CHAPTER – I

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN ESTONIA
Estonia is the smallest state in the Baltic region whose entire territory is around 18,370 square miles. It is bounded in the north by the Gulf of Finland and in the West by the Baltic Sea. The Estonians are of Fenno-Ugrian origin and are linguistically closely related to the Finns\(^1\). Historically, it belonged to Scandinavian culture due to early colonial rule, but 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 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. Before the advent of Gorbachev, Estonian concept of freedom during Soviet period had typical characteristics of getting support from the western world. Therefore, political developments in Estonia could be properly analyzed within the framework of entire colonial history of this region.

Estonia's struggle for independence during the twentieth century was in large part of a reaction to nearly seven hundred years of foreign rule. The most unfortunate part of the history of Estonia is that it had to spend more time under slavery and colonial yokes of different European powers under its own sovereignty. It is interesting to note that different colonial powers tried to colonize this region by Christianising it. Between 1030 and, 1192 Estonia had to repeal thirteen separate campaigns just by Russians. The Estonians defended themselves with success, so that at the beginning of the thirteenth century they were in no way dependent upon the Russians\(^2\). The Danes and Swedish made both peaceful and forcible attempts to Christianise the Estonian people but did not succeed, at least in the beginning. It further reveals: 'the German merchants, after re-founding Lubeck in 1158, started from this base to penetrate the commercial centers in Estonia. They soon saw the advantage that could be obtained from

---

Christianizing the Estonian peoples. This religious interest was shared by Rome, and in 1193, the Pope proclaimed a crusade against the Estonian heathens. After small scale expeditions, Bishop Albert landed in 1200 at the mouth of the River Dvina (Duna) with 23 ships and 500 soldiers.

In 1201, the mart of Riga was founded and the next year a military order of knights was established. Thus began the permanent German colonization of this area. The region of the first German foothold was inhabited by the Livonians who were finally subjected in 1206. It is also said that due to certain rivals Bishop Albert could not get proper support from Germany to conquer northern Estonia as southern Estonia had already been captured by Germans in 1218. Following a shrewd diplomatic move, Bishop Albert reached an agreement with Valdemar 11, king of Denmark, enabling the later to land in northern Estonia in 1219, where after the defeat of Estonians, the castle was built which gave its name to the later capital of Estonia, Tallinn. In Estonian, "Taani linn" means "Danish Castle". The Germans called it Reval, a transcription of the ancient Estonian name for the surrounding district, Ravala.

The 13th century marked the beginning of Estonia's struggle against conquerors under the pretext Christianization, Swedes, Danes, the German Order of the Knights (later the Teutonic Order of the Knights) and Russians. After three decades of struggle in 1227, Estonia was conquered and divided up by the Teutonic Order, bishops and Danes and the people were Christianized and colonized. Despite attempts to restore independence, Estonia was divided among three domains, (the Livonian Order, the Bishops of Tartu and Saane-Laane and Denmark). The Teutonic Order ruled over a century after the Danish crown sold its sovereignty as a result of major revolt in 1343-1345 in which for nearly two centuries that Order remained the sole ruler of Estonia. A complete feudalization of the country took place and justice was carried out in the feudal estates by the vassals themselves. The economic situation of the

---

4 Ibid.
peasants deteriorated with their legal position. Although the Estonians remained nominally owners of their land and property, ownership of the land was burdened with gradually increasing taxes and obligations. Later on, the vassals began to found estates for themselves and the peasants were dispossessed their land. Livonia, the territory of Teutonic Order was bordered by two great powers- the Polish-Lithuanian State and the Dutchy of Moscow. When Ivan IV, "The Terrible", became Czar of Moscow, he took the offensive against Livonia in 1558. The political deterioration of Old Livonia had gone so far that by 1560 this state had begun to disintegrate. The Russians conquered the eastern and central part of Estonia, the western and northern part was conquered by the Kings of Denmark and Sweden and the southern part of Livonia submitted to Sigismund II August, King of the Polish-Lithuanian State.

The dissolution of the Teutonic Order in the 16th century precipitated struggles between Swedes, Poland, and Russia, for control of Estonia: events were resolved in 1629 by the treaty of Altmark which gave Estonia to Sweden, but left the resident German nobility with their privileges in the local governments. In the interest of the Swedish rulers, the power of the aristocracy was somewhat curbed, the administration of justice was nationalized, and the taxation of the peasants was regulated. The freedom of movement of the peasants, which had increased during the wars, was again restricted. The peasants, however, began to understand that it was possible to be protected by the state. A basis was formed for Estonian-language schools were established and Tartu University was founded in 1632.

In 1643-45 Sweden acquired also the islands Saaremaa and Muhumaa by defeating Denmark. In 1680, manorial estates were returned to the State (reduction) in the interests of the State treasury. This increased the discontent of the local Baltic-German aristocracy. Sweden’s aspiration

---

6 Ibid.
to dominion of the Baltic ultimately proved unsustainable, however during the great northern war of 1700-1721, control over Estland and Livland passed to Peterine Russia, which swiftly reiterated noble privileges through the Ostzeiskii Zakone of 1721. The Northern War, nevertheless, had positive results for the Baltic nobility. In 1710 Tallinn, Riga, Pärnu and the nobility of Estonia and Livonia surrendered voluntarily to Russia. In 1721, with the Nystad Peace Treaty, Estonia became part of Russia.

During the Russian period, the country retained its provincial autonomy which remained valid until the Russification of the last decades of the 19th century. In 1802, the University of Tartu was reopened and soon it became one of the most liberal universities in the Russian Empire, it also had a considerable influence on the cultural life of the Baltic Germans and helped to prepare a break-through in the cultural self-consciousness of the peasants that was to come in the second half of the century. The reforms of 1816 and 1819 abolished serfdom in Estonia and the personal freedom of the peasants was granted. In 1887, Russian was made the language of instruction since no Estonian children understood Russian. Russification brought the replacement of the old school masters. Russification was also pursued a series of reforms in the judicial system and the police department.

During the period of Russification, only two kinds of organizations were allowed. They had to be either farmers or temperance associations. As a result, the temperance movement was used as the vehicle through which the Estonians enacted the revival of national activities like general cultural activity and adult education. In 1900, the temperance associations were able to setup a central organization which advised and supported their work and also the farmers associations were able to organize national congresses in 1899 and 1905. One of the most promising ventures, especially in rural areas, was the co-operative movement. The first consumers and dairy co-operatives were started in 1898, and then credit

---

8 Ibid.
and saving banks in 1902. The co-operative movement gradually spread to several other fields of economic activity. A major setback to this favourable development was caused by the Russian revolution of 1905. By 1904, an illegal Estonian Socialist party had been founded and illegal groups also existed in larger cities which belonged to all-Russian Socialist party.10

Although it would appear that the ground work had been laid in preparation for the Russian revolution but in Estonia, some peculiar developments occurred in that period. One of these was a congress of people’s representatives from the southern part of Estonia, all cities, communities and organizations could send their delegates, and about 800 gathered in Tartu on November 27, 1905. The congress split immediately into radical and liberal wings and each holding its separate meetings and voting on its own resolutions. The liberals, led by Tonisson claimed that there should be democratic elections, abolitions of the privileges of the German nobility and warned against violence. On the other side, the radicals called for the revolutionary councils to take over all local administrations. The result was that the liberals who by that time had organized themselves into the first Estonian Political Party, disassociates themselves from the revolution and started to oppose the activities of the radicals.11

During that time, a number of manor houses were burnt down by raiding parties consisting of workers who were assisted in many places by the local population. These terrorist activities were followed by the proclamation of martial-law in Estonia. Martial law in Estonia was maintained until 1908. Political activity was revived in 1910 when Konstantin Pats and several others, who had escaped into exile, could return. Agriculture was modernized, co-operative enterprises flourished, and the number of Estonian industry, shipping and commerce grew

10 Europa World Year Book, op.cit, p. 1321.
steadily, also the number of Estonians receiving higher education rose sharply. Most of the practical groundwork for making for making of an independent Estonian Republic possible was laid during this period.

The Russian February Revolution in 1917 created an opportunity to realize the long cherished hope of uniting the entire area inhabited by Estonians into one autonomous administrative unit. An organization founded for the Estonian province was called “Estonian Union”. Representatives of sub-committees and chapters of both organizations met in Tartu between March 11 and 13 and worked out for a proposal for autonomy. When the proposal was presented to the Russian Provisional Government, a backing for its success was organized in Petrograd where on March 26, about 40,000 Estonians took part in a mass demonstration. Jaan Poska, the Mayor of Tallinn was appointed commissar of Estonia and on July 1, as commissar he opened the session of the temporary National Council, which came to be known as the “Diet”. On October 11, Otto Strandman was elected speaker of the Diet and Konstantin Pats, chairman of Executive Committee. In November 1917, the Estonian Diet, constituted by democratic elections, declared itself the supreme authority of the country, deciding to break away from Russia in accordance with the Soviet Government’s declaration of the right of self-determination to all peoples of the Russian Empire.

The independence of Estonia was formally declared on February 24, 1918, on the eve of the arrival of German troops who occupied the country in connection with the German-Russian peace talks. After the defeat of Germany by the western powers, the Soviet government included Estonia on November 28, 1918, under the banner of a Soviet Estonian government. Having assumed its duties on November 11, 1918, the Estonian provisional government organized the military defense of the country. In January 1919, when the Russian had two-thirds of the country and were within twenty miles of the capital, the Estonians counter attacked across

---

the whole front and the counter attack was an immediate and complete success. During the early period of the war, Estonia received substantial aid from the British and Finns.

In May 1919, a new threat to Estonia’s independence emerged. A force consisting of German mercenaries and Baltic Germans fought to convert Estonia into a German colony. After the liquidation of the German threat, new complications arose through the information of the white Russian North-Western Army, which aimed to liberate Russia from the Bolshevik power. Some of its leaders openly declared that their aim was restoration of Russian empire within its previous borders. After it was defeated by the Bolshevik armies, it retreated behind the Estonians line of defense and was disbanded by the Estonians.

Despite all difficulties, the Estonian Government conducted elections to the Constituent Assembly in the middle of a difficult war. The elections took place from April 5 to 7, 1919, under which Socialists got 48 mandates of a total of 120, the leftist bourgeois Labour Party 30 mandates, and the Liberal Party 25 mandates. The right wing Farmers Party, which had been the largest in the Diet, recovered only eight representatives to the Constituent Assembly. The Assembly, which started its session on April 23, replaced the Government of Pats, who belonged to the Farmers Party, with that of Otto Stran Imman’s leader of the Labour Party. As its next step, the Assembly passed a special declaration of independence adopted by all but the representatives of the Russian and German minorities. This was deemed necessary to conform to the proclamation of Estonia as an independent Republic.

A Bill for Provisional Government Order was passed on June 4, 1919 legalizing the installment of regular governments. With these measures out of the way, the Assembly could devote all its attention to the important land question. The Land Reform Bill of October 10 was of

---

paramount importance. Generations of Estonians had demanded for the right to own land and the demands of more than half of the population could no longer be ignored. The Bill provided that all large estates and farms, representing 58 per cent of the total cultivable land in Estonia, be distributed first to the soldiers at the front, and then to the widows and children of Estonian soldiers killed in the battle for independence.\textsuperscript{15}

After the peace of February 1920, the Constituent Assembly devoted itself to the elaboration of the Constitution of the Republic. This Constitutional Bill was passed on June 15, and came into force on December 20, 1920. Estonians had demonstrated their ability to set up a new state and to defend it against foreign aggression. At the end of 1918, a delegation had been sent to Paris, the site of the Peace Conference. The delegation found the circumstances rather unfavorable. The main obstacle was the White Russian policy, demanding that all questions concerning the territories of the Russian Empire (in the limits of 1914), with the exception of Poland could be solved only with the consent of the Russian people. The Estonian delegation presented a memorandum on March 25, 1919, stating that the Estonian people having proclaimed independence on the basis of the right of peoples to self-determination could in no way consider the settlement of Estonia's future status as depending upon acquiescence of the Russian people. The Estonian people possessing the same right of self-determination applicable to all other civilized nations, had created the de facto independence of Estonia by their own endeavors, and Estonia now entreats the Allies to consecrate the liberty so dearly bought by a de jure recognition.\textsuperscript{16}

The peace-talks between Estonia and Soviet Russia started in Tartu of December 5, 1919. They resulted in the signing of an armistices agreement on December 31, which came into force on January 3, 1920. Negotiations for the peace treaty which were started immediately thereafter were concluded on February 2, 1920. By this Peace Treaty of

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.
Tartu, Soviet Russia unreservedly recognized the independence of the Estonian Republic and renounced voluntarily and forever all rights of sovereignty over the Estonian people and territory. The armistice and Peace Treaty had been negotiated by Estonia alone. By concluding peace with Soviet Russia the Estonian policy created the necessary conditions to obtain the de jure recognition of its independence. This was received from Finland on July 7, 1920, and from Poland of December 31, the same year. Although the first Estonia plea to be admitted to the League of Nations was declined by 27 votes to 5, it meant recognition by these states who had voted for the admission i.e., Columbia, Italy, Paraguay, Persia and Portugal. Thereafter, on January 26, 1921, Estonia was recognized by Argentina, and on the same day came the de jure recognition of the Estonian Republic by the Allied Supreme Council. On September, 21, 1921, Estonia admitted to the League of Nations.

Returning to the internal political developments of Estonia, it should be mentioned that the Constitution of 1920 was extremely liberal. The one-chamber Parliament (Riigikogu) had 100 members, elected by direct, universal, equal and secret suffrage, and proportional representation could be dissolved before its normal period of three years had ended only if a national referendum reversed one of its decisions. The Government of the Republic was established by Riigikogu and could stay in office as long as it had not lost a vote of confidence. The Prime Minister or Riigivanem (State Elder) was also Head of State, but had no special privileges or power, and like the rest of the ministers, depended on the goodwill of Parliament. Efforts were soon made to change the Constitution, depending on the shift of power from the left and center parties to those of the right. In 1932, the United Farmers and Smallholders Party held 42 seats, the National Center Party 23 and the Socialists 22. The rest were held by three Communists and eight members representing various ethnic minorities.

---


18 Great Soviet Encyclopedia, op.cit, p. 311.
Between 1919 and 1933, Estonia had twenty various coalitions in government. Ten different statesmen held the office of Riigivanem, of which Konstantin Pats, Jaan Tonisson and Jaan Jeemant, each holding the position four times. By 1925, the Estonian people surmounted all the economic difficulties connected with the founding of a new state. There was a growing feeling among the Estonian people that the Constitution should be amended so that an equal division of powers could create a more stable situation of political affairs. The Conservative Farmers Party emerged in 1926 and in 1929 and proposals have made to give effect to this. In 1930, the National Liberal Party considered it necessary, but it took another two years before Riigikogu passed a draft bill for constitutional reform. The main opposition to constitutional reform was headed by the Socialists. A year earlier, the Federation of Veterans of the War of Liberation had started its campaign for a drastically change in the whole political system. The veteran federation was influenced by the Lapua movement in Finland and authoritarian trends in almost all Eastern Europe countries, the Veterans Federation rapidly swelled to a general movement, which more and more civilians joined, till ex-servicemen became a small minority. In the beginning, it was a local phenomenon, a product of World War I and the Estonian War of Liberation. Former soldiers felt that they had a small voice in politics. The movement was partly encouraged also by the rapid development of Nazi power in Germany.

In this state of struggle between differing political forces, the first draft of a reform bill, which Riigikogu presented to the nation, was rejected in a referendum in August, 1932, by a small margin. Parliament presented another draft which in a referendum in June, 1933 was crushingly defeated with two thirds of the electorate voting it down. In October of the same year, the Veterans movement took its proposals to the country in a referendum. Their draft for a new constitution put power almost entirely in the hands of the President. The President was to be

---

elected for a period of five years and have the right to dissolve Parliament, to promulgate draft laws as decrees, to appoint and dismiss Cabinets, and have the right to declare a state of emergency. The proposal was adopted by 56.3 per cent of the electorate. It was considered that most of those who wanted a new Constitution and were disappointed by the two previous failures of the Riigikogu proposals voted just for a change not considering all aspects of this third proposal. The new constitution came into force on January 24, 1934. A non-party government under Konstantin Pats held office at this time. According to the new Constitution, Pats assumed the special power vested in the president. Under the Constitution, the first Estonian presidential elections took place within a hundred days

In the beginning, the Veterans movement had not attempted to form a political party, but merely wanted to help the country in order to do the constitutional reform, but this role soon changed. On March 12, 1934, the Government decided that the widespread agitation threatened public order and proclaimed a state of emergency for six months. The Veterans movement was dissolved, its leaders were arrested, and the political activities of all parties forbidden. Under the new Constitution, these measures were quite legal and they were approved by Riigikogu on March 16, 1934. However, opposition against the Government began to show itself in Riigikogu, and in October 1934, Konstantin Pats dissolved Parliament and governed thereafter by virtue of presidential decrees

The leader of the Veterans movement where brought to trial in June 1935, and where found guilty merely of disturbing public order. They were released on probation. On December 8, in the same year, plans for a coup d'état were discovered which leads to a second trial of the Veterans movement's leaders. Convincing evidence was brought against almost all the 154 defendants and in May, 1936, most received long prison sentences. Konstantin Pats immediately started a new constitutional reform. In February, 1935, a Patriotic League was founded whose task was to give

\[\text{Clearance A. Manning, } \textit{The Forgotten Republics}, \text{(New York, Philosophical Library, 1952), p. 209.}\]
\[\text{Ibid.}\]
popular support to the Government and to help them with the coming referendum and the elections to a National Assembly. At the same time, the Government proceeded to organize the professional and working classes into organized bodies. In February, 1936, the Government proposed a referendum for the benefit of the people that whether they agreed to the formation of a National Assembly which should either amend the present constitution or draft an entirely new one. The electorate voted over 62 per cent in favor of these proposals. The National Assembly drew up a new Constitution which came into force on January 1, 1938\textsuperscript{23}.

The Constitution followed general parliamentary lines and the Riigikogu consisted of two chambers: the Chamber of Deputies had 80 members elected on the basis of majority voting for a period of five years, the second chamber, called the National Council, had 40 members, 30 of whom represented the professional chambers, the churches, the courts of justice, the universities, and ethnic minority groups. The remaining 10 members were appointed by the President. The President of the Republic had the right to dissolve Riigikogu and to delay the application of its bills passed. He could govern by decree between parliamentary sessions, but could not interfere with the budget\textsuperscript{24}.

The President was elected for a period of six years from candidates nominated by both Chambers of Riigikogu and by a special of representatives elected by local government authorities. The President appointed and dismissed the Government, which was responsible to Riigikogu. If the Government lost a vote of confidence in Riigikogu, the President could either dismiss it or order a general election. The basic aim of the new Constitution was to bring about a better balance of power. The 1920 constitution had favoured Parliament at the expense of the executive while that of 1934 had given excessive power to the Head of State.

\textsuperscript{23} Michal Buchowski, \textit{The Ethnic question in Estonia-The Problems with Minorities and The Solutions}, (European University, Viadrina, Winter semester, 1999/00), p.5.

\textsuperscript{24} Slumnus, “Sufferings from determination” \textit{Foreign Policy} (Washington), Vol. 2, No. 84, p. 123
The first general election under the new Constitution was held in February, 1938. The Government's opposition gained 17 seats out of 80 in the Chamber of Deputies. On April 24, 1938, Konstantin Pats was elected President of the Republic. It was somewhat a slow and carefully directed procedure back to the democratic way of life after a crisis, similar to contemporary, authoritarian movements in Europe. In front of future events, it should be mentioned that the constitutional crisis in Estonia had no relation whatsoever neither to the insignificantly small number of local Communists nor to any Communist influences from abroad.

The Law of Cultural Self-Government for National Minorities of 1925 granted to minority groups, not less than 3,000, autonomy in the cultural field. Due to this liberal minority policy, the name of Estonia was entered into the Golden Book in Jerusalem. Under the Estonian Constitution, every citizen had the right to choose the national group to which he or she wished to belong. Each citizen was guaranteed complete freedom of conscience and religion, 78.2 per cent of the people belonged to the Lutheran Church, and 19 per cent were Greek Orthodox. All other religious or non-religious groups were under one percent each, sixty-seven per cent of the population lived in the country and 33 percent in the cities. In Estonia, agriculture was originally the dominant branch of trade. By the Agrarian Reform, about 1000 larger estates were divided into 55,000 new small holdings. In the beginning, despite all efforts, the number of industrial workers decreased. The pre-war industrial production had been geared to the needs of the Russian Empire. A new industrial policy, based on the use of local raw materials, was put into effect.

Most important was the development of the oil shale industry under which shale can be used either as fuel or distilled into oil. In 1938, the

---

annual output was 1,473,000 tons of oil shale, 140,000 tons of oil, and 15,000 tons of gasoline. Both agriculture and industry, suffered setbacks during the economic crisis of the early 1930’s. After the depression a boom developed so that the Republic of Estonia was at the peak of its economic achievements when it was abruptly halted by Soviet aggression. The Estonian Republic made great efforts from the very beginning to raise the standard of social welfare introducing as early as 1918 an eight hour workday in industry and commerce. National wealth was evenly spread, and class distinctions were almost non existent. Wages showed a continuous upward trend. The labour market was sound, and unemployment was almost nil. In commerce, the Central Co-operative Society ETK was one of the chief exporters. The grain trade had become a monopoly in 1930\textsuperscript{27}.

According to the educational system introduced in 1920, all children eight years of age were obliged to attend a primary school until they had completed its course of six years or attained the age of sixteen. The University of Tartu was reopened after World War I, on December 1, 1919. Higher technical education was initially provided by a technical college in Tallinn which in 1936 was reformed as the Technical University. The Estonian Academy of Science was founded in 1938 with headquarters in Tartu. Adult education was first developed by the Temperance League at the end of the nineteenth century. Educational activities were also carried on by women’s organizations. These organizations and most of the independent educational societies were associated with a central body, the Estonian Educational League\textsuperscript{28}.

The foreign policy of Estonia was based on three principles: (1) Cooperation with other nations of the world within the framework of the League of Nations, (2) a closer collaboration with other states in the Baltic region, (3) good relations with the nearby colossus, the Soviet Union. Efforts for closer cooperation among the Baltic States started in 1919 and

\textsuperscript{28} Raud Vilem, Developments in Estonia 1939-1941, (Tallinn, 1987.), p.18.
resulted in a defensive alliance with Latvia in 1923, and a treaty of friendship and co-operation between Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania in 1984 which provided for closer foreign policy, cultural, and economic ties. Estonia's relation with the Soviet Union was based on the peace treaty of 1920. In 1932, a nonaggression treaty was concluded and in 1933 both states became signatories to the London Protocol defining aggression. Due to indifference on the part of the Soviet Union, trade relations between the two countries were not extensively developed and Soviet subversive activities in Estonia kept tension alive.

The independence period was one of great cultural advancement. Estonian language schools were established, and artistic life of all kinds flourished. One of the more notable cultural acts of this time was a guarantee of cultural autonomy to minority groups. Estonia had pursued a policy of neutrality, but the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop non-aggression pact on August 23, 1939, signaled the end of independence. The agreement provided for the Soviet occupation of Estonia, Latvia, part of Finland, and, later, Lithuania in return for Nazi Germany's assuming control over most of Poland.

The Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic was proclaimed on July 21, 1940, and was incorporated into the Soviet Union. The movement of the Soviet troops into their Estonian bases started after the necessary implementing agreements had been signed. However, the Soviets showed contempt for Estonian sovereignty, ignoring restrictions placed upon them, contracting Estonian underground Communists, and trying to recruit agents for subversive activities. In the ultimatum, the Soviet Union accused the Estonian Government of: (1) Not dissolving its military alliance with Latvia, (2) extending this alliance to Lithuania, (3) holding two secret conferences in December 1939 and March 1940, (4) furthering close cooper- between the general staffs of the three Baltic countries, and

---

having created "a special press organ of the Baltic military the Revue Baltique."\textsuperscript{30}

The Soviet Union claimed that all these alleged activities were violations of the Soviet-Estonian Mutual Assistance Pact and were a threat to the security of the Soviet Union. Therefore it demanded: (1) a government to be established in Estonia without delay that would be capable and willing to warrant the honest execution of the Soviet-Estonians Mutual Assistance Pact; (2) free passage be promptly assured to Soviet troops which are to be stationed in sufficient numbers in the most important centers of Estonia in order to guarantee the realization of the Soviet-Estonians Mutual Assistance Pact and to prevent possible acts of provocation against the Soviet garrisons in Estonia\textsuperscript{31}.

In this situation, the Estonian Government had no other choice left than to accept the ultimatum. The Soviet charges lacked any foundation and after the seizure of the Estonia official archives the Soviet Government did not try to substantiate them. The periodic conferences of Foreign Ministers were held under the 1934 treaty. The most ridiculous charge was that of labeling the magazine Revnu Baltique an "organ of the Baltic military entente", since it was simply a cultural publication. The soviet Legation in Tallinn became the center for all orders shaping the life in Estonia. The program of the cabinet, written in the Soviet Legation, emphasized that the independence of Estonia could be preserved only on the basis of a firm alliance with the Soviet Union. No radical changes in the existing social and economic structure were announced\textsuperscript{32}.

Under the auspices of the Soviet "puppet" government, supported by the might of the Red Army, Estonians are given the choice of casting votes for their oppressors or of exporting themselves to the Communist terror. In violation of all constitutional procedures the cabinet issued an

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid.
order on July 5 which made important changes in the electoral law. This order (1) eliminated judicial control over electoral procedures, (2) placed all election authorities under complete control of the Communist Party, and (3) facilitated falsification of election returns and fraud in voting. Only 3 ½ days were left to nominate candidates. To the disappointment the Communists, the true political parties and patriotic groups managed to nominate their own candidates to oppose the list field by the “Estonian working People’s League”, a front for the Communist Party. However, opposition candidates did not fit and the Cabinet, by an order of July 9, required all candidates to submit an election program. Some opposition candidates were forced to withdraw by threats and violence and the nominations of others were invalidated by district election committees on order from the Communist Party. Accordingly these decisions were subsequently annulled. Thus, only the candidates of the Communalist Party were on the ballot. The whole Communist organization was employed to bring as many persons to the polls as possible. Intimidation and threats were used. Red army soldiers stood watch over the polls and during the election days military demonstrations were staged, showing the people who were the masters in the country.

The election results were announced as 84.1 percent of voters having participated and 92.8 percent having voted for the communist candidates. After the elections, demands were advanced for a radical change in the form of government and for incorporation of Estonia into the Soviet Union. Despite the terrors or the NKVD and the Red army guns, the Estonian population did not succumb passively.

On July 17 and 18, spontaneous patriotic demonstration broke out and only the intervention of Red troops and tanks saved the day for Moscow’s Estonian puppets. The illegally elected Communist Parliament was ordered into session on July 21, 1940. Its 80 members had been picked by the Communist Party to confirm the decisions already made in

---

33 Ibid.
Moscow. The Communist Parliament was in session for 3 days. Insisting that it was speaking in the name of the Estonian people and that it alone had the “sovereign power”; it passed four resolutions which were supposed to transform Estonia into a Soviet state. On July 21, it passed a resolution which established the Soviet system in Estonia, and the next day another resolution, claiming to express “the will of the Estonian people, was passed, which read: “To petition the Supreme Soviet of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to admit the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic into the Soviet Union as constituent republic”\(^\text{35}\). The next step was the elimination of President Konstantin Pats, who was already a prisoner of the Soviet although nominally still in office. His registration was accepted by the communist parliament on July 23 and Prime Minister Vares appointed the Acting President. Soon afterward, president Pats was deported to the Soviet Union\(^\text{36}\).

The last act of the drama destroying the independent Republic of Estonia was staged in the Kremlin. A delegation selected by the Estonia Parliament submitted to the Supreme Soviet a petition that Estonia be admitted as the 16th Soviet Republic of the USSR. After the resolutions passed by the Communist Parliament had become known, Estonian diplomatic representatives filed their protests with the governments of their residence and raised the question that the illegal seizure of power in Estonia not be recognized. J. Kaiv, the Estonian Acting Consul General in charge of the Legation in New York said in his note of July 23, 1940 to the United States Secretary of State: “Being appointed by the former constitutional Government as senior representative in this country I regard the above-mentioned elections as null and void, as well as all acts passed by this unconstitutionally elected Chamber of Deputies, in particular this decision about the union with the USSR”\(^\text{37}\).

\(^{35}\) Tonu Parming, op.cit, p.433.

\(^{36}\) Ibid.

The illegal character of all governmental acts in Estonia after the occupation of the country by Soviet military forces was understood. On July 23, 1940, the Under Secretary of State, Summer Welles, in an official statement said that the independence and territorial integrity of the Baltic States were “deliberately annihilated” by “devious processes”. On the basis of the principles outlined in this statement, the United States continued to recognize the acting consul general in charge of the legation in New York as the diplomatic representative of the Republic of Estonia and refused to recognize the forcible annexation of Estonia by the Soviet Union.\footnote{Kai-Helin Kaldas, \textit{The Evolution of Estonian Security Options During the 1990s}, (Academies and Security Studies Institutes (PfPC Athena Papers Series No. 4, October 2005), p.11.}

Soviet occupation was accompanied by expropriation of property, Sovietization of cultural life, and the installation of Stalinist communism in political life.\footnote{Alfred Erich Senn, “The Sovietization of the Baltic States”, \textit{Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science}, (The Satellites in Eastern Europe, May, 1985), Vol.317, p.124.} When Nazi Germany attacked the Soviet Union on June 22, most Estonians greeted the Germans with relatively open arms. During two-and-a-half years of Nazi occupation, Estonia became a part of the German Ostland, and about 5,500 Estonians died in concentration camps. However, few Estonians welcomed the Red Army’s push through the Baltics in January 1944. Some 10\% of the population fled to the West between 1940 and 1944.

By late September, Soviet forces expelled the last German troops from Estonia, ushering in a second phase of Soviet rule. That year, Moscow also moved to transfer the Estonian Narva and Petseri border districts, which had large percentages of ethnic Russians, to Russian control. For the next decade, an anti-Soviet guerrilla movement known as "the Forest Brethren" operated in the countryside. Composed of formerly conscripted Estonian soldiers from the German army, fugitives from the Soviet military draft or security police arrest, and those seeking revenge for mass deportations, the Forest Brethren used abandoned German and Soviet equipment and...
worked in groups or alone. Many underground political opposition groups came into being right from the start of the German occupation. After a relatively short period of military government, a German civilian administration was introduced, composed at the top exclusively of German citizens 40.

During this time, in spite of the risks of being caught by the Germans in an attempt to flee the country, some 5,000 men and many of their families succeeded in reaching Finland. After the Soviet offensive had reached the Estonian territory at Narva, about 2,000 of them were given permission by Finnish High Command to return to Estonia to fight to the last in defense of their homeland 41. In 1944, panic seized the Estonian people, with memories of Soviet terror fresh in their minds, when it became clear that German military defeats would result in Soviet reoccupation of the Baltic area. Some 80,000 Estonians seized the initiative by escaping their homeland to take refuge in Sweden or Germany. Tallinn, the capital was reoccupied by the Soviets on September 22, 1944.

The capitalization of Nazi Germany and the end of World War II brought no relief to the Estonian people. For them, as for millions of others in the borderlands of the Soviet Union, liberation from the Nazi yoke merely meant total submission to Soviet oppression. The boundary of Soviet Estonia does not coincide with those of the independent Estonia. In 1947, the north eastern and south-eastern corners, together almost 1,000 square miles, were added to the Russian Republic under the pretext that there was a larger Russian population in those areas 42.

The actual fighting in the Baltic countries did not cease after the occupation by the Red Army. Units of various sizes established themselves

41 Ibid.
42 Anderson Edgar," The role of Baltic States between the USSR and the Western Europe" East European Quarterly (Colorado: University of Colorado), Vol.7, No.4, p.382.
as partisans (Brethren of the Forest) in the forests\textsuperscript{43}. The guerrilla activities in Estonia were liveliest during the years 1944-46. The decisive blow against the armed resistance was the collectivization of agriculture. This deprived the partisans of their food supply, because the kolkhoz peasants were so strictly controlled and their supplies so limited that they were unable to supply the partisans. Nevertheless, some guerrilla activity existed in Estonia until the Hungarian uprising of 1956.

In 1948, however, the press and radio of the Soviet Union began to make strong demands for the establishment of collective farming in the Baltic States. Up to 1947, 7 Kolkhozes had been established in Estonia, and by March they numbered 519. Even so, only small percentage of the farmers had joined the collective farms. This was intolerable to the Kremlin who decided use arrests and deportations to “encourage” Collectivization. Between March 23 and 29, 1949, by order of Moscow a substantial number of farmers were deported from Estonia to the remotest parts of the Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{44}

The final liquidation of independent farmers continued, and by 1951 the majority had been forced into collective farms. Thus the fruits of the long-drawn-out struggle of the Estonian peasantry to become owners of the land, culminating in the Land Reform of 1919-25, were completely swept away. The peasantry was in back into the conditions prevailing in the eighteenth century, owning no land and having no freedom movement\textsuperscript{45}.

Like all colonial powers, Soviet Russia exploited Estonia economically (and other Eastern European countries as well). Approximately two-thirds of the net taxation plus a major share of the compulsory deliveries from the kolkhozes are taken out of the country. The same phenomenon is seen in industrial production. Most of the

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid.
electric and oil shale energy produced in Estonia is "exported" eastwards (like other products from big industries directly subordinated to all Union ministries in Moscow). Often the products have to be given away with no benefit to the country. Soviet propaganda justifies this exploitation by terming it "aid" from the more progressive republics to the backward ones. All these created a situation where the people could not approach the standard of living of democratic Western countries. They are dependent on gifts from relatives and friends abroad to help to cover some of their most urgent needs. Such a plight would not have been thought of in independent Estonia, whose standard of living, Soviet authorities maintain, has been surpassed considerably by the Communists\textsuperscript{46}.

The population base also changed after the war. A large number of Ruusianised Estonian families who had settled during Czarist period I Russia were brought back to Estonia. In 1945-47, around 180,000 non-Estonians arrived in Estonia and in 1950-53, 33,000 more immigrants came to Estonia. Therefore, the share of Estonians in their country's population decreased from about 95 percent in early 1945, to 80 percent in 1940 and 79 percent in 1949 and continued to reduce about 72 percent in 1953. During the German occupation, only 10,000 Jews out of 250,000 could remain alive. In March 1949, more than 60,000 persons were forcibly deported to Siberia. Most of the deportees were the owners of the independent farms and belonged to the rural areas of Estonia. The remaining people joined Kolkhoz. They were afraid of deportations, because deportation meant death. Therefore, without any opposition they started to work on collective farms or Kolkhoz.

The collectivization of agriculture led to the destruction of independent farming and also the elimination of the independent farmers as a social class\textsuperscript{47}. During the first Soviet occupation, Soviet Union had already liquidated private property and private industry. Now other private

\textsuperscript{46} Charles Ozols, "Russia, Germany and the Baltic States", \textit{International affairs}. (Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1931-1939, July-August, 1934), Vol.13, No.4, p.559.

\textsuperscript{47} The Baltics: Nationalities and other Problems, (author's name not mentioned), (Online: web), Accessed, 1 January, 2006, URL: \url{http://history.eserver.org/baltic-history.txt}, p.2.
firms were also nationalized without giving any compensation to the owners. This way of Sovietisation of economic life resulted in reduction of the standard of living to that of the Soviet.

Following the deportations, the struggle for power in the Estonian Communist Party and the ESSR leadership became more violent. There was a rivalry between the pre-war underground communists, the communists who came to power in June 1940. At the 8th ESSR Communist Party plenary session in March 1950, and immediately after, the entire leadership of the Communist Party and the ESSR was replaced. Most of the old Estonian communists were repressed. Thus we see that during the Stalin era, not only the geography of Estonia was changed but also its demography on an unprecedented level. These phenomena reversed the entire social composition of Estonia. The artificial changes introduced in Estonian society imposed during Stalin’s time brought horrified results for the people of this region. The political terror with violence could end only with the death of Stalin, in March 1953. After the advent of Khrushchev following 20th Congress of CPSU in 1956, the direction of entire Soviet Society took a dramatic turn, which was bound to have its impact on Estonia too. In due course of time, this impact symbolized the ultimate road freedom for the people of Estonia in future.

In post-war period, especially after Stalin’s death, Estonia’s revolt turned into a passive movement. They expressed their dissatisfaction against Soviet regime through protest letters, demonstrations, and self-immolations or through memorandum to the western countries. All kind of guerrilla movement, including the Forest Brothers and the Erna Movement became inactive, particularly after the announcement of the 20th Congress of CPSU. A major change came when the new Soviet leader, Nikita Khrushchev, who initiated the policy of general relaxation in all the republics. At the time, in the 20th Congress of CPSU, he announced a policy of de-Stalinisation in the Soviet society. The 20th Congress of CPSU started a resolution, “Socialism does not at all obliterate national

---

48 Romuald Misiunas and Rein Taagepera, op.cit, p.112.
differences and special characteristics, on the contrary, it secures that all round development and prosperity of the economic and cultural life of all nations and nationalities. The party should also in future pay great regard to these national characteristics in all their political activities".  

The de-Stalinisation drive was much more modest in Estonia, however, it began to influence the life of the common people with far reaching impacts. Regarding the prevailing situation in days after the death of Stalin, Oskar Mand, a western scholar wrote, Stalin’s death in 1953 at the 20th Party of Congress in 1956 resulted in an All-Union “thaw” which also embraced Soviet Estonia. In 1954, an Amnesty Law was promulgated releasing many of the deported and jailed Estonians and permitting them to return their country. At the same time, Estonian communists who had been charged with bourgeois nationalism made their re-appearance public life.  

The powers of the political police seemed to be curtailed to the unprecedented extent in Soviet history that people could no longer be arrested without the approval of law courts and public prosecutors. All this resulted in a cultural renaissance, the more so as certain steps of the regime led to the conclusion that it had grown more liberal and would civic rights. Khrushchev reorganized the governmental organs in Estonia. At an all Union level, the most important permanent change was the decline in the status of the security apparatus.  

In May 1954, a separate Committee for State Security was established, i.e., KGB under direct jurisdiction of ESSR Council of Ministers, although the KGB became a factor to be reckoned with, its role has never compared to that of the security forces under Stalin. A certain change also came in the composition and size of the Council of Ministers. Its membership grew from 26 positions at the end of 1952 to 45 in 1980. In the mid 1950, the major source of expansion was created new ministries including foreign affairs, defense, various economic posts and the new

49 Andres Kung, A Dream of freedom (Britain, Boreas Publishing House, 1980), p.166.
office of the first deputy minister. In the 1960s, more ethnic Estonians joined in the Council of Ministers compared to Russians. The head of the newly formed Council of Ministers dealt with cultural and economic matters.

However, there were no significant changes in the party and administration. On the high and significant posts those persons were appointed who were staunch Stalinists and they had enjoyed the full confidence of the Stalinist regime, for example, the first secretary of Estonian Communist Party, Ivan Kabin, who was responsible not only for the deportation of more than 100,000 Estonians to Siberia in 1948-50, but purged numerous scientists and cultural leaders as well. He was responsible for a ruthless large scale purge of the Estonian Communist Party. Ivan Kabin was not alone in this crime, there were several other leading functionaries who occupied major posts in party and ministration.

Initially, when Khrushchev introduced the policy relaxation, these Stalinist leaders had become panicky. They were also unable to combat Khrushchev’s reforms, but when the Polish and Hungarian crisis broke out, Khrushchev checked his policy and in between once again these Stalinists became powerful and also controlled the Estonian society. In 1957, regional economic councils (Sovnarkhoz) were formed in the Soviet Union. Around 160 enterprises were controlled by the Estonian Sovnarkhoz in 1964. These enterprises produced over 70 percent of the total production in Estonian industrial output. Khrushchev also carried out major reforms in the agricultural sector.

Although, the effect of the reform on the economic was very slow, the gradual reorganization and the difficulties of transition were overcome in Baltic States. The death of Stalin and Khrushchev’s reform had saved the Estonian peasants and people from future deportations. Despite this, the position of the peasants who worked on the collective farms was not

---

51 Toivo Raun, op.cit, p.193.
52 Oskar Mand, op.cit, p.2.
improved. The chairmen of these collective farms were directly appointed by Moscow. The size of these collective farms had not extended but in 1955 a major positive step was taken by Khrushchev.\(^{53}\)

During 1953-1956, he implemented a series of reforms which raised production and heavy rents on private plots and the state farms for livestock were reduced. The state price for agricultural products was also increased. In 1958, the Machine Tractors Stations (MTS) were transformed into repair centers. Machine Tractors were also sold at low prices were abolished. The most significant reform of the Khrushchev era was the payment of wages to Kolkhozink in money rather than in kind. By 1959, 14 percent of Estonian Kolkhozes paid their members in cash and in 1960, 68 percent and by 1964, it reached 100 percent.\(^{54}\) Khrushchev’s reforms also provided more freedom to tourism which was not only limited to the east but extended to the western countries, although all tourists were strictly checked before entering the country. The first foreign contact of Estonia was with Finland in post war period in 1956. More and more foreigners visited not only Estonia but also other two Baltic States.\(^{55}\)

Looking back to the Khrushchev’s foreign policy, he also declared the denouncement of Iron curtain, and gives the new idea of peaceful coexistence. He had signed many treaties with the western countries, particularly with the United States of America. In fact, he introduced Detente in the bloc politics and denounced the cold war. Estonian people took advantage and after the World War 11, for the first time they got the chance to develop their contact with the west. Khrushchev’s drive of de-Stalinisation had a positive impact of Estonian culture. The people of Estonia were loosing their fear of the regime, which in its turn resulted in a cultural renaissance. Certain steps of the regime led to the conclusion that it had grown more liberal and would extend civic rights. Those hopeful signs included a reappraisal of the past that is of the works of the pre-

---

\(^{53}\) Romuald Misiunas and Rein Taagepera, op.cit, p.139.

\(^{54}\) Ibid, p.201.

\(^{55}\) Oskar Mand, op.cit, p.1.
Soviet Estonia writers and artists. The authorities now found that they had many characteristics which made them highly acceptable to the Soviets.

The State Publishing House reprinted Estonian classics in relatively huge editions. After Stalin’s death a number of translation, particularly from the western literature had grown rapidly and Finland helped in the development of the Estonian media. Finnish radio could be heard throughout northern Estonia. A regular connection could be established between Tallinn and Helsinki in 1965. The television era started in early 1960s, and the years from 1960 to 1968 was called the golden era of Estonian television, a time when a host of talented journalists were employed who despite numerous technical and ideological difficulties, were able to lay the foundations of national television traditions\textsuperscript{56}.

Under Brezhnev, most of the changes introduced by Khrushchev were revoked. Most importantly, this affected economic self-rule as envisaged in the sovnarkhozy concept. The relative autonomy in decision-making that the Union republics had enjoyed was cut and the decision-making process recentralized. As before in the Khrushchev era, the new leadership again felt its way into office, and again, the first phase of a new era initially had another collective leadership at the beginning. Khrushchev had been removed from power in a cold putsch at a specially convened CC meeting on 14 October 1964. He voluntarily left his office, with hardly any casualties, few sackings, and no deaths, signifying the continuation of the trend started by Khrushchev himself.

In October 1964, Leonid Brezhnev became head of the CPSU and of the Central Committee’s Secretariat. He was consolidating his political power and dealt with party affairs. His other interests were in agriculture, as he had been instrumental as the local party boss in pushing through Khrushchev’s Virgin Land experiment. Brezhnev remained for eighteen years I leadership and most of the dissidence occurred during his period.

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid.
His period was the longest period of the Soviet leadership in the post World War 11 period

Throughout the Brezhnev era, the demands of Estonian people came out in the form of dissent. In Estonia, two such groups acquired prominence by 1972: the Estonian Democratic Movement and the Estonian National Front. In 1974, another group, Estonian Patriots came into existence, and the Association of concerned Estonians was formed in 1976 after the government crushed previous oppositional bodies. In 1978, two new groups, the 'White Key Brotherhood' and 'Maarjamaa', mostly concerned with problems of cultural freedom, were formed in addition to the ones mentioned above. All these groups took a lead in organizing the mass demonstrations of 1987-1988 and thus precipitated the creation of the officially Estonian National Front in spring 1988. In 1972, the Estonian Democratic Movement and the Estonian National Front appealed to the UN general Assembly and the then secretary of the United Nations. In their memorandum, they appealed to the United Nations that the Soviet Union's troops be withdrawn from their country, all democratic parties to be allow to participate in the country's election, the reinstitution of Estonian independence and Estonia's membership in the United Nations.

The Soviet Union took immediate action against the Estonian Democratic Movement and the Estonian National Front. In 1975, four of members of Estonian Democratic Movement were sentenced to five to six years of camp imprisonment. In spite of the ferocious repression that the authorities applied to breakdown organized Estonian dissent, it only persisted but also developed forms of organized activities. Its significant that by the end of 1970s, the dissident groups in Estonia had started co­ordinate their activities and launched joint ventures.

The growing co-operation of activist Estonian dissidents with the Dissident Movement in Russia was extremely significant too. A unity of purpose was established, whereby the Estonians joined the struggle of the Russians for the democratization of Soviet Union and democratically minded Russians made cause of Estonia’s independence a part of their own programme for democratic change of the USSR as a whole. The most symbolic expression of the unity was the fact that the petition of 23rd August 1979, signed by 45 representatives of Estonia demanded the restoration of the sovereignty, was amended by a petition of support for its signed by five representatives of Russian democratic dissent. The history of co-operation between Estonia and Russian dissidents goes, however, much further back. In July 1968, a document written and signed on behalf of "numerous member of the Estonian Technical Intelligentsia, entitled to hope to Hope to Act" gave a sympathetic but a critical assessment of Russian leader Sakharov’s thoughts on Progress of Co-existence, intellectual freedom and formulated a programme for democratic change in the USSR as a whole which was conceived by the authors of this document as the pre-requisite for the attainment of freedom of both Russia and Estonia\(^\text{60}\).

Despite the soviet authorities suppression the scope of the Estonian dissent, broadened in the late 1970s. In 1977, eighteen scientists condemned the pollution caused by the careless and over extraction of oil shale and phasphosite mining Estonian dissidents made contact with other republics resulting most strikingly in the Estonia’s appeal for self determination of the fortieth anniversary of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact in 1979 and a call for Nordic nuclear-free zone including Latvia and Lithuania in 1981. At the same time, a fellow scientist, Juri Kukk who also declared solidarity with the ‘Estonia’s Appeal’ received a two years sentence but he died in mysterious circumstances with on a hunger strike only two months later\(^\text{61}\).

---

\(^{60}\) Ibid. p.106.
\(^{61}\) Toivo Raun, op.cit, p.196.
Tartu University had become a major centre of protests. In October 1980, the largest demonstration took place in Tallinn, in which around 2,000 school students participated in it and marched in the streets, shouting slogans for Estonia’s freedom from Russian rule. The police used force to suppress demonstration as well as clashes with Russian students. In another protest, forty Estonian intellectuals and some of the party officials signed an open letter, describing the ethnic tensions in Estonia and they also spoke out in favour of the Estonian language and culture.

During Brezhnev era, cultural russification was growing in Estonia. In 1978, the Soviet authorities implemented a policy to increase the usage of Russian language in non-Russian Soviet republics. It is interesting to note that in 1981, for the first time in Estonia’s history, Russian was taught at the first grade language in the Estonian language schools and they also introduced Russian language into Estonian pre-school teaching. Regarding the demographic situation, the Russian population increased in the period between the wars from four percent to twenty five percent in Estonia. Thus the share and number of Russians was greatest in Estonia.\(^{62}\)

When Brezhnev died in 1982, a very senior and old leader Andropov took over the leadership but he did not bring about any major reforms in Soviet Union. The demands for autonomy still continued from Estonia and other two republics also. Within a short span time, he died, and then Chernenko, who was very old, took the new leadership but he also died within a period of one year leadership. He too did not come out with any new reforms for Soviet Union in general and Estonia and other Baltic States in particular. The dissident movement continued in Estonia, however, not a single change was introduced during Andropov’s and Chernenko’s period. As a result, the demonstrations and protest movements against russification intensified. In March 1982, an unsigned letter from fifteen Estonian officials discussed a more detail description of the growing role of Russians and the Russian language in Estonia. In October 1982, thirteen Estonians appealed to the Finnish farms and

\(^{62}\) Andres Kung, op.cit, p. 178.
workers not to participate in the construction of the new Munga harbour in Tallinn, because they had a fear that this harbour would lead to the insurgence of Russian and non-Estonians to Estonia\textsuperscript{63}.

The most important permanent economic reform of the post-Stalin era in Estonia began in the mid-1960s. While stressing the crucial role of central planning, the Soviet authorities delegated new powers to local managers, including the right to dispose of their net income (or profits), which now became the ultimate measure of economic efficiency. A new system of incentives was also established to encourage worker productivity. It is noteworthy that in Estonia the tempo of implementation of the reform was more rapid than the all Union average; in 1969, 96 percent of the industrial output came from enterprises functioning under the new system as compared to 84 percent for the USSR as a whole. In this instance and others in recent decades the Moscow leadership has used Estonia as a kind of experimental laboratory for trying out policies. The trend toward slower growth corresponds to the overall Soviet pattern and reflects a number of factors, including the emergence of a more mature economy, a declining labor pool, and concessions to consumers. Among the fifteen union republics Estonia ranked fifth in the 1950s, eighth in the 1960s, and tied for tenth in the 1970s with regard to industrial growth rate. In the 1970s for the first time the ESSR rate fell below the all-Union average\textsuperscript{64}.

As a result of industrial expansion the number of workers in this branch of the economy grew substantially, especially in the first post-Stalin decade. In 1955 there were 104,675 industrial workers in Estonia; by 1965 the figure had jumped to 171,400. However, in the following decade the rate of increase slowed markedly, perhaps reflecting increased mechanization as well as a declining rate of industrial growth. In 1975 (the last year for which the Soviets have published such information) the number of industrial workers was 186,500. With regard to the number of

\textsuperscript{64} Ibid.
employees, the relative positions of the branches of industry have not changed appreciably in recent decades. In the post-Stalin era the agricultural sector of the Estonian economy underwent important changes, which resulted in a major improvement in the lives of the rural population. Indeed, the narrowing of the socioeconomic gap between the city and the countryside must be seen as one of the most significant developments of the past three decades.

The advent of Gorbachev in the history of Soviet rule proved to be a turning point not only for the Soviet society but also for the whole world. It was Gorbachev who accelerated the process of détente throughout the world. On the other hand, internal détente in the form of Perestroika and Glasnost was introduced by him. It is a well known fact that throughout the existence of Soviet Union, its domestic policy always found reflection in its foreign policy. Gorbachev had come to power at a time prior to which three leaders had passed away within a span of three years. Brezhnev died in 1982 after eighteen years long tenure in power. His two successors i.e. Andropov and Chernenko could hardly survive for two years. Therefore, the pre Gorbachev era can be broadly regarded as the Brezhnev era, because Andropov and Chernenko could not act differently from Brezhnev. However, Gorbachev changed the whole course of Soviet life. His policy of Glasnost (openness) opened a broad door of democracy in Soviet society. Though Glasnost had a deep impact on Soviet society and proved to be a particular milestone for the liberation of Estonia and other Baltic States. It was Gorbachev’s policy which ultimately led to the independence of Baltic States more than two years before the total collapse of Soviet Union. Behind this background the Gorbachev period has proved itself a watershed in the history of Baltic States. Perhaps, the liberation of Baltic States could have never been possible. This is why the Gorbachev era needs to be thoroughly examined.

Gorbachev’s policy of Perestroika and Glasnost initiated miraculous developments in the Soviet Union. Many scholars have termed his socio-

---

65 Graham Smith, op.cit, p.127.
economic and political programmes of Perestroika and Glasnost as a ‘Second Revolution’. There is no doubt that these two terms created a new phenomenon in world affairs. The far reaching reforms undertaken by Gorbachev were mainly defined as Perestroika (restructuring), Glasnost (openness), and Novoe Myshlenie (new thinking). Perestroika was introduced with the aim of bringing radical economic and political changes in the Soviet society, while Glasnost was intended to democratize old command system in the social life of the common people.

The new thinking was devoted towards the new Soviet foreign policy primarily towards the West, aimed at eliminating the cold war practices. For the purpose of accomplishing the above tasks, Gorbachev put forward philosophical slogans like “Socialism with human face”, “deideologisation of international relations”, and a “Common European Home”. All these philosophical slogans immediately proved to have devastating impacts not only in the domestic affairs of the Soviet Union but also in international relations. These philosophical logans particularly influenced entire communist movement and forced it to democratize itself on the pattern of Gorbachev reforms.

The reform movement evoked an enthusiastic response in Estonia where, as a result of Glasnost, the country was able to publicly rediscover its history. Glasnost also created an opening for the rebirth of grassroots organizations. In 1986, the Estonian Heritage Society was established which demanded names of all the deported. The association of creative society added their weight to the cause by demanding political freedom, economic and cultural autonomy and the control of immigration from Russia, to stem the tide which had made Estonia 40 percent non-Estonian in its territory. The demonstrators shouted slogans like “Bring the Stalinist executioners to trial” “The right of self-determination for the Baltic States”! “Support Peace”! “No to Fascism”! “No”! with a US rocket

crushed out. A demonstrator said in his speech..." The face of our fatherland is still beautiful when it is wiped clean of all that is false”.

Besides the Estonian patriots, there were other Russian people who joined demonstration. To counter the speech of Estonian patriots, one Russian speaker Afanasev from Moscow said: “He spoke on behalf of the Commintern’s Military Group that worked underground in Tallinn against the “Fascist government” in 1942043... You hard one side, now listen to other side that's democracy”. But the organizer of the demonstrator, Tiit Madisson, an Estonian Patriot declared that there was never a fascist government in Estonia but rather a fascist occupation67.

As far as the reaction of local authority was concerned, it did not take any action against these demonstrators, on the contrary, the official press gave complete coverage and presented an expressive view of this demonstration. This trend of this Part’s Press could be seen when Rahva Haal (Voice of the people) an Estonian language daily newspaper gave full coverage to a demonstration which was held at the city of Parnu on November 7, 1987 in the memory of the October Revolution. Around 2000 Estonian people participated and demanded restoration of a momentum of Estonians who were killed in the 1918-1920 struggles for freedom. The local party officials invited these protestors to discuss their demands in a two day meeting. It is a remarkable point that instead of con’emning the demonstration, the Voice of the people on November 11, 1987 called this event an experiment of democracy.68

In another event of 1987, Samizdat, a journal, reported that during the demonstration big gang fights were fought between Russian and Estonian Youth. Russians had beaten up an Estonian and in reaction Estonian killed one Russian. The Russian youth had become panicky and shouted a slogan “Kill the Estonian by the 70th anniversary of the October Revolution”. In this context, on November 20, 1987, the Russian language

67 Clemens Walter, op.cit, pp.2-3.
Komensomal paper Molodozh ‘Estonia’ noted that Russian youth should not gather at school after school hours” in order to avoid conflicts\textsuperscript{69}.

In 1988, the Estonian liberation movement split into two wings, the first of these wings in which the decisive role was played by the progressive administrators and official of the Communist Party who believed that liberation could be achieved gradually via the administration of the Soviet system and eventual withdrawal from the Soviet Union. The second term was radical, led by the former dissidents, political prisoners and young humanists and ultimately before that put an end to the Soviet occupation and re-established of the Republic of Estonia that had been annexed by the Soviet Union in 1940. In spring 1988, the Popular Front of Estonia emerged into a variety of diverse organizations, such as, environmental organizations, heritage societies, religious organizations and groups\textsuperscript{70}.

The establishment of Popular Front in Estonia occurred more or less simultaneously with the removal of Conservative First Party secretaries. The Conservative first Party secretaries were replaced by reform-minded leaders i.e. Vaino Valjas in Estonia. Initially the Popular Front demanded limited sovereignty within the Soviet federation but when the revolution of Eastern Europe succeeded, the Popular Front had acquired sufficient confidence to call publicly for independent statehood for the first time in soviet rule\textsuperscript{71}.

Besides the Popular Front which was obviously the largest organization, many other formal and informal groups emerged very soon. The Estonian National Independence Party emerged on August 20, 1988 and continuously demanded the publication of the secret protocol of August 23, 1939 Pact and the events of 1940 under Soviet occupation. This group successfully published the document of August 23, 1939 Pact and the events of 1940 in the Estonian Communist Party daily news paper.

\textsuperscript{69} Clemens Walter, op.cit, p.3.
\textsuperscript{71} Ibid.
Rahva Haal. Due to the continuous demand of the Estonian National Independence Party (ENIP) for the publication of the secret protocol of August 23, 1939 contained secret agreements to divide Eastern Europe. The Commission appealed to the Congress of People's Deputies to declare the Soviet-German pact of 1939 null and void. The Estonian Press harshly criticized the facts of the Soviet-German Pact.

A number of changes in the republic's government brought about by political advances late in the 1980s played a major role in forming a legal framework for political change. This involved the republic's Supreme Soviet being transformed into an authentic regional law-making body. This relatively conservative legislature managed to pass a number of laws, notably a package of laws that addressed the most sensitive ethnic concerns. These laws included the early declaration of sovereignty (November 1988); a law on economic independence (May 1989) confirmed by the U.S.S.R. Supreme Soviet that November; a language law making Estonian the official language (January 1989); and local and republic election laws stipulating residency requirements for voting and candidacy (August, November 1989).

In early August, Estonian 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 (Intermovement), primarily made up of ethnic Russians, had staged strikes in Tallinn and northeastern Estonia protesting a set of new electoral rules and a new language law requiring all service workers to speak both Estonian and Russian. Throughout the fall, independence sentiment continued to mount.

In October, the Estonian 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 bypassing 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 could 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 the fall of 1989, it was clear that this argument and strategy would become essential to the independence movement and, indeed, to politics thereafter 74.

To raise popular awareness of the independence issue, the Estonian Citizens Committees launched a year-long campaign to register all citizens of the prewar republic and their descendants. Of an estimated 1 million such citizens, the grassroots movement succeeded in registering about 700,000. It was this electorate that, according to the radical committees, possessed the sole right to decide the future of Soviet-occupied Estonia— not the Soviet-era Supreme Soviet, its government, or 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. Rather, the committees asserted the need to elect a new representative body to lead the independence struggle and the restoration of the prewar republic 75.

The elections to the ESSR Supreme Soviet took place in 18 March 1990 under 105-seat parliament with a strong Estonian-minded membership that was still less radical than the Estonian Congress. Here the so-called moderates dominated, many of whom were members of the Popular Front. Although this political constellation would threaten a competition between the two parliaments which were popularly

legitimized in free and fair elections, despite their different size of electorate, this situation did not continue for very long; on 30 March 1990 the Supreme Soviet invited the Congress to co-operate. Consequently, the following period may have still been characterized internally by a highly charged political atmosphere; with regard to the bilateral relations with the Centre, however, almost all forces but for a fairly marginal if vociferous minority of ‘Union-minded’ opposition group would now have the same goal: reduce the Center’s influence down to zero.

On 30 March 1990 Estonia declared a ‘period of transition’ at whose end de-facto independence would stand; this followed the Congress of Estonia’s line according to which the country was occupied and de-facto non-independent, but that de jure its independence was never taken away. On 8 May 1990, the ESSR Supreme Soviet issued a law ‘On the reinstatement of the Symbols of the First Republic and the abolition of the ESSR symbols.’ This law reinstated parts of the 1938 Constitution; most importantly, it replaced the republic’s full Soviet title, the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic, by the old name, the Republic of Estonia. This was seen as the ‘formal end’ of the ESSR.

In spite of stopping the process of dissolution which had started in 1988 and was in full swing in April-May 1990, the measures Gorbachev adopted were not only increasingly desperate. Because of their total inflexibility and insistence on the Centre-republican model of ‘democratic centralism’ with only cosmetic changes, they were also destructive in that they even accelerated the process by hardening the resolve of the titular nationalities in their republics to go it alone if the Centre is unwilling to cooperate. During 1988-1990 there were enough occasions which may have made it possible to keep the Union alive, if in a different form such as, e.g., a confederation. The Center’s position reflecting the will to keep power at almost all cost, especially from late 1990, made this fully unlikely.

76 Clemens Walter, op.cit, p.14.
In the light of an accumulation of power in the person of Gorbachev who made himself President of the Soviet Union and ruled with a Presidential Council, thus cutting the Party and its CC from power until it was almost completely obliterated; allowing decentralization or openness on the one hand but not going the whole way in either case led to tensions eventually led to a conservative backlash which tried to save the old Union and even instigated the putsch against Gorbachev.\footnote{Keesings Record of World Events, (UK, Torquay, January, 1991), p.37933.}

In April 1990, a Law on Secession was issued which determined the conditions under which a republic could split from the Union; this would appear to be in extension to Article 72 of the 1977 Soviet Constitution which indeed allowed secession. In actual fact, this new law was anything but a way to allow actual secession. The clear fighting for power between the Centre and Estonia came to a new high in late December 1990, when on 27 December a Supreme Soviet Resolution called for an All-Union referendum had even issued a resolution in which the necessity of ‘safeguarding the unified federal state’ was called for in true Brezhnevite fashion – a development hardly surprising in the light of one quarter of deputies representing the die-hard conservative faction ‘Soyus’ (Union). At the end of January 1991, the Estonian leadership decided themselves to hold a referendum: on the independence of Estonia. In a clear effort to preclude the All-Union referendum, the Estonian referendum’s date was slated for the 3 March 1991, two weeks before the All-Union one was to be held on 17 March. In the latter referendum, Estonia did not participate.\footnote{Andreas Demuth, Politics, Migration and Minorities in Independent and Soviet Estonia, 1918-1998, p.194.}

The Estonian referendum allowed the participation for all individuals above the age of 18 who were in the possession of a valid registration (propiska) and who were not members of the army, border guards, interior ministry or railway troops. Consequently, almost all inhabitants of the ESSR could cast their vote. Voter participation was a
high 82.9% of an eligible 1,114,000, of whom 77.8% voted ‘yes’. Therefore, a high number of non-Estonians supported Estonian independence, too. The Estonian Supreme Council therefore took the referendum result as full mandate to continue its work and ask internationally for recognition of the government of the Republic of Estonia. During the putsch, the Estonian Supreme Soviet declared the restoration of Estonia’s independence from the USSR on 20 August 1991. By the end of the year, Estonia was recognized as an independent state by 63 or so states and was member of the UN and other international bodies. Crucially, both the Russian Federation under Boris Yeltsin and, forced by events, the USSR, too, recognized Estonia, too.

One of the main problems of its renewed existence was to become what under Soviet rule was the ‘question of nationalities’ and which was to be come a ‘question of minorities’ in a reversal of order and power. Also, whereas in the Soviet Union external influence on human rights questions had been largely if not totally fended off, Estonia now came into the glare that all ‘new’ states had to endure from the established states of the Western world which they were keen to rejoin. Since the disappearance of the Cold War, meaningful developments especially in human rights questions had become possible since the Paris Conference and the Copenhagen Document in 1990. This included the idea that such questions could not be relegated anymore to the domestic arena only and shielded from external influence.

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 republic’s economic independence and market reforms. Financial contributions to the All-union budget were stopped, and wide-ranging price reform was initiated. Plans for a separate currency, begun in 1989, continued to be worked on. In October, the government dispatched militia forces to patrol the republic’s border with Russia and to control the

---

79 Ibid. p.195.
80 Ibid.
movement of goods; control over western gateways remained under Soviet control. Moscow's bloody military assault on civilians in Vilnius and Riga in January 1991 sent shock waves through Estonia as well. Although there were no violent incidents in Estonia, Soviet loyalists staged a noisy demonstration in Tallinn, and the government installed huge boulders in front of the parliament building for protection.82

On January 12, Tallinn was the site of a hastily organized summit meeting between the Baltic leaders and Yeltsin, who supported the sovereignty of the three republics against Gorbachev. Yeltsin and Estonian parliament chairman Arnold Rüütel signed a bilateral treaty recognizing the sovereignty of each other's republic. When, later in the month, Gorbachev announced a nationwide referendum on the issue of preserving the Soviet Union, Estonia decided to preempt the ballot with a referendum of its own on independence. 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. With public opinion clearly favoring independence, Gorbachev agreed to official talks with Estonia beginning on March 28. 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 on independence. The talks were further upset 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 (Otryad Militsii Osobogo Naznacheniya--OMON), commonly known as the Black Berets, over which Gorbachev apparently had lost control.83

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 troop carriers had already started to move on Tallinn

82 Great Soviet Encyclopedia, op.cit, p.1327.
83 Andreas Demuth, op.cit, p. 209.
as the commander of Soviet forces in the Baltics 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 11:00 P.M., the Supreme Council, as the legislature was now known, passed a final resolution declaring full independence and requesting de facto international recognition. Volunteers were mustered to defend key government buildings and communications centers; there was no bloodshed, however. As Heinz Valk, an artist and a member of parliament, later declared, "The coup in Moscow [gave] us a chance comparable to that in 1918." Once the coup finally collapsed, Estonia resumed its efforts to gain international recognition and reestablish itself as an independent state. 84

After it regained its independence, it took a very important step by establishing a Constituent Assembly on September 7th 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 of new realities. By the spring of 1992, it had finished its work. According to the new constitution, Estonia is a parliamentary state. The President is elected by the Parliament and has no veto on legislation, which can be overridden by a simple majority of Parliament. The constitution guarantees basic freedom for citizens, an independent Judiciary with Legal Chancellor to monitor the constitutionality of laws, and a state audit office to watch over state expenditures 85.

The State Assembly (Riigikogu) is a unicameral parliament with 101 members elected for a four-year term. The Riigikogu has the ultimate authority over legislation, treaties with foreign countries, the appointment of the prime minister and other officials, and the longevity of the

84 Ibid, p.211.
85 Graham Smith, op.cit, p. 141.
government. Parliament also elects the president by a two-thirds majority vote for a term of five years. The Constituent Assembly’s intention was that the powers of the President be more ceremonial than real. Nevertheless, he represents the state in international relations, he has the first two choices in nominating a prime minister, and can force the parliament to reconsider legislation\textsuperscript{86}.

On June 22, 1992, the first Parliament and President Elections were held in which 68 per cent of citizens participated. In the 101 seat Riigikogu, the right wing Fatherland’s list won 28 places and formed a coalition government with the Estonian National Independence Party and Moderates. Thus at the time of the first elections, not a single party got majority to form the government. In Presidential elections, two rounds were needed as none of the four candidates- Arnold Ruutel, Lennert Meri, Rein Taagepera and Lagle Parek received the required 50 per cent of the vote in the first round. In the first round, the former Chairman of the Supreme Soviet, Arnold Ruutel topped the list with 41.8per cent of the votes.

His rivals in the campaign highlighted his Soviet past, and especially the fact that he had been appointed Chairman of the Supreme Soviet in 1983 by Yuri Andropov. This was enough to block him from getting 50 percent in the first round and in the second round of elections to the Riigikogu the Fatherland’s candidate, Lennart Meri received 59 percent against Ruutel’s 31 percent votes. When the elections to the Parliament and the President were over the newly elected Parliament stated in the declaration of October 7, 1992 that the transition period in Estonia had ended and that constitutional power was now fully resorted. However, the final state sovereignty was achieved two years later when the last Russian troops left Estonia on August 31, 1944\textsuperscript{87}.

According to an Estonian scholar, Helsingin Sanomat,’ the 1992 election marked a major turning point in Estonia’s political evolution after

\textsuperscript{87} Graham Smith, op.cit, p.142.
August 1991. During the first post Soviet year, the government was dominated by reformist ex-communist often associated with the Estonian Popular Front e.g. Prime ministers Edgar Savisaar and Tiit Vahi. In contrast, the new cabinet formed by Lart Maar in October 1992 represented a new political generation and also one that with exception was free of previous ties.

Despite commanding only a slim Parliamentary majority at the beginning and facing various various defections in the course of its tenure, the Laar government managed to survive for only two years until 1944. The vote of no-confidence was 60-70, with the opposition citing the incorrect conduct of the state affairs as the main reason, along with a questionable arms deal with Israel and secret state of surplus rubles to Chechnya. In view of the Laar Government’s longevity, it is not surprising that its approval rating dwindled in September1944, with less than 10 percent of the eligible voters supporting the parties still in the ruling coalition.88

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, Chemenko and Andropov years, but some members of the Congress did not like the idea. Therefore, the Popular Front s.r.lit. Thus, 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 Grand Inquisitor’s principal of order before freedom. Overall, the Parliament became increasingly fragmented as numerous splits among the parties and bloc took place making it difficult for Parliament to play the intended leading role in national politics. The major beneficiary of Parliamentary weakness was the Presidency.89

89 Ibid, p.418.
In the 1995 parliamentary election, once again a government was formed. The coalition party and the rural union (KMU) won 32.2 percent votes, while the previous parties which formed the coalition government i.e., Fatherland and the National Independence Party received only 7.9 percent votes and other parties, i.e., the Reform Party gain 16.2 percent, Center Party 14.2 percent, Right Wing Party 5 percent, and Moderates 6 percent. Our Home is Estonia, which represented the Russian speaking electorate, received 5.9 percent votes and independent candidate gained 12.6 percent votes.90

The success of KMU was its landslide victory in the rural areas, although it was one of the leading parties in the urban constituencies as well. While Fatherland stressed the liberal nature of the 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 model.91

The question of the status of the immigrant population emerged as one of the major problem in the relations of the Baltic States with Russia. The root of the problem lies in differing perception over citizenship, human rights and democracy. So far as Estonian citizenship laws are concerned “it can be understood as a response to the period of Soviet rule. By restoring Estonian pre-war citizenship, Estonian officials stated two very complicated and confusing goals at once. At a minimum, they wanted to eliminate from political decision making any people not loyal to the Estonian state during the critical transition process”.

The formulation of citizenship policy also reflects a dilemma felt by Estonian policy makers, i.e., how to trust the segment of Russian people who were loyal to the Soviet regime, know nothing about the real history of the Baltic States before World War II and organized quite powerful.

91 Ibid.
resistance movement against Estonian independence. And yet, although the citizenship law is rooted in a parliamentary commitment to halt cultural erosion and ensure loyalty on the part of Estonian citizens.\(^{92}\)

After the restoration of independence in 1991, an Estonian special committee on citizenship submitted a draft on citizenship law to the supreme council. The proposal provided for two groups of citizens; individuals who had been citizens prior to June 16, and their descendants and individuals who were permanent residents on the date of the transition to independence. Those in second category could apply for citizenship without the Estonian language, and ten years residency to be acquired of future applications.

On February 26, 1992, Estonian citizenship law was formally enacted and closely paralleled the committee's second draft. The law was actually a reinstatement of the 1938 citizenship law, which provided citizenship rights to pre-1940 citizens and their descendants. It departed from the second draft in its provision of a detailed naturalization procedure for non-citizens. Under the new law, any person who had resided in Estonia for twenty years could apply for citizenship. Upon passing an Estonian language exam and swearing on oath of loyalty to the Estonian states, individuals would receive citizenship one year after application.\(^{93}\)

As a result of citizenship law of 1992 in Estonia, non-citizens could not enjoy full voting rights, as electoral procedures stipulated that only citizens could vote in national elections. Non-citizens could not hold national office or form political parties, although they were permitted to vote in local elections, because, the first post independence elections were held in 1992, the new citizenship law prevented in non-citizens involvement in the political process. In the northern eastern town of Narva, where Russians compose vast majority of the local population, less that 10


\(^{93}\) Ibid.
percent of residents were permitted to vote in national elections. As a response to concerns that citizenship legislation and its impact on the Russian population reflected a nationalist leaning, the parliament enacted several changes to the law in 1993. The first of these changes involved the method of determining citizenship by decent. According to the 1992 law, descendants of pre 1940 citizens could automatically receive citizenship but citizenship based on the original law was only passed through paternal line. The 1993 change extended the law to allow for passage through the maternal line as well\textsuperscript{94}.

The second change allowed an exception to the residence and language requirement for those non-citizens who had supported the congress of Estonia, an unofficial parliament elected in 1990 by citizens of the inter-war republic and their descendants. In 1995, further changes were made to the citizenship law, such as lengthening of the two-year residency requirement for naturalization of five years. However, all people who were permanent residents in Estonia prior to 1990 were exempted from this provision. Still, the language requirement was tightened with the addition of a civic exam testing knowledge of the Estonian constitution and citizenship law\textsuperscript{95}.

As the law was passed in 1990, most permanent residents without citizenship could apply for naturalization. A one-year waiting period was necessary for the processing of application and a mere 13,000 people have done so in 1990. Estonia passed legislation on citizenship on June 25, 1993 giving residents who were not citizens two years to apply for permanent residence permits. Former KGB and military personnel and their dependants were specifically excluded from eligibility. In 1992, only 17,000 residents without Estonian citizenship applied for Russian citizenship, suggesting wide scale apathy over the issue of citizenship among resident aliens. Likewise, the turnout among the Russian population in Narva for the Russian referendum on April 25 was very less.

\textsuperscript{95} Ibid.
One immediate result of the citizenship policy has been an important degree of dissatisfaction and discontent within the Russian people. In Estonia, many Russians have expressed their view that the law is a barrier to citizenship acquisition and precludes their full participation in Estonian society. In Russia itself, government officials have been quick to condemn the law maintaining that it violates the Russian-Estonian treaty of January 1991 regulating inter-state relations and an unacceptable infringement of Russian rights. In 1992, the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation formally threatened Estonia with economic sanctions as punishment for the citizenship laws, accusing of "flagrant violations" of human rights and the Estonian-Russian treaty. It is a remarkable point that Russian condemnation of Estonia's citizenship policy continues today as evidenced by a message sent by Boris Yeltsin to Bill Clinton in 1996, asking the US President not to endorse the admission of Estonia to NATO due to Baltic discrimination of the Russian Diaspora. During the CSCE (Conference of Security and Co-operation in Europe) Helsinki meeting, Russia repeatedly raised allegations of human rights violations in the Baltic countries particularly in Estonia.

Estonia, which was signed out in the declarations responded with its own declarations, issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on July 18. The Russian Federation was charged with continued to apply, military and political pressure on Estonia. It was claimed that Russia violates international law by keeping former Soviet troops on Estonian territory despite the CSCE document, which called for their removal. Russian speaking minorities are a serious problem for two of the Baltic States. The same countries, which have accused Russia of violations of the rights of

98 Aksel Kirch, op.cit, p.111.
national minorities, have now themselves set up several restrictions on non-citizens.\footnote{Vladimir B., \textit{Russia and Europe: The Endangering Security}, (Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 339.}

Besides the citizenship and rights of the minorities and statehood problems, there was a major problem of geographical entity. Estonia lost a silver of land across the river by Narva and the Peteseri area in the southeast near Pskov. At the northeast, Abrene, also the Russian Federation. After regaining independence, Estonia raised this issue publicly. Estonia reached an agreement with Russia over a joint investigation of the human rights of the minority in the region. However, in the view of the consistent focus by Baltic politicians on the illegality of the soviet occupation, there was a great likelihood that these boundary questions would be raised in the future. On February 22, 1993 Estonian foreign minister Velliste outlined a plan by Estonia to request CSCE mediation of the claim. Estonia recently passed a law extending its territorial waters twelve miles in most cases, and provided for the possibility of limiting it in some places to allow for international navigation in the Gulf of Finland through negotiation with neighbours. The hard line point of view that the soviet twelve-mile limit to be kept and that questions of subsequent negotiation with Russia about navigation, especially of warships, be made a triumph card for concessions in other matters was narrowly defeated.\footnote{Fredrik Starr, \textit{The Legacy of History in Russia and the New States of Eurasia}, (New York, 1994), pp. 118-119.}

Regarding the border issue, Estonia points out that under the Tartu peace Treaty of February 2, 1920 approximately 2000 km east of the Narva River and the Pechory district, part of the Pskov region should belong to Estonia. Estonia included reference to the Tartu Treaty in its 1992 constitution. The Estonian authorities issued thousands of passports for the ethnic Estonians resident in the Pechory districts. Russia suspected it of intending to create a critical mass of Estonians in the district to lay the legal foundations for calling a referendum and subsequently annexing the territory. The Estonian border regulations are considered in Moscow to be
The border questions remain an issue because territorial disputes are important to be resolved, before full and final recognition by other independent states. The European Union and NATO membership questions have been placed on hold. It is thought that Estonia will not be admitted is a member before the century and the matter can be left unresolved. It is however, an issue which has been compared to the situation Japan finds itself in with Russia over the Kurile Islands, where political scientist Rein Taagepera suggested that Estonia wait in connection with the border issue as the Japanese do, meaning in fact that Estonians would never yield. It is evident that Estonia’s unresolved issues have international ramifications. Acceptance into the European Union clearly presupposes the resolution of the territorial issues, indicating the independence even though achieved, does not end matters, because the reintegration into the international society is incomplete.\(^{103}\)

In reaction, Estonia raised this issue in the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) but failed to attract any serious attention to the problem. As a result of Russia taking unilateral measures and lack of international support, the majority of the Estonian political parties have begun to be inclined to compromise with Russia over the border issue. At the end of 1994, Prime Minister Andres Tarand said that Estonia was prepared to make concessions on the borders if Russia agreed at least to recognize the Tartu Treaty as the basis for the relations between the two countries.\(^ {104}\)

As far as Economy is concerned, Estonia adopted radical economy, which subsequent led to two key challenges. The first challenge was linked

\(^{102}\) Ibid. p.347.

\(^{103}\) Heidi Eskor, Some Parallels in the Emergence of Estonia and Quebec as Nation-States in the context of International Relations, (Tartu, 1996), p.48.

\(^ {104}\) Vladimir B., op. cit, p.347.
to the development of foreign trade and the second was the reorientation of their domestic economies to meet the needs of the domestic market and to establish their place in the new Europe. Besides these two challenges, many of the problems currently faced by Estonia due to the collapse of the centralized Soviet trading system.¹⁰⁵

Prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union, inter-republican trade was managed by the central planning system with the key actors being the all-union industrial ministries. Since the 1991 liquidation of the Soviet bloc, Estonia has ranked behind only the Czech Republic and Hungary in the level of foreign investment per capita. In 1992, Estonia became the first formerly Soviet country to create its own currency, the Kroon, where value was fixed to the German Mark. This created a financial stability at a time when the Russian rouble value, for example was plummeting thousands fold¹⁰⁶. In early 1992, Estonia decided not to join the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) and sought to re-negotiate its trading agreements with the Russian Federation. These agreements have been taken the form of barter agreements based on the tradition pattern of trade between the two republics.

In 1990, after it regained independence, Estonia adopted independent foreign policy and tried to strengthen its relations with the western countries. In the policies of Estonia vis-à-vis international institutions, the initial emphasis was to gain independence and international recognition, to establish diplomatic contacts, and to represent Estonia in international arena. Estonia succeeded to reinstate its independence and to get international recognition. The western countries granted Estonia as the status of “distinguished guests”.

It is interesting to note that the then President of the Soviet Union (in 1990) Gorbachev rejected and threatened to leave the meeting if Estonia was allowed to sit on an equal footing in the CSCE Conference. The

opportunity whereby Estonia could finally break its international isolation emerged with the coup d’etat in Moscow on August 1991. Estonia adopted laws on the full restoration for their independence on August 20-21, 1991, respectively. In the aftermath of the failed coup, Russia granted recognition on August 24, 1991 and the western powers also recognized Estonia as an independent republic.\(^{107}\)

The Western European Union also initiated establishing contact with Estonia and Estonia’s reaction to the Western European Union initiatives was very positive. Estonia’s co-operation with the Western European Union is an important vehicle in facilitating and accelerating its objective of becoming a member state of the European Union. Regarding NATO, it is widely seen in Eastern Europe as the most successful organization. By the beginning of 1992, Estonia had informally but resolutely expressed its interest in joining NATO. There were two possibilities considered- full memberships or some form of security guarantee for their independence.

In this context Estonian Minister of State, Raivo Vare opined that, “the best solution would be direct military guarantees from the West and the only real possibility now a days is NATO. There were many reasons for NATO’s unenthusiastic response to Estonia, for example, extending NATO membership eastward could alarm certain circles in Russia and NATO countries lack the financial resources to extend their commitments. Estonian issues include territorial/borders issues with Russia, minority and the like which are not under the control of NATO.”\(^{108}\)

NATO membership has become a particularly thorny issue for Russia, since it considers it as a threat and NATO may be proceeding slowly and in steps incrementally, so adjustments are to be made. It has been suggested that Estonian along with other Baltic States be allowed to enter first. The apparent disagreement between NATO members and the

---

\(^{107}\) Pettij. and Juris Prikulis, op. cit., p35.  
\(^{108}\) Ibid, pp. 61-62.
position of Russia on its expansion is potentially explosive and the position of Estonia become extremely dangerous.

Besides the efforts to get membership in NATO, Estonia has been admitted to the IMF and the World Bank. It has been accepted as full membership of the Council of Europe. It is trying to develop and establish maximum close co-operation with the West in order to counter balance Russian influence. Estonia also tried to make the best out of their intangible diplomatic power base elements, it used the so called normative power and such elements as prestige and reputation in making appeals to international norms and justice. Although its moralizing and legalistic approach to foreign policy was severely criticized, Estonia had considerable success in enlisting the support of the international forum for its demands.