

Hymn to Freedom

On the Occasion of the 32nd Anniversary of the Independence of the Estonian Republic.

(Editor's note: Today is the 32nd anniversary of the new-found independence of Estonia. It was written by a valley resident—a so-called "displaced person" who does not use his real name for fear of reprisals against relatives still in his home land.)

By A. O. Alakivi
The achievements of Baltic states during their short freedom and independence we dare say, were a hymn to freedom. They showed what a free nation was capable of doing even in a short time if it only had freedom to organize its life itself. The Baltic states—Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania developed so quickly from provinces of Russian Empire to up-to-date states with a high standard of living, well organized social life and high culture—as in a fairy-tale.

Now those states are behind the Iron Curtain, and we know very little about their life there, but what we know, is very sad. The people, who are not deported till now, have lost even their desire to live. They hope only for a miracle that could give them back their freedom and secured life.

Escape by Flight

A small number of Baltic people escaped by flight. Now those people are spread all over the globe looking for a place to put their heads. Mostly they have gone to Sweden, England, USA, Canada, and Australia or hope to escape from DP camps in Germany. It can be imagined that it was not fun to leave all you had and to run for your life under bombs and other dangers. Yet those homeless people keep their eyes turned towards the old homes, remembering the happy days there.

On the February 24 the Estonians outside the Iron Curtain celebrate the 32nd anniversary of their republic, but the Estonians behind it do not dare even think of it. Thirty-two years today the Manifest of Independence was declared. But a few days after that the nine-months German occupation followed, then came the War of Liberation with Russia. After 13 months fighting on Jan. 3, 1920 the peace treaty was signed and Russia renounced her rights and acknowledged Estonian independence for all times.

Respite But Brief

However, in September, 1939, according to the agreement between Russia and Hitler's Germany the Russians invaded Estonia again.

So the country could develop and live its own free life only



TALLINN—picturesque capital of Estonia

about 20 years. Those 20 years were enough to show what an industrious nation, enthusiastic for freedom, could do. It was a chapter of history of which every nation could be proud.

Country Revives

At first it was not easy. Since 1721 Estonia was a part of Russian Empire. The conservative regime of the Russian Czar kept the whole life fettered. The country had suffered from two wars, revolutions and German occupation, had fought against Russia in proportion: one man against 150. But freedom filled the people with enthusiasm and they worked hard. They knew that they worked for themselves and for their own country. There were no foreign masters any more whose orders or prohibitions they had to obey. All the more they had to catch up with the other Western countries to be able to compete with them, and they did their best.

In 1937 with her new constitution Estonia luckily solved her crisis of democracy, which had seized almost the whole of Europe. She balanced her budget, and foreign trade showed activity. From 1924 to 1939 the value of all exported agricultural products increased eight times. The same was true about industry. To bal-

ance her foreign trade, Estonia had to be able to import goods valued at \$25.2 per head in the year 1938. (In the same year USA imported \$15; Italy, \$13.4; Japan, \$10.3; Poland, \$7.1; and Soviet Russia, \$1.5).

The standard of living had risen so that every citizen of Estonia could use home products every day, 1.7 pounds of rye or wheat bread, 4.8 pounds of potatoes, more than 5 ounces of meat, 4.5 pints of milk, etc.

A worker could buy for a week's salary in Estonia (in brackets the corresponding numbers in France and in Soviet Russia are given), rye bread 231 lbs. (France, 200, Soviet Russia, 146); meat 69 lbs. (France 42, Soviet Russia, 9.6); butter 26.6 lbs. (France 22.2, Soviet Russia 6.0); woolen cloth 3.0 yds. (France 4.0, Soviet Russia 0.25); men's suits 0.58 (France 0.7, Soviet Russia 0.09); working boots 2.2 pairs. (France 4.00, Soviet Russia 0.35).

New Industry Formed

Quite a new industry was founded for the first time in the world: They began to extract oil from oil shale. In the year 1939, 200,000 tons of crude oil were extracted and 20,000 tons of gasoline produced. (Estonia used about 9,000 tons herself). Education was raised on a very

high level. There were almost no illiterates. From every 1,000 citizens 829 attended elementary school; 130, secondary school; 87, junior college; 113, professional school; 5, technical institute, 24, university. There were university extension courses, musical schools, art schools, etc. There were theatres and music halls; musical festivals were held every five years with 15,000 singers. Literature was developed. During 15 years of independence more books were printed than during 365 years before that. (The first Estonian book was printed in 1535.)

This swing of cultural enterprises has continued till now among the 60,000 Estonian refugees. Many Estonian artists are now among the most important of the world (young composer Edvard Tubin (Stockholm), contra-bassist Ludvig Juht (Boston), graphic Edvard Viiralt (Paris), etc.) In many sports Estonians are outstanding (chess, shooting, wrestling, etc.).

All Was Changed

But we did not want to rest on our laurels, we worked so feverishly that we did not even notice how far we were gone and how well we lived. Suddenly it all was changed.

At first we did not fear. We had heard Russian propaganda. According to that they were the most advanced nation of the world. So we were curious to see what they and their life was like. Twenty years ago we were about on the same level, but they had better soil and more riches of nature. We were more diligent. Then the Russians arrived—ragged, hungry, they rushed to our stores to buy all they saw. Then we heard about their housing conditions and all about their life. We were surprised. What's the matter?

But we were a free nation, we worked with delight to create, to produce new articles. They were mere slaves of the communist party, they did not work freely, they worked forcibly. That's the difference.

'Twas Not Voluntary

They speak sometimes as if there had been a plebiscite, and Estonian people voluntarily joined Russia. Nothing is more wrong than to say so. Russians pretend that there was one, but the Estonian people were never asked about that.

Estonians heard first about this plan when the communistic council accepted it. But this council was not elected according to the Estonian constitution and laws and its decisions could never have a lawful power. That the people went to vote for the members of this council, was true, but they were not to go to vote, will be put on the black list; if Estonian people want to remain to live on their own soil, then they have to go to vote,

etc.). Moreover, the Estonian laws which were accepted by parliament, had to be accepted by the second house (senate), too. This second house was not asked about this project, it did not even convene. So according to the Estonian constitution and laws, Estonian independence has not been given up. The activities of the state are only interrupted by violent occupation of Russians, and now it depends only on the conscience of the world as to how long the world allows such an iniquity.

HOOP PICKER
COLUMBIA, Mo. — (INS) — George R. Edwards, associate professor of physical education at the University of Missouri, is a member of a 12-man committee in charge of selecting the United States basketball competitors for the 1950 Pan American games and the 1952 Olympics. The committee represents the National Collegiate Athletic association and the American Amateur union.

Annual Cub Scout Dinners Slated Tonight

More than 1,000 Cub Scouts and parents are expected to turn out tonight for six Blue and Gold banquets in the Salem area.

The banquets are annual events in which the scouts entertain their parents and show them the work accomplished during the preceding year of scouting.

Keizer pack 41, sponsored by the North Salem Kiwanis club, will stage a banquet and charter night at the school.

Other packs holding banquets are Rotary pack 1, at the scout hut at South Cottage and Oxford streets; pack 10, sponsored by the Richmond school Parent-Teachers association, at the school; Englewood pack 11, sponsored by the

Englewood PTA, at the VFW hall; pack 19, sponsored by the Salem Heights Community club, at the clubhouse; and the Auburn pack, sponsored by the Auburn Mothers club, at the Four Corners Community club.

Col. Wooten Said Improved

Col. Elmer V. Wooten who has been seriously ill in the Veterans hospital in Washington, D. C., is progressing satisfactorily, according to word received in Salem from Mrs. Wooten.

He expects to be able to return to his home in Mt. Rainier, Md., around the middle of March. Col. Wooten, wartime director of selective service in Oregon, has been stationed in Washington in the office of Brig. Gen. Hershey.

LABOR VALUES
LONDON—(INS)—An American is willing to work steadily, at high speed because he knows that in 15 minutes he can earn the cost of a packet of cigarettes. His opposite number in Britain has to work 90 minutes for the same result. These and other facts were revealed by the Anglo-American Council on Productivity in support of the contention that the U.S. working man will work hard to attain maximum production because, apart from food and shelter, he can buy more with an hour's labor than his British counterpart.

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