

**POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS**  
**IN**  
**ESTONIA : (1991-95)**

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## CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled "**POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN ESTONIA (1991-1995)**", submitted by **NIBEDITA ROUT** in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of **MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**, has not been previously submitted for any degree of this or any other university and this is her own work.

We recommend that dissertation may be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

**Dr. Tulsi Ram**  
(Supervisor)

**Prof. Shasi Kant Jha**  
(Chairperson)

*Dedicated*  
*To*  
*My Parents*

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## **PREFACE**

Estonia's four years struggle for sovereignty and independence from the Soviet Union culminated in victory in 1991. In campaigning for independence most Estonians were intent on escaping and reversing their Soviet past: years of stifling social and political rule, growing economic inefficiency and languor, cultural deprivation under a policy of Russification, and increasing environmental waste and destruction. In the mid-1990s several years after independence, Estonia's past as a Soviet republic was providing itself a legacy that could not be easily put aside.

Estonia is the smallest state in the Baltic region whose entire territory is around 18,370 square miles. However, political developments in this country have always attracted the world's attention. Like other Baltic States Latvia and Lithuania, it also had to face colonial rule for many centuries. Therefore, political developments in Estonia could be analyzed properly within the framework of entire colonial history of this region.

Since independence Estonia has been engaged in taking the necessary steps to define and to establish its statehood. On June 28, 1992 the Estonians approved their constitution through a nation-wide referendum.

The principal objectives of Estonian foreign policy are to resolve the pending succession issues with respect to the former Soviet Union, to accelerate its integration with the West European political, economic and security systems, to develop links with Nordic States with particular emphasis on Finland and Sweden and to identify areas of common interest and future directions of co-operation with its neighbouring Baltic states. The main focus of Estonia's foreign

policy is Estonia's integration into the European Union and enlargement of NATO, which is linked to EU enlargement.

The First Chapter, which is introductory in nature tries to give a brief historical background of political developments in Estonia and the recent developments.

The Second Chapter is intended to trace the historical background of Estonia's political developments, the restoration of Estonia's independence, building up constitutional state structures. It will also cover the entire colonial history because like other Baltic states, it also had faced colonial rule for many centuries. The political developments in Estonia could be analyzed properly within the framework of entire colonial history of this reason. It is essential because without covering the colonial history, political developments would be incomplete.

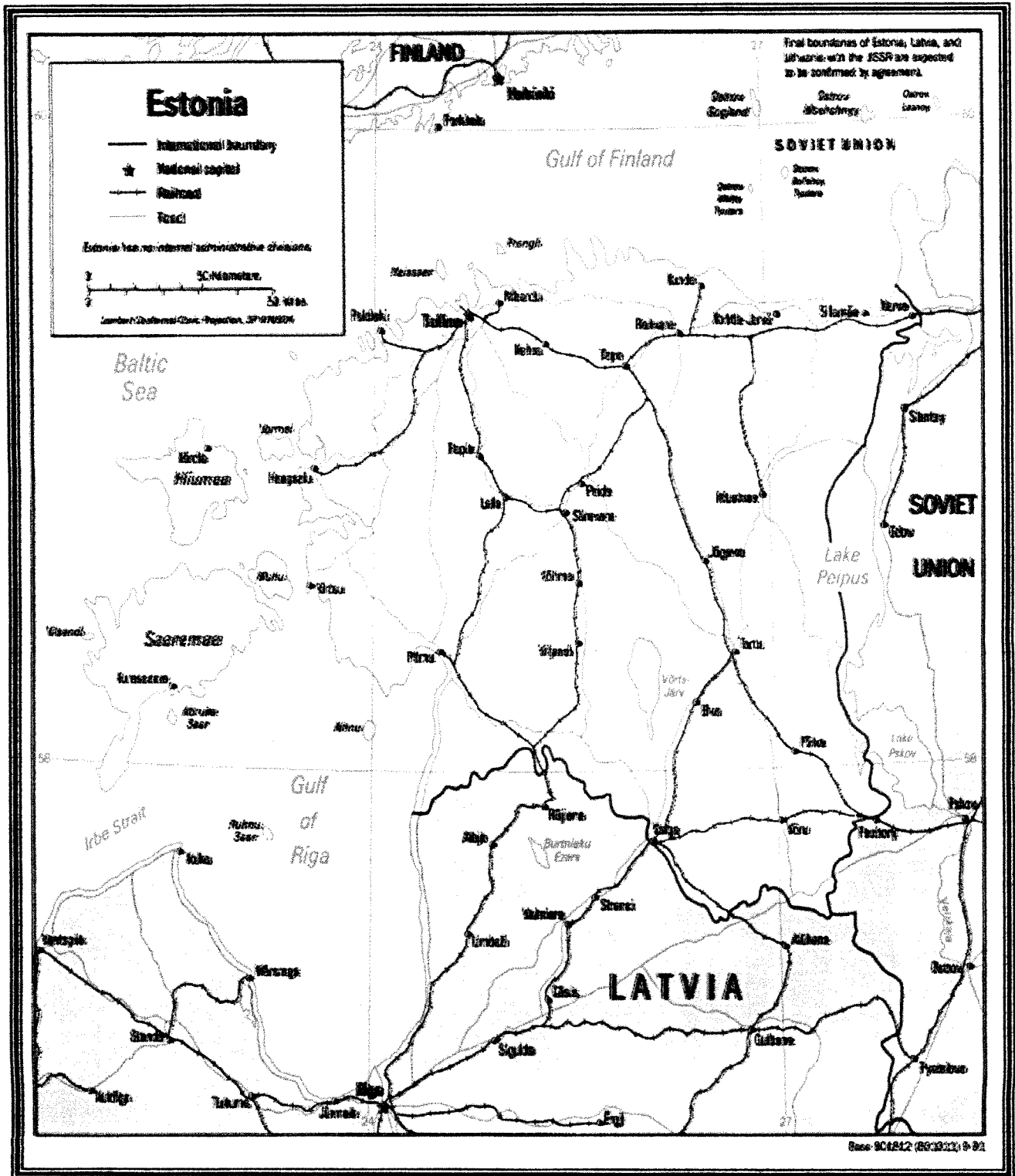
The Third Chapter deal with the impact of Soviet collapse on political developments in Estonia 1991-1992. It will cover how it regained its independence from Soviet Union, and will cover the constitutional foundations of Estonia, constituent assembly. In 1992, there was parliamentary elections in Estonia and citizenship law was introduced in Estonia and also deals how it rebuilds its state and government.

The Fourth Chapter deals with the new constitution and road to independent political developments in Estonia 1992-1995. It will cover the constitutional foundations, features of the new constitution, democracy building in Estonia, Economic reforms and its foreign policy.

The Fifth Chapter is conclusion which sums up the total research work.



# MAP OF ESTONIA



CHAPTER-1

INTRODUCTION

Estonia is the smallest state in the Baltic region whose entire territory is around 18,370 square miles. However, political developments in this country have always attracted the world's attention. Like other Baltic states Latvia and Lithuania, it also had to face colonial rule for many centuries. Therefore, political developments in Estonia could be analyzed properly within the framework of entire colonial history of this region.

Until the close of the twelfth century the Estonians successfully repelled attempts by the Scandinavians and old Russians to conquer and dominate their land. Estonia (together with Finland, Latvia and Lithuania) remained one of the last bulwarks against Christianity resisting the crusaders and practicing ancient religious rites and following their own beliefs. After conversion to Christianity in the thirteenth century, Estonia came under German rule. In the sixteenth century, Sweden, Denmark, Russia and Poland began fighting for dominance in the Baltic region. As a result of these wars, Estonia became part of the Swedish Kingdom in 1625. Later, it was effortlessly taken by Russia 1710.<sup>1</sup>

Under both Swedish and Russian rule, local administration remained in the hands of German settlers and the supremacy of the German language and culture remained intact. During the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as authority of Baltic German nobility declined, a national, cultural and political awakening took place in Estonia.

Even after the collapse of Tsarist rule in 1917, the struggle between Estonian national forces and the Bolsheviks continued. On March 30, 1917, the Russian provisional government

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<sup>1</sup> Romuald J. Misiunas and Rein Taagepera, *The Baltic States : Years of Independence 1940-1980* (London: C. Hurst & Company, 1983), p. 2.

approved an autonomous status for Estonia and the land council was elected as the sole people's representative. In November the land council declared the right of self-determination. In 1921, Estonia became a full member of the League of Nations. But its independence could be preserved only till 1940. During this period, it had a liberal political system and developed an industrial base. In August 1939, the USSR and Germany signed a non-aggression treaty (the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact). Under the secret addendum to this treaty, Estonia again came under the Soviet sphere of influence and in 1940 was forced to sign an agreement permitting the USSR to create a base for Soviet troops in Estonia. During the Second World War, it was once again occupied and controlled by Germany between 1941-44 before it was finally liberated by the Soviet Union.<sup>2</sup>

Historically, Estonia belonged to Scandinavian culture due to early colonial rule. However, after its annexation by Tsar Peter the Great, the old culture was suppressed as Tsarist policy of Russification was imposed. Since then anti-Russian feelings has been a continuous source of utter discontent among the people. This is why, time and again Estonians attempt to liberate themselves failed due to mighty foreign rule. Their concept of independence could see the light of the day when Soviet President Gorbachev, introduced perestroika and glasnost under which democratic freedom of expression was introduced in mid 1980's. Before the advent of Gorbachev, Estonian concept of freedom during Soviet period, had typical characteristics of getting support from the western world, but failed to materialize the same within its society due to Soviet command system. Following Gorbachev's

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<sup>2</sup> Walter R. Iwaskiw, *Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania country studies* (Washington: Federal Research Division Library of Congress, 1995), p. 11.

democratization of Soviet society the voices of freedom became very acute in Estonia. In the meantime, in the general elections of 1989, the local communists were defeated but for the first time during the Soviet era, the nationalist groups captured the power in Estonia.<sup>3</sup>

In May 1989, the Estonian Supreme Soviet passed a law on economic independence of Estonia, which amounted to a declaration of Economic sovereignty on November 12, 1989. The Estonian Supreme Soviet passed another resolution declaring with annexation of Estonia by the USSR as illegal, null and devoid referring to Soviet action in 1940 as aggression followed by military occupation. With the East European countries slipping out of the Soviet grip during the second half of 1989, the USSR under Gorbachev appeared increasingly sympathetic to Estonian aspirations and the USSR supreme Soviet passed a resolution denouncing the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact as illegal on December 24, 1989. Thus, Soviet rule in Estonia was declared illegal. This historical development was followed by declaration of Estonian independence from the Soviet Union in 1990.<sup>4</sup>

At the same time, the inner party rivalry within Soviet leadership, particularly between Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin provided a base for Estonian independence. Initially, Gorbachev tried to provide greater autonomy for Estonia and other Baltic States, however, his policy of Perestroika and glasnost failed following the disintegration of Soviet Union itself in 1991. Thus, Estonia could achieve full independence only after the disintegration of Soviet Union.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Rein Taagepera, *Estonia : Return to Independence* (USA: Westview Press, 1993), p. 106.

Since August 1991, Estonia has been engaged in taking the necessary steps to define and establish its statehood. On June 28, 1992, the Estonians approved their constitution through a nationwide referendum. It came into force on July 4, 1992. In the referendum, the Estonians also expressed their overwhelming opposition to the question of participation of non-Estonians, who had applied for citizenship in the forth-coming general elections.<sup>5</sup>

Under the new constitution, the 101 member supreme council *Riigikogu* or parliament is the highest body of state power, which is elected for five years. The supreme council elects its Chairman, Speaker and two Deputy Speakers. The Chairman, who is the president of the republic, has powers to represent the supreme council in internal and international matters, to sign laws and to recommend the candidate for the Prime Minister's office, who should subsequently get the approval of the parliament. The president is elected for a term of 5 years and for maximum of two terms.<sup>6</sup>

The president promulgates all laws after their adaptation by the *Riigikogu*. However he or she may also refuse to promulgate (i.e., veto) a law and send it back to the *Riigikogu* for reconsideration. If the *Riigikogu* passes the same law again by a simple majority, the president's veto is overridden. The legal chancellor is appointed by the *Riigikogu* to a seven-year term and provides guidance concerning the constitutionality of laws.<sup>7</sup>

In September 1992, general elections to Estonians 101-member parliament and to the presidency were held. No candidate could

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<sup>5</sup> Walter R. Iwaskiw, op.cit., p. 22.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> ibid, p. 70.

get the required absolute majority to be elected as president and the two leading candidates, incumbent Arnold Ruutel (41.8%) and the Ambassador to Finland Lennart Meri (29.5%) had to face a run of election in the parliament, as provided for the constitution to resolve the deadlock. Mr. Meri was thereafter elected president on October 6, 1992, receiving 59 votes as compared to 31 votes for Mr. Ruutel.<sup>8</sup>

The ruling coalition formed in October 1992 consisted of the National Coalition Party (NCP), National Independence Party (NIP), Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), Social Democratic Party, (SDP), Rural Centrist Party (RCP), Conservative Peoples Party (CPP) and the Republican Coalition Party.<sup>9</sup>

Besides many twists and turns in politics, since regaining independence in August 1991, Estonia has achieved remarkable progress in the transition to a market based economy. As in other East European countries, the movement towards market reform coupled with the dislocation caused by the political changes initially led to a fall in the GDP, a high inflation rate, decline in living standards and rising unemployment. Estonia responded by adopting aboard economic reform strategy, including liberalization of domestic prices, privatization, property restitution and land reform reduction in state subsidies, monetary reforms and the establishment of a commercial infrastructure. Estonia joined the World Bank on June 23, 1992, which supported further market-oriented reforms while implementing measures to raise the living standards of lower income groups. The monetary reform had introduced the "Kroon" as the Estonian currency in June

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<sup>8</sup> David J. Smith, *Estonia : Independence and European integration* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 83.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

1992, which was considered as a significant step in creating a foundation for the market economy.<sup>10</sup>

By 1994, the alliance landed in trouble with opinion polls showing a fall in the Prime Ministers' popularity. The resignation of two ministers was followed by the Conservative People's Party and the Rural Coalition Party leaving the coalition in June 1994. The two groups formed a United Peoples Party of Republicans and Conservatives (dubbed as rightist in the parliament) in September 1994, further exacerbating the crisis. The continuous political infighting allegations of financial improperly and discontent with the high economic and social cost of reforms finally brought down the government of premier Mart Laar after he lost a vote of confidence in the parliament on September 26, 1994.<sup>11</sup>

The crisis, however, lingered and the imminent threat of mid-term elections was averted only when acting environment Minister Mr. Andrews Tarand, a non-party member was nominated as Prime Minister by the president and subsequently got the approval of Riigikogu on October 21, 1994. The new government was sworn in on November 8, 1994 and remained in power for just six months still the general elections were held on March 5, 1995.

In the parliamentary elections held on March 5, 1995, Coalition Party/Rural Peoples Union KMU got 41 seats, Reforms Party 19, Centre Party 17, pro-patria 7, moderates six, our home is Estonia (Russian speaking) 6 and right wing 5 seats. The main reason for the defeat of the ruling party was its economic policy, which had enjoyed the support of the urban electorate and was unpopular in

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<sup>10</sup> Graham Smith, *The Nationalities question in the post-Soviet states* (New York : Longman, 1996), p. 141.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p. 91.



the rural areas. The new government thus consisted of KMU (Coalition Party, Rural people's Party, Farmer's Union, Rural Union and association of pensioners and families) and the Centre Party. By the end of 1995, the Centre Party left the Coalition and was replaced by the Reforms Party led by then Foreign Minister Siim Kallas.<sup>12</sup>

The second parliamentary election of March 1995 were thus contested by a total of 33 parties grouped within 10 electoral unions. As the various political groupings jockeyed for position, Tarand was left to exercise a caretaker role until February 1995.

On January 1, 1995, the free trade agreement between Estonia and the European union came into force. Today more than 65% of Estonian trade is connected with member states of the European Union. The share of the main imports from European Union. The share of main imports from European Union member states is ever bigger—over 75%. Estonia has signed free trade agreements with several other countries e.g. Norway, Latvia, Lithuania etc.<sup>13</sup> After regaining independence, the new citizenship law was also introduced in Estonia in 1995.

The principal objectives of Estonian foreign policy are to resolve the pending succession issues with respect to the former Soviet Union, to accelerate its integration with the West European political, economic and security systems to develop links with Nordic states with particular emphasis on Finland and Sweden and to identify the common interest and future directions of cooperation with its two neighboring Baltic states. The main focus of Estonia's

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<sup>12</sup> Kaarel Lahe, "Estonia after the elections" *Baltic Review* (Tallinn) spring/summer, 1996, p. 31.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

foreign policy of Estonia's integration into the European Union and enlargement of NATO, which is linked to EU enlargement.<sup>14</sup>

Estonia's foreign policy emphasizes the need for integration with Europe quickly as possible and Estonia's goal is to gain access to the European Union. As an important step in this direction a free trade agreement between Estonia and the European union was signed on July 18, 1994 taking effect on first January 1995. Estonia joined NATO's partnership for peace programme along with its Baltic neighbour in February 1994. Consultations at various levels with representatives of NATO have been regularly taking place to work out the modalities of cooperation. The defence ministers of Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, UK, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Finland signed a basic document on the Baltic peace keeping on September 11, 1994, at Copenhagen which will give Baltic states access to the European defence system and hopefully, later, enable them to join NATO also.<sup>15</sup>

In early 1995, seven electoral alliances and eight parties were registered to participate in the general election scheduled for 5 March. The result of the election reflected widespread popular dissatisfaction with the parties of the governing coalition. The largest member of seats in the Riigikogu (41 of the total of 101) was won by an alliance of the centrist Estonian Coalition Party (ECP, led by the former Prime Minister, Tiit Vahi) and the Rural Union (comprising various agrarian parties, most prominently Arnold Ruutel's Estonian country people's party). A coalition of the newly-established Estonian Reform party (ERP, led by Siim Kallas, the President of the Bank of Estonia) and liberal groups obtained

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<sup>14</sup> Europa World Year Book (London: Europa Publication), Vol. 1, 1999, p 1321.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

19 seats, followed by Edgar Savisaar Estonian Centre Party.<sup>16</sup> The National Fatherland Party (in coalition with the moderate alliance (which included Andrews Tarand) gained six seats. The “Estonia is our Home” pact (which united three new parties representing the Russian speaking minority) also won six seats; this development was proudly welcomed as a potentially stabilizing factor in both the domestic and foreign affairs of the country. the remaining five seats were taken by a coalition of right wing parties. The electoral turnout was almost 70%. The main reason for the defeat of the ruling party was its economic policy, which had enjoyed the support of the urban electorate and was unpopular in the rural areas. The new government thus consisted of KMU (Coalition Party, Rural People’s Party, Farmer’s Union, Rural Union, and association of Pensioners and families) and the centre party.<sup>17</sup>

In late march 1995, Tiit Vahi was nominated by president Lennart Meri to form a new council of ministers Vahi was confirmed as Prime Minister by the legislature in early April, and the new government- a coalition of the ECP/Rural union and the Estonian Centre Party- was appointed later in the month. Vahi stated that his governments main priorities were to further the reforms undertaken by the preceding administration, to seek full membership of the EU and to improve relations with the Russian. The issue of civil military relations had come to force in December 1995.

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p 1318.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

CHAPTER - 2

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF  
POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN  
ESTONIA**

Estonia is the smallest state in the Baltic region, however, political developments in this country have always attracted the world's attention. Like other Baltic States- Latvia and Lithuania, it also had to face colonial rule for many centuries. Therefore, political developments in this country took a similar course, which prevailed in other Baltic States. Historically, Estonia belonged to Scandinavian culture due to early colonial rule, but after its annexation by Peter the Great the old culture was suppressed as Tsarist policy of Russification was imposed. Estonia's struggle for independence during the twentieth century was in large part a reaction to nearly 700 years of foreign rule.<sup>1</sup> Before 1200 A.D the Estonians lived largely as free peasants loosely organized into parishes (Kihelkonnad) which in turn were grouped into counties (Makonnad).<sup>2</sup> During twelfth century, the Estonians came under assault from German (rusaders seeking to impose Christianity on them who had been practicing ancient religious rites and following their own beliefs. Although the Estonia's resistance to the Teutonic Knights lasted some twenty years, the lack of centralized political organization as well as inferior weaponry eventually brought down the Estonians in 1227.<sup>3</sup>

The Germans, moving from the south were abetted by Danish forces that invaded from the north and captured Tallinn. Together with present day Latvia the region became known as Livonia, the Germans and Danes settled down as nobility and the Estonians were progressively subordinated as serfs.<sup>4</sup> Commerce developed rapidly because Estonia's larger urban centers at the time Tallinn,

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<sup>1</sup> Walter R. Iwaskiw, *Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania country studies*, (Washington: Federal Research Division Library of Congress, 1995), p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Europa World Year Book, (London: Europa Publications), vol. 1, 1999, p. 1317.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Rein Taagepera, *Estonia Return to Independence* (Colorado: West View Press, 1993), p. 18.

Tartu, Parnu and Nurvawere all members of the Hanseatic League, an organization established by merchants of various, mostly German cities to protect their mutual trading interests.<sup>5</sup> In the sixteenth century Sweden, Denmark, Russia and Poland began fighting for dominance in the Baltic region. As a result of these wars, Estonia became part of the Swedish kingdom in 1625. Under Swedish rule, the northern Estonia was incorporated into the Duchy of Estland. The southern part together with northern Latvia became known as Livland. The German based nobility in both areas retained and even strengthened its position under Swedish suzerainty.<sup>6</sup>

During the Swedish era, Estonian education got its start with the founding of Tartu University in 1632 and the establishment of the first Estonian parish schools in 1680s. Swedish hegemony during the last seventeenth century had become over extended marking the Swedish holdings a prime target for a newly expansionist Russia.<sup>7</sup> Sweden's aspiration to dominion of the Baltic ultimately proved unsustainable, however during the great northern war of 1700 –1721 control of Estland and Livland passed to Peterine Russia, which swiftly reiterated noble privileges through the *Ostzeiskii Zakone* of 1721. On the basis of these laws, the region remained politically and economically distinct from the rest of the Russian empire right up to its demise 1917.<sup>8</sup>

The Russian annexation of Estonia, formerly under Swedish rule, was formalised in 1721. During the latter half of 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the power of the dominant Baltic German nobility declined, because

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<sup>5</sup> Walter R. Iwaskiw, op.cit., p. 13.

<sup>6</sup> David J. Smith, *Estonia: Independence and European Integration* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 4.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p. 5

they were enjoying high degree of influence at court. This position left them well placed to resist the project of Russification advanced by Government Officials and slavophiles and publicists during the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.<sup>9</sup> By the mid – 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Estonians were first developing into an independent society and nation. The number of urbanized Estonians had grown considerably overtaking what had been German majorities in the cities. Industrialization was also breaking down the old order. An Estonian cultural awakening began in 1850's and 1860's. Tsarist reaction and a fierce Russification campaign in the 1880's could not extinguish the new Estonian spirit, although for the most part of the Estonian demands continued to focus on culture.<sup>10</sup>

Estonians experienced a national cultural revival which culminated in political demands for autonomy during the 1905 revolution and for full independence after the beginning of the first world war, and an All – Estonian congress was organized in Tartu, in that same year. Although radical Estonian politicians such as Johan Teemant and moderate leaders such as Johan Tonisson were deeply divided on tactics, there was wide spread call from the Estland and Livland provinces for the unification of Estonian land and officials end to russification.<sup>11</sup> The 1905 revolution marked a crucial stage in the evolution of the national movement. Estonian social democrats, who became the largest and the best organized of the proto-parties from in 1905. In other aspect, the central government proved more accommodative towards its Baltic minorities during 1906–13 allowed in the establishment of private – Estonian language

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<sup>9</sup> Pick F.W, *The Baltic Nations Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania* (London: Bores Publishing House, 1945), p. 13.

<sup>10</sup> Romuald J. Misiunas and Rein Taagepera, *The Baltic States Years of Independence 1940-1980* (London: C. Hurst & Company, 1983), p. 6.

<sup>11</sup> Europa World Year Book (London: Europa Publications), vol. 1, 1999, p. 1318.

secondary schools before reverting to the previous policy of Russification on the eve of world war – I.<sup>12</sup>

The fall of the Tsarist regime in February 1917 forced the issue of Estonia's political future. Vigorous lobbying in Petrograd by Tonisson and large Estonian population living there forced the provisional government to accept Estonian territorial confiscation as one province and election of provincial assembly the Maapäev later that year. The election result showed significant support for leftist parties including the Bolsheviks, social democrats and social revolutionaries. Voting was complicated, however by the presence of numerous military personnel from outside Estonia.<sup>13</sup>

On March 30, 1917 the provincial government in Petrograd (St. Petersburg), which had taken power after the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II in February, approved autonomy for Estonia. A land council was elected as the country's representative body. However, in October the Bolsheviks staged a coup in Tallinn, and declared the Estonian Soviet Executive Committee as the sole government of Estonia. As German forces advanced towards Estonia, in early 1918, the Bolsheviks troops were forced to leave. The major Estonian political parties united to form the Estonian Salvation Committee, and on February 1918, an independent republic of Estonia was proclaimed. A provisional government, headed by Konstantin Pats was formed, but Germany refused to recognize Estonia's independence and the country was occupied by German troops until the end of the First World War. Following the capitulation of Germany in November 1918, provisional government assumed power. After a period of armed conflict between Soviet and Estonian troops, the Republic of Estonia and

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<sup>12</sup> Smith, *op.cit*, pp. 9-10.

<sup>13</sup> Walter R. Iwaskiw, *op.cit*, p. 17.



Soviet Russia signed the treaty of Tartu on second February 1920. Under the terms of the treaty, the Soviet government recognized Estonia's independence and renounced any rights to its territory. Estonia's independence was recognized by the major western powers in January 1921, and Estonia was admitted to the League of Nations. <sup>14</sup>

The period of independence lasted until 1940. During most part of this time the country had a liberal – democratic political system in which the *Riigikogu* (State assembly) was the dominant political force. Significant social, cultural and economic advances were made in the 1920's, including radical land reformed. However the decline in trade with Russia and the economic depression of 1930's, combined with the political problems of a divided Parliament, caused public dissatisfaction with the regime. <sup>15</sup>

The five sets of parliamentary elections during 1920-32 were contested by as many as twenty-six different groups, whilst the number of parties actually gaining representation was anywhere between six (1932) and fourteen (1923). This was not a recipe for stable government from 1920 to 1934 Estonia had seventeen cabinets lasting average of nine months. Parliamentary politics was rendered intelligible by the presence of left center and rightwing blocs, with the latter two always able to command on overall minority in successive parliaments. Although pats, Maillot had opposed radical land reform within the constituent assembly, the agrarian right ultimately proved to be the main beneficiary of the 1919 legislation. Newly propertied elements amongst the rural population began to turn to Maillot and new small holders party in

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<sup>14</sup> George Von Rauch, *The Baltic Stats the Years of Independence* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974), p. 21.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

defense if their interests during the 1920s. <sup>16</sup> From 1926, the democratic right constituted the largest bloc within parliament. The Farmers Party consequently became the mainstay of government in what remained a predominately agrarian state elder supplying the street elder in 10 out of 17 of the coalitions. <sup>17</sup>

The country's first big political challenge came in 1924 during an attempted communist take over. In the depth of a nationwide economic crisis, leaders of the Estonian Communist party (*Estima Kommunistilk Partee-EKP*) in close contact with communist international leaders from Moscow, believed the time was ripe for a workers revolution to mirror that the Soviet Union. On the morning of December 1, some 300 party activists moved to takeover key government outposts in Tallinn while expecting workers in the capital Tories up behind them. The effort soon failed and the government quickly regained control.<sup>18</sup> In the aftermath, Estonian political Unity got a strong boost, While the communist lost all credibility relations with the Soviet Union, which had helped to instigate the coup, detonated sharply. Early on 1925, the Riigikogu approved new legal location allowing minority groups with more than 3,000 members to constitute themselves as public corporations. They were then entitled to elect cultural councils enjoying full Administrative and supervisory powers over minority schools and cultural institutions. <sup>19</sup>

In 1928, there was economic slowdown in Estonia and the pats became the one of the leading advocates of constitutional reform during this period. A series of party mergers along with measures

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<sup>16</sup> Smith, op.cit, pp. 14-15.

<sup>17</sup> Walter R. Iwaskiw, op.cit, p. 21.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

to streamline the government administration during the early 1930s had little effect in terms of instilling greater political stability.<sup>20</sup> In 1933, referendum, the league spearheaded replacement of the parliamentary system with a presidential form of government and laid the groundwork for on April 1934 presidential election which it expected to win. Alarmed by the prospect of a league victory and possible fascist rule, the caretaker Prime minister Constantine Pats organized a preemptive coup d'état on March 12, 1934. The Riigikogu and political parties were disbanded in 1934. In concert with the army, Pats began a ruling by decree that endured virtually without interruption until 1940. He suspended the parliament and all political parties and he disbanded the League of Independence War Veterans, arresting several hundred of its leaders. The subsequent "Era of Silence" initially was supported by most of Estonian political society. After the threat from the league was neutralized, however, calls for a return to parliamentary democracy resurfaced.<sup>21</sup>

In 1936, Pats entailed a tentative liberalization with the election of a constituent assembly and the adaptation of a new constitution. During elections for a new parliament, however, political parties remained suspended, except for Pats' own National Front and civil liberties were only slowly restored. But in 1938, a new constitution was adopted, which provided for a presidential system of government, with a bicameral legislature. In April 1938, Pats was elected president by the new parliament in 1938.<sup>22</sup>

Although the period of authoritarian rule that lasted from 1934 to 1940 was a low point in Estonian democracy. The clouds over

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<sup>20</sup> Slumhus, "Sufferings from determination" *Foreign Policy* (Washington) vol. 2, no. 84, p. 61.

<sup>21</sup> Smith, *op.cit.*, p. 21.

<sup>22</sup> Raud Villem, *Developments in Estonia 1939-1941, (Tallinn, 1987), p. 18.*

Estonia and its independence began to gather in August 1939, when Nazi-Germany and the Soviet Union signed the Nazi-Soviet Nonaggression pact (also Known as the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact) dividing Eastern Europe into sphere of influence. Moving to capitalist on its side of the deal, the Soviet Union soon began to pressure Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania into signing the pact of Defense and Mutual Assistance, which would allow Moscow to station 25,000 troops in Estonia. President Pats, in weakening health and with little outside support, acceded to every Soviet demand. In June 1940, Soviet forces completely occupied the country, alleging that Estonia had "Violated" the terms of the Mutual Assistance Treaty. With rapid Political maneuvering the regime of Soviet leader Joseph V. Stalin then forced the installation of a pro-Soviet government and called for new parliamentary elections in July. The Estonian Communist Party, which had only recently reemerged from underground with fewer than 150 members, organized the sole list of candidates permitted to run. Pats and other Estonian political leaders meanwhile were quietly deported to the Soviet Union. <sup>23</sup>

With the country occupied and under total control, the communist's 'official' electrical victory on June 17-18 , 1940 with 92.8 percent of the vote was merely window dressing. On July 21, 1940, the new parliament declared Estonia a Soviet republic and "requested" admission into the Soviet Union in Moscow, the Supreme Soviet granted the request on August 6, 1940. For all ups and downs Estonia's independent government experienced during the inter- war period, its termination by Stalin in 1940 was clearly

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<sup>23</sup> Rein Taagepera, *Estonia: Return to Independence* (Colorado: Westview Press, 1993), p. 58.

not among the range of solution favored by most Estonians.<sup>24</sup> Estonian's absorption into the Soviet Union as the Estonian Soviet Socialistic Republic was interrupted in June 1941 by the German invasion. The German's main interest lay in harnessing the Estonian manpower and resources to the war effort. The new regime did not restore private property confiscated by the Soviets and proceeded to explicit ruthlessly the economic base of the republic. As else where in Nazi-Occupied Eastern Europe, Hitler's 'New order' found at least some active adherents amongst the local population. In an attempt to consolidate the occupying regime, the ruling *Reichskommissariat* set up a puppet native administration headed by the previously-exiled former Veteran's League leader Hjalmar Mae. This engaged in score settling with communists and other former opponents from the independence era. A newly established Estonian Home Guard *Umakaitse* also abetted in the extermination of the thousands or so Estonian Jews who remained in the country following the Soviet withdrawal.<sup>25</sup>

Germans forces entered Estonia in July 1941, and remained in occupation until September 1944. The 1941-44 German occupation witnessed more repression especially of Estonia's Jewish population, which numbered about 2,000. In September 1944, as the Red Army again neared Estonia, the memories of Soviet rule resurfaced vividly enough to prompt some 70,000 Estonians to flee the country into exile. These émigrés later formed ethnic communities in Sweden, the United States, Canada, Britain, Australia and elsewhere, continuing to lobby for Estonian's rights

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Rank Gustav, *Old Estonia: The people and the Culture* (Bloomington: Indian University Press, 1976), p. 21.

during the next fifty years.<sup>26</sup> After the war, the Sovietization of Estonia resumed, sovietisation which began in 1940 and which ignored the interests of Estonian society continued. In 1944, the areas behind the Larva River as well as Petserimaa were united to the Russian federation. Estonia lost 5 percent of its territory. Forced industrialization where oil shale and oil shale gas production, electric power generation and the machinery industry were rapidly expanded meant the introduction of over 200,000 migrants from Russia. Specific policies aimed at out restricting the role of Estonians in Society as well as restricting Estonian culture were implemented. Private sector was liquidated both in industry and trade, the activity of Farms was limited. In 1947, collectivization began. On March 25-26, 1944, at least 20,700 people were deported. In total approximately, 50,000 underwent repression's in the period 1941-53.<sup>27</sup> By the end of 1949, most Estonian farmers had been forced to join collective farms. Heavy industry was expanded, with investment concentrated on electricity generation and the chemical sector. Structural change in the economy was accompanied by increased political repression, with deportations of Estonians continuing until the death of Stalin, in 1953. The most overt form of opposition to Soviet rule was provided by the "forest brethren" (*metsavenned*), a guerrilla movement, which continued to conduct armed operations against Soviet personnel and institutions until the mid-1950s.<sup>28</sup> Until 1953, partisans presented the Soviet countries with armed resistance. At the end of 1940s, there was a strongn attack against national culture treasure were destroyed, and the aim was to severe cultural

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<sup>26</sup> Anderson Edgar, "The role of Baltic states between the USSR and Western Europe" *East European Quarterly* (Colorado: University of Colorado), vol. VII, no. 4, 1974, p. 382.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.* p. 387.

<sup>28</sup> Bolz Kalus and Andreas Polkwaski, "Trends, Economic Policies and Systematic Changes in three Baltic States" *Intereconomics* (May-June), vol. 29, 1994, p. 148.

continuity, In 1950, During the 8<sup>th</sup> plenum of the ECP, Estonians from Russia-with Moscow's support – won the internal party battle, which resulted in the loss of any remaining autonomy on all-out attack on Estonian national culture and to persecution of Estonian National intelligentsia. Estonian national culture was substituted by primitive Soviet mass culture. <sup>29</sup>

In connection with a certain liberal section in the USSR, decentralization occurred in the economy. On 1957, the Estonian SSR National Economic Council was formed as a regional controlling body, and the economic indicators improved-developments also occurred in light industry. Investments in agriculture and the increase of the guaranteed prices resulted in improvements, and the collective farm workers began to receive monetary payments rather than just payments in kind. The constant campaigns and repeated reorganizations in Khrushchev's tim had a negative effect. Very little liberalization occurred in the political sphere, because the Russian- Estonians maintained their leading positions. There was an increased sense of security- those deportees who had survived were able to return to Estonia. The numbers of Estonians joining the ECP increased- in the hope that they would be able to democratize the party (society) from the inside (in 1996, 56 of the party members were Estonians). Continuity was restored in culture, it was possible to be freer in the interpretation of societies realist dogma, there was unnoticeable amount of creative freedom. As society became more open, it was possible to follow new international trends. First contacts with

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<sup>29</sup> Dassanovsky-Harris-Robertvon, "The Philosophy and Fate Of Baltic Self Determination" *East European Quarterly* (January), vol. 20, no. 4, 1987, p. 497

exiled Estonians were established. Travelling was allowed a limited extent.<sup>30</sup>

This 1965 reform meant a return to centralized economic control. The mechanism of economic leadership became bureaucratic. In the 1980s, Moscow managed more than 90 percent of Estonian industry; possibilities for extensive development were exhausted, and the Estonia had fallen further behind developed countries. The amalgamation of state farms in the 1970s resulted in the destruction of many historic settlements. The condition of the environment deteriorated, because of the large-scale productions a whole, however Estonia as still ahead on the Soviet productivity scale, several economic experiments were carried out to modernize the rigid planned economy. In the late 1960s. The leaders of the WCP opposed the attempts of the younger party members to raise the question of social democratization. The control of the ECP over the society increased during the 1970s. Censorship increased and creative freedom was restricted. At the same time, Anglo-American culture was intensively imported to Estonia. At the end of 1970s, the ECP intending to increase the importance of Russian began to restrict the use of Estonian.<sup>31</sup> In 1980, during the period of stagnation under Soviet leader Leonid I. Brezhnev, some 2,000 school children demonstrated the streets of Tallinn against a major rustication campaign launched from Moscow. Several dozen Estonian intellectuals later came together to write their own protest letter, but no avail. Karl Vaino, the Russified Estonian leader of the Estonian communist party at the time was particularly hostile towards dissent of any kind.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid, p. 501.

<sup>31</sup> Smith Graham, *The Baltic States: The National Self Determination of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania* (New York: ST Martins Press, 1994), p. 32.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

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During the late 1970's and 1980s the issue of 'Russification' and environmental degradation became subjects of intense debate in Estonia. The policy of glasnost, introduced by the Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, in 1986, allowed such discussion to spread beyond dissident groups. The first major demonstrations of the 1980s were organised in protest against plans to escalate the scale of open-cast phosphorite mining in north-eastern Estonia. The public opposition to the plans caused the Soviet Government to reconsider its proposals, and this success promoted further protests. In August 1987 a demonstration, attended by some 2,000 people, commemorated the anniversary of the signing of the Nazi-Soviet Pact. Following the demonstration, an Estonian Group for the Publication of the Molotov- Ribbentrop Pact (MRP-AEG) was formed. During 1988, the Nazi-Soviet Pact was duly published, and the MRP-AEG re-formed as the Estonian National Independence Party (ENIP), proclaiming the restoration of Estonian independence as its political objective. Another opposition group, the Estonian Popular Front (EPF), which had been established in April, was formally constituted at its first congress, in October, and included many members of the ruling Communist Party of Estonia (CPE). The EPF was more cautious than the ENIP in its approach, advocating the transformation of the USSR into a confederal system. The CPE itself was forced to adapt its policies to retain a measure of public support. On November 16, the Estonian Supreme Soviet (legislature) adopted a declaration of sovereignty, which included the right to annual all Union (USSR) legislation. The Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet declared the sovereignty legislation unconstitutional, but the Estonian Supreme Soviet affirmed its decision in December.

The political process began in earnest with the formation of the popular front of Estonian (PFE), a mass movement in support of Perestroika. It was established in October 1988 (officially registered in January 1989) in connection with the economic self-management programme. 16 The PFE was an umbrella organization coordinating the political activities of other organizations. The general progress of the popular front of Estonia (October 1988) called for the “decentralization of the state oriented administration system”, the formation of a Soviet Union based on the principles confederation, the decentralized of power and adoption of self management for Estonia. In response to political and potential electoral challenges posed by radical (Estonian) and conservative/Orthodox (non-Estonian) organization, the PFE, in the fall 1989 decided to support a policy calling for an independent Estonia outside of the Soviet Union. Independence was pressed through a transitional stage in which negotiations between the supreme council of Estonia and the Soviet government in Moscow were to occur. The PFE correctly perceived its major vulnerability popular support for independence was aroused by the radical forces. The growing tension with conservative/orthodox forces intensified nationalist desires for independence. Although initially an offer of a confederation of sovereign state by Moscow would have been seriously considered, by the December 1989 elections the national momentum had moved towards independence. 33

The radical Estonian organisations, such as the Estonian heritage society, Estonian National Independence Party, and the Union of Christian Democrats, sought the restoration of the former Republic of Estonia through elections to a successor parliamentary body to

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<sup>33</sup> Koolk, M. Inness R. Silenas R.V, *The Baltic Republics: A Study of Russification*, (Marry Land: Joint Baltic American National Committee, 1983), p. 21.

that of the Republic, the congress of Estonia. The supreme council of Estonia was viewed as a temporary instrument through which policies could be implemented.<sup>34</sup> By the spring of 1989, Estonia had thrown down the gauntlets of political sovereignty and economic autonomy. On the political front Estonia's strongest strategy was to invoke history. At the Soviet Union's first congress of people deputies in Moscow in 1989, Estonian and other Baltic deputies battled with Gorbachev to have the Soviet Union reveal the true story of the Nazi – Soviet non aggression pact in time for the fifteenth anniversary of the pact in August. Just days before the anniversary, a commission charged with studying the pact concluded that secret protocols dividing up Poland and the Baltic states had indeed existed. Armed with this finding, Estonia literally linked up with its Baltic neighbors on August 23, 1989, to form a 600 Kilometer human chain from Tallinn the Lithuanian capital, Vilnius, to draw world wide attention to the anniversary of the pact and to their cause. An estimated two million Baltic residents participated in the show of unity but the actor also elicited a harsh rebuke from Moscow several days later Tensions quickly mounted in Estonia, and the Estonian popular front decided to come a major song festival and rally planned for early September.<sup>35</sup>

In early August, Estonia nationalists had already been shaken by their first confrontation with Soviet loyalists. Members of the international movement of workers in the Estonian Soviet socialist republic primarily made up of ethnic Russians had staged strikes in Tallinn and north eastern Estonia protesting a set of new electoral rules and a new language law requiring all service workers to speak both Estonian and Russian. Many Russians in Estonia,

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<sup>34</sup> Europa World Year Book (London: Europa Publication), vol. 1, 1999, p. 1317.

<sup>35</sup> Walter R. Iwaskiw, *op.cit*, p. 21.

fearful of growing Estonian national feeling and of losing their privileges looked to Moscow for help. But direct intervention would not come.<sup>36</sup> Throughout the fall, independence sentiment continued to mount. In October the Estonia popular front issued a campaign platform for upcoming municipal elections in which it publicly endorsed full independence. Meanwhile, more radical groups had begun organizing their own campaign to restore independence completely by passing the Soviet system. These groups, known as Estonian Citizens committees, maintained that because their country had been illegally occupied and annexed by the Soviet Union and because the prewar republic still retained international recognition, it would not legitimate Soviet authority, by negotiating "secession" rather Estonia had to insist on the continuing legal authority of the prewar republic as the only sure way to ward off Soviet attempts to keep it in the union. By invoking international law, Estonia could also enlist western support and protection at a time when the Soviet Union needed good relations with the west to facilitate its own reforms.<sup>37</sup>

By the fall of 1989, it was clear that this argument and strategy would become essential to the independence movement and indeed, to politics, thereafter. To raise popular awareness of the independence issue, the Estonia citizens committee mounted a year long campaign to register all citizens of the prewar republic and their descendants. Of an estimated one million such citizens, the grassroots movements succeeded in registering about 700,000. It was this elections that, according to radical committees, possessed the sole right to decided the future of Soviet occupied Estonia – not the Soviet era Supreme Soviet its government, or

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 22.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

even the half million Soviet era immigrants to Estonia and their descendants, whom the committees claimed had taken up residence under the terms of the Soviet occupation and who would later be denied automatic citizenship.<sup>38</sup> Rather, the committees asserted the need to elect a new representative body to lead the independence struggle and the restoration of the prewar Republic. In February 1990, they organized nationwide elections for a congress of Estonia, which held its first session the following month.

Although their campaign enabled the citizens committees and the congress to again a fair amount of popular support most Estonians were not totally willing to forsake the Supreme Soviet because it, too, was up for election in March 1990. The most moderate Estonian popular front favoured the Supreme Soviet as a more realistic path to independence. The Estonian popular front campaigned heavily in March and won about 40 of the 101 seats. The Supreme Soviet elections also allowed all residents for Estonia to vote, including Soviet era immigrants and their descendants.<sup>39</sup> These were mostly Russians who, stilled primarily by Estonian communist party functionaries finally elected a total of twenty-seven pro-Soviet deputies. Although the two-thirds Estonian majority consequently was slim it was enough for the Supreme Soviet to declare at its first full session, on March 30, the country's official intention to re-establish its independence.

Unlike Lithuania's declaration of independence, Estonia's declaration was not an outright break with the Soviet Union. Rather, it was an attempt to find a compromise between the radical congress of Estonia and moderate Estonia popular front position.

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

Still the message of asserting independence from Moscow sanctions were imposed on Estonia. Neither, however, was any recognition according Estonia's declaration nor were any serious attempts made to begin talks with the new government in Tallinn. In the meantime, therefore, Estonia attempted to shore up its stance by finding new allies and initiating independent economic policies. In May 1996, the leaders of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania met formally in Tallinn to co-ordinate their strategy. In July, 1996 representatives of the three countries met for the first time with Boris N.Yeltsin, who had just been elected chairman of the Russian Supreme Soviet. Estonian Politicians and government officials traveled in Western Europe and the United States to renew western contracts.<sup>40</sup>

Domestically, in the fall of 1990 the Estonian government led by Estonian popular front leader Edgar Savisaar, began a series of moves to assert the republics economic independence and begin market reforms. Financial contributions to the all union budget were stopped, and wide-ranging price reform was initiated. Plans for a separate currency begin in 1989, continued to be worked on. In October, the government dispatched militia forces to patrol the republic border with Russia and to control the movement of goods; control over western gateways remained under Soviet control.

Moscow's bloody military assert on civilians in vilnius and Riga in January 1991 sent shock waves though Estonia as well. Although there were violent incidents in Estonia, Soviet loyalists staged a noisy demonstration in Tallinn, and the government installed huge boulders in front of the predominant building for protection. In January 1999, 12, Tallinn was the site of a hostile organized

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid, p. 23.

summit meeting between the Baltic leaders and Yeltsin, who supported the sovereignty of the three republics against Gorbachev. Yeltsin and Estonian parliament chairman Arnold Ruttel signed a bilateral treaty recognizing the sovereignty of each other's republic when later in the month, Gorbachev announced a nation-wide referendum on the issue of preserving the Soviet Union, Estonia decided to preempt the ballot with a referendum of its own on independence.<sup>41</sup>

The March 3 Estonian poll showed 78 percent in favour of independence and indicated significant support for independence among Russian residents— as much as 30 percent. Most Estonians boycotted the Soviet referendum held two weeks later. Gorbachev agreed to official talks with Estonia beginning on March 28, 1991. The talks continued through August and the Moscow coup, but no progress was made. Estonia refused to join negotiations for a new union treaty, while the Kremlin avoided any specifics for independence. The talks were further suspect by several hit and run attacks on Estonia's border outposts during the summer of 1991. These were generally attributed to units of the Soviet Ministry of Internal Affairs Special Forces detachment, commonly known as the Black Berets, over which Gorbachev apparently had lost control.<sup>42</sup> On the night of August 19, 1991 Estonia was caught up in the uncertainty generated by the attempted coup in Moscow. A column of Soviet light tanks and troops, carriers and already started to move on Tallinn as the commander of Soviet forces in the Baltic announced his support of the coup. Fearing a total crackdown by the Soviet army, the Estonian parliament met in emergency session on August 20. At

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 24.

<sup>42</sup> Laila Kaarel, "Estonia After the Elections", *Baltic Review*, (Tallinn, Summer) 1995, p. 31.

11.00 P.M. the supreme council, as the legislature was now known, passed a final resolution declaring full independence and requesting de-facto detect international recognition.<sup>43</sup>

On February 2<sup>nd</sup> 1990, a mass rally was held to commemorate the anniversary of the 1920 Treaty of Tartu. Deputies attending the rally later met to approve a declaration urging the USSR Supreme Soviet to begin negotiations on restoring Estonia's independence. On February 22, the Estonia Supreme Soviet approved the declaration, and on the following day it. Voted to abolish the constitutional, guarantee of power enjoyed by the EPE. This formal decision permitted largely free elections take place to the Estonian Supreme Soviet in March. The EPF won 43 of the 105 seats, while 35 were won by the Association for a free Estonia and other pro-independence groups. The remainder were won by members of the International Movement. Candidates belonging to the CPE, which was represented in all these groups, won 55 seats.<sup>44</sup> At the first session of the new legislature, Arnold Ruutel, previously Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, was elected to the new post of Chairman of the Supreme Soviet, in which was vested those state powers that had previously been the preserve of the First Secretary of the CPE. On 30<sup>th</sup> March 1990 the Supreme Soviet adopted a declaration which pro-claimed the beginning of a transitional period towards independence and denied the validity of Soviet power in the republic.

In late February and early March 1990 elections were held to the rival parliament to the Supreme Soviet, the congress of Estonia. Some 580,000 people took part in the election. The Congress convened on 11-12 March and declared itself the constitutional

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<sup>43</sup> Europa World Year Book (London: Europa Publication), vol. 1, 1999, p. 1318.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.



representations demanding the restoration of Estonian independence and the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Estonia. In early April 1990 the Supreme Soviet elected Edger Savisaar, a leader of the EPF, as Prime minister. On 8 May the Soviet voted to restore the first five articles of the 1938 Constitution, which described Estonia's independent status. The formal name of pre-1940 Estonia, the Republic of Estonia, was also restored, as were the state emblems, flag and anthem. On May 16<sup>th</sup>, 1990, a transitional system of government was approved. Although formal economic sanctions were not imposed on Estonia (as was the case with Lithuania), the republic's declaration of independence severally strained relations with the Soviet authorities. In Mid-way 1990 President Gorbachev annulled the declaration, declaring that it violated the USSR Constitution. The Estonian leadership's request for negotiations on the status of the republic was refused by Gorbachev, who insisted that the independence declaration be rescinded before negotiations could begin. There was also opposition within the republic, mostly from ethnic Russians affiliated to the International Movement.<sup>45</sup>

When troops of the USSR's Ministry of Internal Affairs attempted military intervention in Latvia and Lithuania in January 1991, the Estonian leadership anticipated similar confrontation. Barricades and makeshift defenses were erected, but no military action was taken. However, events in the other Baltic republics intensified popular distrust of Estonian involvement in a new union which was being negotiated by other Soviet republics. Consequently, Estonia refused to participate in a referendum on the future of the USSR, which took place in nine of the republics in March 1991. The Estonian authorities had conducted a poll on the issue of

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

independence earlier in the same month. According to the official results, 82.9 percent of the registered electorate took part, of which 7.8 percent voted in favour of Estonian independence. When the State Committee for the State of Emergency announced that it had seized power in the USSR on August 19<sup>th</sup>, 1991, Estonia, together with the other Baltic republics, expected military intervention to overthrow the pro-independence ernments. Gen. Fyoder Kuzmin, the Soviet commander of the Supreme Council (as the legislature was now known that he was taking full control of Estonia. Military vehicles entered Tallinn on August 20<sup>th</sup>, and troops occupied the city's television station of the Estonian Supreme Council from convening on the same day. Deputies adopted a resolution declaring the full and immediate independence of Estonia, thus ending the transitional period, which had begun in March 1990. Plans were also announced for the formation of a government in exile should the Government and the Supreme Council be disbanded by Soviet troops. After it became evident, on August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1991, that the Soviet coup had collapsed, the government began to take measures against persons who had allegedly supported the coup. The anti-government movements, the International Movement and the United Council of Work Collectives, were banned, as was the Communist party of the Soviet Union. Several Directors of Soviet enterprises were dismissed, and the Committee of State security (KGB) was ordered to terminate its actives in Estonia.<sup>46</sup>

As the Estonia Government moved to assert its authors over former Soviet institutions, other countries quickly began to recognize its independence. On September 6<sup>th</sup>, the USSR State council finally recognized the re-establishment of Estonian independence. Later in

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

the month Estonia, together with the other Baltic States, was admitted to the UN as well as to the conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSC renamed Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, OSCE, in December 1994). During the remainder of 1995 Estonia re-established diplomatic relations with most major states and was offered membership of leading international organizations. In internal politics there was hope for a cessation's of conflict between the radical congress of Estonia and the Assembly, composed of equal numbers of delegates from each body, which was to draft a new constitution. In January 1992, following a series of disputes with the Supreme Council concerning economic management and the issue of citizenship, and the Government's failure to persuade the legislature to impose an economic State of emergency, Savisaar resigned as Prime Minister and was replaced by the earst-while Minister of Transport, Tiit Vahi. A new council of Ministers, which included seven ministers from the previous Government, was approved by the Supreme Council at the end of the month.<sup>47</sup>

The draft constitution that had been prepared by the Constitutional Assembly was approved by an overwhelming majority of the electorate (some 91%) in a referendum held in late June 1992. Legislative and presidential elections were duly held on .... September, with the participation of some 67 percent of the electorate. The country's Russian and other ethnic minorities who now represented 42 percent of the total population, were again barred from voting (with the exception of those application for citizenship had been granted). The elections to the 101 – Seat *Riigikogu* were contested by a total of 633 candidates representing some 40 parties and movement, largely grouped in to eight

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid, p. 1319.

coalitions. The nationalist alliance Isamaa (Pre-Patria, or Fatherland) emerged with the largest number of 29 seats. Other right – hand parties and alliances performed well. The centrist Popular Front alliance (led by the EPF) won an unexpectedly low total of 15 seats. The Secure Home alliances, which comprised some former communists, obtained 17 seats. None of the four candidates in the Presidential election, which was held simultaneously, won an overall majority of the votes. It thus fell to the Riigikogu to choose from the most successful candidates, Arnold Ruutel, now a leading member of the Secure Home Alliance, and Lennart Meri, a former Minister of Foreign Affairs who was supported by Isamaa. In early October 1992 the Riigikogu now dominated by members or supporters of Isamaa, elected Lennart Meri to be Estonia's President, by 59 votes to 31. A new coalition government, with large representation of Isamaa members, as well as members of the Moderates electoral alliance and the ENIP, was announced in mid – October 1992. Earlier in the month, Mart Laar, a 32-year-old historian and the leader of Isamaa, had been chosen as Prime Minister. Laar indicated that principal objectives of his administration would be to negotiate the withdrawal of all Russian troops remaining in Estonia, as well as to accelerate the country's privatization programme. In late November, four of the five constituent parties of the Isamaa alliance united to form the National Fatherland Party (NFP), with Laar as its Chairman. In the same month the CPE was renamed the Estonian Democratic Labour Party.<sup>48</sup>

An important focus of Estonia's foreign policy is the attainment of full membership of the European Union (EU). Before regaining independence in 1991, Estonia had no armed forces separate from

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<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1321.

those of the USSR. Following the establishment of its own Ministry of Defence in April 1992, Estonia began to form an independent army. By August 1998, total armed forces numbered 4,340 (Army 3,980, Navy 320 & Air Force 40). There was also a reserved militia of some 14,000. There is a paramilitary border guard numbering 2,800 troops, under the command of the Ministry of the Interior. Military service is for 12 months, but was expected to be reduced to nine months during 1998. In February 1994 Estonia joined NATO's 'partnership for peace' programme of military co-operation.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

CHAPTER - 3

IMPACT OF SOVIET COLLAPSE  
ON POLITICAL  
DEVELOPMENTS IN ESTONIA  
1991-92

Estonia is situated on the northern shores of the Baltic Sea and is surrounded by the slavic nations in the east and Germany in the west. Historically, it belonged to Scandinavian culture but after its annexation by Tsar Peter the Great in 1710, the Scandinavian culture was suppressed because the Tsar imposed a policy of Russification and also introduced Catholicism in terms of Russian orthodoxy on Baltic society. Since then anti-Russian feelings has been a continuous source of utter discontent among the people. This is why, time and again, Estonians try to failed due to mighty foreign rule. Their concept of independence could see a light of the day when Soviet President Gorbachev introduced Perestroika and Glasnost in mid 1980s. <sup>1</sup> Before the advent of Gorbachev, Estonian concept of freedom during Soviet period had typical characteristics of getting support from the western world. The most effective rule in Estonia has been during tsarist and Soviet period. However, Estonia masses always looked towards west, but failed to materilize the support from the western world within its society due to command Soviet system. Follwing Gorbachev's democratization of Soviet society, the voices of freedom became very acute in Estonia.

In November 1988, the Estonian Supreme Soviet adopted a resolution to the effect that the local legislation would take precedence over All Union legislation cities as justification Article 76 of the Soviet constitution, which provided for the sovereignty of the Soviet Republics. Following this provision on the leading role of the communist party was elected from the Republic's constitution, thereby setting the stage for the emergence of alternative political groupings<sup>2</sup> In May 1989, the Estonian Supreme Soviet passed a

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<sup>1</sup> Great Soviet Encyclopedia (London; Collier Macmillan publishers), vol. 30, 1978, p.307.

<sup>2</sup> Europa world year Book (London: Europa publication), vol. 1, 1999, p. 1317.

law on the economic independence of Estonia, which amounted a declaration of economic sovereignty. Significantly, Estonia was the first Republic to break with the Soviet constitution and thus made a special contribution to the process of independence Baltic States and the Soviet Union disintegration.<sup>3</sup>

In the meantime, in the general elections of 1989, the local communists were defeated but the first time during the Soviet era and nationalist groups captured the power in Estonia. "With the East European countries slipping out of the Soviet grip during the second half of 1989, the USSR under Gorbachev appeared increasingly sympathetic to Estonian aspirations and the USSR Supreme Soviet passed a resolution demanding the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact as illegal on December 24, in 1989".<sup>4</sup>

On February 2<sup>nd</sup> 1990, a mass rally was held to commemorate the anniversary of the 1920 Treaty of Tartu. Deputies attending the rally later met to approve a declaration urging the USSR Supreme Soviet to begin negotiations on restoring Estonia's independence. On February 22<sup>nd</sup> 1990, the Estonia Supreme Soviet approved the declaration and on the following day it voted to abolish the constitution guarantee of power enjoyed by the CPE. This formal decision permitted largely free elections to take place to the Estonian Supreme Soviet in March. The EPF won 43 of the 105 seats, while 35 were won by the Association for a Free Estonia and other pro-independence groups. The remainder were by members of the International Movement. Candidates belonging to the CPE which was represented in all these groups, won 55 seats.<sup>5</sup> At the

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<sup>3</sup> Smith Graham, *The Baltic states : the national self determination of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania* (Newyork: StMartins press, 1994), p. 107.

<sup>4</sup> Edgar Anderson, "The role of Baltic states between the USSR and the western Europe" *East European Quarterly* (USA: University of colorado) January, vol. VII, no. 4., 1974, p. 379.

<sup>5</sup> Europa world year Book (London : Europa publication), vol. 1, 1999, p. 1318.



first session of the new legislature, Arnold Ruutel, previously Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, was elected to the new post of chairman of the Supreme Soviet, in which was vested those state powers that had previously been the preserve of the First Secretary of the CPE. On March 30<sup>th</sup> 1990, the Supreme Soviet adopted a declaration which proclaimed the beginning of a transitional period toward independence and denied the early March 1990 elections were held to the rival parliament to the Supreme Soviet, the Congress of Estonia. Some 580,000 people took part in the election. The Congress convened on 11-12 March declared itself the constitutional representative of the Estonian people. The participants adopted resolutions demanding the restoration of Estonian independence and the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Estonia. <sup>6</sup>

In early April 1990, the Supreme Soviet elected Edgar Savisaar, a leader of the EPF, as Prime Minister. On May 8<sup>th</sup> 1990, the Soviet voted to restore the first articles of the 1938 Constitution, which described Estonia's independent status. The formal name of pre-1940 Estonia the Republic of Estonia, was also restored, as were the state emblems, flag and anthem. On May 16<sup>th</sup> 1990, a transitional system of government was approved. Although formal economic sanctions were not imposed on Estonia (as was the case with Lithuania), the republic's declaration of independence severely strained relations with the Soviet authorities. In mid-May 1990 President Gorbachev annulled the declaration, declaring that it violated the USSR Constitution. The Estonian leadership's request for negotiations on the status of the republic was refused by Gorbachev, who insisted that the independence declaration be rescinded before negotiations could begin. There was also

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<sup>6</sup> Europa world year Book (London : Europa publication) vol. 1, 1999, p.1318.

opposition within the republic, mostly from ethnic Russians affiliated to the International Movement.<sup>7</sup>

When troops of the USSR's Ministry of Internal Affairs attempted military intervention in Latvia and Lithuania in January 1991, the Estonian leadership anticipated similar confrontation. Barricades and makeshift defences were erected but no military action was taken. However, events in the other Baltic republics intensified popular distrust of Estonian involvement in a new union which was being negotiated by other Soviet republics. Consequently, Estonia refused to participate in a referendum on the future of the USSR, which took place in nine of the republics in March 1991. The Estonian authorities had conducted a poll on the issue of independence earlier in the same month. According to the official results, 82.9 percent of the registered electorate took part, of which 77.8 percent voted in favour of Estonian independence.<sup>8</sup> When the State Committee for the State of Emergency announced that it had seized power in the USSR on 19 August 1991, Estonia, together with the other Baltic republics, expected military intervention to overthrow the pro-independence Governments, Gen. Fyodor Kuzmin the Soviet commander of the Baltic military district informed Arnold Ruutel, the Chairman of the Supreme Council (as the legislature as now known that he was taking full control of Estonia). Military vehicles entered Tallinn on 20 August, and troops occupied the city's television station. However, the military command did not prevent a session of the Estonian Supreme Council from convening on the same day. Deputies adopted a resolution declaring the full and immediate independence of Estonia, thus ending the transitional period which had begun in

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Great Soviet Encyclopedia (London: Collier Macmillan Press) vol. 30, 1978, p 309.

March 1990 Plans were also announced for the formation of a government in exile should the government and the Supreme Council be disbanded by Soviet troops.<sup>9</sup> After it became evident on 22 August 1991, that the soviet coup had collapsed, the government began to take measures against persons who had allegedly supported the coup. The anti-government movements, the International Movements and the United Council of Work Collectives, were banned as was the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Several directors of Soviet enterprises were dismissed and the committee of state Security( KGB) was ordered to terminate its activities in Estonia. <sup>10</sup> This historical development was followed by declaration of Estonian independence from Soviet Union in 1990. The inner party rivalry within Soviet leadership, particularly Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin provided a base for Estonian independence. Initially Gorbachev tried to provide greater autonomy for Estonia and other Baltic States. However his policy of Perestroika and Glasnost failed following the disintegration of Soviet Union itself in 1991. Thus Estonia could achieve full independence only after the collapse of Soviet Union.

After regained its independence, Estonia has been engaged in taking the necessary steps to define and to establish its statehood. Following the collapse of the August coup, the government dismissed all those in positions of influence who had openly supported the Moscow plotters. The pro-Soviet United Council of work collectives (OSTK) was dissolved, and its leaders relieved of their positions as directors of former all union enterprises. Armed worker's detachments established within these factories were dissolved and certain of their members imprisoned. The CPSU and

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Foreign Broadcast Information Service (Central Eurasia) August No. 89-95, 1994, p. 107. .

the KGB were also banned on the grounds that they were agencies of a foreign state. In spite of a belated pledge of allegiance to the Estonian Republic, city council leaders in Narva and Sillamae were also dismissed on account of their previous refusal to observe Estonian legislation during 1990-91.<sup>11</sup> Unlike in Latvia and Lithuania, however, the Estonia government allowed former council members to stand as candidates in fresh elections. The old leadership were duly re-elected in October 1991, albeit on a turnout of only 35 percent in Narva. Having retained a power base in the Russian-speaking, north-east, these former opponents of independence were well placed to mount a challenge to the new state order over the next two years.

In September 1991, Savisaar sponsored the launch of the Russian Democratic Movement (RDM), a new pro-independence, pro-integrationist party. RDM helped to fill the “vacant political niche” left by disappearance of the communist party, bringing to prominence a new generation of liberally minded Russian intellectuals. By co-opting former opponents of independence such as Vladimir Lebedev, it also helped to prevent a possible drift towards more extreme groups during the crucial months which followed. Savisaar’s support for the RDM was far from purely altruistic, however. By wooing the Russian-speaking population, the Prime Minister was also seeking to revive his waning political fortunes. Savisaar had never enjoyed unquestioned leadership of diverse nationalist groupings within the popular front<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> David J. Smith, *Estonia: independence and European integration* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 60.

<sup>12</sup> Kaplan Cynthia S, *Estonia: A Plural society on the road to independence* (London : cambridge university press, 1992), p. 13.

## **ESTONIA' POLITICAL GROUPINGS IN EARLY 1991.**

- ◆ Anti-independence groups
- ◆ The no-preference people
- ◆ Reform communists
- ◆ Popular front of Estonia
- ◆ Estonia Social Democratic Party (ESDP)
- ◆ Other members of the PFE alliance
- ◆ Non-PFE center – right
- ◆ National radicals <sup>13</sup>

Amongst the first to emerge were Marju Lauristin's Estonian Social Democratic Party (ESDP), Ivar Raigs Rural Centre Party and a liberal democratic groupings which included more moderate members of the congress of Estonia. In all, twelve distinct functions emerged within the 1990-1992 supreme council. As head of the centre caucus in parliaments, Savisaar was elected as prime Minister by a margin of one vote.<sup>14</sup>

"In mid-1991 as the independence struggle seemed to languish, the Estonia government, led by prime Minister Edgar Savisaar showed begins of readiness to compromise on the citizenship issue in order to gain more local Russian support. However after the failed coup and the immediate onset of full independence, the congress and

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<sup>13</sup> Rein Taagepera, *Estonia : Return to independence* (Colorado: Westview press, 1993), p. 195.

<sup>14</sup>Hidden John and Lane Thomas, *The Baltic and the outbreak of the second worldwar* (Loncon: Cambridge university press, 1992), p. 32.

other radical groups were emboldened to insist on the principle of restricted citizenship. Thus the supreme council decided on November 11, 1991 to require the naturalization of all Soviet-era immigrants to Estonia while automatically renewing the citizenship of all prewar citizens and their descendants.<sup>15</sup> As long as independence remained the overarching goal, the popular front leader was allowed to preside over a loose coalition government containing three reform communists. The restoration of statehood, however, deprived the front of its original *raison d'être* and fragmentation soon ensued. In September, Savisaar consolidated the residual core of the movement by forming the people's centre party, which combined pragmatic nationalism with a gradualist approach to economic reform. "According to Savisaar's successor, Tilt Vahi, this approach had worked well as long as Estonia needed to become independent. The achievement of independence, however, called for radical policies to achieve a definitive break with the socialist past."<sup>16</sup>

As the Estonia Government moved to assert its authority over former Soviet institutions, other countries quickly began to recognize its independence. On 6 September the USSR State Council finally recognized the re-establishment of Estonia's independence. Later in the month Estonia, together with the other Baltic states, was admitted to the UN as well as to the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) renamed Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE, in December 1994). During the remainder of 1991, Estonia re-established diplomatic relations with most major states and was offered membership of leading international organizations. In

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<sup>15</sup> Walter R. Iwaskiw, *Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania country studies* (Washington: Federal Research Division Library of Congress, 1995), p. 26.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

internal politics there was hope for a cessation of conflict between the radical Congress of Estonia and the Supreme Council, with the establishment of a Constitutional Assembly, composed of equal numbers of delegates from each body, which was to draft a new constitution.<sup>17</sup>

In January 1992, following a series of disputes with the Supreme Council concerning economic management and the issue of citizenship, and the Government's failure to persuade the legislature to impose an economic state of emergency – Saar resigned as Prime Minister and was replaced by the Minister of Transport. Tiit Vahi A new Council of Minister, which included seven ministers from the previous Government, was approved by the Supreme Council as the end of the month<sup>18</sup>

The draft constitution that had been prepared by the constitutional Assembly was approved by an overwhelming major of the electorate (some 91%) in a referendum held in late June 1992. Under the recently adopted Citizenship Law only person who had been citizens of pre-1940 Estonia, and their descendants, or those who had successfully applied for citizenship was entitled to vote. This ruling drew strong criticism from Russian leaders, concerned that the right of the large Russian minorities in Estonia, most of whom had not been granted citizenship and who were thus disenfranchised, were being violated. The new Constitution, which entered into force in early July 1992, provided for a parliamentary system of government. With a strong presidency. A new legislature, the Riigikogu, was to replace the Supreme Council ( and the Congress of Estonia), and elections to the new body were to be held

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<sup>17</sup> Trapans Jan Arved, *Toward independence: the Baltic popular Movements* (Colorado : westview press, 1991 ), p. 107.

<sup>18</sup> Europa world year book (London: Europa publication), Vol. 1, 1999, p. 1318.

in September. A direct president election was to take place simultaneously (although subsequent presidents would be elected by the *Riigikogu*).<sup>19</sup>

Legislative and presidential election were duly held on September 21<sup>st</sup> 1992, with the participation of some 67 percent of the electorate. The country's Russian and other ethnic minorities who now represented 42 percent of the total population, were barred from voting (with the exception of those whose application for citizenship had been granted). The elections to the 101-seat *Riigikogu* were contested by a total of 633 candidates representing some 40 parties and movements, largely groups in to eight, coalition. The nationalist alliance *Isamaa* (the Patria, or Fatherland) emerged with the largest number of seats (29). Other right-wing parties and alliances performed and the centrist Popular Front alliance (led by the EPF) won an unexpectedly low total of 15 seats. The ENIP which was not part of a coalition won 10 seats. The Secure Home alliance which comprised some former communists, obtained 17 seats.

None of the four candidates in the presidential election, which was held simultaneously, won an overall majority of the votes, it thus fell to the *Riigikogu* to choose from the two most successful candidates, Arnold Ruutel, now a leading member of the Secure home alliance, and Lennart Meri, a former Minister of Foreign affairs, who was supported by *Isamaa*, in early October 1992 the *Riigikogu*, now dominated by members or supporters of *Isamaa* elected Meri to be Estonia's President, by 59 votes to 31, A new coalition Government, with a large representation of *Isamaa* members as well as members of the Moderates electoral alliance

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<sup>19</sup> Europa world year book (London: Europa publication), Vol. 1, 1999, p. 1318



and the ENIP, was announced in mid-October 1992. Earlier in the month, Mart Laar, a 32-year-old historian and the leader of Isamaa, had been chosen as Prime Minister. Laar indicated that the principal objectives of his administration would be to negotiate the withdrawal of all Russian troops remaining in Estonia, as well as to accelerate the country's privatization programme. In late November four of the five constituent parties of the Isamaa alliance united to form the National Fatherland Party (NFP), with Laar as its chairman. In the same month, the CPE was renamed the Estonian Democratic Labour Party.<sup>20</sup>

In January 1992, in the midst of a severe economic crisis and problems securing heating oil, Savisaar asked parliament for emergency power. When the vote on emergency power was taken on January 16, Savisaar won, because of several Russian deputies. This narrow margin revealed the extent of Savisaar's unpopularity among the Estonian deputies and a week later he resigned. Savisaar's transportation Minister, Tiit Vahi, was charged with forming a new government which was billed as one of the technocrats and caretakers in advance of parliamentary elections in the fall.<sup>21</sup>

As Vahi formed his regime, several major issues remained outstanding. The new Prime Minister's first task was to oversee the passage of the naturalization requirements for citizenship, which occurred in February. Then, the language and residency requirements were put into effect. Thereafter, the draft constitution drawn up by the constitutional assembly neared completion and required approval by popular referendum. This referendum was set

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<sup>20</sup> Europa world year book (London: Europa publication), Vol. 1, 1999, p.1319.

<sup>21</sup> Gerner Kristian and Stefan Hedlund, *The Baltic states and the end of the Soviet empire* (London : Routledge, 1993), p. 37.

for June 28, 1992, which only citizens allowed to participate. Along side the proposed constitution, a second question asked the people whether to allow the earliest applicants for citizenship to vote on an exceptional basis in the upcoming nation wide elections. Because these applicants numbered just over 5000, the gesture would be largely symbolic. However, a strong campaign by nationalist Estonian parties led to the defeat of the measure, 53 percent to 46 percent. The constitution was passed by a 91 percent majority.<sup>22</sup>

On June 20, one week before the referendum, the Vahi government completed its third remaining task; currency worn. On that day Estonian residents proudly cashed in their old, worn Russian Rubles for crisp, new Estonian Kroon. The pegged to the stable deutsche mark, would soon bring inflation tumbling down and serve as the basis for a new economy.<sup>23</sup>

In 1992, there was trade agreement with Russia, that would lay a foundation for furthering economic relations between Estonia and Russia. It has been decided that in the first quarter of the coming year goods procurement will be no less than 70 percent of the last years level. The government has decided to sign an agreement on the protection of investments with the Republic of Finland. Rein Nigul, the deputy agriculture Minister has told the Baltic news service that the proposed prices for foodstuffs here at the end of last year were based on emotions. According to Mr. Nigul, price increases for full electricity, machinery and such things together with any additional related factors have not yet has a substantial impact on agriculture. Farmers have been provided with sufficient fuel for a week, some until the spring sowing. The financial state of

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<sup>22</sup> Gerner Kristian and Stefan Hedlund, *The Baltic states and the end of the Soviet empire* (London : Routledge, 1993), p. 37.

<sup>23</sup> Foreign Broadcast Information Service Report (Central Eurasia) June 1994, no. 68-73, p. 73.

large farms is normal in the opinion of the deputy minister of agriculture.<sup>24</sup>

Income tax reduced for individuals in 1992. According to Rein Miler, finance Minister, this will mean a relatively smaller tax amount than before for each tax payer.<sup>25</sup>

Estonia's New era of democratic politics began slowly in the 1990 with the adaption of a new constitution and the formation of stable political groupings. Several mechanisms in the constitution comparisons more than they reveal. As quickly became apparent, the 'golden age' label did not extend to all aspects of the inter-war period. Rather, nationalist forces have simply drawn on these images when it has been politically expedient to do so. When the constitution assembly began its deliberations in the autumn of 1991, pressure for a strong executive came in the first instance not from radical nationalists but from former communists such as Arnold Ruutel who as head of the supreme council enjoyed a position akin to that of president under the existing constitutional arrangements. Ruutel's high approval rating amongst ordinary Estonians rested on his role in overseeing the transition to independence and his demeanour of silver haired elder statesman. Politically he was closest to the coalition party in late 1991. Yet was careful to distance himself from party politics.<sup>26</sup>

The fact that Ruutel opposed Estonian membership of NATO and dismissed the need for a national army made him all the more unpalatable to radical nationalists, who were perhaps all too mindful of the 'national betrayal' perpetrated by a strong president

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p. 95.

<sup>26</sup> Lalle Kaarel, "Estonia after the elections" *Baltic Review* (Tallinn) Summer, 1996, p. 31.

back in 1939-40. Constitution assembly delegates drawn from the were beginning to function to ensure a balance of power and steady government like the supreme council, the congress was home to a number of small proto-parties formed 1988-90. "In September 1991, a group of smaller congress parties (The Christian Democrats, Liberal Democrats, Conservative People Party and Republican Coalition Party) came together to form a coalition known as Isammaa (Fatherland or, as it prefers to be known, propatria). The platform of this new grouping was based around the principles of individual freedom, accountable government, low taxes and the nation state. All of the radical nationalist parties were informed to various degrees by the "restorationist principles" of state building.<sup>27</sup>

"Riina Kionka has rightly characterized the state-building debated of 1991-92 as a thinly valid political struggle rather than a context of high ideals." Whilst the name Isamaa immediately suggests continuity from the inter-war Pats dictatorship, such congress thus advocated a political system weighted towards the legislature. Yet incorporating sufficient checks and balances to avoid the pitfalls encountered during 1920-34. This position quickly found majority support within the assembly, which endeavored to create a synthesis between the 1920 constitution and the political system of the post war Federal Republic of Germany.<sup>28</sup>

The draft constitution of December 1991 gave a limited role to the head of the state, whose ostensibly ceremonial duties include representing Estonia in international relations and acting as

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<sup>27</sup> Ronald D. Asmus and Robert C. Nurick, "NATO enlargement and the Baltic states" *Survival* (Hakone) vol. 38, no. 2, 1996, p. 121.

<sup>28</sup> Kinoka Riina, "The Estonian citizens committee : An opposition Movement of a different complexion" *Report on the USSR* (Munich), vol. 2, No.6, 1990, p. 30.

supreme commander of the defense forces. The president nominates the Prime Minister, yet approval of a new government rests firmly with parliament. Perhaps the most significant power attaching to the presidential office is the right to return legislation to parliament for revision. If parliament refuses to comply the president must either promulgate the law or refer it to the national court for final adjudication on its constitutional validity. According to the new constitution, Estonia has a presidential form of government. This new constitution provides rights duties and liberties of citizens. There is freedom of association, freedom of speech, freedom to form various parties and organizations. It also provides fundamental rights and duties. There are set of provisions in the constitution including state building democracy building etc.<sup>29</sup>

The nature of the political system established after independence has prompted certain commentators to label Estonian “ethnic democracy”. This later term is used to denote a multiethnic state in which the “core nation” possesses a superior institutional status beyond its numerical proportion within the state, certain civil and political rights are open to all ; and certain collective rights are extended to ethnic minorities. The Estonian constitution of 1912 contains provisions making Estonian the sole official state language and granting citizenship according to Jus Sanguinis. In all but exceptional cases, positions on state and local government are to be filled by Estonian citizens, whilst knowledge of the state language has progressively been deemed a requirement for public

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<sup>29</sup> Walter R. Iwaskiw, *op.cit*, p. 68.

sector employment. At the same time, all individuals are deemed equal before the law.<sup>30</sup>

The “Ethnic democracy thesis is derived from literature on conflict regulation in ethnically-divided plural societies. Seen from this perspective, Estonian nationalities policy rests on a classic strategy of divide and rule. To quote Smith, Asland and Mole.” In combining some elements of civil and political democracy with explicit ethnic dominance in ethnic democracy attempts to preserve ethno-political stability based on the contradictions and tensions inherent in such a system. In March 1992, the ruling body of the congress attacked the supreme council for having legalised the presence of ‘colonies’ in Estonia. Elements of ERSP, mean while repeated calls for a formal programme of decolonisation under the auspices of the United Nations. <sup>31</sup>

The fact that a majority of the electorate headed this call suggests Estonians has absorbed the lesson of history with regard to the authoritarian 1930s. at the same time, the experience of 1920-34 offered a salutary reminder of the problems inherent in trying to backed a functioning pluralist democracy virtually from scratch. According to Rosimannus, the fractions parliamentary politics of the 1920s- more democratic façade than democratic substance – had ultimately alienated the people from state institutions, with fatal consequences. The explanation lay in mismatch between a political system borrowed from the west and a political culture which lacked any deep-rooted tradition of democratic politics. <sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> David J Smith, *Estonia independence and European integration* (London : Routledge, 2001), p. 74.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, p. 76.

<sup>32</sup> Walter clemens, *Baltic independence and Russian Empire* (Newyork: St Martins press, 1991), p. 36.

As was the case in the 1920s, most politicians regarded multi-party system as a logical and necessary facet of western-inspired institutional development. The September 1992 elections were contested by over 20 political parties many of which modeled as long established parties in western Europe. Attempts to draw close parallels with western “sister parties” were largely misleading however, for in the absence of well defined categories of socioeconomic class late Soviet political mobilisation had occurred primarily along national lines. As the façade of national unity began to crack during 1990, parties were built on the basis of the various small, issues based groupings within the popular movements. The more often than not, these ‘parties’ began like as little more than cliques based around one or more prominent individuals.<sup>33</sup>

On the premise that elections would henceforth be multiparty affairs, the new electoral law of 1992 replaced the single transferable vote system of 1980-90 with a proportional representation list system. Scope for expression of the “personality factor” was retained in so far as voters still cast their ballot for individual candidates rather than parties or electoral coalitions”. Independent candidates are allowed to stand, and individuals who fulfil a given quota (the total number of votes cast divided by the number of seats to be filled) within a particular district are automatically elected to parliament. However, generally high quotas meant that only that 17 percent of the Riigikogu meant were allocated this way in September 1992. <sup>34</sup>

The remaining seats are allocated according to the total number of votes cast of each party and electoral coalition. Provided a party

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<sup>33</sup> David J. Smith, *Op.cit.*, p. 79.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

obtains more than 5 percent of the vote at the nationwide level, its total vote within the constituency is divided by the local electoral quota to determine the number of seats obtained in the given district. In the first instance, these seats will go to local candidates in descending order of their personal vote (provided this exceeds 10% of the district quota). Those seats which remained unfilled are transferred to a national pool where they are allocated in proportion to the total national vote for each eligible party. Under this final 'Compensation' mechanism candidates are selected according to their ranking on the national party list rather than their personal vote".<sup>35</sup>

The 5 percent threshold was intended as safeguard against an under fragmented parliament. Hopes that smaller parties would merge to form larger groupings were only partially realised in the first two sets of post Soviet elections, for the rules governing electoral coalitions allowed different parties to run under a single list whilst still maintaining their distinct identities. The loose nature of these alliances provided no guarantee of continued cooperation within parliament, where the coalition partners were free to part company and form their own separate caucuses.<sup>36</sup>

Although the institutional bases of multi party system were in place by the time Estonians went to the polls in September 1992, the fledging political parties still faced an uphill struggle in order to establish themselves as legitimate agents of representation. Surveys taken before and after revealed that only 13 percent of the population identified with a particular party, compared to the EU average of 56 percent. If the mushrooming of parties and electoral platforms posed difficulties for political analysts, it proved yet more

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, P. 83.



confusing to an Estonian electorate whose interest in politics was already waning following the exertions of the independence campaign.<sup>37</sup>

Prior to independence, the major issues of the day had been clear and unambiguous requiring little in the way of rational deliberation. The appeal of the independence movements rested on promises of the bright future which beckoned once statehood was restored. Growing economic hardship during 1991 -92 it seems, could not dispel this sense of optimism, so total was the rejection of soviet communism. Yet in as much as the new ideological discourses espoused by politicians remained largely untested, public understanding of them was necessarily limited. Best placed to prosper were parties such as Ismaa which promised a rapid break with Soviet past. For over half of voters casting ballots in September 1992, however, the personality of the candidate counted for more than his/ her party affiliation.<sup>38</sup>

At 66 percent participation in the elections was high by western European standards, but already well down on the levels witnessed in Estonia during 1989-91. Due to the exclusion of settlers and their descendants, the electorate was now 90 percent ethnically Estonia, as opposed to 65 percent two years earlier. It was thus hardly surprising that the new 101 member Riigikogu was made up entirely of Estonian representation of the 15 parties and coalitions which contested the elections, a total of seven crossed the 5 percent barrier.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Taagepera Rein, "Note on the March 1989 elections in Estonia" *Soviet Studies* (U.K.), vol. 42, no. 2, 1990, p. 329.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

After a campaign heavily coloured by nationalist issues the new parliament is most easily rendered rendered intelligible with reference to the pre-existing cleavages within the independence movement. Of the congress groupings, by far the largest number of seats (29) fell to Isamaa, which drew most of its support from urban areas. The ERSP (10 seats) vote was more evenly distributed nationwide, with the bulk of its support coming from lower income groups. The second most popular group amongst urban voters was moderates (Moodukad) coalition consisting of Lauristin's ESDP and Raig's rural centre party (12) seats). These parties belonged to the section of the popular front which defected to a more exclusivist stance on citizenship during 1991. In keeping with this new orientation the moderates electoral programme included provision for future cooperation with Isamaa and ESRP. Together, these three groupings commanded a slim 3 seat majority and entered government in October 1992.<sup>40</sup>

The rump popular front coalition, meanwhile was left with only 15 seats. Savisaar's high visibility and residual popularity probably helped to avert a more disastrous stamp in support for a party perceived as overly compliant towards Russian-Speaking settlers. Nationalist attacks on the centre and its allies had come not just from the right but also from the old reforms communist wing of the independence movement now grouped within the "secure home" (Kindel Kodu) coalition. Secure homes emphasis on 'security', 'Home' and 'family' found widespread support amongst the elderly and the impoverished rural population, giving the coalition 17 seats in the new parliament. The inaptly named "left opportunity"-drawn from the rump CPE-failed cross the 5 percent threshold making Estonia the first post socialist state in which the official

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid, p. 340.

successor to the communist party lacked any representation in parliament. <sup>41</sup>

Another notable feature of the elections was the success encountered by two 'anti-system' groups. Out of the restitution movement came Estonian citizen (8 seats ) led by charismatic Estonia-American vietnam veteran Juri Toomepuu. Toompeuu garnered the highest personal vote of any candidate in September 1992. <sup>42</sup> Despite the avowed preference for personalities over parties expressed by the electorate, 60 of the 101 Riigikogu seats were allocated through the "compensation" mechanism which left the final choice of candidate to the party. This factor was later seized upon by the Demagogue Toomepuu, who contrasted 14,000 personal votes with the mere handful (often less than 100) obtained by other Riigikogu deputies.<sup>43</sup>

On June 28, 1992 under the new constitution, Estonia has a parliamentary system of government, with a prime minister as chief executive. The constitution opens with a set of general provisions and a forty eight article section establishing the fundamental rights, liberties, and duties of citizens. Freedom of expression and assembly, freedom of information, the right to petition the courts and the right to health care are all guaranteed. Censorship and discrimination on the basis of nationality, gender religion, or political belief are forbidden.<sup>44</sup>

The July 1992 law on the implementation of the constitution had recognised the 'Salience' of the 'personality factor' by providing for

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<sup>41</sup> Stefan C, "Self determination and recent development in the Baltic States" *Journal of international law and policy*. (Cambridge ) vol. 19, No. 3, 1991, p. 625.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, p. 636.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, p. 640.

a one-off popular election to the presidency, held simultaneously to the parliamentary poll. Under these regulations, any candidate obtaining more than 50 percent of the popular vote would be automatically elected, other wise the matter would be referred to parliament. The candidates for the post (and their party sponsors) were as follows: Arnold Ruutel (kindelkodu) and Lennart Meri (Isamaa) emerged at the front runners, whilst 'émigré' professor Rein Taagepera (Centre) and former dissident Lagle Parek (ERSP) declared that they were competing Ruutel rather than one another in 1992. No candidate could get the required absolute majority to be elected as president and the two leading candidates, incumbent Arnold Ruutel (41.8% and the Ambassador of Finland Lennart Meri (29%.5) had to face a run of election in the parliament, as provided for the constitution to resolve the deadlock. Mr. Meri was thereafter elected president on October 6, 1992 receiving 59 votes as compared to 31 votes for Mr. Ruutel.<sup>45</sup>

Meri's first act as president was to invite Ismaa's Mart Laar to form a government. Laar duly concluded a coalition agreement with ERSP and the moderates, giving the former the portfolios of interior, defense and transport and the latter reform, social affairs, agriculture and the environment. The rest of the 14 principal cabinet posts went to representatives of his own coalition. The new government took office on 21 October 1992. <sup>46</sup>

The other major priorities set by Laar in his inaugural speech to the Riigikogu were withdrawal of Russian troops; membership of the council of Europe; an association agreement with the EU; reorganization of the defence forces ; and cooperation with NATO.

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<sup>45</sup> Taagepera Rein, *"Building democracy in Estonia" Political Science and politics* (London) American Political Science Association, vol. 24, no. 3, September, 1991. p.. 478.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, p. 983.

In 1992 Estonia divided into 'citizens' and 'foreigners.' The division was made on the basis of a new legal act- a resolution adopted by parliament on putting into effect the Law on Citizenship. Under the parliamentary rules, this extremely important document that in many respects decides the fate of the republic and hundreds of thousands of people living there had to win a simple majority of votes. Fifty- two Deputies voted confirmation. Almost all the Russian- speaking Deputies voted against it or abstained. "To some extent, we won a small victory," said Viktor Andreyev, deputy speaker of the parliament." The naturalization period- the minimal time required to obtain citizenship-was reduced from three years to a year and one month."<sup>47</sup>

The parliament recorded and reflected the state of Estonian society. The first point of the adopted resolution put into effect the version of the Law on Citizenship that existed on June 16,1940-the day the Red Army entered the [Baltic] republics. By the standards of those times, the law was one of the most democratic in Europe. Unless it is changed, it is mild and favorably disposed towards those who might come to Estonia in the future. After just two years, each such person will be able to petition for citizen status. A year after submitting his application the person has to take a language test and an exam on the republic's history and culture. The law takes a tough stance towards those who are already living in Estonia and have already worked for the republic's goods for many years. They will now have to go through the two-year qualification period and one-year trial period all over again, as well as take the exams. True, the date selected as the starting point is March 30, 1990-the day

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<sup>47</sup> The Current Digest of the post Soviet Press vol. XLIV, no. 8, 1992, p. 19.

the parliament declared the transitional period and the real restoration of independence.

By a whim of fate, the trade unions of Narva, a city that is 96 percent Russian, find themselves at the centre of economic and political processes of vital importance to Estonia's Russian Population. Rampant unemployment, the collapse of the monetary circulation system and a decline in Estonian industrial production that is sharper than even the "Union average" have invigorated the activities of all the republic's trade unions without exception-Russian and Estonian alike. For the Russian-speaking working people, their social and economic woes have been compounded by the citizenship problem. Despite all the admonitions of officials and national politicians ("the Russian have to understand"), the "slow-witted" Russians link the status of foreigners with political, economic and social rights and guarantees-especially at a time of economic collapse. Therefore, the Narva trade unions, which are headed by relatively young technocrats who are completely untarnished by the imperial period and concerned not so much with ideology as with the fate of flesh-and-blood individuals, put forward a package of economic and political demands back in March. It is significant that the color of the banners under which the Narva trade unions assembled their supporters was not pink but distinctly blue, black and white( the colors of the Estonian flag) They view Estonia's independence as an immutable fact. Nevertheless, the demand that Estonian citizenship be granted to all permanent residents of the republic who have lived there for at least the past three years became a stumbling block. As is customary, the demands were backed up with a promise of civil disobedience and strikes. It was stated from the outset that the power-industry workers were fully aware of the danger of shutting

down the electric power stations and that they intend, in the event of a strike, only to reduce output at the two state regional power stations by roughly 50 percent, after giving dispatchers at the Estonian Power Engineering Administration 24 hours notice.<sup>48</sup>

During the first three weeks of April, commission after commission regularly left Tallinn and headed northeast in an attempt to persuade the power-industry workers to heed the voice of reason. However, the legislature itself refused to make any compromises. Things are complicated by the fact that by the end of last week, the situation in the Estonian political establishment was increasingly reminiscent of dual power. In the conflict-ridden Supreme Council, the problem of the Narva "foreigners" has assumed not so much practical as symbolic importance; the focus is on how, in future elections, voters will assess a given politician's patriotism in creating a national state. Therefore, the Supreme Council adopted a law on elections to the State Assembly low permanent residents to participate in them. A few days later, proposals by Deputies Valery Kois and Juhan Telgmaa for amending the resolution on putting the Law on Citizenship into effect and for simplifying the naturalization procedure for permanent residents were also rejected.<sup>49</sup>

Some Estonian politicians are well aware of the danger that the acute political crisis poses to the young republic. Former Prime Minister, Edgar Savisaar, who heads the centrist faction in parliament, has already led several attempts to liberalize the legislation on citizenship. Despite the fact that they were all torpedoed by the radical nationalists, Savisaar significantly strengthened his faction's position. Moreover, being a pragmatic

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<sup>48</sup> The Current Digest of the post Soviet Press XLIV, No, 17, 1992, p. 17.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

and energetic politician, he managed to revive the Estonian People's Front that he himself had once created and to hold its fourth congress. At the congress, taking advantage of the situation that has developed, Savisaar declared that the People's Front had always advocated the creation of a civil society in an independent Estonia, and that the radical nationalists could bring Estonia to ruin. In doing so, he and his party secured a monopoly on the image of staunch champions of democracy, something that will of course be a rather serious factor in the election campaign.

Unwilling to allow any further delay, strike committees at both [of Narva's] power stations declared a two-hour warning strike (from 8:30 a.m.) to be held April 23. Their decision was supported by enterprise in Narva and several plants in Sillamae and Tallinn. This time the power-industry workers are demanding the immediate creation of a joint commission of parliament and the Narva and Sillamae city councils to solve the socioeconomic and civil-rights problems of the Russian-speaking population. The commission's proclaimed objective was to make a legislative determination of the legal status of foreigners, which is to say non-citizens of the Estonian Republic. The commission was made up of members of Supreme Council standing committees, Minister Without Portfolio Klara Hallik, and a representative of the Ministry of Justice, and led by Maria Lauristin, vice-Chairman of parliament. On Wednesday, another vice-chairman, Viktor Andreyev, said that in his opinion, the commission would be able to reach agreement with the power-industry workers and that no strike would be held. Nevertheless, the strike began promptly at 8:30 a.m. local time on Thursday, April 23, and ended no less promptly at 10:30 a.m. The power-industry workers were joined by virtually all of Narva's industrial enterprises. Before the strike,



Vladimir Alekseyev, head of the Estonian State Regional Power generation would be reduced to lowest possible level; that minimum would be just enough to supply electric power to Estonia's enterprises, residences and social and cultural facilities. The only loss would be lost revenues from the sale of electric power to Latvia and Leningrad Province. On the morning of April 23, the dispatching service of the Power Inspectorate Association asked all users to reduce their electricity consumption as much as possible.<sup>50</sup>

According to ponyatovsky and Alekseyev, leaders of Narva's power-industry workers, the meeting of the commission created by the Supreme Council was unable to prevent the strike because the commission offered them nothing, confining itself to merely listening to the Narva's workers. The latter had apparently grown tired of repeating the same thing over and over without any visible result. The strikers insist on the creation of a duly empowered joint commission of the Estonian parliament, to consist of Deputies at all levels from the northeastern part of the republic and representatives of the trade unions, the Russian Democratic Movement of Estonia, and Russian itself. The Narva workers believe that such a commission should work out terms for solving the problems of the Russian-speaking population and devise guarantees for the protection of their social, economic and civil rights.<sup>51</sup>

Nevertheless, on the key question—at least for the Estonian side—of the without the withdrawal of troops under Russian jurisdiction from Estonia, no significant understanding was reached. The Estonian press noted a toughening of the Russian side's position

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

on this issue. The Estonian delegation steadfastly insists on the immediate determination of deadlines and a schedule for the withdrawal of the foreign army, believing that the withdrawal can and should be completed before the end of this year. At a press conference, the head of the Russian delegation, Special Ambassador Vasily Svirin, called this deadline absolutely unrealistic. The Russian side proposed beginning the troop withdrawal in 1994 and completing it no earlier than 1997, and dismantling the two nuclear reactors at the naval base in Paldiski by 2002. Since the issue of the Russian Army's withdrawal from Estonia has become a key domestic political problem for Tallinn and an arena for conflict among various political forces, the Estonian delegation broke off negotiations on this issue and declared that it sees no possibility of coming to an agreement on troop withdrawal in bilateral talks. It was also stated that the Estonian side may possibly appeal to Russia's political leadership and to other states, international organizations and world public opinion to use all their influence to achieve the rapid withdrawal of the foreign troops. Incidentally, even before the talks began, Ago Tijman, an adviser to the Estonian Republic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, threatened that if definite deadline for "the withdrawal of the foreign troops" were not set by the beginning of July, Estonia might refuse to sign the final document of the second helsinki conference. The explanation being used to account for Russian's tough position is that senior Russian officers are exercising diktat over the negotiations. However, no connection is being drawn between the current situation and other recent events such as the bicycle raid by "greens" on the Russian naval base in Paldiski.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> The Current Digest of the post Soviet Press. Vol. XLIV, No. 23, 1992, p. 23.

The negotiations on border issues arrived at no less of an impasse. The Russian delegation cited the Supreme Soviet's ban on negotiations on any territorial concessions whatsoever. The Estonian side insists that its state border be determined in accordance with the Tartu peace treaty of 1920; that is, it lays claim to the return of Pechory District in Pskov province and the land to the east of the Narova [Narva] River, including Ivangorod. The situation here may become stalemated: on one side, the decision of the clause on borders according to the Tartu treaty contained in the Estonian Republic Constitution that is evidently going to be adopted in a referendum on June 28. To achieve the desired goal- the withdrawal of the foreign army from Estonia-not only foreign policy actions and so-called "popular protests" are planned, but also methods of social and economic pressure. The city authorities in Tartu recently made a decision whereby the families of services personnel leaving Estonia do not have the right to receive compensation for the apartments they are leaving. State subsidies will not be provided for the children of Russian officers attending school or preschool, and the families will have to pay for school or preschool in full-approximately 1,000 rubles a month. The fact that the mothers of these children work and pay taxes into the republic treasury is being taken into account.<sup>53</sup>

On July 27, 1992, a detachment of Estonian defense forces seized the compound of a naval construction unit. Four hours later [Russian] naval infantrymen regained control of the compound and took Estonian soldiers prisoner. The commander of the group that liberated the compound and a civilian construction worker were wounded. The compound is located in a densely populated area of Tallinn. The naval construction workers are in the process of

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

quietly leaving Tallinn. They sold part of their facilities to a joint-stock company last October. But 20 million rubles' worth of Baltic Fle property remains within the compound. July 27 began as usual. The personnel, of whom more than 60 percent are women and the rest civilian employees, set about their work.

The problem of the Estonian-Russian state border has never left the agenda in discussions of the two countries' relations. Today, the so-called "administrative border" remains where it has been for the past 47 years. But under the Russian-Estonian state-to-state treaty of January 12, 1991, an agreement on a normal state border is supposed to be drafted and signed separately. The sluggish talks haven't made one iota of progress in this matter. The Russian delegation claims that it doesn't have the authority to alter the Federation's border, while the Estonian delegation, for its part, insists on the border established by the Tartu treaty of February 2, 1920, which the Bolsheviks signed on behalf of Russia. These days, the Estonian authorities' insistent efforts to base their position on a 70-year-old legal document are not so much practical as symbolic in nature. This is important for the people's historical self-identity, in order that, for the second time in the past 72 years, they can use the Tartu Peace Treaty to convince themselves and others of Estonia's final break with the eastern empire. To waive even one provision of that justifies many of today's foreign-and domestic-policy decisions. And whereas just two years ago, one could confound one's opponents by stating, as did Fyodor Shelov-Kovedyayev, that Russia cannot recognize treaties signed by the Bolsheviks, who usurped power illegally, that trick won't work any more.

Article 122 of the Estonian Constitution establishes the republic's eastern border in accordance with the "Tartu Peace." This compels

the authorities, and not them alone, to jealously keep track of what goes on the other side of the “administrative border”- which, under the Constitution, is Estonian territory. On July 20, at the Russian-Estonian talks in Lohusalu, the Estonian delegation’s working group on border questions officially protested the fact that on July 15, Russian Federation border troops began securing the illegal “administrative border.” Estonia proposed that the Russian troops be moved Eastward, to the line established by the “Tartu Peace.” Shortly thereafter, Estonian Deputy Foreign Minister Trivimi Velliste released a statement saying that Estonia might return disputed territories to Russia if the latter recognized the legality of the state border established by the Tartu Treaty.<sup>54</sup>

Russia stubbornly continues to secure the existing border. Checkpoints of the Northwest Border District have been set up along it, a rapid-response unit known as the Pskov group has been formed, border posts are being built, border guards who used to serve in the Estonian SSR are being hired to man them, and border patrol boats are plying the Narova [Narva] River. The authorities of Ivangorod have started charging a fee for crossing the border : 25 rubles for Russian citizens and persons without citizenship, and 250 rubles for citizens of the Baltic countries. The Pskov authorities are charging a whole 10. The deadlocked border dispute has caused the Estonians to harden their position even more. A diplomatic note that the Estonian Republic Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent to the Russian Federation Ministry of Foreign Affairs is a perfect example. In the note, the Estonian Foreign Ministry insists that the 1920 Tartu Treaty is the only legal treaty establishing the Russian-Estonian border... Estonia views Russia’s refusal to recognize the border. Established by this treaty as

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<sup>54</sup> The Current Digest of the Post Soviet Press Vol. XLIV, no. 34, 1992, p. 17.

[meaning that Russia has] territorial claims against it.” It is obvious that the Estonian side does not and will not take into account the fact that it will be hard to explain to the people of the Russian Federation why Izborsk and Pechory, which, all the wars notwithstanding, never fell into the hands of the crusaders[i.e., the Teutonic Knights.- Trans.], Lithuania, or the Swedes, should pass to Estonia, along with their Russian populations. Under Estonian legislation, [Estonians] have the right to have to recover farmsteads, houses, stores, factories, and other kinds of property that were nationalized. It must be noted that between 1922 and 1934 alone, the Estonian population of Pechory nearly doubled. So there are potential claimants and property to be recovered. And there is another sore point: Following the introduction of border regulations, communications between the disputed territory and Estonia have been virtually severed. Even the St. Petersburg-Riga bus skirts Estonian territory. There are no Estonian newspapers or radio and television programs, and most importantly, no Estonian schools. Neither side is making any effort to break the deadlock. The draft treaty on the rights of national minorities, which Moscow presented to Tallinn early this year, has been shelved.<sup>55</sup>

In 1992 on Sept. 20, the citizens of Estonia voted for a republic President a members of the State Assembly According to preliminary return 67 percent of the electorate-just over 400,000 people-participated in voting. None of the presidential candidates succeeded in garneri more than half the votes. Supreme Council Chairman Arnold Ruutel received the greatest support-42 percent of all votes. Lennart Meri won 28 percent of the vote, Rein Taagapera 23 percent, and Lagle Pan 3.8 percent. These are preliminary returns, but they can be used to draw preliminary

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<sup>55</sup> The Current Digest of the Post Soviet Press Vol. XLIV, no. 34, 1992, p. 17

conclusions. Any political campaign has its own scenario, its own driving force and transmission belts. The scenario for the first election of an Estonian President and members of the State Assembly since 1934 was based on two key features. The right to vote was granted only to republic citizens, which is to say people who lived in Estonia before June 16, 1940, and their descendants. This reduced the electorate from 1.14 million to between 620,000 and 630,000 people. More than 90 percent of those who were not allowed to vote were non-Estonians. The second unique feature was that the elections were held on the basis of party slates. Parties and electoral alliances nominated four presidential candidates and about 600 candidates for the State Assembly. Twenty-five people were bold enough to wage hopeless campaigns for Deputy seats independently. It was believed that Arnold Ruutel, the current Supreme Council chairman who was nominated for President by the *Kindel Kodu* alliance, had the greatest chance. The *Isamaa* [Fatherland] national-radical bloc nominated writer Lennart Meri, who recently served as Foreign Minister and is now Ambassador to Finland, to run against A. Ruutel. In the spring of 1988, Meri, was one of the first to talk about the threat of extinction of the Estonian nation and the need for a drastic change in the demographic structure of the population. He suggested paying a sizable sum of money-for that time-to everyone willing to leave the republic. Meri is openly fearful of Russia. He would like to see Estonia quickly join all European organizations and alliances, in order to protect it from its eastern neighbour. To this end he even suggested that the republic be turned into a *coron sanitaire* against Russia.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> The Current Digest of the Post Soviet Press Vol. XLIV, no. 38, 1992, p. 18

In analyzing A. Ruutel's activities and views, some observers are perplexed: His views essentially coincide with the principles espoused by Isamma on the major issues—with the respect to the Russian-speaking population, the Russian Army and border questions. (Is it really only his high political sophistication, restrained words and consistency in decisions that support his previous image as a centrist?) Ruutel differs from the Isamaa leaders in one thing—his attitude toward the nomenklatura, the former key economic and state officials. Nor does he advocate a rapid and abrupt break with established agricultural and industrial practices. The People's Front also ran an opponent against Ruutel. He is Rein Taagapera, a Canadian citizen and University of California professor who is very well known in Estonia. As far back as the 1970s, he left the old émigré organizations and devised a theoretical model for Estonia's gaining independence, which proved useful to the first campaign conference, Taagapera declared: "We have and will continue to have a great neighbor—Russia—and we must treat it with grater respect than at present." Many Russians had always supported Ruutel, seeing him as offering protection from the national-radicals. But in supporting the principal of continuity of citizenship in both the debate and the vote on this issue, the Supreme Council chairman deprived his numerous supporters of the right to vote and himself of their votes. The sharp change in the demographic structure of the electorate is perhaps the main reason for the presidency. As a result, Isamma scored a twofold victory: The bloc's presidential candidate still has a chance, and it nominated the largest number of Deputies elected to the State Assembly.

Without the Russian vote, the People's Front finished after fatherland in all areas. Of course, the movement had been



weakened by the fact that Maria Lauristin took the social democrats and several other organizations out of it. Nevertheless, the Russian vote always meant a great deal for the People's Front. It must be pointed out that despite this complex situation and the Estonian public's obvious shift to the right, the movement was not afraid to campaign with the most reasonable "Russian program." "We are now faced with a very dangerous situation in which national interests are being supplanted by national instincts. The People's Front leadership takes the following position: It is essential to protect both state interests and national interests in the broad sense of the word." That is the position of Rein Beidemann, Supreme Council Deputy and candidate for the State Assembly, as set forth in the newspaper Estonia shortly before the election. We will see how that statement affected his appeal among the voters. At a press conference on election day, the People's Front announced a readiness to form a coalition government. The proposal was addressed first of all to Fatherland. The first step, or "coalition admission fee," could be an agreement among the factions in the State Assembly on a single candidate for President. At the first meeting of the State Assembly on Oct, 5, the Deputies will elect the republic's President from the two candidates who won the most votes... There were no incidents on election day, nor was there any celebration. All foreign journalists and observers took note of this. They also noted that one-third of the republic's adult population was not allowed to vote. In the cities, the proportion of those not allowed to vote was even higher. In Narva, only 6,000 of the 65,000 voters who took part in the [1990] elections to the Supreme Council are citizens. And they alone voted for members of the State Assembly. The Russian-speaking population will have

virtually no representation in it. This doesn't strengthen the parliament.<sup>57</sup>

The Parliamentary Assembly in Strasbourg has reacted sharply to discrimination against the Russian-speaking minority in the elections in Estonia. "One historical injustice cannot be rectified with another," said Miguel Martinez, Chairman of the Council of Europe's Parliament Assembly, commenting on the results of the recent elections in Estonia in a conversation with journalists. By the first injustice he had in mind the "Soviet occupation." By the second, he was referring to the fact that Russians, who make up nearly 40 percent of the population of that Baltic republic, could not participate in the elections. One cannot be satisfied with such elections, M. Martinez continued. They raise objections even from those who take an "understanding" view of the problems facing the Estonian authorities. The elections in Estonia were one of the most pressing issues discussed in the Council of Europe's Parliament Assembly and its corridors. In addition, the results of the elections were the subject of a press conference held by the heads of the three Baltic republics' delegations to the session and members of a delegation from a Parliament Assembly special committee who were present at the elections as observers. The Parliamentarians' conclusion, which Luxembourg Deputy Kami Dimmer—the author of the report on this subject—presented to journalists, can be summarized as follows: The elections were free and democratic. For various reasons, a large part of the population of Estonia did not participate in them. The question of the Russians is a serious problem that the newly elected parliament should take up as quickly as possible. In short, the official conclusions were very "balanced." As M. Martinez's statement attests, a significant

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

number of parliamentarians disagree with them. In a conversation with this correspondent some of them characterized the elections as “unfair another for that republic to join the Council of Europe (Estonia submitted its application more than a year ago). The Council of Europe Secretariat does not rule this out either. As I understand it, the question of Estonia’s membership in the Old World’s most representative organization depends primarily on the decision of its Committee of Foreign Ministers. It was to this committee that Andrei Kozyrev submitted a “Memorandum on Human Rights Violations in the Baltic Countries” for consideration in early May 1992. The memorandum emphasizes that citizenship laws in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia contain discriminatory articles and are aimed at reducing the numbers of ethnic Russians living in those republics.<sup>58</sup>

After a break of several months due to the change of government in Estonia( especially the change in to the leadership of the republic’s foreign ministry) and a great many exchanges of notes and statements, contacts have resume between the Russian and Estonian foreign ministers. Estonia’s new foreign ministers, Trivimi Velliste, and his Russian counterpart Andrei Kiozyrev met in Mosow yesterday. The meeting was also attended by the following officials: the heads of the delegations to the Russian-Estonian talks-Vasily Svirin and Estonian minister Without Portfolio Juri Luik, who was appointed to that post on December 1 1992, the two countries ambassasors- Aleksandr Trofimov, Russia’s representative in Tallinn, and Juri Kakh, Estonia’s Ambassador to Moscow; Vitaly Churkin, Kozyre’s deputy; and others. They discussed a wide range of issues concerning bilateral relations and the problem of

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<sup>58</sup> The Current Digest of the Post Soviet Press Vol. XLIV, no. 34, 1992 , p. 19.

withdrawing Russian troops from Estonian territory, as well as humanitarian and economic matters.

One could say that the meeting's greatest achievement was the two sides' statement that there are no human rights violations in Estonia, a charge that the Russian side had been making rather persistently until recently. According to Andrei Kozyrev, his colleague demonstrated serious positive intentions on the part of the Estonian government to radically improve its relations with Russia and to channel them in the direction of good neighborliness and cooperation. Velliste brought to Moscow a government statement of December 1, 1992, on humanitarian issues and also a whole package of specific proposals for solving human rights problems. Among them was the Estonian side's intention to make it considerably easier for old people and school children to pass the Estonian language test that is required for citizenship (it is proposed that Estonian citizenship be granted automatically when a graduation diploma is issued), and recognition of unemployment benefits as a legal source of income (which one must also have in order to become a citizen). In Kozyrev's opinion, the package of proposals is very interesting and attests to Estonia's desire to solve citizenship problems jointly and in a way that protects people's interests to the greatest possible extent: "Practical steps to put these intentions into actual practice will open all the gates to the development of good-neighbor relations between us".<sup>59</sup>

As for the withdrawal of Russian troops, a specific timetable is to be set once and for all by the delegations at the next round of talks (in mid-December, to all appearances). The ministers agreed in principle, however, that this withdrawal should be completed "in

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<sup>59</sup> The Current Digest of the Post Soviet Press Vol. XLIV, no. 34, 1992, p. 21

the shortest feasible time,” without unnecessary delays and in a way that solves related social problems. “There is an encouraging signal of a readiness to move from a political and ideological view of this problem to a specific discussion of a timetable for withdrawing the troops and of social problems,” Kozyrev observed.

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The sides agreed that it is possible and necessary to enlist third partners-experts from the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Baltic Council-to provide support at the governmental and non governmental levels for efforts to solve the problems of Russian-Estonian relations, including tangible assistance by the international community in accelerating the withdrawal of troops from Estonian territory.

On the whole, as Estonian Minister Velliste noted, “ a very positive spirit reigned” at the meeting. “ The intentions with which we came were fully borne out. “In the Estonian minister’s words, “the fact that we are insisting on the earliest possible withdrawal of troops in no way means that we are pursuing a policy of forcing out the Russian-speaking population. That is simply a misunderstanding of the situation. “Estonia has a serious desire to integrate the republic’s Russian -speaking population into Estonian society. A

state-to-state meeting at the highest level, involving the Presidents, is slated for January.<sup>60</sup>

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A state-to-state meeting at the highest level, involving the Presidents, is slated for January. Inspired by the success of Lithuania’s former Communists, who won the recent parliamentary Lithuanias under the banner of the DLPL (Democratic Labor Party of Lithuania), Estonia’s Communists decided not to lag behind and renamed their party the Democratic Lobar Party of Estonia (DLPE). This occurred in Tallinn at the 22<sup>nd</sup> Congress of the Estonia Communist Party, which, by the way, not only has not placed a single Deputy in the State Assembly, but didn’t even have its own separate slate of candidates for September’s parliamentary and presidential elections.

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

The refurbished party, which does not intend to repudiate the political experience amassed by the ECP in recent years, has proclaimed that its main objective is to fight for social justice and democracy in Estonian society. The party adopted new statutes and a new program. The not unknown Estonian Communist leader Vaino Valas was elected chairman of the DLPE, and Hillar Eller, former first Secretary of the Estonian Communist Party Central Committee, was elected General Secretary.

Another founding congress was held in Tallinn that same Saturday-that of the Estonian Civic Union , found, to all appearances, to replace the Congress of Estonian Citizens, which disbanded banded after achieving its objectives in the fall election of a President and a mono-ethnic parliament. Juri Toomepuu, Deputy to the State Assembly defense minister (without an army) of the Estonian Republic government in exile, former Green Beret, veteran of the US's Korean and wars and a retired colonel in the American Army, was elected chairman of the new association of birthright citizens of the Estonian Republic. The Union's main objective is to ensure that in Estonia "its citizens alone wield undivided power". To achieve this goal, the Estonian Civic Union intends to seek amendments to current republic legislation, including the citizenship and election laws and the Constitution, which, in the opinion of the Union's leader, are too lax. Noncitizens of Estonia also intend to unite and form an organization. Assurances by the country's officials that the government intends to observe the basis right of noncitizenship of the republic are uninspiring to the latter groups and irritating to the former. What

this sort of organized opposition between citizens of the republic might lead to is not hard to guess. <sup>61</sup>

The meeting of foreign ministers of the member countries of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, in Stockholm, Russian Federation Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev presented the conference participants with a memorandum on discrimination against the Russian-speaking population of Russian and Latvia. The memorandum notes that the interests of Russia, Estonia and Latvia would be served by efforts to promote the integration of ethnic Russians into Estonian and Latvian society, as opposed to attempts to compel them to leave for their so-called historical homeland Kozyrev asked the CSCE to use all the member countries authority to bring the human rights situation in Latvia and Estonia into conformity with international pacts and the Helsinki process. Toivo Klar, leader of the Estonian delegation to the CSCE, expressed a total readiness to receive such a mission. The present Estonian administration is pursuing an active in this area, itself inviting all manner of human rights experts to the country. New Prime Minister, Mart Laar, has repeatedly declared intention to liberalize the citizenship law somewhat, and last week he announced his intention to present to the parliament a draft law on the status of foreigners and on social guarantees for them.

However, the Prime Minister's wishes are already encountering strong opposition. An increasingly radical opposition that can put a great deal of political pressure on the government from "genuinely patriotic positions is growing among the ranks of the patriots who have entered the state Assembly. A leading role in this is being played by the Union Citizens of Estonia (also known as Estonia

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid.



Citizen), under the leadership of American colonel Juri Toomepuu, a veteran of “two against communism”.<sup>62</sup>

To all appearances, the Estonia Citizen radicals and their parliamentary faction, led by juri Toomepuu, won't be troubled at all by the UN resolution, adopted on Wednesday (by consensus, incidentally), directing that the human rights situation of the Russian-speaking population of Latvia and Estonia be placed under general international oversight.

Estonian Citizen's antitheses are not picky about their choice of propaganda devices, either. Through the newspaper, Svernoye Propaganda (Northern shore), Edgar savisaar, deputy speaker of the parliament and lender of the People's Centrist Party, in effect called on noncitizens, in view of the fact that they are not citizens, to refuse to pay the portion of their taxes that is used to maintain the government and the Estonian Army. On this issue, in the opinion of Indrek, vice-chairman of the Fatherland parliamentary faction, the government coalition will have to repulse, on the one hand, the “centrists”, who believe that any permanent resident who wants citizenship should be granted it and on the other hand Estonia Citizen, which takes the view that all foreigners are in Estonia only on the shakiest of grounds.<sup>63</sup>

Both before and after independence Estonia's foreign policy had a strong western orientation. Western recognition of Estonia's legal independence was a key sources of strength for the republic on its struggle with the Soviet Union. After 1991, Estonia worked to maintain that relationship and integrate with European political institutions as a further safeguard against potential threats from

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<sup>62</sup> Europa world year book (London : Europa publication) vol. 1, 1999, p. 1321.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

Russia. The last Russian troops stationed in Estonia after 1991 finally were withdrawn in 1994, but relations with Yeltsin's Kremlin remained cool.

In the wake of independence, Estonia moved quickly to join the international community. In September, it was admitted to both the United Nations (UN) and the CSCE. In the UN, Estonia would later find common ground in the organization's various committees and auxiliary bodies, such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). In March 1992, Estonia took part in the creation of the Baltic Sea states, an association of all the countries bordering the Baltic Sea and dedicated to furthering regional, Economic and political cooperation. A year later, the Estonian representative was elected to a one year term as president of the organization.<sup>64</sup>

In the realm of security Estonia joined the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NAAC) in late 1991 and actively sought support for its efforts to become a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The principal objectives of Estonian foreign policy are to resolve the pending succession issues with respect to the former Soviet, to accelerate into integration with the west European political, economic and security systems, to develop links with Nordic states with particular emphasis on Finland and Sweden and to identify areas of common interest and further directions of cooperation with its two neighbouring Baltic states. The main focus of Estonia's foreign policy is Estonia's integration

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

into the European Union and enlargement of NATO, which is linked to EU enlargement.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

CHAPTER - 4

NEW CONSTITUTION AND  
ROAD TO INDEPENDENT  
POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN  
ESTONIA - 1992-95

Estonia is the smallest state in the Baltic region. After passing a long duration of colonial rule and command slavery of over 250 years, Estonia took a very important step by establishing a constituent assembly on September 7, 1991 comprising 30 members elected by the supreme council and another 30 members elected by the Estonian congress. Such a political compromise between the two main groupings in Estonian politics reflected the general aim of the constitution to maintain the idea of legal continuity of the Estonian Republic and to take account to new realities and by 1992, it had to finished its work.

The constitution opens with a set of general provisions and a forty-eight-article section establishing the fundamental rights, liberties, and duties of citizen. There is freedom of association, freedom to form parties and organisation, and a flourishing free press. According to the new constitution, Estonia is a parliamentary state and has a flourishing system of government. The president is elected by the parliament and has no vote on legislation, which can be overridden by a simple majority of parliament. The constitution guaranteed freedom of expression, an independent judiciary with legal chancellor to monitor the constitutionally laws, a state audit office to watch over the state expenditures, assembly, freedom of information, the right to petition the courts and the right to health care <sup>1</sup>

Chapter 1 of the Estonia Constitution deals with the General Provisions. Estonia is an independent and sovereign democratic republic wherein the supreme power of the state is held by the people. Estonia independence and sovereignty is interminable and

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<sup>1</sup> Walter R. Iwaskiw, *Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania country studies* (Washington: Federal Research Division Library of Congress, 1995), p.68.

inalienable. Estonia is politically a unitary state where in the division of its territory into administrative units shall be determined by law. Governmental power shall be exercised solely on the basis of this Constitution and such laws, which are in accordance with the constitution. Universally recognized principles and norms of international law shall be an inseparable part of the Estonia legal system. The work of the Parliament, the president of the Republic, the Government of the Republic, and the courts shall be organized on the principle of separate and balanced powers. The natural wealth and resources of Estonia are national assets, which shall be used sparingly. The national colours of Estonia are blue, black and white. The dimensions of the national flag the national coat-of-arms shall be determined by law.<sup>2</sup>

Chapter-II deals with Fundamental Rights, Liberties and Duties. Every child with one parent who is an Estonian citizen shall have the right, by birth, to Estonian citizenship. Everyone who as a minor lost his on hen Estonian citizenship shall have the right to have his her citizenship restored. No person who has acquired Estonia citizenship by birth may be deprived of it. No person may be deprived of Estonian citizenship because of his on her persuasion. Conditions and procedures for the acquisition, loss and restoration of Estonian citizenship shall be determined by the law on citizenship.<sup>3</sup>

The rights, liberties and duties of everyone and persons as listed in the Constitution, shall be Equal for Estonian citizens as well as for citizens of foreign states and stateless persons. Who are present in Estonian. Rights and liberties may be restricted only in accordance

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Walter R. Iwaskiw, op.cit., p. 73.

with the Constitution. Restrictions may be implemented only insofar as they are necessary in a democratic society and their imposition may not distort the nature of rights and liberties. All persons shall be equal before the law. No one may be discriminated against on the basis of nationality, race, colour, sex language, origin, creed, political or other persuasions, financial or social status or other reasons. Everyone shall have the right to the protection of the state and the law. The law shall protect everyone against arbitrary treatment by state authorities.<sup>4</sup>

Everyone has the right to appeal to a court of law if his or her rights or liberties have been violated. Everyone has the right to life. This right is protected by law. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his or her life. Everyone shall have the right to free self-realization. Everyone shall have the right to liberty and security of person. No one shall be deprived of his or her liberty, except in such cases and procedures as determined by law. No one may be held in custody for more than forty-eight hours without specific permission by the court. Such a decision shall promptly be made known to the person in custody, in such a language and manner which he or she understands. Everyone shall court in accordance with procedures determined by law.<sup>5</sup>

Chapter-III deals with the people Every Estonian citizen who has attained the age of 18 has the right to vote. The participation in elections of Estonian citizens who have been convicted under a court of law and who are serving a sentence in a place of detention may be restricted by law. <sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Europa World Year Book (London: Europa Publication), Vol. 1, 1999, p.1317.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

Chapter-IV deals with the parliament. The Legislative power rest with the parliament. The parliament comprises of one hundred and one members. Members of the parliament are elected by free elections on the principle of proportionality. Some of the important functions of parliament are:

1. adopt law resolutions;
2. decide on the conduction of referenda;
3. elect the President of the Republic in accordance with Article 79;
4. ratify and denounce foreign treaties in accordance with Article 121;
5. authorize the candidate for Prime Minister to form the Government of the Republic;
6. adopt the national budget and approve the report on its execution;
7. appoint, on proposal by the President of Republic, the Chairman of the National Court, the Chairman of the Council of the Bank of Estonia, the Auditor-General, the Legal Chancellor, and Commander or Commander-in Chief of the Defense Forces;
8. appoint, on proposal by the chairman of National Court, judges for the National Court;
9. appoint members of the Council of the Bank of Estonia;



10. To decide, on proposal by the Government, on the issue of Government loans and the undertaking of other financial obligations by the state;
11. present statements, declarations and appeals to the Estonian people, foreign states and international organizations;
12. establish national orders of merit and military and diplomatic ranks;
13. decide on votes of no-confidence in the Government of the Republic, the Prime Minister or individual ministers;
14. declare a state of emergency in the nation in accordance with Article 129;
15. on proposal by the President of the Republic declare a state of war, order mobilization and demobilization;
16. resolve all issues of government which, according to the Constitution, are not to be resolved by the President of the Republic, the Government of the Republic, other state bodies or local government .<sup>7</sup>

According to the new constitution, Estonia is a parliamentary state and has a parliamentary system of government. The President is elected by the parliament and has no vote on legislation, which can be over ridden by a simple majority of parliament. The president of the Republic is elected to a five year term by a two thirds majority of the Riigikogu. The President nominates a vote of confidence from the Riigikogu. The Riigikogu passes legislation as well as votes of no confidence in the government. The President can dissolve

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<sup>7</sup> Foreign Broadcast Information Service Report (Central Eurasia) March 1995, No. 69 – 73, p.73.

parliament if there is a prolonged delay in the nomination of a Prime Minister on in the adoption of a state budget on after a vote of no confidence in the government. The President promulgates all laws after their adoption by the Riigikogu. <sup>8</sup>

However, he or she may also refuse to promulgate (i.e. vote) a law and send it back to the Riigikogu for reconsideration. If the Riigikogu passes the same law again by a simple majority, the President's vote is overridden. The constitutional assembly's intention was that power of the President be more ceremonial than real. Some of the important functions of the President of Estonia are:

1. represent the Republic of Estonia in international relations;
2. appoint and recall, on proposal by the Government, diplomatic representatives of the Republic of Estonia and accept letters of credence of diplomatic representatives accredited in Estonia;
3. declare regular Parliament elections, and early elections for the Parliament, in accordance with Articles 89, 97, 105 and 119;
4. convene the new complement of the Parliament in accordance with Article 66, and shall open its first session;
5. propose to the Speaker of the Parliament to convene an extraordinary session of the Parliament in accordance with Article 68;

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

6. proclaim laws in accordance with Articles 05 and 107 and shall sign documents of ratification;
7. issue edicts in accordance with Articles 109 and 110;
8. initiate amendments to the Constitution;
9. determine the candidate for Prime Minister in accordance with Article 89;
10. appoint and recall members of the Government, in accordance with Articles 89, 90 and 92;
11. present proposals to the Parliament for appointments to the offices of the Chairman of the National Court, the Chairman of the Council of the Bank of Estonia, the Auditor-General, the Legal Chancellor and the Commander or the Commander-in-Chief of the Defense Forces;
12. appoint, on proposal by the Council of the Bank of Estonia, the President of the Bank of Estonia;
13. appoint judges on proposal by the National Court;
14. appoint and recall from office the Government of the Republic and, on proposal by the Commander of the Defense Force, officers in the Defense Forces;
15. confer civil and military honors and diplomatic ranks;
16. be the Supreme Commander of Estonia's national defense;
17. present proposals to the Parliament on declarations of a state of war, on orders for mobilization and demobilization and, in

accordance with Article 129, on proclamations of a state of emergency;

18. declare, in cases of armed aggression against Estonia, a state of war, shall issue orders for mobilization and shall appoint a Commander-in-Chief of the Defense Forces, in accordance with Article 128;
19. grant mercy, on the request of prisoners, by freeing those sentenced or reducing the sentence;
20. initiate the placing of criminal charges against the Legal Chancellor, in accordance with Article 145; <sup>9</sup>

Chapter-VI of the Estonian constitution deals with the Government of the Republic. The Government of the Republic comprises of the Prime Minister and Ministers. The Prime Ministers represents the Government of the Republic and directs its work. The Prime Minister appoints two Ministers who have the right to substitution is determined by the Prime Minister. The Government makes decision on proposal by the Prime Minister on by the appropriate Minister. <sup>10</sup>

Some of the important functions of the government of the Republic are:

1. implement national domestic and foreign policies;
2. direct and coordinate the work of government institutions;

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<sup>9</sup> David J.Smith, ***Estonia: Independence and European integration*** (London : Routledge, 2001), p.103.

<sup>10</sup> Kaplan Cynthia S, ***Estonia: A Plural society on the road to independence*** (London: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p.36.

3. organize the implementation of legislation, the resolutions of the Parliament, and the edicts of the President of the Republic;
4. submit draft legislation to the Parliament, as well as foreign treaties for either ratification or denunciation;
5. prepare a draft of the national budget and present it to the Parliament, shall administer the implementation of the national budget, and present a report on the implementation of the budget to the Parliament;
6. issue ordinances and directives for fulfillment in accordance with the law;
7. organize relations with foreign states;
8. declare, in the case of natural disasters and catastrophes or in order to impede the spread of infectious diseases, a state of emergency throughout the nation or in parts thereof;
9. fulfill other tasks which have been placed under its jurisdiction by the Constitution and laws; <sup>11</sup>

Chapter-VIII of the new constitution deals with Finance and the National Budget. The sole right to issue currency in Estonia. The Bank of Estonia organize Currency Circulation, and promote the stability of a good national currency. The Bank of Estonia operate in accordance with the law, and reports to the parliament. The Government of the Republic shall present a draft national budget to the Parliament no later than three mouths before the

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<sup>11</sup> Collier's encyclopedia (USA, Macmillan Educational Company), vol.16, 1993, p.683.

commencement of the budget year. The procedures for the preparation and adoption of the budget shall be determined by law.<sup>12</sup>

Chapter-IX of the new constitution deals with Foreign Relations and Foreign Treaties. Procedures for the relations of the Republic of Estonia with other states and with international organizations is determined by law. The parliament shall ratify and denounce treaties of the Republic of Estonia. The land border of Estonia shall be determined by the Tartu Peace Treaty of February 2, 1920 and other international border treaties. The sea and air borders of Estonia shall be determined on the basis of international conventions. A two-third majority of the complement of the parliament shall be mandatory for the notification of treaties which amend Estonian state borders.<sup>13</sup>

Chapter-X of the new constitution deals with National Defence. The President of the Republic is the supreme commander of national defence. The Estonian defence forces in headed by the Commander of the Defence Forces in peacetime, and the Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Force during a state of war. The Commander and Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces shall be appointed and recalled by the parliament, on proposal by the president of the Republic. In the case of a threat to the constitutional system of government, the parliament may declare on proposal by the president of the Republic or them Government of the Republic and with a majority of its complement, a state of emergency in the whole country, with a duration of no longer than three months. Regulations for a state of emergency shall be determined by law.

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

During a state of emergency on a state of war, the rights and liberties of person may be restricted, and obligations placed upon them, in the interest of national security and public order, in the cases and in accordance with procedures prescribed by law. During emergency on a state of war there shall be no elections for the parliament, the President of the Republic or representative bodies of local government, no can their authority be terminated. The authority of the parliament, the President of the Republic and representative bodies of local government shall be extended if they should end during a state of emergency on a state of war, or within three months of the end of a state of emergency or state of war. In these cases new elections shall be declared within three months of the end of a state of emergency or a state of war. <sup>14</sup>

Chapter-XIII of the new constitution deals with courts. The courts are independent in their activities and administer justice in accordance with the constitution and the laws. The supreme court is the highest court in the state and shall review court judgements by way of cassation proceedings. The Supreme Court is also the court of constitutional review. The Chief Justices of the Supreme Court is appointed by the Riigikogu, on the proposal of the President of the Republic. Justices of the Supreme Court are appointed to the office by the Riigikogu, or the proposal of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. Others Judges are appointed to the office by the President or the proposal of the Supreme Court. The rules of court procedure regarding representation, defence, state prosecution, and supervision of legality are provided by law. The Supreme Court

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<sup>14</sup> Ian B and Ray T, *New States and New Politics: Building the post soviet nation* (USA: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p.213.

declares invalid any law or other legislation that is in conflict with the provisions and spirit of the constitution. <sup>15</sup>

Chapter-XIV of the new constitution deals with the Local Government. All local issues are resolved and managed by local governments, which operate independently pursuant to law. The units of local government are rural municipalities and towns. The representative body of a local government is the council which is elected in free elections for a term of three years. The elections are general uniform and direct. Voting is secret. A local government have an independent budget for which the bases and procedure are provided by law. A local government has the right on the basis of law, to levy and collect taxes, and to impose duties. The boundaries of local government are not altered without considering the opinion of the local government concerned. A local government has the right to form unions and joint agencies with other local governments. The administration of local governments and the supervision of their activities are provided by law. <sup>16</sup>

The Riigikogu (State assembly) which replaced the transitional supreme council in 1992, has 101 members, who are chosen every four years by popular election. Members must be at least twenty – one years old. Each member may belong to only one committee. the Riigikogu has the ultimate authority over legislation, treaties with foreign countries, the appointment of Prime Minister and other official and the longevity of government. The President of the Republic is elected is elected to a five-year term by a two-thirds majority of the Riigikogu. The president nominates the Prime Minister, who must receive a vote of confidence from the Riigikogu.

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.



The Riigikogu passes legislation as well as votes of non-confidence in the government. The president can dissolve parliament if there is a prolonged delay in the nomination of Prime Minister or in the adaptation of a state budget, or after a vote of non-confidence in the government. The president promulgates all laws after their adoption by the Riigikogu. However, her or she may also refuse to promulgate (i.e veto) a law and send it back to the Riigikogu for reconsideration. If the Riigikogu passes the same law again by a simple majority, the President's veto is overridden. The constitutional assembly's intention was that power of the President be more ceremonial than real <sup>17</sup>

On June 20,1992 the First Parliamentary and Presidential elections were held, in Estonia in which 68 percent of citizens participated it. In the 101 seat of Riigikogu, the Rightwing Fatherland's lost won 28 places and formed a coalition government with Estonian National independence party and moderates. Therefore, at the time of the first elections, not a single party got the majority to form the government. In Presidential elections, two rounds were needed as no one of the four candidates – Lennart Meri' Rein Taagepera, Arnold Ruutel, Lagle Parek received the required 50 percent of the vote in the first round.<sup>18</sup>

In the first round, the former Charmin of the Supreme Soviet, Arnold Ruutel topped the list with 41.8 percent of the votes. His rivals in the campaign highlighted soviet past, and especially the fact that he had been appointed Charmin of the supreme soviet in 1983 by Yuri Andropov. This was the main reason to block him from getting 80 percent in the first round and in the second round

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<sup>17</sup> Kaslas J Bromis, *The Baltic Nation: The Quest for regional integration and political liberty* (Pennsylvania euramerica press, pittson, 1976), p.227.

<sup>18</sup> Europa world year book (London: Europa Publication), vol.1, 1999, p.1318.

of the election to the Riigikogu the Fatherland's candidates Lennart Meri, Meri received 59 percent against Ruutel's 31 percent votes, when the election to the parliament stated in the declaration of October 7, 1992 that the transition period in Estonia and ended that the constitutional power was now fully restored.<sup>19</sup>

In January 1992, following a series of disputes with the Supreme Council concerning economic management and the issue of citizenship, and the government's failure to presence the legislature to impose an economics state of emergency saar resigned as Prime Minister and was replaced by the while Minister of Transport, Tiit Vahi. A new council Minster, which included seven ministers from the previous Government, was approved by the Supreme Council at the end of the month.<sup>20</sup>

Legislative and presidential elections were duly held on September 1992, with the participation of some 67 percent of the electorate. The country's Russian and other ethnic minorities who now represented 42 percent of the total population, were barred from voting (with the exception of those whose applications for citizenship's had been granted). The elections to be 101 seat Riigikogu were contested by a total of 633 candidates representing some 40 parties and movements, largely ground into eight coalitions. The nationalist alliance Isamaa the Partia, or Fatherland) emerged with the largest number of seats (29). Other right-wing parties and alliances performed well. The centrist Popular Front alliance (led by the EPF) won as unexpectedly low total of 15 seats. The ENIP, which was the parts of a coalition, won 10 seats. The Secure Home alliances which comprised some former

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Summary of world Broadcast (London) August 6, 1988.

communities, obtained 17 seats none of the four candidates in the presidential election, which was held simultaneously, won an overall majority of the votes. It thus fell to the Riigikogu to choose from the two most successful candidates, Arnold Ruutel, now a leading member of the Secure Home alliance, and Lennart Meri, a former Minister of Foreign affairs who was supported by Isamaa. In early October 1992 Riigikogu, now dominated by members or supporters of Isamaa, elected Meri to be Estonia's President, by 59 votes to 31. A new coalition government, with a large representation of Isamaa members, as well as members of the Moderates electoral alliance and the ENIP, was announced in mid-October 1992.

Earlier the month, Mart Laar, a 32-year-old historian and the leader of Isamaa, had been chosen as Prime Minister. Laar indicates that the principal objectives of his administration would be to negotiate the withdrawal of all Russian troops remaining in Estonia, as well as to accelerate the country's generation programme. In late November four of the five constituent parties of the Isamaa alliance united to form the National Fatherland Party (NEP), with Laar as its Chairman. In the same month the CPE was renamed the Estonian Democratic Labour Party.<sup>21</sup>

The NEP suffered considerable loss of support at local elections held in October 1993. In Tallinn, party secured only five of the 64 seats on the city council. In the following month Laar survived a vote of "no confidence" proposed to the Riigikogu by opposition deputies, who accused the Prime Minister of incompetence and "strategic errors in foreign affairs". In January 1994 Laar reshuffled

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<sup>21</sup> Petti J and Juris Prikulis, *The Foreign policies of the Baltic countries: Basic issues* (Riga Centre of Baltic-Nordic History and political studies, 1994), p.59.

four key portfolio in the Council of Minister (Finance, economy, defence and foreign affairs) overcoming initial opposition by President Meri to two of the nominees. Meanwhile, in November 1993, the EPF was disbanded; it was stated that the party had largely fulfilled its aims.

The NEP continued to lose popular support in early 1994. At the same time the governing coalition led by the NFP, was increasingly affected by internal divisions, largely prompted by what was perceived as Laar's authoritarian style of leadership in May-June four members of the Council of Ministers resigned their posts. Defections from the Isamaa faction within the Riigikogu resulted in supporters of Laar restraining control of only 19 seats in the legislature by early September. Following the revelation, in that month, that Laar had secretly contravened an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), a vote of "no confidence in the Prime Minister" was endorsed by 60 members of the Riigikogu (with 27 votes against). In late October Andres Tarand, hitherto Minister of the Environment, was appointed to replace Laar. A new Council of Minister – which included representatives of the Isamaa and Moderates groups, the ENIP and liberal and right-wing parties were announced in the following month.<sup>22</sup>

In 1993, President Meri voted seven laws, most of which were later modified by the Riigikogu. An early sting of vectors in the string of 1993 especially angered members of the governments coalition in parliaments, who had helped to elect him. Lennart Meri, declared it his obligation, to protect the balance of power in government. His involvement was particularly critical during the domestic and international crisis surrounding Estonia's Law on Aliens. However

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

the final state sovereignty was only achieved two year later when the last Russian troops left Estonia on 31<sup>st</sup> August 1994.<sup>23</sup>

According to an Estonian Scholar, Helsingin Sanomat “the 1992 election marked a major turning point in Estonia’s political evolution after August 1991. During the first – Soviet year, the government was dominated by reformist ex-communist often associated with the Estonian popular front, e.g Prime Ministers Edger Savisaar and Tiit Vahi. In contrast, the new cabinet formed by Mart Laar in October 1992 represented a new political generation and also one that with few exception, was free of previous ties. <sup>24</sup>

Despite commanding only a slim parliamentary majority at the beginning and facing various defections in the course of its tenure, the Laar Government managed to survive for nearly two years until 1994.

The vote of no-confidence was 60-27 with the opposition citing the incorrect conduct of state affairs as the main reason, along with a questionable arms deal with Israel and the secret state of surplus Russian roubles to Chchnya. In view of the Laar governments longevity , it is not surprising that its approval rating dwindled in September 1994, with less than 10 percent of the eligible voters supporting the parties still in the ruling coalition.

Another cause of no-confidence motion was that the congress of Estonia wanted to absorb Estonian people who had spent years in prison or house arrest or had occupied privileged position in the Brezhnev, Chernenko and Andropov fears but some members of the

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> John Hiden and Solomon Partridge, *The Baltic nations and Europe: Estonia Latvia and Lithuania in the 20<sup>th</sup> century* (London: Longman, 1991), p.109.

congress did not like the idea. Therefore the popular front split<sup>25</sup>. At the third session of the congress popular front leader Lauristin urged the expression of vote of 'no-confidence' for many had become an Estonian Gorbachev, a reformer in words, an authoritarian in deeds. A champion of the ground inquisitors principal of order before freedom. Overall, the parliament became increasingly fragmented as numerous splits among the parties and block took peace making it difficult for parliament to pay the intended leading role in national politics. The major beneficiary of parliamentary weakness was the presidency. For example, president Lennart Meri played an active role in the legislative, e.g. his intervention on the issue of law on Aliens in June-July 1993 and in the making of foreign policy. It was also clear that after only two years experience under the new constitution the working relationship between the branches of government was still in the process of evaluation.<sup>26</sup>

In the 1995, parliamentary election, once again a government was formed. The coalition party and rural union (KMU) won 32.2 percent votes, where the previous parties which formed the coalition government i.e. Fatherland and the National Independence Party received only 7.9 percent vote and other parties i.e. The Reform Party gained 16.2 percent, Centre Party 14.2 percent Right Wing party 5 percent, moderates 6 percent. Our home is Estonia, which represented the Russian speaking electorate received 5.9 percent votes and independent candidates gained 12.6 percent votes<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Gerner Kristian and Stefan Headlund, *The Baltic States and the end of the Soviet Empire* (London : Routledge, 1993), p.37.

<sup>27</sup> Walter R. Iwaskiw, op.cit, .p.69.

The success of KMU was its landslide in the rural areas, although it was one of the leading party in the urban constituencies as well, while fatherlands stressed the liberal nature of their economic policy, KMU and other opposition party of the fatherland, i.e, centre party relied on the social market economy slogan. The Coalition Party considered it necessary to stress the role of German economic policy (social market economy) as a mode <sup>28</sup>

In early January 1995 seven electoral alliances and eight parties were registered to participate in the general election scheduled for 5 March. The result of the election reflected widespread popular dissatisfaction with the parties of the governing coalition. The largest number of seats in the Riigikogu (41) of the total of (101) was won by an alliance of the Centrist Estonian Coalition Party (ECP, led by the former Prime Minister, Tiit Vahi) and the Rural Union (comprising various agrarian parties, most prominently Arnold Ruutel's Estonian Country People's Party). A coalition of the newly established Estonian Reform Party (ENIP, led by Siim Kallas, the President of the Bank of Estonia) and liberal groups obtained 19 seats, followed by Edger Savisaar's Estonian Center Party (16). The NEP (in coalition with the ENIP), won only eight seats, while the Moderates alliances (which included Andress Tarand) gained six seats.

The Estonia is Our Home party (which united three new parties representing the Russian – speaking minority) also won six seats; this development was broadly welcomed as a potentially stabilizing factor in both the domestic and foreign affairs of the

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<sup>28</sup> Hidden John and Lane Thomas, *The Baltic and the outbreak of the second world war* (London: Cambridge, University press, 1992), p.32.

country. The remaining five seats were taken by a coalition of Right Wing Parties. The electoral turnout was almost 70 percent.<sup>29</sup>

In late March 1995. Tiit Vahi was nominated by President Meri to form a new council of Ministers. Vahi was conformed Prime Minister by the Legislature in early April, and the Government- a coalition of the ECP / Rural Union and the Estonian Central Party- was appointed later in the month. Vahi stated that his Government's main priorities were to further the reforms undertaken by the preceding administration, to seek full membership of the EU and to improve relations with the Russian Federation.

The Government survived only until early October 1995, when it was revealed that Edgar Savisaar, the Minister of the Interior, had made secret tape and video recordings of conversations that he had held with other politicians, following the Riigikogu election in March concerning the formation of a new coalition government, In the ensuing scandal. Savisaar was dismissed from his post by Vahi; however, the Estonian Centre Party (of which Savisaar was the leader) refused to accept his dismissal. As a result of the effective collapse of the coalition, Vahi and the remaining members the Council of Ministers tendered their resignations. In mid. October President Meri reappointed Vahi as Prime Minister and charged him-with the formation of a new Government, This emerged in late October and represented a coalition of the ECP/Rural Union and Siim Kallas's ERP, Meanwhile, Savisaar resigned as Chairman of the Estonian Centre Party; he also announced his departure from political activity. In December the NFP and the ENIP, which had campaigned jointly in the legislative

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<sup>29</sup> David J Smith, *op.cit.*, p. 83.



election in March, merged to form the Pro Patria (Fatherland) Union.

In March-1996 tension within the Estonian Centre Party, following the scandal surrounding Savisaar, resulted in the emergence of two factions: Andra Veiaemann, the Chairman and Six deputies from the Riigikogu established the New Democratic Association, subsequently to become the liberal-centrist Development Party, while Savisaar was re-elected as Chairman of the Estonian Centre Party. Criminal proceedings initiated against Savisaar in May, for conducting 'Illegal investigative activities, but these were later abandoned.<sup>30</sup>

So far as economy is concerned, Estonia became the first formerly Soviet country to create its own currency, the 'Kroon' in 1992. On January 1<sup>st</sup>, the free trade agreement between Estonia and the European Union came into force. Today more than 65 percent of Estonian foreign trade is connected with member states of the European Union. The share of the main imports with European Union member states is even bigger- over 75.1. Estonia has signed free trade agreements with several other countries, e.g Norway, Latvia, Lithuania.

After 1991, Estonia worked to maintain the relationship and integrate with European political institutions as a further safeguard against political threats from Russia. The last Russian troops, stationed in Estonia in 1991 finally were withdrawn in August 1994, but relations with Yeltsin's Kremlin remained cool.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Europa world year book (London: Europa publication) vol.1, 1999, p.1321.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

Since the restoration of Estonian independence in 1991, the republic's relations with its eastern neighbor, the Russian Federation, have been strained by a number of issues most notably the presence of former Soviet troops (under Russian jurisdiction) and the rights of the large Russian minority in Estonia. Under the civilizations law of 1992 (a modified version of that adopted in 1938), non ethnic Estonia's who settled in the republic after its annexation by the USSR in 1940 were obliged to apply for naturalization (as were their descendants) Many of the requirements for naturalization – including two years residency in Estonia as well as an examination in the Estonian languages – were criticized by the Russian Government as being excessively stringent and discriminatory against the Russian – speaking minority. A new citizenship law adopted in January 1995 extended the residency requirement to five years. Non – citizen were given until 12 July 1995 to apply for residence and work permits, by which time almost 330, people (more than 80% of the total) had submitted application.<sup>32</sup>

With the dissolution of the USSR in 1991 several those former Soviet troops remained stationed (Under Russian Command) on Estonian territory. Their withdrawal was command in 1992, but the Russian leadership increasing linked progress of the troop withdrawal with the question of citizenship, and other rights of the Russian – speaking mind in Estonia Withdrwals of the troops were suspended temerity on several occasions in response to allegations of violence of the Russian minority's rights.

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<sup>32</sup> Walter Clemens, *Baltic independence and Russian empire* (New York: St Martins Press, 1991), p.36.

In November 1993 a resolution by the UN General Assembly demanded a complete withdrawal of the ex-soviet troops, and the final deadline for the withdrawal Negotiations continue in 1994 on the terms of the withdrawal of the troops but were complicated by Russian demands the 12,000 retired Russian military serviceman (and them pendants) living in Estonia be granted unqualified citizen rights and social guarantees. In July talks were held in More between President Meri and President Yeltsin of the Russian Federation at which Lennart Meri pledged that civil and social would be guaranteed to all Russian military pensions Estonia, while Yeltsin confirmed that Russian would remove military pensioners Estonia, while Yeltsin confirmed that Russia would removes military presence by the end of August. The withdrawal former Soviet troops from Estonia was finally completed on August 1994. The agreements on the withdrawal troops on Russian military pensioners were ratified by the Russian and Estonian legislatures in 1995, despite opposition from Estonian politicians who argued that, as Russia had been a occupying force, its servicemen should not be allowed to rests in Estonia. <sup>33</sup>

The head of the Russian delegation, Russian Federation Special Envoy Vasily Svirin, commented to journalists that he saw nothing sensational in either President Yeltsin's statement in Vancouver or Defense Minister Grachev's speech in Brussels about suspending the withdrawal of Russian troops from the Baltic countries, reminding those present that the Russian President issued a directive to this effect back in October of last year. That directive, the Russian delegation leader emphasized, spoke of suspending the withdrawal on account of the unfinished construction in Russia of social and consumer facilities for the

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

Russian service personnel. Nevertheless, the troop pullout from Estonia never stopped for even a single day, Svirin noted. And he cited figures: Of the 25,000-man contingent of Russian troops stationed in Estonia in 1991, 7,600 remained as of March 1, 1993. In terms of equipment, the Russian "presence" is limited to 27 tanks, 186 armored personnel carriers, 166 infantry-fighting vehicles, 27 aircraft, 13 ships and three small surface craft<sup>34</sup>.

But it was clear from the remarks of Juri Luik of the Estonian delegation, that even these figures-and the pace of the withdrawal, for that matter are categorically unacceptable to Estonia. He again spoke of the 144th Russian Motorized Division, stationed in the republic's capital, and mentioned the nuclear facility at Paldiski, which Russian Defense Ministry documents refer to as a Russian naval training center, as well as the Russian Federation intelligence centers in the republic, from which, Estonia believes, the Scandinavian countries continue to be "monitored." None of the previous agreements with Russia on the troop withdrawal contained any "additional conditions," Luik emphasized. In the Estonian side's view, there aren't any. In any case, Tallinn is convinced that humanitarian problems associated with the situation of the republic's nonindigenous population as regards the observance of intentional legal norms and social protection in Estonia are being vigilantly monitored by the international community, something that in and of itself guarantees the republic the moral support of the European countries. Envoy Svirin voiced a somewhat different (to put it mildly) opinion of the situation of former Soviet citizens in independent Estonia, parrying his Estonian counterpart's argument with a reference to the 47th UN

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<sup>34</sup> Stefan C, "Self determination and recent development in the Baltic States" *Journal of international law and Policy* (Cambridge), vol. 21, No.7, p.723.

General Assembly's resolution containing information about discrimination against Russians.<sup>35</sup>

There was a lively exchange over a traditional issue in relations with Estonia the issue of borders. The Russian side declared that all attempts to revise existing borders would be unequivocally viewed as a destabilizing factor in European life. Estonia, on the other hand, remained committed to its own ideas about a just settlement of this issue: The Estonian Republic must be restored within the borders of the independent Estonian state in 1940.

Nevertheless, and this was expressed in reserved but positive ones by both the negotiating parties, the troop withdrawal process as well as trade and economic cooperation between Russia and Estonia, must be continued. To this end, a number of agreements were signed during the 10<sup>th</sup> round-treaties on free trade between the Estonia Republic and the Russian Federation, on most-favored-nation status in trade and economic cooperation between the countries, and In transit trade and the use of Estonian seaports for that purpose. All the other (pressing) problems, such as material compensation for environmental damage to the republic or Estonia's claim a "military real estate" on its territory, as well as the draft treaty between the Estonian Republic and the Russian Federation on citizenship, remain outside the jurisdiction of the Russian and Estonian delegation. In any case, that is what Russian delegation leader Svirin said.<sup>36</sup>

In 1994, Estonian Prime Minister Mart Laar has characterized as naïve nationalism President Lennart Meri's statement to the State

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<sup>35</sup> Keeseings record of world events (Torquary, UK) January, 1991, p.379444.

<sup>36</sup> The Current Digest of the Post Soviet Press, vol.XLV, No.14, 1993, p.27.

Assembly in which he expressed fears that the state lacks a sufficiently clear picture of how Russian state capital is penetrating Estonia under the cover provided by front companies and front men. Speaking at a press conference after a meeting of the government on January 11, the Prime Minister gave assurances that the government is aware of the danger of Russian capital expansion and is taking measures and monitoring the situation. However, while monitoring the operations of large monopolies from the neighboring country in Estonia's economy, the government does not intend to interfere in specific transactions. In response to a question regarding possible restrictions on Russian capital in/Estonia, Mr. Laar said that there is no need for them. Estonia would be acting rashly if it took the course of blocking incoming capital and investment and rejecting the establishment of joint firms with businessmen from any country in East or West.<sup>37</sup>

As for Russia, it is currently Estonia's second largest trading partner, ranking only after Finland in terms of imports and exports, according to the Estonian Ministry of finance. Total trade in the third quarter of 1993 was roughly one billion krooni. Russia accounts for close to 20 percent of Estonia's exports and about 19 percent of its imports. Estonia maintains a positive trade balance with Russia, albeit a small one.<sup>38</sup>

While Russia tries, without much success, to persuade its partners in the Cis to agree to the introduction of dual citizenship, a number of its Baltic neighbours are happily resolving this problem without informing either the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs or local authorities.

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<sup>37</sup> The Current Digest of the Post Soviet Press, vol. SLVI, no. 2, 1994, p. 26.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

Estonia has been the most successful in this endeavour not at home, however, but in contiguous regions that belong to Russia. An account of this was given by Vladimir Lukin and Vladimir Podoprigora, the heads of the Federal Assembly's committees on international affairs, who have returned from a strip to the border areas.

The areas in question are Pechory District in Pskov Province and the part of Leningrad Province just across the Narva from Estonia, where emissaries from Tallinn have been issuing passports at their own discretion for quite some time, bestowing Estonian citizenship on grateful Russians.<sup>39</sup>

In 1994, Several thousand Pskovians have already procured Estonian citizenship without any excess formalities or bureaucracy. All they had to do was show up at an inconspicuous office a stone's throw from the border and sign for receipt of their passport.

When a representation was made about this to Juri Kahn, Estonia's ambassador to Moscow, he stated that he sees no violations of international law here, since a basis is provided by the provisions of the Tartu (Yuryev) peace treaty of 1920, under which Pechory left the Russian SFSR and became part of the Estonian Republic, which at that time was part of the Entente. So Russia, it seems, is still holding on to other people's land and does not want to deal with territorial problems. Moreover, the passports are allegedly being issued by a non-governmental organisation know as Petserimaa (the Estonian name for Pechory) not to everyone who comes along, but only to people who are "temporarily residing" in

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<sup>39</sup> The Current Digest of the Post Soviet Press, vol. SLVI, no. 2, 1994, p. 26.

the disputed areas, which the Constitution refers to as an age-old part of Estonia. One has to assume that eventually these citizens will be usable as a "fifth column" when a referendum is held on the question of whom these areas belong to.<sup>40</sup>

In 1994, Many sections of the border with Estonia are open and unmonitored, and this has enabled Estonia, which has no copper or molybdenum mines, to rise to fifth place in the world in exports of nonferrous metals. In 1993 alone, 1.5 million rubles' worth of freight was confiscated during attempts to transport it illegally into Estonia. Talks on demarcation have as yet produced no results, because of Tallinn's reluctance to deal with this matter. Under these conditions, Izvestia was told at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Russia will be forced to unilaterally establish border posts so that it can protect its borders.<sup>41</sup>

Estonian President Lennart Meri has called in Russian Ambassador Alexander Trofimov and demanded an explanation of Defense Minister Pavel Grachev's threat to halt the troop withdrawal and even send in a new contingent to protect military facilities. Tallinn learned of the Russian minister's statement right after the end of the failed 19<sup>th</sup> round of Russian Estonian talks. According to V. Svirin, head of the Russian delegation, the fact that the talks have obviously stalled can be attributed to Estonia's repudiation of commitments regarding social protection for Russian military pensioners that were formulated back in the 14 round of talks. In response to that move, the Russian delegation said that

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, p. 27.



the previously agreed upon deadline for completion of the troop withdrawal, August 31, 1994 was no longer relevant.<sup>42</sup>

Apparently, Pavel, Grachev decided to strengthen the diplomats' position. But this world played right into the hands of Estonia's leaders. Tiit Made, a Deputy to the state assembly and head of the Entrepreneurs party stated, "We should be grateful to Defense Minister Grachev. His comments are politically very advantageous to Estonia. It has been handed some strong trump cards to play in the international arena. But no one in Estonia itself takes Grachev's threat seriously. Russia cannot afford to occupy us again.

President Lennart Meri cut short his visit to Portugal. A chief of state must be at home when danger threatens his country. When he returned to Tallinn, he said in a speech on Mother's Day. "This holiday takes place at a very disturbing time for Estonia, a time when the country is being threatened." If it were not for Pavel Grachev, Estonian diplomats would have had to rack their brains over how to explain the failure of the talks with Russia.<sup>43</sup>

In 1994, there was establishment of first Soviet Bordering Estonia. Tallinn Accuses Moscow of 'Unilateral Demarcation." Yeltsin decree, made public on Tuesday, on physically marking the state border between the Russian Federation and Estonia drew a sharply negative reaction from our neighbours. The Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed regret over this unilateral decision by Moscow" and stated that it was at variance with the UN Charter nad the principles of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. Tallinn continues to insist that "a line whose location is

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid, p. 17.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, p. 19.

not the subject of a treaty with the other state cannot be considered a border.”

Basically, what is involved here are territorial claims by Estonia against Russia. Tallinn views the present border with the Russian Federation not as a state border but as an administrative one, since under the Russian-Estonian Tartu Peace Treaty of 1920, Estonia’s territory included regions (with a total area of about 2,000 square kilometers) that were transferred to Leningrad and Pskov Provinces in Russia after World War II. But the Russia side does not recognize this document and has repeatedly urged Estonia to participate in joint demarcation of the existing border. Estonia, for its part, refuses to do this.<sup>44</sup>

The Russian President’s decree, which went into effect the moment it was signed on June 21, stipulates that pending a relevant bilateral treaty, the Russian state border in the Estonian sector will be demarcated unilaterally. It is planned to complete the necessary work for this by the end of the year. As was explained to a Savodnya correspondent at the press bureau of the Russian Border Troops, “it will be a completely equipped state border line, with all the necessary infrastructure and paraphernalia, making it possible to ensure that it is fully protected.” The barbed wire and “no man’s land” that were customary fixtures at the borders of the former USSR will not be present, however, the main role is being assigned to technical protection systems.<sup>45</sup>

In point of fact, despite the sharp reaction from official Tallinn, which is insisting that “Yeltsin” decree creates the impression that

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<sup>44</sup> Foreign Broadcast Information Service (Central Eurasia), August, no. 89-95, 1994, p. 107.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

his country is not interested in normalizing relations with Estonia,” its signing cannot be considered a complete surprise. An expedition from the Russian Federation chief administration for geology and cartography began working on the Pechora sector of the Russian Estonian border back in early May. Its mission included making all the necessary markers on site, on the basis of which the border guards will set up protective installations and signs. During his April visit to Pskov, Russian Federation Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev mentioned the possibility of unilateral demarcation of the state border, declaring at that time that “the border must be strengthened through technical means, not by the bodies of Russian soldiers.” The minister was referring to the shooting of a Russian border guard detail by smugglers on the Estonian sector of the border.<sup>46</sup>

The Accumulated Problems and Resentments could be resolved at a meeting between the two countries’ presidents. Tallinn-Boris Yeltsin’s statement in Naples once again stirred up politicians in Estonia and neighboring countries. The Russian President stated that the remaining 2500 Russian military personnel would not be withdrawn from Estonia by August 31 because of flagrant violations of human rights. At the same time, giving in to Bill Clinton’s efforts at persuasion, he publicly promised to meet with Estonian President Lennart Meri and discuss the question of the troop withdrawal. Clinton passed along to Yeltsin some proposals from the Estonian side that the American leader had heard during his visit to Riga on July 6.

President Meri said on Monday that he was “glad” to hear of Yeltsin’s readiness to meet, but that he could not agree with the accusations

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<sup>46</sup> The Current Digest of the post Soviet Press, Vol. XLVI, no. 25, 1994, p. 21.

of human rights violations. ;Considering that dozens of missions from foreign states and international organizations have failed to find evidence of such violations, I am shocked by the tone that Yeltsin chose, a tone that is hardly in keeping with a desire to normalize relations.” A statement by the Estonian President says.<sup>47</sup>

Yeltsin’s demarche forced Estonian Foreign Minister Juri Luik to interrupt his vacation. In a statement of his own, the minister recalled that Russia had made a commitment the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe to withdraw the troops from the Baltics quickly and without additional conditions, and had named August 31 as the last day that Russian Federation troops would be in Estonia. But Luik assessed Yeltsin’s promise to meet with Meri as “a constructive step,” and recalled that Estonia had advanced such a proposal a year ago.<sup>48</sup>

According to all international norms, Estonia has “a clean record before the law” in terms of human rights and has every right to accuse Russia of lying and linking the troop withdrawal to extraneous conditions. But Russia still has major trump cards – its size, its nuclear weapons, and its status as a permanent member of the UN Security Council., this was admitted with bitterness and irritation by Ago Tiiman, secretary of the Estonian delegation at the talks with Russia, who commented on Yeltsin’s statement for the Baltic News Service: “We can adopt as many resolutions as we like, but Russia will still do whatever it wants. It no longer takes the West’s opinion into account. Our hope that Russia will become a democracy and we will become equal partners

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

in utopian.” Tiiman believes that Estonia should change its tactics and strategy toward Russia.<sup>49</sup>

The Russian and Estonian government delegations have not met since April, and the talks are being conducted by Estonian Foreign Ministry Vice Chancellor Raul Malk and Russian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Vitaly Churkin. The sides are not divulging the results of those meetings. Nor is anything known about the proposals Lennart Meri conveyed to Yeltsin through Clinton.

As for the meeting between the two countries’ Presidents, since the time that Estonia advanced the proposal, attempts to organize it have constantly run into obstacles. The Russian leadership has said that the Presidents should meet on to sign already prepared accords, but he members of the delegations have informed one another that they do not have the authority to make the policy decisions needed to prepare the agreements.

At this point, Yeltsin’s promise to meet with Meri is still only a promise. Estonian is now awaiting word from Moscow as to how, when and where the summit could held.<sup>50</sup> In June of 1992, the Bank of Estonia “brought back” 2.2 billion rubles from the public and firm firms. At that time one dollar was worth about 120 rubles, making for a total value of 18.5 million. Under an intergovernmental agreement, Estonia pledged to return to the Central Bank of Russia, within a month, the rubles that were withdrawn from circulation during the reform. Unfortunately, the agreement did not specify the procedures for and terms of the transfer, but the money never went back to Russia.

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

The document was signed by the governments of Yegor Gaidar and Tiit Vahi, and soon afterward both of them left office. Mart Laar, who replaced Vahi both as head of the government and as chairman of the committee on monetary reform, “repudiated” the agreement. Today he explains it like this: “The government received numerous proposals that it sell its cash rubles for dollars. Many international advisers recommended that we sell our cash rubles. At the same time, the government was experiencing a serious shortage of money. The social fund needed money. Talks were being held on buying weapons. The dollars that were being offered premised at least some kind of solution.”<sup>51</sup>

The government began hurriedly searching for the most reliable intermediaries, people who could be sell the rubles with the least risk and publicity for Estonia. Intermediaries were found, although they were exceedingly expensive, if one is to believe the coalition party’s experts, and the deal was overseen by Tiit Pruuli, an adviser to Mart Laar. Over a period of three months, up until March 23, 1993, the government received from the Bank of Estonia and passed on to the intermediaries nearly 1.5 million rubles.

For a total of 2.264 billion rubles, Estonia received \$1916000. That is just one tenth of the value of the Russian currency at the time of the reform. The committee on monetary reform considers the illegal or, at best, quasi legal currency deal to have been a profitable operation the state’s coffers ended up 2 billion richer, and the depositories got rid of their wastepaper.

For now, the only ones talking about the drawbacks of the deal are people not vested with high state powers. Sooner or later it will strike a blow to Estonia’s international prestige. And damaged

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<sup>51</sup> Summary of the World Broadcast (London), June 1992.

relations with Russia will cost more than 2 million. Many people are disrobed by the ethical aspect of it, as well. The incident is strongly reminiscent of back street currency speculation at the state level. Estonia has stopped to speculating in the currency black ,market. The committee on monetary reform is not saying what country the money was sold to. The brokers and the banks through which the operations were conducted are also still unnamed.<sup>52</sup>

In Tallinn on October 8, 1994, several Russian speaking organizations created the United People's Party of Estonia (UPPE). The UPPE is the country's second Russian speaking party, after the Russian party of Estonia, which was founded October 1, 1994, but it promises to become first inn terms in influence.

A leading role in the formation of the party is being played by the Representative Assembly (an umbrella group uniting several ethic Russian organizations in Estonia – Trans) and its nucleus, the Russian Democratic Movement of Estonia, which are more disposed to compromise than other Estonia, which are more disposed to compromise than other non-Estonian organizations. They are the one that Estonian politicians prefer to do business with. Moreover, the party has solid material support one of its founders is the Estonian-Russian Chamber of Entrepreneurs, a representative of which, Tallinn Deputy Major Viktor Ndrejev, has been elected chairman of the UPPE.<sup>53</sup>

The fact that there are not a great many politicized Russian speaking citizens in Estonia forced the Upper's founders to adapt

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> John fitzmurice, *The Baltic Regional future*, (UK: St. Martins Press, 1992), p. 72.

as broad a platform as possible. Besides the fact that all mention of nationality is omitted from the party's name the program also brings together elements of rightist and leftist ideology, diluted by points traditional for Estonia's Russians concerning less stringent naturalization requirements, the state system of Estonian language instruction, normalization of relations with Russia etc.

We will uphold the interests of the most disenfranchised segment of the Estonian population, and it just so happens that right now the majority of that part of the population is made up of Russians, Andreyev explained. The UPPE program proclaims that splendid goal, the creation of a "socially oriented market economy".

With elections six months away, the leaders of Estonia's non-Estonian population simultaneously developed plans to form their own parties consisting of Russian speaking citizens of Estonia. The first to do so was Tallinn City Assembly member and former Estonian Supreme Soviet Deputy Sergei Kuznestov, who considers his Russian Party of Estonia to be the heir to the Russian National Union of Estonia created by White emigrants in 1920.

The party that the leader of the Russian community of Estonia, Aleksei Zybin, intends to establish could prove to be a much more serious rival for the UPPE than the RPE will be, but Zybin has not gotten to the point of officially founding it yet. For now, the leaders of the new parties refuse to even guess at the total number of seats Russian speaking Deputies could get in parliament. Journalists predict they will get up to 10 of the 101.<sup>54</sup>

The new Prime Minister of Estonia is 54 year old Andres Tarand, Minister of the Environment in the previous government. On

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid.



Thursday 63 of the 101 Deputies to the Estonian parliament voted in favour of confirming Tarand's nomination, which had been [proposed by the President. Only one Deputy voted against, while the rest either abstained or did not participate in the voting.

Tarand's confirmation essentially marked the end of the government crisis that had been quietly smoldering for more than a year and that flared up with full force on September 26. When the parliament passed a vote of no confidence in Mart Laar "for improper conduct of affairs of state." Then, on October 13, the parliament voted against the President's first proposed candidate for head of government. Bank of Estonia President Siim Kallas, who stated that he intended to continue Laar's radical reforms.<sup>55</sup>

Tarand also told the parliamentarians that he intends to keep following the general outlines of the approved courses, and that he even plans to retain most of the current ministers. But the Deputies pressed the green buttons on their panels anyway largely for the sake of being able to sit comfortably behind those panels until next March.

If the State Assembly had not confirmed Tarand, the President's second nominee, and had then been unable to choose a candidate of its own, according to the Constitution the President would have had to call early elections. Considering the time needed for preparation, early elections would have almost coincided with the regular ones, which are to be held in March. Meanwhile, the state budget for next year, many laws that have already been prepared, and the treaties with Russia on troop withdrawal and military pensioners would have been left unconfirmed. None of the main

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<sup>55</sup> The Current Digest of the Post Soviet Press, Vol. XLVI, no. 43, 1994, p. 21.

political focus in parliament wanted this. But the government crisis cannot yet be considered completely over not until the President confirms the makeup of the government.

Andres Tarand is a geographer by profession. He went through all the stages that were normal for an activist in the singing revolution: the Peoples Front, the Committee of Estonia, and then his own party, the Green Movement of Estonia, which he has just left in connection with his new appointment. In 1990 Tarand was elected to the Republic's Supreme Council, and in 1992 he ran for the State Assembly on the slate of the "moderate" block, which included the Greens along with the Social Democrats and the rural centrists.<sup>56</sup>

On December 11, 1995, in Narva, Russian citizens living in Estonia decided to unite in the Estonian Republic Union Citizens of Russia. Prior to this, separate unions of Russian citizens had existed in Narva, Tallinn and Silamae. By the beginning of November, more than 54,000 residents of Estonia had taken Russian citizenship, and according to unofficial data, another 5,000 were added in November. Admittedly, the granting of Estonian citizenship is proceeding at almost the same pace. Mart Piiskop, head of Estonia's department of citizens and migration, informed *Sevodnya* that about 45,000 people in Estonia have been naturalized in the past two and a half years, and about 3,000 in November.

In the auditorium of the Narva House of Culture, adorned with the Soviet, Romanov, St. Andrew's and current Russian flags, the 190 delegates to the congress decided henceforth to fight shoulder to shoulder for the rights of ethnic Russians in Estonia.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> The current Digest of the Post Soviet Press, Vol. XLVI, no. 50, 1994, p. 26.

Under the new law, citizenship may be acquired only by a foreigner who has lived in Estonia on a permanent residence permit for five years before applying for citizenship and for one year after. No current non citizen ha a permanent permit or will have one before 1996. But so as not to cut off such people's possibility of acquiring an Estonian passport, the law includes a point stating that for these who took up residence in the county before July 1990, the requirement for permanent Estonia permit dopes not apply a permanent Soviet permit is sufficient. After July 1990, new arrivals in Estonia were issued temporary.

Basic knowledge of the Constitute and the law on citizenship was required of non Estonians seeking naturalization previously, as well, being one of the subjects addressed by the questions on the language exam. The language test itself will not be any easier or harder the requirements for knowledge of Estonian, Nutt himself says, "are copied word for word" from the government resolution now in force.<sup>58</sup>

Russia has condemned the Estonian parliament's eecision to adopt law on citizenship. This is another regrettable step in the legislative formalization and codification of the Estonian authorities current policy of discriminating against Russian residents and flouting their fundamental rights, says a statement issued by the Russian Federation Ministry of Foreign Affairs. "In comparison with legislation now in effect, the law significantly toughens the conditions for obtaining citizenship through naturalization, lengthens the residence requirement, and sharply increase the demands concerning knowledge of the Estonian languages." The statement by the Russian Federation Foreign Ministry stress that

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<sup>58</sup> The current Digest of the Post Soviet Press, Vol. XLVII, no. 3, 1995, p. 27

“a number of provisions in the law on citizenship[ do not conform to present day trends in the legislation of European countries and could cause massive numbers of permanent residents of Estonia to become stateless persons.” Adoption of the law violates the Estonian sides obligations under the January 12, 1991, treaty between Russia and Estonia on the principles of relations between the two states and could execrable the already difficult interethnic relations in Estonia,” the document notes.<sup>59</sup>

Estonia’s President Lennart Meri has proposed that territorial claims against Russia be dropped. “e should have the courage to recognize treaty in 1920 Tartu Peace Treaty and the border after the Tartu Peace Treaty are not identical concepts, “he said. In his opinion, Estonian diplomats should hold talks with Russia to resolve the border issue in away advantageous to Estonia.

Vahi delivered a policy speech to the State Assembly on Wednesday, after which the parliament, by a majority vote, decided to empower him to form a government. The CP/RPU and the centrist Party, which have joined to form a government coalition, together have 57 of the 101 votes in parliament, so getting the State Assembly’s nod was no problem for Vahi.

In terms of ideology, the govermet of the CP/RPU and the Centrist Party will be significantly to the left of the right wing Isamaa Party Cabinet that has governed for the past two years. Nevertheless, the new Prime Minister firmly vows to continue radical reforms.

Tiit Vahi did not all to the parliament at length about the CP/RPU Centirst A prty coalitions economic programme, saying it had already been published in the perss. According to the program, the

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<sup>59</sup> The Current Digest of the Post Soviet Press, vol. XLVII, no. 4, 1995, p. 25.

coalition will not alter the firm exchange rate of the kroon to the German mark, will maintain a balanced state budget and full economic openness, and will not increase the tax burden. The rather strong influence of the rural pareis in the new government is reflected in it was plans to exempt small agricultural producers from the income tax, to find money for easy terms credits for farmers so they can do their spring field work, and to freeze agricultural entireness debts to the state. The CP/RPU block and the centrists came to power in large part thanks to the votes of rural residents, to whom the pragmatic far right Laar government bluntly promised no assistance.

The CP/RPU blackened the Centrists intend to continue the policy of seeking to European structures, especially the European Union. This will give us political protection and foster conditions for economic development, Vahi said in his speech to parliament.

The future government considers it important to establish smooth political and economic relations with Russia, but it does not intend to yield in matter of citizenship and language. Tiit Vahi told the Deputies that all the problems inside the country can be solved in cooperation with the Russian faction in parliament. The current parliament has six Deputies representing Russian speaking parties. In relates with Russia, the coalition believes, Estonia must staunchly oppose any and all attempts to treat it as part of the geopolitical space of the CISU.<sup>60</sup>

Cooperation with the European Union included significant economic aid as well as talks on a free trade agreement. Estonia's greatest foreign policy success came in May 1993 with its

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<sup>60</sup> The Current Digest of the Post Soviet Press, vol. XLVII, no. 14, 1995, pp. 22-21.

admission to the council of Europe Estonia considered admission the equivalent of a clean bill of health for its young Democracy, which Russia had sought to furnish with accusation of human rights violations. In mid 1993, Baltic military commanders even met to discuss plans for joint infantry battalion that would be offered for peace keeping missions around the world. The principal objectives of Estonian Foreign Policy are to resolve the pending succession issues with respect to the former Soviet Union to accelerate its integration with the west European political, economic and secretary system to develop links with Nordic states with participates emphasis on Finland and Sweden and to identify areas of common interest and future directions of cooperation with its two neighboring Baltic states. The main focus of Estonia's Foreign policy is Estonian's integration into the European union and enlargement of NATO, which is linked to enlargement. Estonia's foreign policy emphasizes the need for integration with Europe as quickly as possible and Estonia's goal to gain access to the European Union. As an important step in this deities a Free Trade Agreement between Estonia and the European union was signed on July 18, 1994 taking effect on Ist January 1995.<sup>61</sup>

Estonia's ties with Boris N. Yeltsin had weakened since the Russian leaders show of solidarity with the Baltic states in January 1992. Issues surrounding Russian troop withdrawals from the Baltic Republic's and Estonian's denial of automatic citizenship to non-citizens ranked high on the lost of points of contention. Immediately after independence, Estonia began pressing the Soviet Union, and outer Russia for a speedy withdrawal of Soviet troops

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<sup>61</sup> Sevennik Hoyer, *Towards a Civil Society: The Baltic Media Long Road to Freedom* (Tartu, Baltic Association for Media Research, Nota Baltic LTd., 1993), p. 67.

from its territory. Estonia insisted that the process be completed by the end of the year. The Soviet government, citing a lack of available housing for its troops, said not before 1994. In January 1992, some 25,000 troops were reported left in Estonia, the smallest contingent in the Baltic states. Still, more than 80,000 hectares of land, including an inland artillery range, remained in the Russian military hands. More than 150 battle tanks, 300 armed vehicles, and 163 battle air craft also remained. The last troops did not leave until August 1994.<sup>62</sup>

In the fall of 1991, as Estonia laid down its new citizenship policy, the Soviet Union called the move a violation of human rights. Under the citizenship policy, most of the country's large ethnic Russian minority were declared non-citizens. The Soviet government linked the further withdrawal of troops from Estonia to a satisfactory change in Estonia's citizenship assistance. In response Estonia denied the human rights charges and invited more than a dozen international fact finding groups to visit the country for verification. As the propaganda war and negotiations dragged on, Estonia gained international support for their position on troop withdrawal at July 1992 summit of the CSCE in Helsinki. The final communiqué called on Russia to act "without delay ... for the early orderly and complete withdrawal" of foreign troops from Estonia. Resolutions were also passed in the United States Senate in 1992 and 1993 linking the issues of troops withdrawals to continued United States aids to Russia.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius, "As we Go the Baltic So Goes Europe" *Oribis* (Published by Foreign Research Institute), vol. 39, no. 3, Summer, 1995, p. 389.

<sup>63</sup> Frederic Star, *The Legally History on Russia and the new States of Eurostate*, (New York, 1994), p. 111.

Yet, Estonian and Russian negotiators remained dead locked through 1993. At several points, President Yeltsin and other Russian officials called on official halt to the pullet, but the unofficial withdrawal of forces continued. By the end of 1992, about 16,000 troops remained. A year later that number was down to fewer than 3500 and more than half of the army outposts had been turned over to Estonian defense officials. The Estonian and Russian sides continued with disagree, primarily over the peace of Russia's on the northern cost some thirty five kilometers west of Tallinn. The Soviet navy had built a submarine base there that included two nuclear submarine training reactors. Russian officials maintained that dismantling the reactor facility would take time; supervision of the process. The last Russian workshop, carrying ten T-72 ranks, departed in August 1994. However Russia was to retain control of the reactor facility in paldiski until September 1995.

Although the ultimate goal of ensuring protection against an outside attack appeared remote. Estonia was hard at work building up a defense force in the mid 1990s, with plenty of outside help. The most dramatic step the country took was the appointem tin /may 1993 of Alexander Einstein, a retired United States Army colonel and émigré Estonian, to command Estonian's fledging armed forces. The decision drew strong objections from the United States Department of state, which feared upsetting Russia by allowing former United States military personnel to serve in high posts the former Soviet Union. The United States threatened to remote Einseen's military union and even his citizenship. Support



for the new Estonian general from several United States senators, however, helped ease the controversy.<sup>64</sup>

The armed forces in 1994 numbered about 3000 including a 2500 member army and a 500 navy. There were also a 6000 member reserve militia known as the Defense League (Kaitseliit) a 2000 member para-military border guard under the command of the ministry of Interior and a maritime border guard, which also functioned as a coast guard. The army's equipment included eight Mi-8 transport helicopters. The navy possessed two former Soviet and four former Swedish patrol craft, as well as two small transport vessels. The government allocated some EKR 250 million for defense in 1994.<sup>65</sup>

In July 1993, Estonia saw the dissension within the army erupt into a minor mutiny among the group of several dozen recruits serving in Pullapaa in western Estonia. More outside help in improving Estonia's armed forces came with the purchase in January 1993 of more than US 60 million in Israeli light arms the contract, signed by the government in private talks with TAAS-Israel industries, later caused a political storm when many deputies in Parliament questioned whether Estonia had gotten a fair deal. The government nevertheless convinced the Riigikogu in December to ratify the agreement while increasing the army's firepower, part of the weaponry was also to go to Estonia's border guard. Estonia's Nordic neighbours also were active in building up the country's defenses.

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<sup>64</sup> Vladmiir B, *Rusia and Europe the Endagerring Security* (London: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 339.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

The penal code introduced in 1992 retained the death penalty for terrorism and murder. In 1993 two persons were sentenced to death for aggravated murder. In August, 1993, about 4500 persons were in custody in the country's eleven persons.

CHAPTER - 5

**CONCLUSION**

The above mentioned study on the "Political Developments in Estonia: 1991-1995" highlights the historical background of political Developments in Estonia, how it regained its independence and building up constitutional state structures and democracy building in Estonia. The Soviet legacy had a varied influence on political developments in Estonia. A new stage of national, cultural and political awakening took place in Estonia. There had been extensive economic development, an increased standard of living for all lower groups of the society.

As Estonia entered its fourth year of independence it had already built a strong record of achievements. In the midst of the August 1991 coup, Estonia's politicians had the foresight to convene a constitutional assembly and seize the moment for political restructuring. The process of constitution making was completed in a relatively orderly manner, and the new basic law was successfully implemented. Lasting political parties had yet to develop, however half a decade after open parliamentary politics began with the Supreme Soviet elections of 1990, the factions in parliament continued to fragment and regroup. Part of Estonia's problem may have been its small size. Because the circle of politicians was not very large in a country of only about 1.5 million people, there was relatively little turnover, and old rivals and allies were constantly pitted against each other.

The first era of independence had witnessed the same problem. Yet, Estonia's decision to stick to a parliamentary system of government in 1992 appeared to be a good one. Even though it was the same system that had been detrimental to the country's democracy in 1934. More safeguards had been built into the 1992 constitution against parliamentary domination of politics. Lennart Meri's tenure

as Estonia's first post independence war President appeared to mould the new office into a source of balance, despite grumblings from his Isamaa backers. A new court system was also put into place, with effective use being made of provisions for testing the constitutionality of laws.

Yet, politics did not reach the lives of all Estonia's residents. Having been left out of the parliamentary elections in 1992 because of citizenship requirements, Estonia's large Russophone population was virtually absent from national politics. Russians dominated in the city councils of the heavy Russian towns of Narva and Sillamäe, in the north eastern part of the country, but their political presence rarely extended beyond the city limits. Even a last-ditch local referendum on territorial autonomy for the northeastern region, declared in July 1993 in response to the law Aliens crises, largely failed because of numerous reports of voting irregularities. Most of these Russian elders - who had long histories as communist party functionaries, who had tacitly supported the August 1991 coup, and who had held on their political turf since then - finally were ousted in the local elections of October 1993. A new core of Russian leaders began to emerge in the city of Tallinn, where two Russian based parties did well at the polls and were poised to play an important role in the capital's city council. From the point, a responsive mainstream political society could begin to serve a Russian population that seems determined to remain in Estonia and willing to contribute to its future.

The progress of Estonia's economic reforms in the early 1990s, if only in comparison with Russia, was clearly a source of confidence among both Estonians and Russians in the future of the country. Estonia was the first of the Baltic states to jump out of the ruble zone and create its own currency "Kroon, which was introduced in

June 1992, and which was considered as a significant step in creating a foundation for market economy. This move was soon rewarded by low inflation, rising wages, and an apparent bottoming out of the country's economic decline. Nevertheless, a large section of the population continued to fear unemployment. Retraining for new skills needed on the open market (such as learning the Estonian language for many Russians) also was a pressing need. The growing gap between the newly rich and the newly poor could be seen in the comparison between new western luxury automobiles racing around Tallinn's streets and pensioners counting their Kroon at a sore to buy a half kilogram of meat. For better or worse, the transition to capitalism was re-ordering society. There was free trade agreement between Estonia and the European Union came into force in January 1995. Today more than 65 percent of Estonian trade is connected with member states of the European Union. Estonia has signed free trade agreements with several other countries, e.g. Norway, Latvia, Lithuania etc.

The main focus of Estonia's foreign policy was Estonia's integration into the European Union and enlargement of NATO which is linked to EU enlargement. It also emphasizes the need for integration with Europe as quickly as possible and Estonia's goal to gain access to the European Union. Estonia also joined NATO's partnership for peace programme along with its Baltic neighbours in February 1994.

Estonia was not alone on its long road to recovery nor in its return to the European community of nations. Yet even so many countries with a kindred past and a common desire for a better future, the hoped for drawing of a new geo-political age did not appear to have taken place by the mid 1990s. Estonia remained of strategic interest to the Kremlin, and the west appeared to have little

intention of crossing Russia on its very doorstep. European and especially Scandinavian, support for Estonia's defense forces was noticeable. But it would take a longtime before a credible Estonian force could be assembled. Although the Russian troops had finally departed, full security for Estonia seemed to remain distant.

From the beginning four hypotheses formed the basis of the Research. The first hypothesis is, "There have been very few countries in the world like Estonia who had faced such a long duration of colonial rule, as a result of which the concept of freedom and independence never ceased to exist even after the untimely Russian - Soviet socio cultural offensive".

Estonia is the smallest state in the Baltic region. However political developments in this country have always attracted the world's attention, it belonged to Scandinavian culture due to early colonial rule. However after its annexation by Peter the Great, the old culture was suppressed as tsarist policy of Russification was imposed. Their concept of freedom and independence could see a light of the day when Soviet President Gorbachev introduced Perestroika and Glasnost.

Thereafter, democratic freedom of expression was introduced. The inner party rivalry within Soviet leadership provided a base for Estonian independence.

The second hypothesis is "political developments in Estonia has always been a culmination of the colonial legacy of the past many centuries".

Like other Baltic states - Latvia and Lithuania, it also had to face colonial rule for many centuries. This is why time and again Estonians try to failed due to mighty foreign true. Following

Gorbachev's democratization of Soviet society, the voices of freedom very acute in Estonia. The political developments in Estonia could be analyzed properly within the frame work of entire colonial history of this region.

The third hypothesis is "Estonia independence and politics cannot be isolated from the similar developments in other parts of Baltic region".

Therefore political developments in Estonia took a similar course, which prevailed in other Baltic states. Like other Baltic states, it also had impact on Soviet command system.

The fourth hypothesis is "The most effective rule in Estonia has been during tsarist and Soviet period. However Estonia always looked towards the west. This is the fundamental of current political developments in Estonia after its independence."

Before the advent of Gorbachev, Estonian, concept of freedom during Soviet period had typical characteristics of getting support from the western world, but failed to materialize the same within its society due to Soviet command system. After its annexation by Peter the Great the old culture was suppressed as tsarist policy of Russification was imposed. Since then anti-Russian feelings has been a continues source of uttar discontent among the people. Therefore, Estonians try to failed due to mighty foreign rule. Therefore, Estonian masses always looked towards the west.

After passing a long duration of Soviet rule, it regained its independence and got international recognition, constituent assembly, democracy building etc. therefore it is the unique state in the Baltic region. This is the fundamental of current political developments in Estonia after its independence.



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