"In Search of ..."

BERTRAND RUSSELL IN ESTONIA

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This essay presents first what we know about Russell's visit to Tallinn (Reval), Estonia, during his trip to Russia in 1920. Unnoticed by his biographers, Russell spent over a week in Estonia (9–11 May and 16–23 June). Secondly, Russell's personal and intellectual connections with Estonia, including his frequent mentions of the Baltic Barons such as Count Keyserling and jokes about Estonians, will be revealed. These are followed by his involvement with Clifford Allen in Estonia and Dora Black's visit there. Finally, a once-secret British Government memorandum on the relations between Russia and the Baltic States will be pointed out.

INTRODUCTION

In 1920 the outstanding twentieth-century British logician, philosopher, politician, pacifist and moralist Bertrand Russell (1872–1970) paid a short visit to Tallinn, Estonia. Does the fact have any meaning for Estonians? Maybe not. It has not even been mentioned in the Estonian collection of his essays. The epilogue does not go any deeper than stating that he visited Russia, and China, in the early 1920s. This seems to be more important. It certainly is so for world history, in par-

¹ Russell spelt it Esthonia. In German and Swedish it is Estland, in French l'Estonie, in Russian Эстония. We Estonians call our country Eesti. The German name for the capital city, Tallinn, is Reval; it is sometimes found in the Russian style, Revel (as in *Papers* 15).

² Erkki Sivonen, "Saateks" [Epilogue], in Bertrand Russell, *Valik esseid* [Selected essays] (Tallinn: Hortus Litterarum, 1994), pp. 287–92.

ticular if seen from Moscow or Beijing. And yet, living in Estonia, are we not entitled to a viewpoint of our own? Should we not acknowledge that he was here, met someone, and left some traces for us to decipher some day?

It is this sense of mission that has driven me to piece together all the fragments of information that I have been able to collect from various sources about Bertrand Russell's stay in Tallinn. First, what would be Russell's personal opinion? For him, Tallinn was certainly Reval,³ a characteristically German town of the Russian Empire. Was he also aware of Estonians, or Estonia, for that matter? Russell once called the Hungarian and Finnish languages out-of-the-way items.⁴ Apparently he thought about the Estonian language and Estonia the same way. Yet he wasn't unaware of Baltic history, complaining at one time in a review:

Mr. Bowle [author of *The Unity of European History*] is particularly good on eastern Europe: the Byzantine Empire and the subsequent development of the Baltic, Balkan and Russian regions whose medieval history is little known by most English people.⁵

But Russell could also caricature the old German viewpoint (see the section below on Count Keyserling). Russell's penchant for caricature even led him to put words into Hitler's mouth as the clouds of war gathered in the 1930s, at the same time revealing his concern for Baltic independence:

But why (I am still imagining Hitler's thoughts) should the Germans, who, after all, are the noblest nation on earth, be content with an empire smaller than that of England, France, or Russia? Did not Germans, in the middle ages, introduce civilization into the Baltic provinces? And were they not the main civilizing influence in those regions down to the end of the war? And were not these provinces surrendered to Germany by the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk? Why not re-absorb them?⁶

³ A few sentences referring to Reval can be found in the *Autobiography*, 2: 104, 108–10, and 122. There are some also in his travel diary, "Journal of Trip to Russia", published in *Papers* 15: 159–73.

^{4 &}quot;Some of My Contemporaries at Cambridge" (1953), PfM, pp. 64-5.

⁵ "European Culture", *The Listener*, 40 (7 Oct. 1948): 537.

⁶ "Socialism and the Planned State", Fabian Lecture, 1935; published as "The Prospects of a Permanent Peace", *The Lecture Recorder*, 5 (Jan. 1936): 163–7.

Heathen Estonia was Christianized and incorporated into the Western world at the beginning of the thirteenth century after the Baltic crusade when the Teutonic knights and Denmark conquered the land in 1227. For a very short period, Estonia was a part of the Holy Roman Empire of the German nation—and was ruled from Palermo, Sicily, by the Emperor Frederick II (1194–1250) of the Hohenstaufen dynasty. In the thirteenth century Estonia was divided politically among the Bishop of Riga, the Livonian Order of the Brothers of the Sword (an independent branch of the German Order), and Denmark. During the next centuries Estonia was the theatre of war between the Sword Brethren, Denmark, Poland, Sweden and Russia. In 1721 Sweden finally lost control over the Baltic area and, by the treaty of Nystadt, gave Estonia (and neighbouring Latvia) to Russia.

Estonia at the time of Russell's visit in May and June 1920 had only recently become a democratic republic, having (with British military assistance) beaten back Russian forces that tried to reassert Russian (now Bolshevik) control. The Tartu Peace Treaty between Bolshevik Russia and newly independent Estonia was signed on 2 February 1920. Estonia was the first country to recognize Bolshevik Russia. (The Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty that ended World War I for Russia in March 1918 was denounced by Russia after the November 1918 revolution in Germany.) The Tartu Peace Treaty broke the Western blockade of Russia and made contact possible between Russia and Western countries through Estonia. This unique situation lasted until the Russian-Latvian Peace Treaty, signed on 11 August 1920. Soon after that all Western European powers recognized Soviet Russia, and the blockade ended. It is interesting to note that Estonia belonged to the German Kulturkreis from the thirteenth century up to World War 11. Even the "high language" of Estonia—the language of nobility and the teaching language at the University of Tartu (founded in 1632)—was German.⁷

RUSSELL ON ESTONIA AND ESTONIANS

Russell's earliest direct observation on Estonia is a comparison of beverages. In his "Journal of Trip to Russia" Russell points out that Russia is

⁷ For the history of Estonia see, e.g., Toivo U. Raun, *Estonia and the Estonians*, 2nd edn. (Stanford: Hoover Institution, 2001).

said to have adopted a new technology of producing vodka, which has considerably diminished its quality in comparison with the old (Tsarist) times. As his experience included drinking "good" vodka in Reval, we can conclude that Tallinn retained the old technology.⁸ There is no mention of Estonia, only Reval.

Bertrand Russell was, first and foremost, aware of the Great Powers and the relevant trends in them, such as the rise of Social Democrats in Germany, Bolshevism in Russia, China, the fall of liberalism in the USA and, naturally, the British Empire. In this sphere of interests, Estonia could have belonged, at most, to the western borderland of Bolshevism. But obviously Estonia remains rather beyond his attention. Instead he focuses on the conflict of interests between Russian Bolshevism and British imperialism in the Orient, notably in China, and in India. In the 1920s Russell believed, or rather feared, that no world power could prevent Russia from occupying the Orient within the following decade.⁹

In 1923, together with Dora Russell, discussing the politics of Lev Trotski, Russell proudly declares that "we [Britain or possibly the Great Powers] have prevented Esthonia, Latvia and Lithuania from exterminating each other since self-determination set them nominally free to do so" (*PIC*, p. 87). Russell may be referring here to the commission of arbitration headed by the British Commissioner for the Baltic Provinces, Stephen Tallents (later Sir). His job was to fix the disputed Estonian-Latvian boundary, which he did on 1 July 1920—a few days after Russell left. This is one of the few details of the Estonian situation that Russell surely picked up while he was there; it is unlikely that he is referring to somewhat later Baltic conflicts and defensive alliances.

Russell did not care for smaller States grabbing the agenda, as it were:

It is monstrous that Czecho-Slovakia or Jugo-Slavia should be free to refuse to trade with Austria or Hungary, and that the Baltic States should be able to block intercourse between Germany and Russia. Such rights can, unfortunately, be exerted by the strong; but that they should be voluntarily conceded to the

⁸ Papers 15: 162: "Says drinking common among soldiers and peasants: vodka made by new process, more poisonous than old. (Judging by my experience of good vodka at Reval, it must be terrible.)"

⁹ The Practice and Theory of Bolshevism (London: Allen and Unwin, 1920; new edn., 1949; New York: Simon and Schuster, 1960), Pt. 1, Chap. 8. "If we continue to antagonize the Bolsheviks", Russell adds.

weak is an example of Wilsonian liberalism gone mad.

(*PIC*, p. 95)

He decried Estonian nationalism, among others: "In recent times nationalism has spread far more widely than it did in the 19th century; it is vehement in Poland, Esthonia, and San Marino..." However, Russell did not except his own country from blame where it was warranted:

... Professor Goode, a disinterested inquirer, went to Russia expecting to think ill of the Bolsheviks, but came to think well of them. For this crime he was arrested by the British on his arrival in Reval; his papers were confiscated, and after he had been nominally set free he was kidnapped by the British naval authorities in Reval and detained on board British warships in the Baltic for a considerable period. II

Much older, in his Nobel lecture on 11 December 1950, Bertrand Russell gave a caricatured description of two Estonian girls. His purpose was not to disparage those girls, but to ridicule Rockefeller:

Acquisitiveness—the wish to possess as much as possible of goods, or the title to goods—is a motive which, I suppose, has its origin in a combination of fear with the desire for necessaries. I once befriended two little girls from Estonia, who had narrowly escaped death from starvation in a famine. They lived in my family, and of course had plenty to eat. But they spent all their leisure visiting neighbouring farms and stealing potatoes, which they hoarded. Rockefeller, who in his infancy had experienced great poverty, spent his adult life in a similar manner.¹²

A couple of years earlier, in 1948, Russell was concerned about Baltic refugees (or displaced persons), possibly those in Sweden, which is where Constance Malleson (Colette O'Niel¹³) lived then. Malleson hoped

¹⁰ Russell then asks: "What are we to think of this new doctrine of nationalism which has spread over the world?" ("Nationalism—Is it a Blessing or a Curse?", *Jewish Daily Forward*, 13 May 1928, p. E1).

^{II} "Government by Propaganda", in *These Eventful Years* (New York: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1924), 1: 380–5 (at 383).

¹² "What Desires Are Politically Important?" in *Les Prix Nobel en 1950* (Stockholm: Imprimerie Royale. P. A. Norstedt & Söner, 1951), pp. 259–70; *HSEP*, p. 161.

¹³ Colette O'Niel was the stage name of Lady Constance Malleson. She and Russell first met in 1916. Sometime lovers, they remained friends.

that Russell would sign a joint letter about Estonian and other Baltic refugees, intended for an English newspaper. In her unpublished book of letters, Malleson's editor states: "to her delight he approved her draft of the Baltic refugees letter, and was glad to sign it." ¹¹⁴

RUSSELL, THE BALTIC BARONS AND THE KEYSERLINGS

Before Russell visited Estonia he was personally acquainted with the Baltic German philosophers Count Hermann Keyserling (1880–1946) and his sister Comtesse Léonie Keyserling (1887–1945). The Keyserlings belonged to one of the oldest aristocratic families who came to Estonia from Germany after the Baltic crusade. In 1905, during the first Russian revolution, Count Keyserling lost his estate in Raikull, Estonia. Some years later, in 1908, he got the family estate back for the next ten years. After the second Russian revolution Estonia proclaimed its independence on 24 February 1918. At the end of the year, in November, Estonian land reform was legally initiated with the Land Ownership Reform Act and concluded next year with the Estonian Land Act (or Agrarian Law). According to these acts, the land belonging to estates (in the hands of Germans) was nationalized and sold to Estonian soldiers of the War of Independence and to the peasants. Count Keyserling became embittered and left Estonia in 1919. In Germany he founded the School of Wisdom at Darmstadt in 1920.

The personal contacts between Russell and the Keyserlings may have begun as early as 1903. In his *Autobiography* Keyserling recalls that he lived in Vienna and then Paris in 1903. From that place he made frequent trips to England. Keyserling continues his self-presentation:

In between I travelled often, struck up or continued personal relations with interesting spiritual personalities in Europe—so I met *Bergson* and *Simmel, Walther Rathenau, Gustave Le Bon, Max* and *Alfred Weber, Boutroux, F. C. S. Schiller, Bertrand Russell, Haldane, Balfour, Benedetto Croce....¹⁵*

¹⁴ Constance Malleson, "Letters to Bertrand Russell", typescript, RA3 REC. ACQ. 596, box 6.63. See Malleson's letter to Russell, 2: 98, and editor's comment, 2: 102. (J. Hampdon Jackson [author of *Estonia*] and the Duchess of Atholl were also involved in the joint letter, which has not come to light.—Ed.)

¹⁵ Count Hermann Keyserling, "Graf Hermann Keyserling", Raymund Schmidt, ed., *Die Philosophie der Gegenwart in Selbstdarstellungen*, Vol. 4 (Leipzig: Felix Meiner, 1923):

From the *Autobiography* it is not clear when and where Russell and Keyserling got together. While they might have met as early as 1903, when Keyserling visited England several times, but more likely it was close to 1911, when Russell's niece Karin Costelloe was an adult¹⁶ and whose mother and step-father, the Berensons, Keyserling knew. In his memoirs Keyserling recalls attending a lecture on memory in London at Russell's invitation. He greatly enjoyed how Russell chaired the event: Russell's introductory remarks and summaries were "intellectually stimulating and indescribably ironical".¹⁷ Then Keyserling decided to escape the confines of Europe by taking a long trip to the Far East—Ceylon, India, China, and Japan—and subsequently wrote *The Travel Diary of a Philosopher* (published in German, 1919).

Léonie Keyserling took her D.PHIL. degree from Heidelberg University in 1912 or 1913 and became professor of philosophy at the University of Shanghai. She wrote Russell in the middle of the war:

[crowned letterhead with printed address: Rayküll, Rappel, Estland] Russia August 30th 1916

Dear Mr. Russell

My brother and I have just read your book *Justice in War-Time* with the greatest possible admiration. [She continues her praise of the book, discusses international politics, and asks after Russell's writings since the book.] ...

My talks with you remain among my best English remembrances, how I should like to have one just now. [She then asks about Karin Costelloe.]¹⁸

In April 1919, when Keyserling escaped from Estonia, he wrote an

¹⁶ In a letter to Russell of 7 March 1925 Keyserling reminded him that they had met at Karin Costelloe's home before the war (RAI 710.051798).

^{99–125 (}at 107 and 111).

¹⁷ Hermann Keyserling, *Die Reise durch die Zeit*, Vol. 1: *Ursprünge und Entfaltungen*, (Innsbruck: Verlag der Palme, 1948): 215 ("*unbeschreiblich geistreich-ironische Vorstellungen und Zusammenfassungen*"). Keyserling's widow, Countess Goedela Keyserling-Bismarck, a granddaughter of Prince Otto von Bismarck, finished her husband's memoirs. The event may have been a meeting of the Aristotelian Society, of which Russell was President in 1911–13.

¹⁸ RAI 710.051800.

article, "Estonia's Future: the Land Question". ¹⁹ In the article, in which he appeals to the Allies, he argues that Estonian agriculture will go under as the result of the "Bolshevistic" expropriation of the baronic estates. This article possibly influenced Russell's attitude on the dispossession of the Estonian aristocrats. In his *History of Western Philosophy*, Russell, in discussing Locke's political philosophy, delivered a passage on property, where he (a nobleman himself) points out that in Estonia the aristocrats were dispossessed by the Russian revolution (*HWP*, p. 634). Locke, says Russell, "seems blandly unaware" that his model of peasant proprietorship "would be hardly possible without a bloody revolution." Whether we like it or not, these remarks imply that the Estonian agrarian reform was, after all, an agrarian revolution and, as such, a follow-up of the Russian revolution.

In reviewing the English translation of *The Travel Diary of a Philosopher* (1925) Russell referred to the dispossession of Estonian aristocrats, including Keyserling. The passage is already critical of the Baltic German aristocrats:

Until the aftermath of war dispossessed him, he was one of the German aristocratic landowners who formed a reactionary garrison in the Russian Baltic Provinces, now Esthonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. This position ensured on his part a neutrality of feeling in the war, together with a singular blend of German culture and the Asiatic conservatism of the old Russian autocracy.²⁰

Russell caricatured the old Baltic German viewpoint by means of a fictional character, Baron Schambok, who appears as a conspirator in a short story written when Russell was 81:

He looked back nostalgically to the days of the original Baltic Barons from whom he was descended. He remembered how they had introduced Teutonic civilization to the still pagan inhabitants of northern regions [i.e. the Estonians *et al.*]. The Teutonic Knights dwelt in his imagination as the shining champions of chivalry and Christendom in a dark, difficult land. Though he had been an exile since 1917, he still hoped: some turn of the wheel of fortune, so he dreamt, might restore his family and friends to their former greatness.²¹

²¹ "The Right Will Prevail or The Road to Lhasa" (1953), Fact and Fiction (London:

¹⁹ Published in *The Daily Telegraph*, 17 Sept. 1919, p. 7.

²⁰ "Count Keyserling Surveys the World", *The Calendar of Modern Letters*, 1 (July 1925): 395–8.

Count Keyserling was first and foremost a Baltic Baron, Russell pointed out in reviewing Keyserling's *Europe* (1928):

The share of the Baltic States [in Keyserling's character] gives the key to all the others. Keyserling is first and foremost a Baltic Baron. This means to say that his ancestors centuries ago formed part of a band of German freebooters who enslaved a semi-barbarous country to the east of Germany, and retained their position there after the country came under the dominion of the Tsar. The people over whom the Baltic Barons ruled were neither Russian nor German, and in their own territory these aristocrats represented quite genuinely culture as well as aristocracy, but they differed from the Germans of Germany in the same sort of way as did the Vizi-Gothic and Vandal kings of Spain and Africa in the time of the downfall of Rome. The difference consisted in a certain rank luxuriance due to emancipation from the typical German domination of *Pflicht* [Duty].²²

In his autobiography Keyserling returned to analyzing Russell's character, this time negatively: "Bertrand Russell is a fantastically sharp thinker and an ironist of great charm. But as a man he also does not [like Bergson] appear to be important; in essence he is nothing better than an intellectual renegade among aristocrats and [is] revolutionary for this very personal reason."²³

Although there are similarities in the thought of Russell and Keyserling—both were interested in the Orient, in education, and in marriage—they remain quite different. Russell is a logician, Keyserling a spiritualist and sometimes even a mystic; Russell's view on marriage is liberal, Keyserling's conservative.²⁴ Russell's opinion that Count Keyserling

Allen and Unwin, 1961), p. 168.

²² "Count Keyserling's Appraisal of Europe and Himself", *Jewish Daily Forward*, 5 Aug. 1928, pp. E1–2.

²³ Die Reise durch die Zeit, 1: 233 ("Bergson war ... geradezu unbedeutend... Bertrand Russell war ein phantastisch scharfer Denker und ein Ironiker von großem Charme. Aber als Mensch wirkte auch er nicht bedeutend; als Sein war er eigentlich nichts Besseres als ein intellektueller Renegat unter Aristokraten und aus diesem sehr persönlichen Grunde revolutionär").

²⁴ Cf., e.g. Russell, Marriage and Morals (London: Allen and Unwin, 1929) and Keyserling, ed., The Book of Marriage: a New Interpretation by Twenty-Four Leaders of Contemporary Thought (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1926). In the letter already cited, Keyserling invited Russell to contribute to this book. Russell noted: "I refused, as I did not consider myself an expert on how to make a success of marriage" (RAI 710.051799,

was a aristocratic Baltic Baron who ruled people who were neither Russian nor German is in contrast with the highly positive appraisal of Keyserling on the School of Wisdom website: "Count Keyserling is the first Western thinker to conceive and promote a planetary culture, beyond nationalism and cultural ethnocentrism, based on recognition of the equal value and validity of non-western cultures and philosophies." Russell, for his part, didn't much care for Keyserling's School of Wisdom—"a subject which he considers himself qualified to teach." 26

RUSSELL IN ESTONIA AND RUSSIA

Let us return to the main theme of this article. From 11 May to 15 June 1920 Bertrand Russell toured Russia with a joint delegation of the British Labour Party (including some members of the Independent Labour Party—henceforth ILP) and the trade unions, without being a member of any but the ILP.²⁷ He had left his mistress, Dora Black, behind in Paris, despite her own strong wish to see the new Russia. He was interested in Russia as a social experiment, writing that Lenin and Trotsky were the only two lamps of the world. For this, the Right condemned him. The stay in Russia, however, had a devastating effect on Russell's communist ideals, as he was confronted with the true face of Bolshevism. Meeting Lenin, Russell was struck by his intellectual limitations. After the trip into Russia Russell became an anti-communist, which brought him the contempt of the Left. For Russell, the best social order was *freedom*.

No sooner was Russell back from Russia than he wrote to his former mistress Lady Ottoline Morrell: "Bolshevism is a close tyrannical bureaucracy, with a spy system more elaborated and terrible than the Tsar's, and an aristocracy as insolent and unfeeling, composed of Americanized Jews." ²⁸

annotation of 1948/9).

²⁶ "Count Keyserling's Appraisal of Europe and Himself", p. E1.

²⁸ Russell's letter to Ottoline Morrell from the Continental Hotel in Stockholm, 25

²⁵ "Count Hermann Keyserling. Founder of the School of Wisdom", School of Wisdom Internet source, http://www.schoolofwisdom.com/count.html.

²⁷ Stephen White, "British Labour in Soviet Russia, 1920", *English Historical Review*, 109 (June 1994): 621–40. See also Dimitri von Mohrenschildt, "The Early American Observers of the Russian Revolution, 1917–1921", *Russian Review*, 3, no. 1 (autumn 1943): 64–74 (at 72–3).

On 20 April 1920 Russell had written to Ottoline Morrell: "If our Government gives me permission, I shall have to get visas from the Consulates of Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Esthonia, each of which will take ages" (*SLBR*, 2: 203). He got permission from the British Government to join the Russian mission on 21 April.²⁹ He got an Estonian visa on 23 April 1920.³⁰ He was able to leave England on 27 April 1920 and travelled to Russia via Stockholm and Estonia.³¹ The Russian visa, a *sine qua non* for a transit visa, was obtained by Russell in Stockholm immediately before leaving for the port city of Tallinn on 8 May 1920.³² He remained in Stockholm from 2 to 8 May. The delay was caused by the refusal of Maxim Litvinov, the Russian Deputy Commissar of Foreign Affairs, to grant Russell an entry to Russia. It is interesting to remember that Russell and Litvinov had shared imprisonment in Brixton jail, London.³³

Somehow the visa was obtained, so that on 9 May Russell and the delegation arrived in Tallinn. In his "Journal of Trip to Russia", Russell wrote: "May 9. Arrive Reval late. Lodged by Social Democrats in palace of former German Baron, now M.P's Club. Big dinner given by Communists" (Papers 15: 160). The editors have added a note to the effect that the Bolsheviks had turned a former private residence into a hotel

June 1920 (Auto., 2: 122).

²⁹ See *Papers* 15: xxxvii–xxxix and xc.

³⁰ Russell's passport is stamped with an "Esthonian Legation" visa: "Seen at Esthonian Legation in London. Good for journey to Esthonian Republic". Russell's passport for 1919–20 bears many stamps and endorsements. See also E. Mattisen, *Tartu rahu* [The Tartu Peace Treaty between Estonia and Soviet Russia in 1920] (Tallinn, 1988) p. 431.

³¹ See J. Zaidelson, "Rahvusvahelise töölisliikumise tegelaste transiit läbi Eesti Nõukogudemaale aastail 1919–1921" [Transit of the members of the international labour movement into Soviet Russia through Estonia in 1919–1921], in *Töid EKP ajaloo alalt* [On the history of the Estonian Communist Party], Vol. 5 (Tallinn, 1970): 210–23 (at 220). Zaidelson does not mention Russell in his article. His name is mentioned, together with a couple of references, in Mattisen, *Tartu rahu*, p. 431. The opinions on Russia and its politics upon his return from Russia that are ascribed to Russell by Mattisen do not tally with the facts. For the general background see Jüri Ant, *Eesti 1920. Iseseisvuse esimene rahuaasta* [Estonia 1920. The first independent year of peace] (Tallinn: Olion, 1990).

³² What seems to be the Soviet visa unaccountably bears the date 29 May 1920; it is in RA2 712. There are Soviet stamps on his passport, including the exit date of 15 June 1920.

³³ Russell spent nearly six months in prison for anti-war protest in 1918. Litvinov was detained in October the same year, and was set free in exchange for the British journalist Bruce Lockhart, who was an important British spy.

called *Petrograd*, while its previous owner was an anonymous German Baltic baron (15: 505).34 On the 10th Robert Williams of the Delegation spoke to a press conference, saying that the future of Estonia depended on three factors: Russia, England and Germany, and that Estonia should "coolly" play off one against the other.³⁵ Although the various parties in the Delegation were described, Russell was not mentioned directly.

In the evening of 10 May, after a concert by Chaliapin, 36 the company set out for Petrograd. Russell complains of "infinite delays and muddles" until they crossed the Russian frontier in the afternoon of 11 May. This brought a change to a fast, specially decorated train *de luxe*, receptions, speeches and a sumptuous dinner. Bashkirian guards in their beautiful uniforms provided a picturesque background to the delegation being met by the Soviet Trade Union leader Melichansky. The company arrived in Petrograd on 12 May at 3 a.m.³⁷

Emma Goldman, an anarchist, wrote in her book My Disillusionment in Russia that "[t]he British Mission was entertained royally with theatres, operas, ballets, and excursions. Luxury was heaped upon them while the people slaved and went hungry. The Soviet Government left nothing undone to create a good impression and everything of a disturbing nature was kept from the visitors."38

- 34 The Club and the Hotel Petrograd were distinct. Local research has turned up no Baltic Barons associated with ownership of the Hotel Petrograd. (Thanks to Kalmer Mäeorg of the Tallinn City Archives.) In the report referred to in note 35, the Delegation is said to be lodged in the Club of the Estonian Constituent Assembly. The Russian trade mission to Estonia was situated in Hotel Petrograd. The Russians invited the Labour Delegation to switch to the hotel, but they politely declined the offer.
- 35 H.S., "Interview mit der englischen Arbeiterdelegation", Revaler Bote, no. 103 (11 May 1920): 1–2. Russell is not mentioned directly. Younger members of the Delegation, it is said, must wait their time for their role in politics to become notable.
- ³⁶ Feodor Chaliapin (1873–1938), Russian opera singer, the most famous bass in the first half of the twentieth century. The concert took place at the Estonia Concert Hall in Tallinn.
- ³⁷ "Journal of Trip to Russia", Papers 15: 160, 176-7; also The Practice and Theory of Bolshevism, Pt. 1, Chap. 2, 1st p.
- ³⁸ Emma Goldman (1869–1940) was a Lithuanian-born feminist and anarcho-communist. She emigrated to the United States at seventeen and was later deported to Russia, where she witnessed the results of the Russian revolution. Chapter 10, "The British Labour Mission", of My Disillusionment in Russia (Garden City and New York: Doubleday, Page, 1923) is cited from the Libertarian community and organizing resource,

On 14 May the Estonian Ambassador to Finland (and later to the UK), Oskar Kallas, received a telegram from the Estonian Foreign Ministry, reading as follows:

A delegation of the British Labour Party has travelled through recently. The local British representatives had no idea of their coming, neither had we. Bolsheviks' carriages, however, had been waiting for them in Jamburg [now Kingisepp in the Russian Federation] for days. Their return is planned through Estonia, or maybe Finland. Official contact is not in our Government's interests.³⁹

Returning from Russia, Russell crossed the Russian-Estonian border on 15/16 June, arriving in Tallinn at 5 a.m.,⁴⁰ on the day following the Estonian Constituent Assembly's adoption of its first Constitution. The delegation soon left for Sweden and home. Russell's latest biographer does not realize that he stayed behind with Clifford Allen (Monk, 1: 583). By 25 June Russell was finally accommodated in the Continental Hotel, Stockholm. With due allowance for a voyage from Estonia to Sweden, we get a full week for Estonia. Other Labour delegates took their leave from Moscow's Nikolaev station on 17 June, left Tallinn on 19 June and travelled back to London via Sweden.⁴¹

A British military attaché for the Baltic States, Robert Blundell Goodden, wrote to Russell from Tallinn on 14 August 1920 to say he had just received copies of the London weekly, *The Nation*, containing four articles written by Russell on his Russian trip, later incorporated into *The Practice and Theory of Bolshevism*. In this letter Goodden pointed out that Russell's impartiality was in striking contrast to Charles Roden Buxton's article "The Narva Waiting Room" in the same number of the *Nation*. Buxton's article seemed to Goodden "merely obsessed".⁴²

Buxton was joint secretary with physician Leslie Haden Guest of the British Delegation into Russia. "The Refreshment Room at Narva" is a good period piece and evokes images of the plentiful produce and other

http://libcom.org/library/emma-goldman.

³⁹ Estonian State Archives, deposited archive 957-II-405-II, 12.

⁴⁰ The final entry of his Journal reads "June 16. Reval, 5 a.m." (Papers 15: 170).

⁴¹ See White, "British Labour in Soviet Russia, 1920", p. 633.

⁴² Goodden to Russell, 14 Aug. 1920, RAI 710.050345. The true title of Buxton's article was "The Refreshment Room at Narva", *The Nation*, 27 (31 July 1920): 554–5.

goods available in Estonia, as compared with Soviet Russia, which Buxton has just exited. Then he contrasts a recent trial of communists in Estonia with the opposite in Russia, and how Western reporting of the one is distinct from the reporting of the other. His sympathies are clearly with those who are solidifying the revolution in Russia against the hostilities engendered by the West. This article shows the contrast in consumer goods that Russell must have enjoyed as well when he emerged into Estonia at Narva and specially Tallinn. Russell remarks briefly that Buxton became "pro-Bolsh" in Russia (*Papers* 15: 167).

ILLNESS OF CLIFFORD ALLEN AND DORA BLACK'S VISIT

While the British delegation was touring the land of the Bolsheviks, it so happened that Clifford Allen, who represented the ILP, was taken seriously ill with pneumonia when on board a steamer plying down the Volga River. His condition worsened so that Russian doctors were afraid he might die in a few days. With great difficulty Russell obtained permission to leave Russia together with Allen.

Clifford Allen (1889–1939), later Lord Allen of Hurtwood, was an eminent pacifist and socialist. Allen and Russell had become friends during World War 1 and shared a London flat in 1919–20. Allen's attitude to Nazi Germany was controversial. Shocked by Hitler's anti-Semitism, he nevertheless worked on developing a British-German bond which, he hoped, might prevent the outbreak of war.⁴³

Yakov Mikhailovich Sverdlov, the Soviet Russian minister of transport, who accompanied the tour, personally arranged the transport of the sick man and the few people who had joined him, by a boat from Astrakhan to Saratov, then a direct train to Tallinn, in a carriage that had once belonged to the Tsar's daughters. As for Russell's impressions of Astrakhan, he described the place later as one most similar to hell (*Auto.*, 2: 103).

Travelling through Moscow they had a problem with Georgi Vasilyevich Chicherin, 44 who refused to let them leave before Allen had been

⁴³ On Lord Allen see Joyce M. Bellamy and John Saville, eds., *Dictionary of Labour Biography*, Vol. 2 (London: Macmillan, 1974): 1–11.

⁴⁴ Georgi Vasilyevich Chicherin (1872–1936) had been the Peoples' Commissar of Foreign Affairs for Soviet Russia since 1918.

examined by two Soviet doctors. Things were accelerated, though, by Chicherin having once been a friend of Russell's uncle, Rollo Russell.

In Tallinn Allen was taken to the Diakonnisse Nursing Home, where they found the American Red Cross. The doctor was very pessimistic at first, but in two days he reported that the immediate danger was over. Allen's subsequent recovery was quick. Allen was taken care of by an English-speaking nurse, who was even prepared to accompany the patient to Britain, if necessary.⁴⁵

The Estonian authorities considered Russell *persona non grata*. But he seemed hardly to be disturbed by that. When not philosophizing or thinking on politics, his mind was often occupied with women. In his autobiography he mentions that Tallinn was the site of his first, accidental meeting with Mrs. Stan Harding, who had enthusiastically set out for the Bolshevik land. The enthusiasm, though, was short-lived as Mrs. Harding was soon arrested by the Bolsheviks. She owed her release only to the special efforts of the British Government. Russell provided the following description of her situation in a handwritten annotation on the 2 May 1921 telegram she sent him: "I met Mrs. Stan Harding at Reval, as I was coming out of Russia and she was going in. She was full of enthusiastic admiration, which I tried to diminish. The moment she got to Petrograd they clapped her into gaol and kept her there eight months. Only diplomatic pressure at the highest level secured her release." 47

Throughout his journey Russell had been thinking of his mistress Dora Black. Unfortunately Russia was blockaded, and he could neither write nor send a telegram to his beloved. Back in Tallinn he began tele-

⁴⁷ Filed at RAI 710.050716.

⁴⁵ Russell and L. Haden Guest (who, together with Mrs. Snowden, accompanied Clifford Allen to Tallinn) published a report dated 2 July on Allen's illness and final cure in the medical journal *The Lancet*, 199 (17 July 1920): 159–60 (see *Papers* 15: 171–3). The Diakonisse Nursing Home's building is still in use in Tallinn. Only some accessory buildings and the church have been demolished. It is interesting to note that in the Soviet time there was the so-called exclusive State Fourth Hospital in Tallinn for the top communists.

⁴⁶ See *Auto.*, 2: 109. Mrs. Stan Harding was a British journalist. Some years later Russell wrote an introduction to her book *The Underworld of State* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1925). See also *Correspondence with the Russian Soviet Government Respecting the Imprisonment of Mrs. Stan Harding in Russia* (London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1922).

graphing at once, but to his distress, all his telegrams remained unanswered. One of Russell's biographers mentions that he "telegraphed to Dora Black from the port of Reval on the Gulf of Bothnia".⁴⁸ Russell finally left Tallinn on 23 June.⁴⁹

In Stockholm Russell learnt from friends that Dora had been in the same city, and he immediately renewed his search. To his frustration, he accidentally heard from a Finn that Dora Black was on her way to Russia, as full of ardent enthusiasm as ever. Having left Stockholm just a few days before, she had chosen a route through the Russian polar port of Murmansk, not Estonia. ⁵⁰ Russell's attention was short-lived, though, and stepping out of the train in London he fell into the arms of Colette, where he stayed for quite a while.

Back in England, Russell received an invitation to China to lecture for a year in Beijing University. He decided to go with Dora Black or not at all. To his surprise he soon began receiving mail from Dora, still aglow with enthusiasm for Russia. That enthusiasm stuck to her for life. Now Russell was at a loss how to persuade Dora to leave Russia and accompany him to China. Due to the blockade, he could not write to her.

It suddenly occurred to Russell that he knew a Quaker in Tallinn who used to frequent Russia with the Quaker welfare mission. He spent several pounds on a telegram to Arthur Watts, asking him to find Dora and hand her his letter. And lo and behold! Arthur Watts managed to track Dora down in that enormous country.

Arthur Watts had written to Russell during the war. In 1919 he had left England, joining a Quaker mission to Russia, whence he never returned. According to his first impression, Russia had fewer food supplies than Germany, Poland or the Baltic provinces, but they were better distributed. Although Russian towns were suffering from an acute shortage of food, Russian children looked healthier and more promising to him than their peers in Germany or Poland. When the Quaker mission

⁴⁸ Clark, p. 380. The Gulf of Bothnia is located between Finland and Sweden, Tallinn (Reval) is located on the Gulf of Finland.

⁴⁹ Russell's passport has attached to it a handwritten certificate date 21 June 1920 by Dr. Harry Goldberg (Innere & Kinderkrankheiten, Reval,—Langstrasse 49. Sprechstunden 9–11 and 5–7).

⁵⁰ Dora Black had planned to enter Russia via Estonia. She wrote Russell on 3 June from Stockholm that she expected to find in Reval answers to a telegram that her friend, G. Ström, had sent Russell on her behalf (RA2 710.103889).

was over, Watts was employed as a factory engineer. The highlight of his career was the day his photograph was hung up on the wall in the factory club, together with a legend saying that he had saved the land of Soviets 282,000 roubles. When Watts retired, the Soviet Government gave him a plot in Zagorsk, near Moscow, where he could plant some fruit trees.⁵¹

Dora Black found that to return via Murmansk was impossible. However, things did not look much better for returning by Estonia, as the required visa could be obtained only from the Estonian Consulate, where many Russians had been queuing up for weeks in their haste to leave the country, and besides—not everyone was granted Estonian transit. So Dora turned to Arthur Watts for advice and help. Watts gave her a letter to be presented at the Consulate and to be returned to him. As instructed, Dora produced the letter, having not the slightest idea of its language or contents, and showed it to a young Consulate secretary. Much to her surprise, the secretary exclaimed, "A-ah, Pitka!" and showed her on. The Consul, in turn, merely glanced at the letter, uttered another "A-aa-h, Pitka!" and stamped Dora's passport without a single question.

Later, Dora Black became the second of the four wives of Bertrand Russell. Russell divorced his first wife only after his trip to China in 1921. For Dora, Bertrand and their children "Pitka" remained a magic formula often jokingly repeated. Many years later Dora happened to read in the London *Evening Standard* that the prominent Estonian businessman General Pitka had passed away. She guessed that Pitka had had business relations with the Quakers, and conveyed goods to Russia. Evidently Pitka had given Arthur Watts a letter in Estonian asking that all assistance be provided the bearer.⁵²

⁵¹ For Quakers and Arthur Watts see Richenda C. Scott, *Quakers in Russia* (London: Michael Joseph, 1964). Jack Sutters (American Friends Service Committee) wrote to me on 25 March 1994: "It is quite true Quakers sent most of their relief supplies to Russia through the port of Reval in the 1920s. Arthur Watts was a well known representative of the Quakers, and helped to negotiate an agreement with the new Soviet government at the time. This in turn permitted Quakers to function in Russia for some years before they were asked to leave."

⁵² See Dora Russell, *The Tamarisk Tree*, Vol. 1: *My Quest for Liberty and Love* (London: Virago, 1977), Chap. 6, "Bolshevik Russia", pp. 83–105 (at 99–100). Admiral Pitka was born in 1872. His year (after 1944) and cause of death are not known. There are at

Another fact of interest is that when Dora Black arrived in Russia, illegally, via Murmansk and without a visa, she went on to Petrograd, where she was taken to the comfortably furnished Astoria Hotel. At the reception there worked a Comrade Kingissepp, a woman who had access to one of the few working telephone lines of the city. She was married to the Estonian communist leader Viktor Kingissepp (1888–1922). At the Astoria Dora Black met John Reed, the famous author of *Ten Days that Shook the World*. Thanks to Reed (who also had travelled to Russia through Estonia⁵³) Dora Black gained the Bolsheviks' confidence and thus she was free to move around in Russia, visa or no visa.

On her way back she made another stop at Petrograd, which was a little prolonged by her wish to meet the Moscow delegation to the Third Comintern Congress and to hear Lenin speak. In Tallinn she found a room at an address which had been given to her in Russia and picked up telegrams and letters from Russell at the British Mission, which was his postal address in Estonia. Having found a direct boat to England, she was soon in London and able to accompany her Bertie to China.

What, then, was Bertrand Russell doing in Tallinn for a whole week? Nursing Allen? But that was definitely the job of the English-speaking nurse and doctors at the Diaconisse Nursing Home. Writing? None of his publications can be identified as having been composed in Estonia, though possibly he updated his Journal there. Enjoying the favours of Mrs. Stan Harding? We have no evidence. All we can be sure of is that he was pondering the political ramifications of what he had observed in Russia. But it is likely that Russell stayed in Tallinn because Allen was in need not only of nursing but also of numerous and complex arrange-

least thirteen legends on his passing away. See Voldemar Pinn, Kolmteist legendi admiral Johan Pitka lahkumisest. Punane terror ja Läänemaa. Täienduste esimene osa [Thirteen legends on Admiral Johan Pitka's passing away. Red terror and the Western Estonia. First part of the additions] (Haapsalu, 1991).

⁵³ For the connections of John Reed and Estonia see J. Zaidelson, "Rahvusvahelise töölisliikumise tegelaste transiit läbi Eesti Nõukogudemaale aastail 1919–1921", pp. 215–17.

⁵⁴ He seems to have had a second address, for Dora addressed one envelope to him "c/o Goukovsky, Reval". The envelope has an Estonian postal cancellation dated 16 July 1920. Her letter is dated 29 June (RA2 710.103891), and she has heard that Russell might still be in Reval. In fact, he had left six days before she wrote. Her friend, Maud K. Burt, had forwarded Russell's letter to Dora postmarked Reval about 20 May, and various telegrams after Russell left Reval (7 July 1920, RA1 710.047924).

ments, especially for his trip home, and Russell proved to be very competent in such things. After four days he cabled Colette that Allen was out of danger and that he (Russell) was sailing "Wednesday". That day was 23 June 1920, which is when he did sail from Tallinn. Martin Gilbert has noted: "At Reval, the Esthonian capital, Allen was looked after by nuns who could speak no English. Haden-Guest, Bertrand Russell and Mrs. Snowden returned to England. Russell left thirty pounds with the British Consul⁵⁷ 'to be expended on behalf of Mr. Clifford Allen'." Russell's concern for the well-being of his friend continued. He wrote Allen a few days later from the Grand Hotel, Kristiania:

We leave here tonight, Bergen probably Monday, so we hope to get home Wednesday. There is no parcels post to Reval, but I found an Italian Tovarish just starting from Stockholm and gave him a parcel of oranges for you.... I did not engage a nurse in Sweden, as you are not going by Sweden, but I will send one from England if you so desire, tho' the one you have was only engaged on the understanding that she would do the journey. I don't think one from England is likely to be any better, for tho' she would be better when you reach England she would be worse at the Reval end.... I hope you are getting on well. Goodbye.

(Russell to Allen, 26 June 1920, RA3 REC. ACQ. 16⁵⁹)

Although Russell's meetings with the Bolsheviks and their leader Lenin had frustrated him to the point of wishing he would never meet

⁵⁵ Russell to Malleson, 20 June 1920, RA3 REC. ACQ. 596.200666.

⁵⁶ Opposite the title-page of *Papers* 15 is a photograph captioned "Russell, Ethel Snowden, Leslie Haden Guest, summer 1920". It is possible that the picture was taken in Tallinn. The brick building behind the company is very typical of Tallinn, especially the limestone basement. However, the photograph is also reproduced in Monk (1: illus. 62), where the caption asserts that it was taken in England after the trio's return.

⁵⁷ Goodden refers to him as Consul Leslie in the letter I quoted from 14 August 1920. Russell seems to refer to him on another occasion: "The present writer was in Russia in 1920, in company with a Labour Delegation, who were received as other Governments receive princes, and were everywhere fêted. On returning from Russia, we found it universally believed, even by British Consuls in capitals near Russia, that we had all been put in prison" ("Government by Propaganda", p. 382).

58 Plough My Own Furrow: the Story of Lord Allen of Hurtwood as told through his Writings and Correspondence, ed. Martin Gilbert (London: Longmans, 1965), p. 144.

⁵⁹ Portions of this letter where they concern Russell's hunt for Dora are quoted in Clark, pp. 380–1.

those people again (with the exception of Maksim Gorki, who had seemed to Russell an extremely nice and humane person), he still used the ROSTA bureau⁶⁰ in Tallinn to send Lenin two of his books with personal inscriptions.⁶¹

As we know, Bertrand Russell was an undesirable to the Estonian administration. What about the interests of the local intellectuals? What was the dominant mentality of Tallinn in 1920, between the Tartu Peace Treaty and the Russian-Latvian Peace Treaty, when the Estonian capital experienced a massive transit of refugees from Russia (legal, of course), while Russia was visited and revisited by an endless array of people driven by curiosity and a thirst for adventure? Was there any discernible amount of Estonian spirit in Tallinn, or were the intellectuals (mostly physicians) still German-speaking and German-minded? We do not have the answers.

As for Russell, he must have talked at least to the doctors at the Diakonisse Nursing Home and Dr. Goldberg, who signed his passport. Maybe he spent his time in the company of British or American representatives, such as R. B. Goodden, drinking vodka in its old Tsarist quality? A meeting with the local social democrats, or the communists, who had, after all, accommodated and fed him before his leaving for Russia, is not ruled out either. Or was he just sitting at the port, desperately telegraphing to Paris, in the vain hope of contacting Dora? It cannot be that all local trace of him has vanished.⁶²

FINAL REMARKS

After Russell had returned to London he encountered the British cabinet minister H. A. L. Fisher,⁶³ who used their conversation to draft a secret memorandum, "The Russian Situation". One of Fisher's questions was

⁶⁰ ROSTA (*Rossijskoe telegrafnoe agentstvo*)—the Russian Telegraph Agency, founded in 1918.

⁶¹ V. I. Lenin. Biografičeskaja xronika [Biographical chronicle of V. I. Lenin], Vol. 9 (VI. 1920–I. 1921) (Moscow, 1978): 13. Here it states that Lenin got Russell's books from Tallinn after 12 June, through a ROSTA co-worker. To be more exact, he could have received them only after 16 June, which was the day of Russell's arrival in Tallinn.

⁶² Perhaps one should search in old non-Estonian newspapers, or among the papers of the Estonian Secret Police (which are in the State Archives).

⁶³ Herbert Albert Laurens Fisher (1865–1940), British historian and public servant.

whether Russell thought the Soviet Government would ever acquiesce in the loss of Tallinn or in the independence of Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, or some other small States carved out of the body of Imperial Russia. Russell answered that he believed that they were quite prepared to accept the existence and independence of these States, because they took the view that these small States would necessarily be penetrated by Russian influence and, if they ever became troublesome, could easily be swallowed up by their powerful neighbour.⁶⁴

Russell later resisted the injustice of German and Soviet domination of the Baltics, then looming in the 1930s and 1940s:

And even if we were the victors in such a war [as the next world war], we should lose about half our population, and should probably have either a Fascist Government or complete anarchy. If, on the other hand, we allow Germany to absorb Austria, the turn of the Baltic States will come next.⁶⁵

During the Second World War he wrote that "The success of the Moscow Conference suggests that the Western Powers have acquiesced in Russia's claims to the Baltic States and considerable parts of Poland." He continued the same year on the Polish problem: "There is no completely just solution of the Polish territorial problem, but it is of the sort to which diplomats are accustomed, and no doubt some compromise settlement will be arrived at. The same may be said of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia." When the Baltics were conquered, Russell saw the situation for what it was:

They [the Russians] say that imperialism is an outcome of private capitalism and since private capitalism has been abolished in Russia, there cannot be imperialism in that country. This argument is scholastic and à priori; the facts refute it. Russia has annexed Eastern Poland and the Baltic Provinces, has established subservient governments in Poland, Bulgaria, and Rumania, and is demanding Port Arthur and a half share of the Chinese Eastern Railway. If this is not imperialism, what is?⁶⁸

⁶⁴ H. A. L. Fisher, "Cabinet Report [1920]", an appendix in *Papers* 15: 422–5 (at 424).

^{65 &}quot;The New Alliance", The Sunday Referee, 15 Sept. 1935, p. 4.

⁶⁶ "Our World After the War—A Plan for International Action", *The New Leader*, New York, 26, no. 48 (27 Nov. 1943): 5, 7.

⁶⁷ "The Russian Realities", Common Sense, 12 (Oct. 1943): 351-4.

^{68 &}quot;What Should Be British Policy towards Russia?", Forward, Glasgow, 39, no. 39

Some years later (in 1955), at an international press conference on "Atomic Energy", Bruce Miller, an Australian political scientist, elaborated on a question he had posed to Russell with an example about the invasion of Estonia (and its incorporation in the USSR). The way in which the communists put it, he said, was that there had been an upsurge of the Estonian people against oppression and that the Soviet State simply helped them. Russell answered: "Yes, I think, Mr. Miller, you are quite right about the past" (*Papers* 28: 377). Half a century has passed from this press conference, and Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania—three out-of-the-way countries—are again independent States in a safer world, where freedom is the basis of everything. 69

(29 Sept. 1945): 4.

⁶⁹ Versions of my earlier article on this subject were published in *Looming*, I (1996): 140–2, and in *Ajalooline Ajakiri*, no. I/108 (2000): 89–96, both in Estonian. I thank Ms. Tiina Randviir, Estonian Institute, Tallinn, and Ms. Sirje Ainsaar, Institute of the Estonian Language, Tallinn, for reading the manuscript and correcting my English. I also thank two anonymous referees for very useful comments, the Editor for suggesting valuable references, Sheila Turcon for proofreading, and Richard Schmitt for revising the translation on page 63 from Count Keyserling.