

versucht. Aus diesem Grund wurde die Isolierung von Kranken und Gesunden erst mit Verspätung vorgenommen, auch konnten so weder Kranke in separaten Gebäuden untergebracht noch neue Friedhöfe angelegt werden, was im Ergebnis die Zahl der Pestopfer nur erhöhte. Wenn sich die Wahrheit nicht mehr verschleiern ließ, reagierten die Behörden auf die Pest in den meisten Fällen durchaus adäquat. Die dabei ergriffenen Schutzmaßnahmen waren in ganz Europa ähnlich. Die verhängte Quarantäne erfüllte schließlich ihren Zweck. Frandsen zieht den Schluss, dass die Pest der Jahre 1709–1714 eben dank der endlich in Angriff genommenen administrativen Maßnahmen erloschen sei.

PRIIT RAUDKIVI

Eesti ajalugu V: Pärissorjuse kaotamisest Vabadussõjani [Estonische Geschichte, Bd. V: Von der Aufhebung der Leibeigenschaft bis zum Freiheitskrieg]. Hrsg. von SULEV VAHTRE (†), verantwortlich für diesen Band TOOMAS KARJAHÄRM und TIIT ROSENBERG. Verlag Ilmamaa. Tartu 2010. 503 S. ISBN 9789985771419.

The highly welcomed publication of the fifth volume of *Eesti ajalugu* finally brings to a close a process that began three-quarters of a century ago with the appearance in 1935–1940 of the first three volumes of a projected five-volume work, also titled *Eesti ajalugu* with Hans KRUIJ as the chief editor. The fate of this project, which sought to offer a scholarly survey of Estonian history directed toward the general reader, reflects and highlights the sharp discontinuities of the Estonian experience in the twentieth century. Although the Soviet regime did permit the publication in 1940 of the original third volume, covering the period from the collapse of medieval Livonia to the end of the seventeenth century, it then consigned the whole undertaking to oblivion, and library copies of the three published volumes of *Eesti ajalugu* became inaccessible to the general public in so-called *spetsfondy*. Fortunately, the restoration of Estonian independence permitted the revival of the initiative, this time with Sulev Vahtre as the chief editor, and a new fourth volume on the eighteenth century appeared in 2003, along with a sixth volume on the twentieth century in 2005. Thus, this worthwhile project, slated to have been completed in less than a decade, actually required seventy-five years. The amount of time that has elapsed since the publication of the original first three volumes has rightly encouraged plans to issue new and up-to-date versions of them in the near future.

The fifth volume of *Eesti ajalugu* under review covers almost exactly one hundred years from the emancipation of the Baltic serfs in 1816–1819 to the beginning of the Estonian War of Independence near the end of 1918. This century, particularly the last six decades, was an era of increasingly rapid change in the history of Estonia, and this work succeeds well in making the period come alive for the general reader. The book is divided into three main parts and generally well balanced in its coverage. Nearly half of the pages are devoted to a section entitled “State, People, and the Economy,” focusing mainly on social and economic history, but also on the political evolution of the Russian empire as well as the legal system and governmental institutions in the Baltic provinces. About a third of the text is allocated to the second part, “National Awakening and Russification,” which concentrates on the Estonian national movement and on cultural developments. Finally, “Revolution and War,” with just under a quarter of the text, emphasizes the politicization of the national movement, as its goals escalated from autonomy in 1905 to independence following the Russian Revolution of 1917. In view of the heightened pace of change in the second half of the century being covered, it is entirely appropriate that considerably more space be devoted to the later decades.

In the opening substantive chapter, the main authors of the book, Toomas Karjahärm and Tiit Rosenberg, valiantly provide a brief introduction to the larger European and Russian context, a necessary, but difficult task to do in a limited number of pages. No mention is made, for example, of the liberal Finnish solution in 1809, and the origins and evolution of the Russian revolutionary movement deserve more detailed treatment. The extensive chapters on social and economic history, mainly authored by Rosenberg with contributions from Sulev Vahtre, Aadu Must, and Mati Laur, provide a solid overview of the transformation taking place in the history of Estonia. The analysis of demographic developments highlights Estonia’s distinctive position in the Russian empire, including comparisons with its most immediate neighbours, and also places it into a larger European context. The initial failure of the emancipation of the serfs to solve the agrarian question and the ensuing decades of unrest and attempts at further reform are also well documented here. However, the term *lindpriius* (“outside the law”) is not well chosen as a description of the problematic, but not “illegal” status of the Estonian peasantry in the early years of freedom, and more comparison of the agrarian conditions in northern and southern Estonia would have been helpful.

Modernization in the agrarian sector and the transition to dairy and live-stock farming, especially after 1870, rightly receive considerable attention. Estonia clearly lagged behind its more developed Baltic Sea regional neighbours, but productivity on peasant farms was only slightly lower than on the estates at the eve of World War I. As a result of new landowning opportunities, social differentiation increasingly appeared among the Estonian

agrarian population, as documented in an excellent table on p. 133. At the end of the nineteenth century northern Estonia had a slightly higher proportion of peasant landowners, but those in the southern regions had larger farms. Missing from this detailed portrait is a view of the parallel Baltic German rural world. Aadu Must offers an interesting counterpoint to the picture of peasant rural life in the Baltic region with an analysis of Estonian emigration to the interior of the Russian empire, mainly by landless peasants in search of farmland. Most were Lutherans, but perhaps one-fourth were Orthodox. A strikingly large proportion retained command of the Estonian language throughout the tsarist period.

The chapters on the gradual rise of industrialization, the continuing role of handicrafts, foreign and domestic trade, and improvements in communication round out the picture of an increasingly dynamic society coming to grips with the challenges and transformation fostered by the broad process of modernization. The grim life facing the early industrial working class receives much attention here, but other social groups in the cities are less thoroughly treated. Indeed the chapter on urbanization and the urban population is surprisingly short. It could have been strengthened with a few more tables and analysis on, for example, the changing ethnic composition and the evolution of property ownership in the urban areas. The increased mobility of the population is well documented in the chapter on communication, enhanced by two excellent colour maps (pp. 192–193), which show the development of highways, postal connections, and railroads. However, the social and economic impact of the railroad, one of the great symbols of the industrial era, deserves more elaboration than is afforded here. How often and how quickly, for example, did the trains run and which lines carried the most freight and passengers?

Arguing on the basis of his recently published work *Äratjad* (The Awakeners), Mart Laar, the main author of the chapters on the national awakening, applies the well-known model of Miroslav Hroch to the Estonian case. Although Hroch clearly defines his Phase A as “the period of scholarly interest” in a given national movement,¹ Laar looks for signs of activism already in the “pre-awakening” period. He seems surprised that Faehlmann and Kreutzwald would express pessimism about the viability of an Estonian nation (p. 229), but such doubts were entirely understandable in view of the level of Estonian development and the prevailing conditions in the tsarist empire during the reign of Nicholas I. Although he calls it “perhaps an exaggeration,” in a scholarly survey there is no reason for Laar to repeat the traditional rhetorical flourish that the Estonian people “sang itself into a nation” at the first All-Estonian Song Festival in 1869. Overall, however, Laar provides a useful overview of the national movement in

¹ MIROSLAV HROCH: *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe: A Comparative Analysis of Patriotic Groups Among the Smaller European Nations*, New York 2000, p. 23.

the 1860s and 1870s, and his prosopographical study of over 4,000 Estonian activists yields some important results. Unfortunately, his definition of the elite group of “awakeners” is not entirely clear since he offers two varying standards: participation in “at least three” (p. 262) or “more than three” (p. 264) different initiatives of the national movement. His research not only confirms the dominant position of southern Estonia in the movement, especially Tartumaa and Viljandimaa, but also documents a stronger role for the cities than had been noticed in previous scholarship. In addition, Laar finds no particular correlation between national activism and any of the following factors: farm ownership, the density of the educational network, or association with the Moravian Brethren. Some discussion on whether conversion to Orthodoxy among southern Estonian peasants in the 1840s had any impact on their involvement in the national movement would also have been helpful.

In a succinct, but substantive chapter, Karjahärm offers an up-to-date summary of the contradictory impact of the tsarist regime’s attempts at Russification, although the extent to which it constituted a clearly planned state policy remains debatable (p. 270). He concludes that the central government’s standardizing administrative reforms largely took root, but attempts at cultural Russification fell through because Estonian national identity was already too firmly developed to be subject to any substantial assimilation to the Russian cultural world. Karjahärm also reminds us that the so-called “Russification era” was a complex and multifaceted period, and St. Petersburg’s attempted reforms were not necessarily the most decisive or important factor shaping the changes taking place. Further insight into the Russification period is afforded by the late Ea Jansen, who analyzes the failure of the seemingly fully Russified rural school system to produce the results desired by the central government. As she notes, the tsarist regime simply lacked the means to enforce its reforms, e.g., the small number of available inspectors who made infrequent visits to schools. In addition, some subjects were still taught in Estonian (religious instruction and hymn singing), and even the Russian language itself could be taught with the aid of the pupils’ native tongue (p. 383).

Some of the most appealing sections of the book are the various chapters on culture, mainly written by Jansen, who clearly displays her deep knowledge of Estonian and Baltic life in the last century of the tsarist era. In crisply composed prose she paints a lively picture of Estonian cultural advances in education, publishing, and the evolution of a public sphere, the latter crucial for fostering the emergence of civil society and further mobilization of the national movement. In her view, despite continued Baltic German control, the Lutheran Church played a key role for the Estonians, both as a cultural and social institution. Above all, Jansen succeeds in offering the reader an insightful view of both the Estonian and Baltic German cultural worlds as they were being transformed by the process of

modernization. The final chapters, mainly by Karjahärm, deal with the most rapid and explosive period of change from the Revolution of 1905 to the end of the First World War. He calls 1905 a turning point in Estonian history (p. 364) because—despite the failure of the revolution to unseat the tsarist regime—broadly based participation in the revolutionary process constituted the opening phase of a new movement for political self-determination that had previously been stymied by tsarist authoritarianism. Importantly, Jansen adds the observation that the experience of 1905 also contributed to the “mental emancipation” (*vaimne iseseisvumine*) of the Estonians (p. 382). Very welcome is the substantial chapter on World War I, usually a neglected topic in historical surveys, in which Karjahärm and Tõnu Tannberg summarize the overall European context as well as the results of recent research on Estonian participation in the Russian military forces. Ironically, by fall 1917 the Russian authorities had trained nearly 3,000 Estonian officers, most of whom voluntarily played a crucial role among the Estonian national forces in the ensuing War of Independence.

Although this fifth volume of *Eesti ajalugu* is a notably successful culmination to the overall project, certain issues deserve to be raised. At the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century the Baltic Germans are clearly a historical topic in Estonia, in contrast to the situation in the 1930s. This chronological distance provides the basis for a more impartial view of their role in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries than was possible during the first period of Estonian independence, and various authors offer a well-balanced approach to this topic in the book. Nevertheless, the evolution of Baltic German attitudes could be treated more systematically. Where, for example, did the striking Baltic German liberalism in the early years of Alexander II's reign come from and how monolithic was the more conservative Baltic German public opinion in the waning decades of the tsarist regime? In recent Estonian historiography there is a trend that increasingly views the Estonian case within a larger context. For the period covered in this volume, the most obvious comparison is with the Latvian experience, and several authors make useful references to it. However, more could have been done in this regard, including topics such as the 1840s Orthodox conversion movement, the role of voluntary associations (*seltsid*), the highly parallel national movements, and the Revolution of 1905. More references to Estonia's relative position in the Russian empire as a whole, e.g., regarding economic development, would also have been welcome. In a survey history, written by ten different authors and organized by topics that inevitably overlap to some degree, there is a built-in structural problem that makes a certain amount of repetitiveness and fragmentation unavoidable. For example, the Estonian emigration to the interior of the Russian empire is covered in two separate chapters. In addition, the Estonian press in the national awakening era is appropriately

discussed under the rubric of the national movement, but also receives considerable treatment in one of the cultural chapters.

In terms of format and organization this book closely follows the approach taken in the other two recently published volumes, and all three conform in large measure to the style used in the original works in 1935–1940, e.g., scholarly prose, but no references or footnotes, and large numbers of maps and illustrations. Although respect for continuity and an established tradition is understandable, the question arises whether the needs of the Estonian reader today are the same as they were in the 1930s. Extensive footnotes would be unwieldy in a historical survey, but the contemporary reader might expect references for quotations, which often appear disembodied and undated in the text, and the various statistical tables. A helpful innovation in the recent volumes is sections on historiography, including extensive treatment of a wide range of scholars writing both in Estonian and in other languages, and it could be argued that the thorough, 36-page bibliography at the back of the fifth volume should satisfy even the most demanding reader. Nevertheless, there is no indication of which sources the authors of *Eesti ajalugu* have used most extensively. In this sense the approach in the original three volumes, showing references to the used or suggested literature at the end of each chapter, is preferable to the current one. That said, the three historiography sections, which introduce each major part of the book and total thirty pages in all, deserve praise for bringing to the reader's attention not only key secondary works, but also important primary sources such as memoirs and collections of documents.

One of the most attractive aspects of the book is the colour maps, all of which are clearly presented and highly informative. However, in some cases, such as the excellent and detailed map on literacy in the Baltic region and in neighbouring provinces according to the census of 1897 (p. 282), they need at least some analysis in the text. Estonia's leading position in the Russian Empire (excluding Finland) with regard to reading ability at the end of the nineteenth century is certainly worth explaining and highlighting. Although the wide array of illustrations is also useful, a large number have been reduced too much in size, and in many cases dates would be helpful for context. A tradition that began in the original volumes of this series in the 1930s was the inclusion of a brief concluding section titled "in retrospect" (*tagasivaade*), and this practice was continued in the new fourth volume. It was not, however, followed in volumes five and six. For the general reader, even the well-read one, such a concluding summary can serve a useful purpose in drawing together themes and main trends that may be obscured by the organization of a historical survey according to a large number of topical divisions.

In sum, it should be stressed that the fifth volume of *Eesti ajalugu*, although delayed and thus appearing out of sequence, represents a highly worthy conclusion to the important project begun three-quarters of a

century ago. On a symbolic level, the fifth volume and the other two recently published ones help to restore an intellectual connection from the present to the first era of Estonian independence, a link that will be further strengthened when the original three volumes are rewritten and published. For the contemporary Estonian reader, whether a student or a history enthusiast of whatever age, this significant and up-to-date survey of a crucial period in Estonian history will provide much food for thought as well as inspiration for further study.

TOIVO RAUN

ANJA WILHELMIS: *Lebenswelten von Frauen der deutschen Oberschicht im Baltikum (1800–1939). Eine Untersuchung anhand von Autobiographien* (Veröffentlichungen des Nordost-Instituts, 10). Harrassowitz Verlag. Wiesbaden 2008. 422 S. ISBN 9783447058308.

Die anzuzeigende Dissertation Anja Wilhelms gliedert sich in fünf Kapitel. Nach der Einleitung, die eine kurze Einführung in das zu behandelnde Thema, den derzeitigen Forschungsstand, die Quellenlage sowie Methodik und Aufbau der Arbeit skizziert, folgt eine allgemeine Einführung in Geschichte und soziale Bedingungen der ehemaligen Ostseeprovinzen sowie der ersten estnischen und lettischen Republiken, der sich ein ebenfalls allgemein gehaltener Überblick über die gesellschaftliche Position deutschbaltischer Frauen der Oberschicht anschließt. Im dritten Kapitel widmet sich die Verfasserin ihrer expliziten Forschungsaufgabe, der Darstellung von „Lebenswelten“ anhand autobiographischer Schriften von Deutschbaltinnen. Das fünfte Kapitel schließlich fasst die Ergebnisse zusammen. Das Ziel Wilhelms ist es, die Auswirkungen gesellschaftlicher Umbrüche auf die Mentalitäten der Deutschbaltinnen zu untersuchen und durch die Filterung von geschlechts- und gesellschaftlich differierenden Rahmenbedingungen eine Separierung der in ihnen enthaltenen individuellen „Lebenswelten“ zu erreichen (S. 13f.). Neben diesen beiden Analysepunkten stehen auch Einzelaspekte im Untersuchungsfokus, die zu einer „Nachzeichnung der Vielschichtigkeit der Identitäten in kulturellen, nationalen, ‚weiblichen‘ und sozialen Dimensionen“ führen sollen (S. 14).

Die bisher vorliegenden Besprechungen dieser Arbeit, u.a. von Ragna Boden und Thilo Nie dhöfer,¹ weisen zwar auf manche geschichtswissenschaftlich

¹ Vgl. die Rezensionen von RAGNA BODEN, in: Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropaforschung 57 (2008), S. 398ff.; und THILO NIEDHÖFER, in: H-Soz-u-Kult, 1.3.2010,