sich auch viele Personen finden, welche dann für die deutsche Armee mehr machen wollen.

März 1916.

Grundbesitzer aus Esthland.

(Uebersetzung aus dem Esthnischen).

[*Marginal note:* an die Deutsche Regierung vor der Reichstagsrede v. Bethman-Hollwegs über die „Befreiernmission“ Deutschlands abgeschickt.]

4.4 Ueber die Unterdrückung der Russen durch die Esthen

Kungliga Biblioteket, Otto Järtes Efterlämnade Papper, L78:5

Leitartikel der „Revelskija Iswestija“ (- „Revaler Nachrichten“ - das Organ der russischen Gouvernementsverwaltung im Esthland).

Nach der Revaler esthnischen Zeitung „Tallin[n]a Teataja“ Nr. 88, vom 3. Mai 1916.

..... „Im vorigen Herbst bereits traten Klagen russischer Menschen verschiedenster Stände zum Vorschein über das – wenn nicht mehr zu sagen so doch zum mindesten – merkwürdige Verhältnis, welches die örtliche Volksmasse gegen alle diejenigen einnimmt, welche das Glück und das Vergnügen haben russisch zu sprechen. Derartige Erscheinungen kamen früher recht selten vor, und bis zur letzten Zeit war es z. B. unerhört, dass man einer russischen Dame, welche in einem kleinen Laden auf russisch Petroleum verlangte, beinahe demonstrativ antwortete – es gäbe kein Petroleum. Trotzdem verkaufte man zur gleichen Zeit wie auch später allen esthnischen Frauen, welche die betreffende Ware auf esthnisch verlangten ohne irgend welche Schwierigkeiten Petroleum. Im andern Laden derselben Strasse erhielt eine Käuferin, welche auf russisch Milch verlangte zur Antwort dass keine Milch da sei. Als die Kundin auf die Milch wies, welche offen zu sehen war und den anderen Frauen ohne weiters verkauft wurde, versteckte die Verkäuferin die Milch schnell unter den Ladentisch und entgegnete ebenso entschieden und fest wie der berühmte Spartaner – es gibt keine Milch.

Man muss annehmen, dass solche Fälle nicht vereinzelt dastehen und derart schreiend sind, dass bereits, wie bekannt, eine spezielle Verordnung der Regierungsgewalt in dieser Angelegenheit nötig wurde.

Wenn man das Leben der örtlichen Bevölkerungsmasse aufmerksam betrachtet, muss man annehmen dass auch das Bestreben der Schüler, untereinander nur estnisch zu sprechen, als eine Erscheinung der obigen Art betrachten ist. Auf die Bemerkung der Lehrer, dass der ständige Gebrauch der russischen Sprache unter den Schulkameraden die Erlernung der Staatssprache bedeutend erleichtert, hört man keine andere Antwort, als „Wir sind Esthen..... und müssen daher estnisch sprechen.“

Ein junges Mädchen dass u. a. russisch kann, fängt in einer russischen Familie an in der Gegenwart der Familienmitglieder mit einem andern Menschen, der auch frei russisch reden kann, estnisch zu sprechen – immer aus demselben Grunde – wir sind Esthen.....

Als dann das Verbot der deutschen Sprache erlassen wurde, konnte man annehmen, das bei uns die russische Sprache wie ein Springquell sprudeln wird. Wirklich schien es am Anfang so, aber später, aber nun..... Über all und an jeder Stelle fließt die esthnische Sprache immer stärker und lebhafter.

Es ist bisher noch die gesehen worden, dass zwei Freunde der örtlichen Nationalität abends auf dem Heimwege unter einander eine Geschäftsangelegenheit in russischer Sprache erörtern würden.

Niemand, denke ich, wird verneinen können, dass die Geschäftssphäre mehr als irgend ein anderes Gebiet international ist, denn das Interesse der Verkäufers seine Ware abzusetzen dominiert über alle anderen Erwägungen. Wenn nun die Verkäuferin im Laden oder die Bäuerin auf dem Wagen einen Unterschied machen, ob sich jemand an sie auf russisch oder auf esthnisch wendet, um dann den Wunsch des einen zu erfüllen, dem andern aber keine Ware abzutreten, so ist darin etwas anderes zu sehen – der Esthe sucht und will nur den Esthen kennen. Die ständige Wiederkehr derselben Erscheinung in vielerlei Formen und in verschiedenen Fällen, zeigt dass unter der örtlichen Volksmasse eine feste gesellschaftliche Tendenz mit einem bestimmten Ziele vorhanden ist“.

Nach einer Jeremiade darüber dass den Esthen „sowohl Herz wie Seele fehlen,“ „falls sie im gegenwärtigen Moment verlangen, dass man mit ihnen esthnisch sprechen soll,“ kommt die russische Zeitung zu folgenden Schlussbetrachtungen: „Wahrlich, in das gute Verhältnis der örtlichen Volksmasse und der Russen wird Tropfen um Tropfen unnütze Bitterkeit, Aufregung, Misstrauen, Zweifel u. a. m. hineingetragen. Ist es nötig zu sagen dass all dies durchaus nicht dem gegenwärtigen feierlichen und hochwichtigen Momente entspricht, wo alles und die Kräfte Aller einmütig auf das gemeinsame Ziel gerichtet sind. Es wäre vielleicht nicht schlecht zu bedenken, dass in örtlicher Gegend zur Zeit der Kriegsverhältnisse halber sich vorübergehend viele russische Menschen aus den verschiedensten Ständen und sozialen Stellungen aufhalten. Wenn diese alle auf derartige zielbewusste Erscheinungen aufmerksam werden, könnten sie dieselben verallgemeinern und ihnen eine vielleicht unerwünschte Bedeutung beilegen. Ein russischer Arbeiter z. B. sagte

folgendes: „Die Esthen – das ist ein solches deutschähnliches Volk“..... Dieser Vergleich ist nicht angenehmer wie wenn man als Hottentotten oder Bashi-Busuken bezeichnet wird (sic! D. Ü.). Ein Soldat, welcher früher in der Garnison von Ossowietz diente, sagt: „Weiss der Teufel was das hier für ein Volk ist – man kann sich mit ihm auf keine Art und Weise verständigen“.... Ein kleinrussischer Soldat, welcher kürzlich von der Front auf Urlaub gekommen ist meint traurig: „Schlimm ist es, dass bei uns nicht alle russisch reden“.....

Mann muss auf Grund der angeführten Tatsachen annehmen, dass in diesem Lande bereits die Säuglinge sich als Esthen fühlen und überall ihr Selbstgefühl heraus scheinen lassen – wo es passt und wo es nicht passen sollte. Von den Kleinen bis zu den Grossen sind alle übermässig nationalstolz..... Alles dies erfüllt den russischen Menschen mit verständnisloser Verwunderung, denn seiner Seele ist der übermässige Nationalstolz fremd. Wenn die Seelen der Esthen vom nationalen Stolze erfüllt sind so wäre es nicht überflüssig, wenn sie sich vor allem und zu allererst als russische Menschen aufweisen würden und erst an zweiter Stelle als Esthen. Denn alle wir sind russische Menschen als die Bürger der gemeinsamen Mutter (sic! D. Ü.) – Russlands wie es unter anderem die Letten sagen. Wenn sich jeder Esthe auf einen derartigen (d. h. lettischen D. Ü.) Standpunkt in der Frage des nationalen Selbstbewusstseins und Nationalstolzes stellen würde, so würde er sich des blossen Gedankens schämen sich von der russischen Sprache als von einer ihm fremden Sprache abzuwenden.“

Zum Schluss predigt der russische Verfasser – ein gewisser Herr Stepanenko – noch einmal die Esthen an, „welche die russische Sprache fürchten und wegen ihres estnischen Wertes zittern“, und schliesst salbungsvoll an die esthnische Adresse dass „nach einem russischen Sprichwort,“ „Den Selbstsüchtigen niemand liebt“.

[*Marginal note:* Die skandinavischen (= gross-schwedischen) Interessen der Esthen sind nicht ein Produkt der Schwäche, sondern eine Folge der nationalen Kraft.]

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