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The Temperance Movement in Esthonia and its present Development in 1921.

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Preliminary observations.

According to the results of philological and ethnographical researches intoxicating beverages were first introduced into Esthonia by foreigners. All names of alcoholic drinks are either borrowed from the Lithuanian, German or Slavonic languages, or are derived from the common inter-European dictionary. Neither philology nor ethnology has been able to obtain any information as to the intoxicating drinks of the Finnish-Ural tribes or of the still earlier dated Ural nation.

The alcoholizing of the Esthonian nation begins with its subjection and enslavement by the Germans and Russians. A large number of historical facts go to prove this assertion.

The beginning of the alcohol question.

Temperance ideals made their first appearance in Esthonia as far back as the XVII century, and in a more distinct shape in the XVIII century under the influence of rationalism and especially of the so-called Herrenhut movement. During the second quarter of last century the influence of the American temperance movement, which had at that time reached Europe, could be felt very clearly; unfortunately all possible results were successfully repressed by the joint efforts of the German Barons and Russian Governors.

The situation on the eve of the Great War.

The present Temperance Movement in Esthonia received its impetus from the Finnish Temperance Movement during the last quarter of last century. This movement was developing very successfully, in spite of the difficult conditions, then prevailing, and to such an extent that it brought about a general friendly attitude towards temperance on the part of the leading circles of the peo-

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ple. This is easily understood if one considers the fact that the sale of liquor was impoverishing and destroying our people for the benefit of the Russians and Germans. If, at that time, the Esthonian people had been able to pronounce upon their destiny, a law prohibiting the sale of alcohol would surely have been accepted and enforced.

War-time prohibition and its failure.

The World War brought us the 1914 prohibition law which, at first, produced good results. But the prolongation of the World War, followed by the Russian Revolution, the German occupation and the Esthonian War of Independence, the expropriation of all distilleries and also the disloyalty of some classes of the population in regard to the war-time prohibition, provoked the collapse of the prohibition law in Esthonia. On April 27th. 1920, the Esthonian Constituent Assembly established the present liquor sale system in Esthonia, whereby all male adults may obtain an order entitling them to half a toop (a little more than 0,5 litres) monthly of alcohol, apart from the consumption in restaurants; on June 1st. this ration was increased to 1 toop monthly. The practical application of this law began on June 30th. 1920.

The consumption of alcohol in Esthonian 1919—1921.

In 1919 there was no official use of alcohol in Esthonia, but the Esthonian provisional Government then in power did not enforce the prohibition law resolutely enough even in those circles of society which were close to the Government. Alcohol was also unofficially used by the troops, the difficult war-time conditions serving as pretext. The people in general having, owing to the war, lost their nerve equipoise, there was some illegal production of alcohol in the country (in 1919 about 2300 illicit distillers were prosecuted by the police, while of course there were many others who were not discovered). During the same period there were 734 prosecutions for drunkenness and disorderly conduct throughout the State of Esthonia.

The sale of alcohol began with the second half of the year 1920. During the remainder of this year about 1,300,000 toops were consumed, while in 1921 the consumption reached 3,355,624 toops, i. e. 6,91 of 50% spirits per capita, more than the consumption in Russia during 1913, (6,21), and than the consumption in the former area of the government of Esthonia under the Russian regime during 1902—1906 (5,5; 5,6; 4,8; 5,6; 6,11), as well as in the government of Livonia during 1902—1905 (6,1; 6,2; 6,1; 6,21).

The consumption of wine and beer has not been taken into

¹⁾ 1 toop = 1,23 litres.

consideration. Were one to do so the outlook would be still more discouraging.

The results.

The moral standard of life has been lowered. Diseases caused by alcohol are again raging, drink has reduced many families to misery, the entire economic life of the nation is threatened by the fact that large capitals are invested in the liquor trade, that billions of marks of the national money are circulating in the liquor traffic, destroying values instead of creating them.

A specially disheartening fact is the increase in the number of crimes, illustrated by the following statistics which show the number of crimes committed under the direct influence of intoxicating drinks. It must be observed that prohibition was in force during the first half of 1920 and that the sale of liquor was re-established in the second half of 1920. The figures of the first half of 1920 serve as a basis for comparison.

These figures speak for themselves. The number of crimes of violence has increased from the 1st. half of 1920, being then 2255 as against 6488 in the 2nd. half of 1921, or 288 per cent, when compared with the former. The number of offenders has increased at the rate of one thousand a month.

Nature of offence	1920		1921	
	No.	%	No.	%
Larceny and theft	99	100	225	227
Embezzlement of trust funds	286	100	358	122
Fraud	143	100	220	160
Assaults	308	100	442	143
Threats and offences	443	100	548	124
Quarrelling	214	100	345	161
Murder	63	100	116	171
Child-murder	18	100	23	128
Abortion	9	100	23	128
Suicides	22	100	35	164
Assaults upon women	13	100	25	192
Drunkenness and disorderly conduct	595	100	3136	527
Accidents	37	100	63	170
Total	2255	100	5553	246

That alcohol has done much harm to national health is amply shown by the statistics of the Board of Public Hygiene in 1919 and 1920. Whereas in 1919 257,997 cases of disease were reported, in 1920 the number was 375,088, an increase of 42 per cent. It must also be taken into account that there were 10,950 cases of infectious diseases in 1919 (owing to the typhoid fever introduced by the Russian army), and 15,593 cases in 1920. That the general status of national health has grown worse proves the evil influence of the sale of liquor in the latter half of 1920. The increase is especially marked in nerve and venereal diseases. The

number of cases was in 1919; nerve diseases, 9459; venereal diseases, in 10,944; in 1920: 16,203 and 17,975; an increase of 71 and 64 per cent in 1920.

The influence of alcohol is specially felt because it is sold in its most concentrated form.

Reaction against alcoholism.

When, in 1920, the prohibition law was done away with and the actual system was established the general attitude towards alcohol was to a certain extent friendly; it was thought that the legal sale, by stopping illicit distilling, would diminish consumption. There were many press articles in favor of the liquor sale and very few in favor of prohibition.

It can be stated with a feeling of satisfaction that matters have changed now. The first craving for alcohol has passed off, drinking has revealed itself in all its horror, and many of the former opponents of prohibition and of temperance efforts have now become temperance-minded, though many others have succumbed to alcohol. This is also shown by the press, hardly any article appears advocating drinking while, on the other hand, those favoring temperance are frequent. *There is now a basis for temperance work in Esthonia*, although many of our fellow-citizens are paying a heavy tribute to alcohol.

Temperance work in Esthonia during 1921.

Notwithstanding the fact that the Esthonian Parliament and the Government have accepted the liquor sale law and have based to some extent the budget of our State and of the local Governments upon alcohol¹), the Parliament and the Ministry are ready to favor temperance work by financing it. On Sept. 4th. 1920 a law was passed, whereby one quarter of the fines paid by moonshiners is to be used for temperance work. This law was amended on May 13th. 1921, when one third of the fines was dedicated to this end. This rendered possible the pursuit of a limited temperance work.

On the 14th. of July, 1921, a new law was passed to the effect that a special duty of one mark is to be levied upon each alcohol order for the promotion of temperance work. On March 22nd. 1922 this duty was raised to 1½ marks, i. e. 3 marks for each toop of liquor. Although this amounts only to one per cent of the price of alcohol, it has enabled us to extend our work since the end of 1921.

In the year 1921 the Central Committee of the Esthonian

¹) The Government expects to raise in 1922, 1,172,144,000 marks, by the sale of liquor, i. e. 25% of the regular incomes or 21 per cent of the budget.

Temperance Societies arranged 226 public lectures and speeches by Esthonian speakers and 12 where the lecturers were foreigners. (Prof. Dr. Joh. Bergmann — 4 lectures, Prof. Dr. med. Al. Lipschütz — 1 lecture, Prof. Taav. Laitinen from Helsingfors — 1 lecture, Dr. med. A. Nikula from Finland — 1 lecture Editor V. Karpio from Finland — 1 lecture, Mrs. Hilja Ketunen — 2 lectures, students Soininen and Helanen of the Helsingfors University — 1 lecture each) altogether 238 lectures, one per 5250 of the population (there are about 1,250,000 inhabitants in the Esthonian Republic.) Esthonian speakers have delivered 12 lectures in foreign countries, 7 in Finland, 4 in Denmark and 1 in Switzerland.

In the schools 678 temperance lessons were given to 20,398 pupils¹⁾, 80 temperance meetings were arranged for 5105 pupils, and 12 festivals with 1939 participants.

The number of juvenile temperance associations was 57 in 1921 with one Students' temperance association. Nineteen new societies were founded on the temperance day of 1921 with about 1000 members, the total number of members of juvenile associations being thus not less than 4000.

As to the adult societies their number has not as yet attained the pre-war figures, that is to say 61 organizations with a membership of 2690. Most of them were dissolved during the war, and are now re-awakening to life. Their number is now about 33 with 1500 members. In addition to these there are of course other societies which have accepted temperance as principle, or have temperance sections.

In 1921, the XIth. temperance convention was held at Tartu, where 73 organizations were represented by 72 delegates (the Xth. convention was held in 1919 with a participation of 32 organizations and 49 delegates). Current temperance problems were discussed, but it was not decided to undertake any steps for a popular referendum on the prohibition issue, for there was some doubt as to the possibility of its realization.²⁾

The movement was represented at the 39th. Finnish temperance convention in Kuopio, at the 10th. Northern temperance convention in Copenhagen and at the 16th. International Congress at Lausanne, as well as at the Northern juvenile temperance convention in Helsingfors.

Two national temperance days were arranged, instructive

¹⁾ A suggestion to arrange temperance lessons was sent to all schools, but from some no reply was received. The number of pupils has probably been under-stated.

²⁾ According to the Constitution of the Esthonian Republic 25,000 citizens may request a referendum which can decide any question by a majority of votes.

material for which was sent to all temperance associations, to the societies for public instruction, to public libraries and schools.

Three books were published with an edition of 13,000, besides leaflets, schedules for temperance lessons, etc.

An Esthonian juvenile magazine «Uudismaa», with a temperance section, has been published and has received our financial support. Appart from this some temperance associations and public instruction societies have been supported.

In order to promote the scientific investigation of the liquor question two prize competitions have been organized for essays on «The influence of alcohol upon the human body» and «Alcohol and the national budget». Only university students were eligible to compete. Other competitions have been arranged on «The History of the Temperance Movement in Esthonia», and «What can college students do for the furthering of temperance?» Another prize topic «Why should we be abstainers?» has brought in many good papers; the best of which, written by a student of the Viljandi High School for girls, E. Saal, has been printed and edited by the Central Committee.

We have elected to our Central Committee, the President of the International Temperance Bureau, Prof. J. Bergman, of the Tartu University.

The Central Committee is at present taking advantage of the services of the most prominent Russian temperance worker, the Rev. Pavel Gorshkow, who is doing successful work among the Russian speaking Esthonian citizens.

Temperance work in Esthonia at the beginning of 1922.

During the first quarter of this year about as many addresses were delivered as in the entire previous year. A four days' temperance course was organized at Tartu and was largely attended especially by young men and women. A similar six days' course will be arranged at Tallinn in connection with a temperance week in this city from April 18-23rd. Four temperance associations have been founded in the Esthonian army — the first of this kind!

A systematic propaganda is being carried on in the country, taking the district as territorial unit; a firm connection is established with all educational agencies of the district and tentative temperance addresses are delivered in each school, followed by a two days' general district convention. So far four conventions have been held, while the Lutheran districts alone number 105!

Three pamphlets published during the first quarter of this year, with a total issue of 22,000, of which one, by Prof. Dr. J. Bergman was printed in an edition of 10,000 copies. Dr. Matti Helenius-Seppälä's book, «Elements of the Temperance Question» and some others are now in the press. A temperance Monthly, «Tulev Eesti» (Future Esthonia) is appearing.

It being very important to reduce distilling, the Central Committee has initiated a prize-competition on this topic for agriculturists.

The Central Committee is in close touch with the Central Statistical Bureau of Esthonia, so as to secure adequate and up-to-date information.

In order to promote scientific study of the alcohol question, the Central Committee has established two special scientific commissions, composed of professors from Tartu University and other scientists, one for the investigation of medical, and the other of social problems. Their task is, apart from a general scientific study of drinking and of temperance conditions in Esthonia. We expect to secure from these commissions an ample amount of facts which may serve as a basis for popular propaganda.

The discussions provoked by our activity show that the present alcoholism has produced a very distinct reaction in the attitude of the people so that one may seriously consider the possibility of a referendum without running too much risk¹). This step being infinitely important and far-reaching, the Central Committee has neither the moral nor the legal right to decide upon it but must await the decision of the XIIth. National Convention, meeting on June 25th.-27th. in Viljandi, which will probably be in favor of the referendum. Upon the passing of this decision a period of hard work will begin for all our temperance workers. In this struggle the Esthonian temperance workers rely upon the moral and practical support of their fellow-workers throughout the world, and especially in America and Finland, so that they may go steadfastly forward on the way to victory.

¹) The only opponents of prohibition and temperance are to be found in the frontier districts of Esthonia, which are demoralized by the illegal export of liquor into Finland, Russia etc. This illegal trade has certainly cast a shadow upon the prestige of Esthonia among the nations.

Latest temperance news from Estonia.

The prohibition problem.

The most important question discussed at the XII. Estonian Temperance Congress in Viljandi on June 25—28-th this year was the question of prohibition. Although there were very many who demanded prohibition, the general opinion was, that it is uncertain whether prohibition would get a majority in the referendum, as the present Estonian parliament is against prohibition. At the end of 8 hours' discussion a resolution was passed: the prohibition ought to be put to the referendum only in this case, if the demand of prohibition has got so many signatures, that the prohibition is guaranteed.

The failure of the Swedish prohibition has to a certain degree diminished the courage of the Estonian prohibitionists and strengthened the position of the antiprohibitionists. Yet the effect of the Swedish failure should not be overrated.

There will be two occasions for voting prohibition in order to get at least statistics about the numeral relation between prohibitionists and antiprohibitionists in whole Estonia and its singular parts. The first of these is the first Estonian general demographical census, which could also contain questions about temperance and prohibition. The Central Committee of the Estonian Temperance Associations proposed these questions to the Estonian Statistical Office, but they were declined as they would disturb the common plan of the census, they said.

The other occasion is the referendum of religio-teaching in Estonian schools (at present the Estonian elementary schools are without religio-teaching), which will be arranged by the Christian People Party. It would be to our advantage to unite with this referendum also the prohibition referendum, but the

Christians are against it, as they feel, that some prohibitionists will vote against religion teaching.

It is possible to demand the referendum of prohibition by 25 000 signatures, but as the success of this demand is at present uncertain, the Estonian prohibitionists think, that the question must be thoroughly prepared and can be seriously raised within three years, or at the elections of the new Estonian parliament.

Attacks against temperance workers.

There were many discussions about the direct and indirect temperance work, which were used by the adversaries of the temperance work as strong attacks against the Central Committee of the Estonian Temperance Associations. In connection with that the Estonian government has reduced the financial support for the temperance work to $\frac{2}{3}$ of the earlier one and has taken the usage of this money under the control of the ministry of education, which is nearly quite on the standpoint of the indirect temperance work and does not like the direct temperance propaganda.

The foundation of the Estonian Temperance League.

The Central Committee of the Estonian Temperance Associations has enlarged its work and is now transformed into the Estonian Temperance League, members of which can be all those organizations, that are interested in the progress of the temperance work and are as organizations on the temperance standpoint.

The Estonian temperance men hope, that the foundation of the Estonian Temperance League will give an energetic stimulus to the development of the Estonian Temperance Work.

French wines into Estonia!

On June 29-th 1922 the Estonian Parliament ratified the Estonian-French commercial treaty, by which French wines can flow into Estonia with greatly reduced duties. The Estonian temperance men sent 75 protestations to the parliament, but they remained ineffective.

The Estonian-Finnish convention against spirits-smuggling.

At the present time the Estonian-Finnish commission is at work for preventing the illegal import of Estonian spirits into Finland, as they cause greatest difficulties for the Finnish prohibition.

The temperance work among Estonian minorities.

The temperance work has also begun among the Estonian minorities, at first under Russians and Setus (a separate tribe of the Estonian nation), lately also among the Swedes and Ingrians (a tribe related to the Estonians). The temperance work among Swedes is supported by the Swedish Temperance Organizations from Sweden.

The beginning of the scientific investigation.

The scientific investigation of the temperance question has begun also in the new Estonian University at Tartu (Dorpat) by the proposal and financial support of the Estonian Temperance League. Many professors and assistants make experiments on the influence of alcohol. Many temperance tasks are given to the students of the University for degree-works. Many professors, first among them neurologist prof. Dr. med. L. Puusepp and philologist prof. Dr. phil. Johan Bergman, the president of the International Bureau against alcoholism, will read special courses at the University about the temperance question (at present prof. Bergman reads about the history of the temperance movement). It is planned to publish a special scientific Estonian Temperance journal in the English, French and German languages to acquaint temperance men in the whole world with the results of the scientific investigation of the temperance question in Estonia. The Latvian and Lithuanian temperance men will also take part in our journal.

The connections with Latvia and Lithuania.

In recent times the Estonian temperance movement has come into near connection with the Latvian and Lithuanian temperance organizations. By the stimulus from Estonian temperance organizations the Latvian temperance movement

has become more effective. On September 9—10-th of this year the II Latvian Temperance Conference was held at Riga and on September 13—14-th the Lithuanian Temperance Congress at Kaunas (Kovno). The president of the Central Committee of the Estonian Temperance Associations took part in these conferences, in which a temperance convention was made between Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian temperance organizations. We hope, that this convention will be a great help for each above named country in our common work, and will also be an effective factor in the temperance work of the whole north-east Europe and at the same time be worth notice in the world struggle against alcoholism.

Tartu,

November 6-th 1922.

Villem Ernits,

president of the Estonian
Temperance League.