

The Role of Helsinki in the Estonian Agenda of Modernizing Tallinn at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century

Karin Hallas-Murula

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Die Rolle Helsinkis im Rahmen der estnischen Modernisierungspläne für Tallinn zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts

Aufgrund der geografischen, ethnischen und kulturellen Nähe spielte Finnland eine wichtige Rolle bei der kulturellen und politischen Entwicklung Estlands. In den Jahren 1904-1914 erlebte die estnische Architektur ihre Finnische Periode. Wichtige staatliche Gebäude in Estland wurden von finnischen Architekten entworfen.

Für viele Esten war Helsinki die nächstgelegene europäische Großstadt; ein Besuch dort lag nur 80 Kilometer über die Ostsee entfernt. Helsinkis Stadtentwicklung fand seit den 1890er Jahren in estnischen Zeitungen ihren Widerhall. Zu den urbanen Errungenschaften Helsinkis, die dort hervorgehoben wurden, zählten die Boulevards, Parks und Denkmale, die Neubauten, der moderne Straßenverkehr und vor allem die Sauberkeit im Stadtbild sowie das zivilisierte Auftreten seiner Einwohner.

Im Jahr 1904 errangen die Esten bei der Wahl zur Tallinner Stadtverordnetenversammlung erstmals die Mehrheit. Orientierten sie sich im Folgenden, konfrontiert mit der praktischen Verwaltungsarbeit, an Helsinki als dem Modell einer europäischen Stadt? Angesichts des immer dichter werdenden kommunikativen Netzwerks zwischen den beiden Stadtverwaltungen wird in dem vorliegenden Beitrag der Standpunkt vertreten, dass beim Transfer von Wissen bezüglich kommunaler Verwaltung auch Städte an der geografischen Peripherie als Vermittler von Innovation auftreten konnten.

Der internationale Wettbewerb eines Generalplans für Tallinn (1913) war der erste seiner Art im Russischen Reich. Bedenkt man den finnischen Einfluss auf die estnische Architektur, war es nur zu natürlich, dass der finnische Architekt Eliel Saarinen eingeladen wurde, um den Wettbewerb vorzubereiten. Zugleich rezipierten die Angehörigen der Tallinner Stadtverwaltung die zumeist deutsche Fachliteratur und verbanden diese Recherchen mit Studienreisen nach Deutschland. Joseph Stübgen und Theodor Goecke, führende Experten im Bereich der Stadtplanung, wurden in die Jury berufen, wo sie auf Bertel Jung aus Helsinki und Grigori Dubeliev aus Kiev trafen. In ihrem Bestreben, den Planungswettbewerb für Tallinn auf ein möglichst hohes Niveau zu heben, zeigten sich die estnischen Verantwortlichen flexibel und wandten sich *best-practice*-Beispielen in ganz Europa zu – auch in Ländern wie Deutschland und Russland, denen die Esten in kultureller Hinsicht eigentlich reserviert gegenüberstanden. Professionalität zählte hier also mehr als Nationalismus.

KEYWORDS: Helsinki, city planning, transfer of knowledge, Eliel Saarinen, Tallinn.

As in many other European pre-state nations at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, the processes of “nation building,” urbanization and modernization were simultaneously taking place in Estonia (then Estonian Gubernya, a territory belonging to the Tsarist Russian State). The “myth of nation” intertwined with “the myth of Europe.”¹ The “myth of Europe” was a loose concept which carried the imagination about modern European development, a kind of belief that Europe had reached a particular level of “civilization”. Visually, this concept was most clearly recognized in urban development, in the modern elements that were appearing and symbolic signs of progress in big cities, including modern transport infrastructure (urban railways, trams and cars), changing architecture, new democratic spaces such as wide boulevards, city parks and new types of public buildings, as well as technical features such as street lights, electricity, telegraph and telephone lines etc. Together, these advancements signaled the beginning of a new era. As Nathaniel D. Wood put it: “In many cases, urbanities of the day simply referred to ‘Europe’ or ‘European civilization’ as the model of their urban development.”²

Smaller and geographically distanced cities admired the changes and novelties of bigger cities and eagerly learned from the advanced administrative developments and technical innovations that were taking place abroad. European capitals—London, Paris, Berlin, Vienna, were at the forefront of urban innovations and became the models for the rest of Europe. In this active period of international “learning from the others,”³ information and technical innovations quickly spread to smaller cities thanks to increased and extensive travel and published media including books, journals, newspapers etc.

The capital of Estonian Gubernya, Tallinn (in German: Reval, in Russian: Revel), was located far away from the big European capitals. The closest big city, geographically and culturally, for Tallinn was Helsinki, the capital of autonomous Finland (80 km across the Gulf of Finland). The autonomy within the Russian Empire allowed Finland much quicker cultural and political development than other parts of Russia and turned it into an admired model for the Estonian national movement. Due to its geographical, ethnical and cultural closeness (including the closeness of languages), in the nineteenth century Finland became a model for “constructing” the nation in the eyes of Estonians.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Estonian national independence movement entered a new stage: it turned from “the peasant period” into

¹ See NATHANIEL D. WOOD: Not Just the National: Modernity and the Myth of Europe in the Capital Cities of Central and Southeastern Europe, in EMILY GUNZBURGER MAKAS, TANJA DAMLJANOVIC CONLEY (eds.): Capital Cities and the Aftermath of Empires, London—New York 2009, pp. 258-269; DAVID GORDON (ed.): Planning Twentieth Century Capital Cities, New York 2006.

² WOOD (as in footnote 1), p. 261.

³ ANTHONY SUTCLIFFE: The Rise of Modern Urban Planning 1800-1914, London 1980, p. 64.

“an urban period.” The prerequisite for this was a rapid urbanization process. Between 1871 and 1897, the population of Tallinn increased from 29,162 to 58,810, and in the period 1897-1915 it more than doubled—from 58,000 to 133,000.⁴ The number of Estonian citizens in Tallinn grew remarkably from 56.4 per cent in 1881 to 71.6 per cent in 1913.⁵ Accordingly, the percentage of other nationalities—Baltic-Germans, Russians, Jews and others, diminished. The future of the Estonian nation was now envisaged as that of an urban nation. The crucial point was in 1904 when the first generation of Estonian politicians won the majority in the Tallinn City Council elections. It marked the end of a centuries-long Baltic-German domination in the Tallinn municipality and it was the first generation of ethnically Estonian municipal politicians who now stood at the forefront of the progressive development of Tallinn, its growth into a “European” city and, furthermore, into the Estonian national capital.

As mentioned above, the role of Finnish culture and politics served as a model for the Estonian national movement in the nineteenth century. Following this, at the beginning of the twentieth century, Finnish architecture began to be admired and imported into Estonia. The importance of Finnish architecture in forming Estonian national architecture has been stressed in previous research.⁶ What has been left out of the focus of previous research, however, is the role Helsinki played as the model of a “European capital” for Estonians, and as a source for learning about urban technical innovations.

Helsinki was the closest capital to Tallinn and, for many Estonians, it was the first big European city they would visit. One could guess that the influence of Finnish cultural and political developments, so highly appreciated in Estonia in the nineteenth century, would prove to be a lasting one. In Estonia, the best European practices of modernization were learnt through the Finnish “window to Europe.” But was it really so? Did Finland and its capital Helsinki remain a crucial role model for Estonians after they had entered into the “urban phase” of the building of their nation? These are the key questions this article addresses. The focus is on the municipal development of Tallinn in the period 1904-1914, a time when the Estonian political and cultural elite, for the first time in a history, won the majority in the Tallinn City Council elections (1904) and became responsible for modernizing the capital. Was it still Helsinki that municipal officers of Estonian nationality were looking to for practical learning about municipal governance and modern urban matters? Which municipal innovations and urban technological advances taking place in Tallinn had been taken from the example of Helsinki?

⁴ Gorodskoe chozjajstvo Revelja 1905-1915 [Municipal Economy of Tallinn 1905-1915], vol. 1, Revel [1915/1916], p. 16.

⁵ Ibidem.

⁶ KARIN HALLAS-MURULA: Suomi-Viro: Arkkitehtuurin Yhteinen Vuosisata [Finland-Estonia: A Century of Architectural Relations], Tallinn 2006, pp. 11-80.

Firstly, the article will introduce the dynamics of how the general image of Finland was changed in the eyes of Estonians. The term “Estonians” is mostly used to refer to people of Estonian nationality rather than as a general term for all the citizens of Estonia (which included also Baltic-Germans, Russians etc.).

Several main sources will be studied with particular interest, including travelogues produced by representatives of the Estonian cultural and political elite, which were published in newspapers at the time and later in their personal memoirs. The question will be considered: to what extent did these travelogues reflect (on) the modern urban features of Helsinki and what did they identify as the urban novelties of particular interest in Tallinn? Secondly, the article will investigate documents produced by the Tallinn municipality at that time, focusing on the question: what best practices from Helsinki were adopted by the nationally minded municipality in Tallinn? The first part of the research considers a general overview (the image and appreciation of Finland that was created by the Estonian national and political elite); the second part focuses on the professional level, namely, municipal officers from the Estonian political and cultural elite, who, in 1904, became members of the Tallinn City Council and decision-makers on municipal matters.

At both these levels, the Estonian media played an important role as an image-creating and policy-making platform. All Estonian newspapers were involved in spreading information about Finland. When it came to municipal policy-making, *Tallinna Teataja* was especially important. It was founded in 1901 by Konstantin Päts, the national leader of Tallinn citizens of Estonian nationality, who became a vice-mayor of Tallinn, and later (in the 1920s and 1930s) the State Elder and then the President of Estonia. Newspapers had already played an important communicative role during the first period of national awakening in the mid-nineteenth century (when there were no problems with illiteracy among Estonian people due to the Lutheran church and a wide network of popular schools⁷). At the beginning of the twentieth century, newspapers continued to provide a communicative platform for the consolidation of the nation. Now urban questions began to arise next to other national matters. The main source for the research of Estonians’ activity in the Tallinn municipality is a volume entitled “The Municipal Economy of Tallinn 1905-1915.”⁸ The practice of publishing municipal reports and statistical data dates back to the mid-nineteenth century when statistical yearbooks like *Municipal Yearbook* in England, *Statistisches Jahrbuch Deutscher Städte* in Germany, and other special municipal journals, started to offer a fruitful plat-

⁷ According to the 1897 census, the literacy rate in Estonia was 77.7%: Pervaja vseobščaja perepis’ naselenija Rossijskoj Imperii [The First General Census of the Population of the Russian Empire], 1897 g., 49: Ėstljanskaja Gubernija, S.-Peterburg 1905, p. 30.

⁸ Gorodskoe chozjajstvo Revelja 1905-1915 (as in footnote 4).

form for the dissemination of municipal information and also for comparisons between cities.

The Image of Finland in Estonians' Travel Impressions

In 1836, regular sea traffic between Tallinn and Helsinki was established, spurring increased travel between Estonia and Finland. In that year, 600 passengers travelled between the two cities. In 1839, the number had already risen to 2,263.⁹

Several decades later, in 1869, Finnish professors of folklore Johan Reinhold Aspelin and Carl Gustaf Swan participated in the Estonian First song festival and the idea of an Estonian-Finnish union was born. It also became common for Estonian national leaders to visit Finland.¹⁰ Personal contacts, the romantic rhetoric about the bridge over the Baltic Sea, and the brotherhood of the two countries greatly contributed to the strengthening of the Estonian people's positive feelings towards Finland and the Finnish people.

In his study on the dynamics of the changing image of Finland in texts in Estonian newspapers in 1850-1917, Kari Alenius creates a periodization.¹¹ According to him, in the 1850s the Estonians' romantic image was mainly based on nature—Finland was admired but, at the same time, it was considered to some extent too cold and wild a country. The decade of 1878-1887 was characterized as a breakthrough in terms of Estonians' growing admiration for Finland, due to the common fight for national independence during a period of strengthening Russification in both countries. As their common enemy, the Russian Tsarist administration brought the Estonian and Finnish nations closer together in their fights for national independence and created a sense of mutual understanding. In the next decade (1888-1898), contact between Estonia and Finland expanded dramatically and there was widespread admiration for Finland amongst Estonians. In this period, the image of Finland continued to capture the imagination; it was seen as a romantic country of thousands of lakes and forests, but also as a place characterized by new features of modern urban development. Social novelties such as Finnish women's emancipation, the establishment of democratic educational and cultural societies and the Finnish anti-alcohol movement with its effective abstinence propaganda were featured in Estonian newspapers as examples to

⁹ PÄIVIÖ TOMMILA: Aurulaevasild Helsingi ja Tallinna vahel [The Steamboat Connection between Helsinki and Tallinn], in: *Vana Tallinn* 5 (9) (1995), pp. 206-209, here p. 206.

¹⁰ Johann Voldemar Jannsens' family travelled to Finland in 1871, Carl Robert Jakobson's in 1871 and in 1874.

¹¹ KARI ALENIUS: Ahkeruus, edistys ja ylimielisyys: Virolaisten Suomi-kuva kansallisen heräämisen ajasta tsaarinvallan päättymiseen (n. 1850-1917) [Diligence, Progression and Arrogance: Estonians' Finnish Imagination from the Era of National Awakening to the End of the Tsarist Era (1850-1917)], Rovaniemi 1996.

follow in order to become a “modern” nation. In the 1890s, the first Finnish and Estonian art exhibitions were exchanged.¹² In the 1890s, most Estonian art and literary enthusiasts had visited Finland and personally experienced the more advanced development of modern city culture there. At the same time, the rising interest of Finnish artists towards their folklore in arts and culture formed the basis for Finnish National Romanticism and strengthened their feelings of nationality.

In the years between 1899 and 1905, the image of Finland became multidirectional. In 1905, Finland became a destination of exile for Estonian political refugees. Estonian-Finnish friendship was strengthened in 1900 by Oskar Kallas, an Estonian folklorist who studied at Helsinki University and married Aino Krohn, the daughter of a professor there. The Kallas family played an important role in Estonian cultural life. They became active in organizing summer exchanges for Estonian students to travel to Finland (to teach German in Finnish families). In 1906, the Finnish-Estonian Society was founded.

Until the mid-nineteenth century, Estonians were a homogeneous peasant people. On entering the urban era, it became important to catch up to the “European level” of cultural development, vividly expressed in a slogan of the literati group Young-Estonia [Noor-Eesti] in 1905: “Let us become Europeans while staying Estonians.”¹³ Cosmopolitan modernism was seen as a springboard for a new urban national culture. Estonians eagerly learnt about literature, the arts, and international knowledge, and Estonian newspapers frequently featured articles comparing various local matters with the imagined higher “European level” of culture. At the same time, Finnish National Romanticism offered a model of how to synthesize modern culture and national roots. In 1902, personal contacts between Estonian intellectuals and Finnish architects (in this case Gustav Suits and Jalmari Kekkonen) resulted in material about Finnish National Romantic architecture being published in the Young-Estonia almanac *Kiired III* (Rays 3). Finnish National Romantic architecture was presented as a model for Estonians to follow in order to create their own professional architecture.

The success of the Finnish Pavilion at the Paris World Fair in 1900, which exhibited the work of young Finnish architects Herman Gesellius, Armas Lindgren and Eliel Saarinen, was enthusiastically received by Estonian newspapers. The fact that Finland, an autonomous country within Russia, could build its own national pavilion at a world fair was especially important for Estonians, who were not allowed to represent their own nation in such a way: Estonian exhibits were included in the pavilion of the Russian Empire. When the Finnish National Theater opened in Helsinki in 1902 (designed by the architect Onni Törnqvist-Tarjanne), Estonian newspapers began to discuss the

¹² In 1892, the Finnish art exhibition was organized in Tallinn, and in 1893 August Weizenberg’s sculpture exhibition was taken to Helsinki.

¹³ Toimetuselt: Noorte püüded [Editorial: Youthful Aspirations], in: Noor-Eesti album I, Tartu 1905, pp. 5-19, here p. 17.

term “Finnish style” as an architectural term in its own right.¹⁴ The Finnish National Theater gave a direct impulse for the building of the Vanemuine Theater in Tartu in 1906 and the Estonia Theater in Tallinn in 1913, (both designed by Finnish architects Armas Lindgren and Wivi Lönn).

In 1900, Tallinn had a population of 70,000 people, Helsinki 93,000. In Helsinki, earlier than in Tallinn, the building of a modern downtown area started with new “metropolitan” architecture. Around the 1890s, features on the urban development of Helsinki appeared in Estonian travelogues. “The city of Helsinki is like a doll, so beautiful, just finished, new and clean,” wrote Oskar Kallas in 1892.¹⁵

“Helsinki is the most modernized city in the world,” Miina Hermann (later Härma), the well-known Estonian female composer wrote in 1895.¹⁶ Writer Friedebert Tuglas recalled in his memoirs: “It was the first western European city I’d ever seen.”¹⁷ In 1902, newspaper editor Jaak Järv published a series of articles about Finland. As others had, he pointed out the beauty, cleanliness, tidiness, and special charm of Helsinki, remarking on its elegant buildings, galleries, well installed shops, and public parks with their picturesque hills and valleys. Järv compared Helsinki with a young girl—“kind-hearted, shining, fresh and smart, who can be gazed at endlessly.” The article even ended with an emotional declaration of love to Helsinki: “You are so lovely and beautiful! My heart wants to be with you, to love you!”¹⁸

Estonian travellers noticed in Helsinki things they were lacking in Tallinn: cleanliness and greenery, tidy train wagons (“with extraordinary hygienic supplies like mirrors with wash-basins, spittoons and special bins for passengers”¹⁹). Helsinki’s Esplanade and other boulevards adorned with monuments were praised for their artistic spirit. Trimmed grass in Helsinki was compared with velvet, where “there are neither thistles nor nettles whatsoever.”²⁰ “There are special baskets tied to trees for waste, paved carriageways and smooth streets with faceted paving” in Helsinki.²¹ Asphalt, telephone-wires, newspaper kiosks (as a sign of modern media)—and other contemporary elements were noticed by Estonian travelers. Special mention was also often made of

¹⁴ Teataja from 1902-11-23.

¹⁵ Oskar Kallas in a private letter to Mihkel Kallas from 1892, quoted in: VEERA PINO: Oskar Kallase noorusaeg, õpingud ja töö algus [Youth, Studies and the Early Works of Oskar Kallas], in: Oskar Kallas: Artikleid Oskar Kallase elust ja tööst, Tartu 1998, pp. 13-66, here p. 31.

¹⁶ MIINA HERMANN: Külaskäik Soomes [A Visit to Finland], in: Postimees from 1895-05-17.

¹⁷ FRIEDEBERT TUGLAS: Helsingist [About Helsinki], in: IDEM: Mälestused, Tallinn 1960, p. 163.

¹⁸ JAAK JÄRV: Reisikiri Soomest [A Travelogue from Finland], in: Uus Aeg from 1902-09-24.

¹⁹ Ibidem.

²⁰ Ibidem.

²¹ Üks päev Helsingis [One Day in Helsinki], in: Teataja from 1903-07-28.

the kindness and honesty of Finnish people: “Nobody steals here. In trains, everybody purchases a ticket despite there being no controls.”²²

The crucial role of cities in the development of modern culture was acknowledged by Young-Estonia members: “A new culture with new psychology and a new world view—an intelligent city culture—is on its way [...] for it is big cities where the arteries of cultural interests always pulsate more vigorously, where the more intelligent people always congregate,” Tuglas wrote.²³ The city of the new era was perceived as “an assimilator and blender of universal cultural traditions, a pneumatic engine and a cultural cauldron.” “Urban mentality,” “urban people,” “urban psychology,” “urban spirit”—those and many other expressions were frequent in the writings of Young Estonia literati, who created a conceptual model of a modern metropolis.

Helsinki formed the first impressions of a modern city and, for some Estonians, it retained its special charm also after they had experienced other European metropolises. Artist Ants Laikmaa, after travelling in Europe, still admired Helsinki: “Helsinki cannot be compared to any metropolis. [...] The voyage to Finland has a tremendous effect. Living in Finland for a while would be fruitful for anybody. A friendly atmosphere can be felt across the whole of Finland, warming one’s heart. Everywhere in Finland one can notice a kind and responsive attitude towards foreigners [...]. Even Finnish women speak correctly and interestingly, so it seems her speech is thoroughly elaborated and thoughtful.”²⁴ Laikmaa’s comparison of Helsinki and Tallinn was very critical: “Returning from Finland, I disliked Tallinn completely: everything was so narrow, dirty and disorderly—streets, houses, gardens and even people. No, I am not speaking here about tramps, of whom there are as many in Tallinn as there are in Narva.”²⁵ When I see a young girl, rosy as an apple, but with her fancy boots in mud, her beautiful skirt covered in dirt splatters—Tallinn disgusts me.”²⁶ In Helsinki, everything—peoples’ manners, behavior, clothes, and even workers’ clothes seemed pleasant and clean to Estonians. Laikmaa was one of the first to write about the new Finnish architecture. He praised Eliel Saarinen’s design for the Finnish parliament (1908, not executed), the new railway station (which was under construction at the time) and Workers’ House by Karl Lindahl (1908) in Helsinki. He also wrote about the buildings in Tampere and Viipuri. The Great Merijoki mansion (1903, by Gesellius, Lindgren and Saarinen) was admired by Laikmaa as “the most artistic and poetic living house his eyes had ever seen.”²⁷ It has to be critically

²² Ibidem.

²³ FRIEDEBERT TUGLAS: Kirjanduslik stiil [Literature Style] (1912), in: IDEM: Teosed, vol. 7, Tallinn 1959, p. 164.

²⁴ ANTS LAIKMAA: Soome [Finland] (1909), in: IDEM: Kas tõesti mina? Kirjad läbi elu, Tartu 2001, pp. 189-194, here p. 189.

²⁵ Narva is a city on the Estonian-Russian border, much influenced by Russian culture.

²⁶ ANTS LAIKMAA: Teelt [From the Trip], in: Päevaleht from 1910-01-05.

²⁷ Ibidem.

noted, however, that Estonians were sometimes inclined to exaggerate things they saw in Finland. It was an ideological aim and general mentality to oppose local Baltic-German and Russian culture in order to stress that the Estonian way had been subdued by these traditions and cultural influences and would now follow the new Finnish way.

In Estonia, representatives of political parties stressed different aspects of modern life in Finland according to their own political positions. For example, Mihkel Martna, an Estonian social-democrat elaborated in his book *Soome* (Finland, 1909) his impressions of Finland with a survey of Finnish social-democratic politics. A photo of Helsinki Workers' House was published in his book, not because of its new architecture, but because of the content: the house was built for the working class.

In 1909, Konstantin Päts wrote an article in which he elaborated on a political program that envisioned a common Finnish-Estonian future: "We are still enthusiastic admirers of everything Finnish. [...] It is the closest corner of Europe to us."²⁸

The Import of Finnish Architecture

1905-1914 were the years when Finnish architecture was imported into Estonia. With one minor exception²⁹, it was Estonian national societies and private commissioners who ordered projects from Finnish architects. The commissioners of the Vanemuine and Estonia national theaters were Estonian cultural societies. The Vanemuine Theater, which was completed in 1906 (not preserved), heralded the beginning of the "Finnish era" in the architecture of Estonia.³⁰

The Estonian Credit Bank (1912, designed by Saarinen) and several apartment buildings were commissioned by members of Tallinn's business elite, who were also active members of Estonian societies. In Tartu, Saarinen's St. Paul's Church was commissioned by an Estonian congregation. Public buildings designed by Finnish architects also inspired Estonian house owners to use Finnish architects. In 1909, the Society of Tallinn House Owners planned a special trip to Helsinki in order to explore new architecture and raise "the desire amongst the people of Tallinn for prettier buildings and a cleaner town."³¹ The glowing newspaper article that prompted the visit re-

²⁸ KONSTANTIN PÄTS: *Soome-Eesti sild* [Finnish-Estonian Bridge], in: *Peterburi Teataja* from 1909-01-24.

²⁹ The Luther Factory's club building in Tallinn (1904-1905) was commissioned from the office of Gesellius, Lindgren and Saarinen by German-Baltic businessman Christian Luther, which could have been caused by the fact that there were people of Finnish nationality in the factory's administration.

³⁰ BERNHARD LINDE: *Rahvusline omapärasus* [National Originality], in: *Sirviluud* (1912), p. 61.

³¹ *Ehk mõjub ?* [Perhaps it Has an Effect?] in: *Päevaleht* from 1909-07-04.

ported that: “Recently, the Swedish, Norwegian and Danish architects visited Finland to see its houses, and they unanimously admitted that small Finland with its original architecture is not at all insignificant in the overall cultural development of nations.” In 1909 the trip was postponed, but took place later. Private commissioners of Finnish architecture included house owners Friedrich Akel, Hans Vinnal, and Mihkel Einsild in Tallinn, and writer Karl-Eduard Sööt, Oskar Kallas, lawyer Oskar Rütli and others in Tartu.³² For Oskar Kallas and Oskar Rütli, it was a natural decision: they were married to Finnish wives and both considered Finland as their second homeland. House owners decided to turn to Finnish architects because they did not want to engage local Baltic-German or Russian architects whose architecture represented different, old cultural traditions. Architecture had become a political matter as it was important for Estonians to express their oppositional cultural orientation, but at the same time there were not yet any professional architects of Estonian nationality able to implement the new national orientation in architecture (the first professional Estonian architect Karl Burman only started his work in 1910.)

Finnish architecture had a most fruitful effect on Estonia, a fact that was also acknowledged at that time. Juhan Luiga, Estonian public intellectual, wrote: “The outward manifestation and characteristic feature of Finnish friendship could be the recent culture of construction in Estonia and the architecture of cultural establishments influenced by Finland, the best example of which is Lindgren’s masterpiece, the Vanemuine Theater. The theater has had an impact on the building style in Tartu, and also on the design of houses throughout the whole country. When the heart of Tallinn—the Estonia Theater, town hall, and bank—are erected according to the plans of Saarinen and Lindgren, we will have enough proof that the Finnish creative spirit, from our old allies, has truly laid a foundation for the ‘beauty’ of Estonian life. Some most impressive results of this have already manifested. The culture of building and architectural design has already left its noticeable mark in our emotional life.”³³

Estonians were not at all disturbed by the fact that their national architecture was being imported from Finland. Analyzing the process of learning from the others, Bernhard Linde, a member of the Estonian literati, wrote: “While receiving educational impulses from outside and from other civilized nations, any intelligentsia should have the inner strength to help them absorb all foreign elements by reworking them. Only anti-nationalists could wish for their nation to strive for spiritual independence in complete isolation from the surrounding world.”³⁴ From 1906 to 1914, the image of Finland became many-sided and diverse, and also included critical attitude, caused by the

³² See further HALLAS-MURULA, *Suomi-Viro* (as in footnote 6).

³³ JUHAN LUIGA: *Noor-Suomi-Estonia* (1917), in: HANDO RUNNEL (ed.): *Juhan Luiga: Mäss ja meelegaigus*, Tartu 1995, pp. 274-318, here p. 276.

³⁴ LINDE (as in footnote 30), p. 61.

Finnish authorities' accusation of Estonians in a bank robbery in Helsinki in 1909.³⁵ However, the general image still remained the same. In 1909, a total of 98 articles about Finland were published in Estonian newspapers, and 133 in 1910.³⁶ This rising number reflected the growing interest towards a wide range of aspects of life in Finland at this time. After the peak of 1910, the number of articles about Finland started to diminish, and in 1911 the number published fell back to 76.³⁷

Dissemination of International Knowledge on Municipal Matters

The second half of the nineteenth century witnessed the beginning of cooperation between European cities, both at a national and an international level. Faced with common tasks, municipalities started to exchange information and compare their practice in a wide range of fields from creating infrastructure and urban railways to supplying clean water, gas and electricity, and from establishing municipal enterprises to modernizing communal politics and the economics of management. In the decision-making process, it became a rule that municipal officers, before making a final choice, would consult with other municipalities in order to learn what they had done when faced with similar situations. While a general image and perhaps more strategic ideas could be adopted from bigger European metropolises, smaller cities which were perceived as “peripheral”, also learnt a lot from each other when it came to technical innovations and municipal engineering matters. Thus, in a network of mutual exchange, such cities which often formed regional centers, could also become mediators or places of innovation. European cities were part of a larger process of international modernization, but within this process cities always had their own local particularities.

In light of this, the model whereby municipal knowledge is transferred along a channel in one direction from metropolises to smaller cities seems a great oversimplification and does not always fit with the reality of that time. Rather than comparing themselves to big metropolises, it was only rational for smaller, “peripheral” municipalities to compare themselves to others of a similar size with similar financial possibilities and with whom there was intercommunication on urban matters.

Platforms for comparing the statistical data of different municipalities appeared in late 1880s in the form of statistical yearbooks and special journals on municipal information. In Russia, a general survey on the economies of

³⁵ SEPPÖ ZETTERBERG: *Kultuurisillad ja revolutsioonituuled: Helsingi eesti kogukond 20. sajandi alguses* [Cultural Bridges and Revolutionary Winds: The Estonian Community in Helsinki at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century], Tallinn 2013, pp. 220-243.

³⁶ ALENIUS (as in footnote 11), p. 242.

³⁷ *Ibidem*.

bigger cities was published in 1889³⁸ and, after that, regular statistical information about the cities started to appear in different Russian towns. In 1890, the Tallinn municipality began publishing annual surveys under the name *Otčet ob upravlenii gorodom Revelem*.

It is widely acknowledged that international conferences and exhibitions served as an important platform for exchanging information on many municipal matters, starting from medicine and housing and ending with conferences on specific themes like, for example, modern sewage systems.³⁹

Next to international conferences, it must be noted that the national communication networks were also influential platforms for obtaining knowledge and holding discussions. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the tradition of organizing municipal exhibitions was established. The first was the Deutsche Städteausstellung in 1903 in Leipzig. In 1905, the tradition of holding city congresses (Städtetage) emerged in Germany. The first Deutscher Städtetag was held in Berlin, the next ones followed in 1908 and in 1910. The tradition is still continuing today.

The aim of the national exhibitions and congresses was to strengthen the communication of municipality officers, including the highest level of mayors, so that discussions on administrative matters could take place.

German ideas were quickly taken up by municipalities in other countries. In 1904, the mayor of Charkov presented a proposal to organize regular meetings for municipal leaders and officers of Russian cities, but the first Congress of Russian Cities did not take place until 1913 in Kiev.⁴⁰ The Tallinn City Council was represented by Juhan Umblija and Ferdinand Karlson there. In the review in *Gorodskoe Delo* the congress was called a “municipal academy.”⁴¹ In 1914, the Association of Russian Cities was created in Moscow.⁴²

The communication between cities also involved Tallinn and technical innovations did reach the city before 1904, but it seems the Baltic-German municipality was not very active in moving towards modern innovations and communication. The activity of the Baltic-German municipality in Tallinn has not yet been deeply researched.

The Baltic-German municipality learnt about technical innovations from various different cities and companies. For example, Auer-gas bulbs were installed in Tallinn in 1886 (only one year after they had been invented), directly after being presented in Vienna. Tallinn was the first city in Russia to

³⁸ Sbornik svedenij o nastojaščem sostojanii gorodskogo chozjajstva v glavnejšich gorodach Rossii [Data about the Current Situation of City Economies of the Biggest Cities of Russia], Samara 1889.

³⁹ For example, the Canalization Congress took place in Riga in 1913, the same year the Tram Congress was held in Stockholm. *Gorodskoe Delo* (1913), 13/14, pp. 911-923.

⁴⁰ *Gorodskoe Delo* (1913), 19, p. 1260.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, p. 1264.

⁴² *Ibidem*, p. 1260.

use this innovation.⁴³ In 1896 Auer bulbs began to be utilized also for street lighting in Tallinn.

The horse-tramway had been built in Tallinn in 1888 (a concession was given to local Baltic-German businessmen), two years earlier than in Helsinki. In 1898, the French company Ennemonde Faye made an offer to install electric tram, but the Tallinn municipality could not accept it because of a binding agreement with a Belgian company (until 1913). The first private telephone exchanges were established in Tallinn and Helsinki simultaneously in 1882, a year before the first telephone lines were built in Turku, Finland and in Kunda, Estonia.

The major change in 1904 was that municipal power was taken from the Baltic-German minority and given to the Estonian majority. The municipality turned its attention from the medieval center of Tallinn's Old Town to the city as a whole and started to focus, especially, on modernizing and improving the slums, where the majority of voters for Estonian members of the city council came from. Another goal was to build a new city away from the Old Town of Tallinn and Toompea. The program of Estonian municipal politics stressed four objectives: 1) to modernize municipal government, increasing its openness and public control, 2) to improve living conditions in the slums, 3) to develop and create new municipal enterprises, 4) to develop elementary education by opening municipal schools. The program clearly reflected the European ideas of municipal socialism that were on the rise in Germany. It was the municipalities that became responsible for solving problems related to urban density and improving the housing in slums for workers, which inevitably contributed to the leftist thinking. German municipal reforms, innovations and methods inspired many countries, including progressively thinking people in Tsarist Russia. German ideas of municipal socialism and municipal programs of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) were introduced in Russia, translated from German books by German social reformist Hugo Lindemann and other authors.⁴⁴

The new Tallinn City Council was elected in 1904, but was unable to start operations because of the revolutionary events of 1905, followed with the arrests and forced emigration of many of its members. Fortunately, the emigration of Estonian municipal politicians offered them a good opportunity to learn the theory of municipal matters abroad. Only eight of them had been educated at universities, the others being self-made men. They were highly

⁴³ MERIKE JÜRJO: Tallinn tuledes: Linnavalgustuse ajalugu [Tallinn in Lights: The History of Street Lighting], Tallinn 2011, p. 101.

⁴⁴ MICHAEL KURČINSKI: Municipal'nyi socialism: Zadači gorodskogo chozjajstva [Municipal Socialism: Tasks of Municipal Government], Sankt-Peterburg 1906; IDEM: Municipal'nyi socialism i razvitie gorodskoj žizni [Municipal Socialism and the Development of City Life], Sankt-Peterburg 1907; VACHTAN TOTOMIANZ: Samoupravlenie i gorodskoe chozjajstvo [Self-government and City Economy], Sankt-Peterburg 1910; HUGO LINDEMAN: Gorodskoe chozjajstvo i rabočij vopros v germanskich gorodach [City Economy and Working Class in German Cities], Moskva 1910.

motivated in self-education. The escape from Tsarist repression in 1905 took some of them to Finland initially, but then they continued to Switzerland where they had the opportunity to use the university library. Obviously, the socialist political literature available in Switzerland strengthened the leftist political positions among Estonian politicians. In order to spread knowledge about municipal communal politics and self-governmental issues, the above-mentioned Estonian leader Konstantin Päts translated one of the most influential municipal reformists' books in Europe at that time—Adolf Damaschke's *Aufgaben der Gemeindepolitik* into Estonian. The Estonian translation of Damaschke's book was published in 1908.⁴⁵

Damaschke, the founder of the Alliance of German Land Reformists (Bund Deutscher Bodenreformer), promoted German municipal expertise in the provision of public services, and the setting up of municipal schools, city markets, pawnshops, hospitals, pharmacies, power plants, slaughterhouses, transport infrastructure, street lighting, social housing, etc. He dealt with workers' living conditions, supported the establishment of companies and many other things. Much of this was absorbed into the Estonian municipal agenda. Among other things, Damaschke tackled the subject of city planning and made mention of Joseph Stübben, who had already gained international fame as an urban planner. It was Stübben who was later invited to sit on the jury of the international planning competition of Greater Tallinn.

Damaschke's book was translated and published in Finland in 1908. Finnish urban researchers have also pointed out the importance of this book to the municipal development of Finnish towns.⁴⁶ In Russia, Damaschke's book had already been translated in 1904 (after the fifth edition had been published in Berlin in 1903) and in a bigger volume.⁴⁷ The copy included the publication of political programs implemented by socialist democrats in Hesse and Saxony.

Information about municipal matters had also been collected in Russia at an earlier stage⁴⁸, but it was a big step forward when a special journal of municipal affairs *Gorodskoe Delo* was established in 1909. It started to publish a wide range of information about European and American municipal undertakings, as well as meetings and conferences and it deserved to be called the flagship of advanced social thinking at a municipal level in Russia. City exhibitions in Cologne and in Leipzig (1912), the city conference in The Hague

⁴⁵ ADOLF DAMASCHKE: Kogukondliku omavalitsuse ülesanded [Tasks of Communal Government], Tallinn 1908.

⁴⁶ JUSSI KUUSANMÄKI: Sosiaalipoliitiikka ja kaupunginsuunnittelua [Social Politics and City Planning], in: MARJATTA HIETALA (ed.): Tietoa, taitoa, asiantuntemusta: Helsinki eurooppalaisessa kehityksessä 1875-1917, vol. 2, pp. 25-26.

⁴⁷ ADOLF DAMASCHKE: Zadači gorodskogo chozajstva [Tasks of Communal Government], Moskva 1904.

⁴⁸ See the impressive bibliography in BORIS VESSELOVSKIJ: Spravočnye biblioteki po voprosam mestnogo samoupravlenija. [Library References Concerning Local Government], Sankt-Peterburg 1912.

(1913) and many other conferences like these in Germany, Ghent, Lyon etc. were introduced to Russian readers via *Gorodskoe Delo*. The leading promoter of garden cities in *Gorodskoe Delo* was the progressively minded Alexander Block who knew Ebenezer Howard, the founder of Garden City movement, personally. He organized trips for Russian officials to visit English garden cities.

Gorodskoe Delo was also actively studied in Tallinn. Vivid evidence of this was the translation of a series of articles by Vachtang Totomianz into Estonian. Totomianz was an economist who had studied in Zürich and Berlin. Three of his articles on city governing and the municipal economy were introduced to the wider Estonian public in 1910 in the daily newspaper *Päevaleht*.⁴⁹ Totomianz's name was also mentioned in relation to other matters related to urban development.

The first practical undertakings of the Tallinn Estonian municipality were works in the cheap wooden slums of Tallinn. Between 1905 and 1908, pavements were built along many of the streets there and proper drainage was installed. In 1905, Tallinn had 45 kilometers of drainage; by 1915, this number had risen to 70 kilometers. Gas pipes were also lengthened significantly. The number of street lamps was doubled and, by 1910, there were 2000 illuminating city (1313 gas lamps and 683 kerosene lamps).

For financing works, cities needed stable income, which lead to the municipalization of existing enterprises and the creation new ones. From 1904 to 1915, the new Tallinn City Council managed to triple the city's municipal income. Many new municipal institutions were created, including the electrical power plant, the municipal library (1907), a pharmacy (1909), a pawnshop (1909), a sanitary laboratory (1905), a morgue (1905), many elementary schools, the labor exchange (1907), the city hospital (1908, 1911), a lodging bureau (1910), municipal baths (1912), food kitchens for the poor, a fire signaling system etc. The city bank was reopened in 1915 and the city museum was established in 1911. There were discussions held on the topics of shelters for homeless people, cold storage depot, peoples' club, etc., as well as a general improvement of the water provision system, canalization and an electric tramway. A particular priority was the new modern town hall that was to be built for the elected municipality as a symbol of the new democratic power. An international architecture competition was organized for this in 1911/12. The architecture of the town hall had to symbolize Estonian cultural orientation, modern development and the new municipal power, so no German or Russian style could be used for the building. Though the design by Eliel Saarinen did not win the competition, it was still adopted for the Tallinn City Hall (but was never realized because of the First World War).

Architecture was an ideological matter for Estonians, but there were no ideological barriers to learning new technical innovations. Municipal initia-

⁴⁹ Linna omavalitsusest ja majapidamisest [Municipal Self-government and City Economy], in: *Päevaleht* from 1910-04-22, 23, 26 and 27.

tives were therefore often adopted from Russian towns and cities, as was German know-how. When a city pharmacy was to be opened in Tallinn, the municipal pharmacies in St. Petersburg, Astrachan, Tiflis, Odessa, Dvinsk (Daugavpils) and Georgievsk were held up as examples.⁵⁰ The idea of establishing a municipal pharmacy (as was the case with all city enterprises) was to decrease the prices of medication. In St. Petersburg, for example, the municipal pharmacy managed to reduce prices by 20 per cent.

When the municipal pawnshop was opened in 1909, the statute was modelled on the one in Vologda, and the systems of pawnshops in St. Petersburg, Voronež, Vjatka and Cherson were studied as examples to follow.⁵¹ During the planning stage of the Estonian municipal brick industry, many Russian towns where municipal brick factories had decreased building prices were seen as models (in Saratov, Samara, Kaluga etc.).⁵² In 1913, the canalization project followed the example of the canalization system in Kazan.⁵³

This orientation according to Russian examples can be explained, not just by the fact that Estonia belonged to Russia and therefore also came under its systems, but also by the necessity of following Russian legislation. Being a part of Russia, it was only natural that Tallinn should use the help of technical experts from institutes in St. Petersburg and Moscow. Engineers from the Polytechnic Institute in St. Petersburg were therefore approached for designing Tallinn's railway viaducts⁵⁴, and a geodesic land survey for the city was ordered from specialists at the Konstantin Institute in Moscow.⁵⁵ Tallinn's electric tramway project was carried out by St Petersburg Polytechnic Institute engineer P. Gavrilov (1914)⁵⁶, etc.

Were there any technical innovations learnt from Helsinki? There is a documented case concerning the creation of a modern fire signaling system, where a special committee, founded for this purpose in the Tallinn municipality in 1902, travelled to Helsinki to learn how a similar system had been implemented there.⁵⁷ The public call-boxes for making an alarm call in the case of fire were subsequently installed in Tallinn. The importance of Helsinki did not center around its urban technical advancements. Helsinki itself was in a "peripheral" position in the context of a larger Europe, where cities actively learnt from each other's practice.

Municipal professionalization in Helsinki has been thoroughly studied by a group of Finnish researchers, led by Marjatta Hietala. According to their research, the majority of study trips taken by municipal officers working in dif-

⁵⁰ Gorodskoe chozjajstvo Revelja (as in footnote 4), 3, p. 46.

⁵¹ Ibidem, 2, p. 137.

⁵² Ibidem, p. 38.

⁵³ Ibidem, p. 115.

⁵⁴ Ibidem, 1, p. 137.

⁵⁵ Ibidem, 2, p. 115.

⁵⁶ Ibidem, 1, p. 182.

⁵⁷ Ibidem, 3, p. 5.

ferent fields in Helsinki were to destinations in Sweden and Germany.⁵⁸ German expertise in municipal matters was highly valued in Europe.

European orientation and direct influences from neighboring Sweden, gave Helsinki an advantage in the area of municipal development. The “European level” of culture in Helsinki was also admired by Russian municipal reformers: “There is no need to look at statistics in order to realize the enormous difference between Finland and Russia. The Finnish town is not a coincidental collection of houses, but an example of organized common living. Paved streets, some with paving stones of cubic form, are relentlessly and thoroughly cleaned. Parks, gardens, and green spaces can be found everywhere, stone is varied with greenery, houses are built with comfort in mind—space is used rationally and buildings follow Finnish national style [...] flowers are everywhere, as are electric street lights, trams, and telephones,” wrote an enthusiastic contributor to *Gorodskoe Delo*.⁵⁹ Alongside its general European outlook, municipal innovations in Helsinki were also admired such as the Central Communal Information Bureau (founded in Helsinki in 1912) and the journal *Finsk Kommunal Tidskrift* published in Helsinki with a run of 1,600 copies. From 38 towns in Finland, 25 published their historical surveys and 19 municipalities published regular statistical surveys.⁶⁰

Germany was the second destination for professional study trips (after Sweden) for Finnish municipal officials and technicians.⁶¹ A number of articles in *Gorodskoe Delo* also focused on German information. So, for the Tallinn municipality, German information came from all directions—directly from Germany, through local Baltic-German newspapers, from widely available German books (the Estonian elite read German fluently), as well as through Russian channels and, last but not least, in a mediated way from Finland. The Baltic-German gentry, who had oppressed Estonian peasants throughout the centuries, were considered enemies of Estonian nation, but there was no ideological problem in learning urban innovations from Germany. This became especially clear when the more complicated areas of urban development, such as city planning, started to gain importance and relevance in Estonia.

⁵⁸ MARJATTA HIETALA: Innovaatioiden ja kansainvälistymisen vuosikymmenet [Decades of Innovation and Internationalization, in: EADEM (ed.): Tietoa, taitoa, asiantuntemusta: Helsinki eurooppalaisessa kehityksessä 1875-1917, vol. 1, Helsinki 1992, p. 44.

⁵⁹ M. PETROV: Učastie Finljandij v s’ezde po ozdravlenii gorodov [Finnish Participation at the Cities’ Development Conference], in: *Gorodskoe Delo* (1916), 7, p. 774.

⁶⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 775.

⁶¹ HIETALA (as in footnote 58), pp. 216-291.

Implementing Foreign Expertise in Planning

Around the 1910s, town planning became an acknowledged part of municipal social reforms.

Tallinn was the first city in the Russian Empire where a comprehensive master plan was initiated and the international planning competition was organized (in 1912/13). Before this, the Kiev master plan had been started by Grigori Dubelier, a professor at the Polytechnic University in Kiev and a serious activist of modern planning⁶², but the plan was never completed.

The main promoter of the Greater Tallinn master plan was the Tallinn House Owners' Society (Tallinna Majaomanikkude Selts, founded in 1907). Many of its members were also city council members. House owners were directly interested in the development of the city. The Society approached the city administration with an official proposal to organize two special committees in the municipality: one for planning and the other for carrying out a technical land inventory in Tallinn.

Considering the admiration for Finnish architecture among Estonian private commissioners, it was only natural that, in preparation for the planning competition, Eliel Saarinen was invited from Finland as a consultant for the program and the rules. The general direction for the development of Tallinn was laid down by the Russian Tsarist government: Tallinn had to become the main military port of Russia; a railway connection to Moscow was to be built, etc. Saarinen thoroughly studied the aspects of the development of Tallinn.

The dissemination of international knowledge in the field of city planning has been described by Stephen V. Ward, who identified two general modes of how planning knowledge was transferred internationally: borrowing and imposition.⁶³ The balance of power between the importer and exporter has been seen as the major factor in the transfer process. In countries where democratically elected governments and reformist movements were absent, the "congested imposition" process prevailed. If the imposition came from a figure of authority, it turned into "authoritarian imposition."⁶⁴ Due to the highly motivated receiver, Ward's term "synthetic borrowing" is applicable to Tallinn. The key point here was the selection and assessment of the foreign professional experts.⁶⁵

Preparations for the competition motivated Estonians to turn to the best experience Europe had to offer in city planning. Saarinen was invited from Finland as an expert, but in order to learn the skills and knowledge of planning itself, Estonians turned to the widely recognized experience of Germany. In the 1910s, Germany had won the leading position in European city plan-

⁶² GRIGORI DUBELIER: *Planirovka gorodov* [City Planning], Sankt-Peterburg 1910; IDEM: *Gorodskie ulicy i mostovye* [City Streets and Embankments], Kiev 1912.

⁶³ STEPHEN V. WARD: *Planning the Twentieth Century City: The Advanced Capitalist World*, London 2002, pp. 402-405.

⁶⁴ Ibidem.

⁶⁵ Ibidem.

ning. Germany was also a significant influence for Saarinen's own planning.⁶⁶ Quite remarkably, his planning competition project for Canberra (1912, second prize) was described as "German."⁶⁷ The municipality of Helsinki also used German planning experts. During the Helsinki Töölö planning competition in 1901, Joseph Stübben was invited to Helsinki as an expert. Later, in 1911, Saarinen and Stübben worked together as planning experts in Budapest—one could guess that they had been personally introduced.

Germany demonstrated its competence in modern planning in the Greater Berlin international competition (1908-1910) and in the first international city planning exhibition in Berlin in 1910. These events attracted wide interest and also inspired enthusiastic write-ups in Estonian newspapers.⁶⁸ The municipal politician Leopold Tõnson had a special interest in modern planning. He had studied in Switzerland and travelled extensively in Europe. He had visited the Leipzig housing exhibition and Berlin city planning exhibition. In explaining contemporary planning ideas to Estonian readers, he was most critical of Tallinn in comparison with other European cities: "Compared to Helsinki, Stockholm, St Petersburg and Hamburg or other regulated cities, Tallinn is a big, chaotic Russian village."⁶⁹ Remarkably, Helsinki was mentioned by him first. The Comparison to a Russian village was highly provocative in two respects—"Russian" was identified with the Tsarist rule, which was to be fought against, and a "chaotic village" was the deepest possible contrast to the idea of modern city. Due to his active participation in urban matters, Leopold Tõnson became a city councilor and, in 1913, a member of the Tallinn planning competition jury.

The Tallinn municipality predominantly ordered German professional literature for studying aspects of modern planning (as a rule, Estonians read German fluently).⁷⁰ On their study trips, the Tallinn City Council members and the staff of the municipal building department mainly chose Germany as a destination. In 1912, several council members and municipal engineers were sent to Germany for six weeks in order to study planning with the aim of attending planning lectures in Dresden and visiting a planning exhibition in Düsseldorf.⁷¹

Stübben and Theodor Goecke, a professor at Berlin's Technical University and the editor of the Journal *Der Städtebau*—the first of its kind in Europe—

⁶⁶ This has been mentioned many times by several Finnish architecture researchers Mariika Hausen, Kirmo Mikkola, Riitta Nikula and others.

⁶⁷ EDWIN E. SLOSSON: Hunting for the Capital of Australia, in: *The Independent* from 1912-09-12, p. 602.

⁶⁸ *Berlini linnade-ehituse näitus* [The City Planning Exhibition in Berlin], in: *Päevaleht* from 1910-05-17 and 22.

⁶⁹ *Linn või küla?* [City or Village?], in: *Päevaleht* from 1910-04-03.

⁷⁰ E. g., books by Rudolf Eberstadt and Joseph Stübben and *Städtebauliche Vorträge*.

⁷¹ See more in KARIN HALLAS-MURULA: *Suurlinn Tallinn: Eliel Saarineni Suur-Tallinna projekt, 1913 / Greater Tallinn: Eliel Saarinen's Greater-Tallinn Project, 1913*, Tallinn 2005, pp. 80-87.

were invited from Germany to the jury of the Tallinn master plan competition in 1913. Dubelier was invited from Kiev, and the Helsinki city architect Bertel Jung from Finland. In developing their own modern urban planning, Finnish architects looked to Sweden, where, in 1907, the progressive law on urban planning was implemented and, in 1908, the Urban Planning Committee was founded to draw up new urban plans for Stockholm. In the same year, an Urban Planning Committee was also established in Helsinki and assigned the task of making a new plan of the city. Bertel Jung was awarded the post of city planning architect.⁷² He had studied in Helsinki and in Berlin in 1896. Jung himself had admitted how greatly he had been influenced by Germany. Naturally, he had also visited the Berlin exhibition in 1910.⁷³

Local members of the Tallinn jury were Voldemar Lender, engineer and major of Tallinn, Carl Jacoby, a city engineer and Leopold Tõnson, a representative of the city council and a local expert in modern planning. The Greater Tallinn planning competition has been analyzed in two books⁷⁴ and in several articles. Here it is important to stress that the Tallinn international planning competition was the first of its kind in the whole of Tsarist Russia. The organization of a competition at the highest possible international level using multinational sources of expertise clearly reflected the ambitious attempt of the Tallinn municipality to turn Tallinn into a modern European city, to become “civilized” and “to embody the spirit of Europe.”

Conclusion

From the mid-nineteenth century, Finland had a widely acknowledged influence in the development of Estonian national culture. In the period from 1905 to 1914, Finnish architecture was directly imported into Estonia by national societies and private commissioners as there were no professional Estonian architects yet.

In the process of transformation from a peasant nation into a modern, urbanized society, Estonians felt that their country lagged behind other, much more “advanced nations,” which in itself created a powerful motivation for rapid development. As seen above, Helsinki played an important role in the Estonian people’s visual imagination of a modern European city, and was associated with cleanness, orderly streets and boulevards, modern architecture and monuments, welfare and careful maintenance, modern traffic, infrastructural elements and urban conveniences, and last but not least, civilized and

⁷² LAURA KOLBE: Helsinki, in: DAVID GORDON (ed.): *Planning Twentieth Century Capital Cities*, New York 2006, p. 76.

⁷³ KUUSANMÄKI (as in footnote 46), p. 177.

⁷⁴ IGOR DJOMKIN: Eliel Saarinen ja “Suur Tallinn” [Eliel Saarinen and “Greater Tallinn”], Tallinn 1977; HALLAS-MURULA, *Suurlinn Tallinn* (as in footnote 71).

kind people. For a period, Helsinki embodied the meaning of a “European city” for Estonians.

In 1904, after they became the municipal decision-makers in Tallinn, Estonian politicians were faced with the need to solve a wide range of municipal problems. In looking for solutions and innovations, they turned their glance to a much wider Europe and, like many municipal administrators in other European cities, studied the theory and practice of municipal self-governance in the examples of Switzerland and Germany. Technical innovations and engineering advancements were also obtained from different international sources. Some innovations arrived in the form of commercial offers from companies abroad (for example, the electric tramway concession, which was offered to the Tallinn municipality by a Belgian company). Such cases mark the process of knowledge transfer between municipalities as a free-market system of selling and buying from the best provider.

While Helsinki remained an important visual model of the modern capital for the Estonian cultural elite, Estonian municipal politicians turned for expertise to the rest of Europe, where different technical innovations and matters of municipal governance and urban life were to be discovered.

Russian Tsarist laws and rules had to be followed in Estonia, thus making conditions there quite similar to those in other municipalities of Russia (relating to the establishment of municipal enterprises, arranging municipal finances etc.). It was therefore only natural that Russian best practice was also used in adopting municipal innovations. The Russian journal *Gorodskoe Delo* became an important channel for mediating Russian ideas about progressive municipal reforms.

In the Estonian cultural agenda, Russian and German orientations were principally rejected by Estonian intellectuals for ideological reasons. But there were no ideological obstacles in learning technical, economic and administrative innovations from those countries at times when urban development called for practical tasks to be solved. Finland could not remain the only model to follow. In many urban matters, Finland was also in the position of receiver.

Eliel Saarinen from Finland was hired as a consultant to help prepare the Tallinn planning competition. This reflects the degree to which he was trusted and valued despite the fact that his career as a planner was only just beginning. Saarinen’s Greater Tallinn project intensely fulfilled Estonians’ expectations by visualizing a magnificent perspective for the future national capital.

It was a powerful sign of the continuous influence of Finnish architecture in Estonia. At the same time, in the field of urban planning, Germany’s leadership was recognized and followed.

It was to German cities—Berlin, Leipzig, Düsseldorf and others—where Estonian municipal officers responsible for planning were travelling on study trips. The first International Planning Exhibition in Berlin in 1910 also attracted Estonians, and offered attendees an unequalled opportunity to learn

about modern planning developments from around the world. The literature on planning being studied in Tallinn was also mainly from Germany. Reading it was easy for educated Estonians, who had a good level of fluency in German and were used to receiving German information from local Baltic-German newspapers. When assembling the jury of the planning competition, organizers were able to harness international expertise by inviting the chairman Joseph Stübben and his well-known colleague Theodor Goecke from Germany to attend. While the Finnish orientation remained dominant in Estonia's cultural development, in obtaining municipal and technical knowledge the city administration of Tallinn showed its flexibility towards all possible sources and directions of learning, including Germany and Russia. Professionalism was preferred to nationalism.