

Baltic Archives in Exile and Today

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Baltic Archives in the National Archives of Sweden

The Baltic Archives were established in Stockholm 40 years ago. The collections of the Baltic Archives are still deposited in the Swedish States Archives, accessible there for researchers. The collections of the Baltic Archives contain primarily the records of the Estonian refugees living in Sweden.

The origin, activities and the present state of the Baltic Archives

The Baltic Committee, a body for cooperation of Swedes, Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians, was established in Stockholm in spring 1943, even before the great autumn 1944 flight. It saw as its aim to publish texts introducing the past and the present of the Baltic States. Estonians were represented in the Committee by the chairman of its establishing body, the former Elder of the State and the last Estonian ambassador to Moscow August Rei, and Professor Harald Perlitz. The latter was later replaced by Professor Ants Oras. The Latvian member was Professor Francis Balodis, the Lithuanian one the former Lithuanian ambassador, the writer Ignas Scheynius. The Swedes were represented by the lawyer, the future Professor Hilding Eek, the editor Nils Bohman, the librarian of the Academy of Humanities Adolf Schück, and Professor Birger Nerman. The latter, an active supporter of the Baltic refugees after the war, had been the professor of archeology at Tartu University in 1923–1925. Nerman was elected the chairman of the Baltic Committee.

In 1943–44 the Baltic Committee initiates a number of books and booklets on the situation in the Baltic States. In 1945 the field of action of the Baltic Committee enlarges. In order to stop the banishment of Baltic soldiers from Sweden to the Soviet Union the Committee contacts the members of the Swedish government, sends a telegram to the King of Sweden, Gustav V, writes for newspapers and holds speeches.

In the 1950s the Baltic Committee becomes even more active. Its membership grows. There are meetings, there are protest marches, letters are sent to the governments of the Western countries, conferences are visited, exhibitions on the Baltic States are being organized, etc.

In 1966, after 20 years of exile, the chairman of the Baltic Committee Birger Nerman proposes to set up at the Committee the Baltic Archives that would collect and arrange material on Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The emphasis should be on the material shedding light on the life and activities of Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians in exile, especially in the Nordic countries. Alongside, an archival library, an archive of newspapers, journals and printed matter, and of photos has to be founded. The statute of the Baltic Archives is composed delegating the right to elect the board and the audit committee to the general assembly of the Baltic Committee. The board, at that, is independent in its work and decisions. Birger Nerman is elected the chairman of the Baltic Archives. Kalju Lepik is invited to be its director.

In retrospect, it has to be admitted that it was the high time to get seriously involved in collecting the archival material. With years the organizations and their present or former members had stored an array of documents revealing the organizations' versatile and lively cultural activities, the adaptation of the refugees to the new society, contacts with institutions and the political initiatives of central bodies in protecting the rights of the Baltic peoples at

the international arena. The active part of the first generation was advanced in years and passing away. In many cases the death of a person had meant the ruin of documents or it was to be expected.

Although initially, at the establishment of the archives, it was meant not for the Estonian documents only, the majority of the records in the Baltic Archives are on Estonia. One of the reasons for that is that the Estonian community was the biggest Baltic community in Sweden and these were primarily Estonians who worked for the Baltic Archives.

A number of questions emerged as the received documents were being arranged. The urgent one was concerned with the preservation of the material. It was a distress to know that ordinary rooms do not suit for long-term preservation.

In order to get proper depositories there were initiated negotiations with the Swedish State Archives. In 1968 the State Archives completed in Stockholm its new modern depository built in the rocks. The negotiations resulted in the consent of the State Archivist granting the Baltic Archives the right to keep in the State Archives their arranged and listed archives of persons, institutions and organizations.

As organizations and individuals asked the Baltic Archives often for advice on arranging and preserving their records, in 1972 the Baltic Archives had archival courses in Stockholm giving elementary instruction in how to arrange and preserve records and compile archival lists.

Lectures were held in exile organizations to inform people of the Baltic Archives and their need to preserve records giving evidence on the life and activities of the exile community.

In order to educate people on the arrangement and preservation of archives, in 1972 the BA issued a short dictionary of archival terms and in 1978 the booklet "Guidelines on Archival Arrangement" („Juhtnööre arhiivide korrastamiseks") by Ago Pärtel, the chairman of the Baltic Archives.

In 1973 the BA, in cooperation with the Swedish State Archives and the Baltic Institute, organized a symposium in the State Archives discussing archival issues. The symposium was opened by the State Archivist Åke Kromnow giving a survey of the Swedish archival organization "Guidelines on Archival Arrangement".

At the same time the State Archives opened an exhibition of records, maps and photos on the Baltic history from the early 13th century up to the late 1930s. The visitors could see the 1201 decree of Pope Innocent III to Bishop Albert; the agreement drawn on August 27, 1255 between the German order and the inhabitants of Ösel on their rights and duties; the record from 1346 testifying that the Danish King Valdemar Atterdag had sold for 19,000 marks of pure silver his Estonian territories to the German order; the record signed on June 30, 1632 by Gustav II Adolf to establish Tartu University; and numerous other rare and intriguing documents. Among the maps and drawings of interest were the map of Dagö from 1593, and the plan of the siege of Tartu in 1704. The Baltic Archives published the exhibition catalogue.

In 1973 the Swedish State Archivist Åke Kromnow visited the Baltic Archives to get better acquainted with its work. At that time the offices of the Baltic Archives together with a number of other Estonian organizations were in Arsenalsgatan, Stockholm. Later these were moved to the Estonian House in Wallingatan. The visit resulted in the publication of a joint call. It encourages Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians to preserve or deposit their personal archives in the Baltic Archives. Organizations are advised to consult the BA in arranging and taking care of the documents in their hands. Swedes were addressed as follows, "If you have documents on the Baltic States, the arrival of Baltic refugees in Sweden or their stay, please contact the Baltic Archives for information or hand your records over. If you have personal memoirs on the arrival of Baltic refugees or their welcome, or certain events, like the

banishment of Baltic refugees, please put them down and give them to the Baltic Archives". The call was published in Estonian and Swedish periodicals.

In 1978 the Baltic Archives published "The Family Correspondence of Jakob Hurt 1866–1917". The first volume includes letters from 1866–1892, the second one from the period 1893–1917. The 2nd volume ends with the index of persons and place names, and the family tree. The publication was prepared by the medical doctor and cultural historian Henno Lender. The compiler says in his preface, "In 1961 I contacted architect Gunnar Hurt, the grandson of Jakob Hurt, and visited him, my schoolmate from the Tallinn Nikolai Gymnasium, thrice in his home in Koblenz. Gunnar Hurt showed me the family letters he had. He regretted his financial circumstances do not permit him to publish them. In 1930 Gunnar Hurt had visited his aunt Mathilde Mohrfelt–Mäeväli in her place in Valgejõe. There was a basketful of letters in the shed, and aunt had allowed to take with him the letters published hereby."

In the 1980s of significance could be the following. Jakob Hurt family correspondence got another volume "The Letters of Gunnar Hurt to Mihkel Hurt and Henno Lender" („Jakob Hurda perekondlik kirjavahetus 1866–1917"). The publication includes the memoirs of Alfons Hintzer about Jakob Hurt, and the impressions Helvi Katajavuori and Henno Lender had of their meetings with Gunnar Hurt.

In 1983 the BA initiated its series of memoirs. The first publication was "My Life and Work" ("Minu elukäik ja tegevus") by Eduard Karma. The second volume "Pieces of Memory 1940–1946" ("Mälestuskilde 1940–1946") came out in 1985.

For the 3rd Global Estonian Days in summer 1980 in Stockholm the Baltic Archives compiled an exhibition on its activities. The display included records from the archives of Juhan Aavik and Karl Ristikivi; the diary of bishop Konrad Veem's father Georg Vehm from the years 1890–1907 when he was the parish clerk and schoolmaster in an Estonian settlement in Russia; photos taken during the War of Independence and from the collection of Jakob Hurt, and many other records. The Baltic Archives also organized a meeting of people working for archives who could get acquainted and exchange ideas.

For the 1983 Gothenburg ESTIVAL there was compiled an exhibition "Baltic Archives"; photos and records were displayed also in the *Estland*-show of the City Library.

In 1984 the Stockholm Army Museum opened its exhibition "Mare Balticum". The Baltic Archives helped it with its photos and records.

In 1984 the board of the Baltic Archives decided to propose the general assembly of the Baltic Committee to reorganize the Baltic Archives into an independent organization. On May 6, 1985 the general assembly passed the statute of the new, now independent organization.

Prior to Estonia's liberation in 1990 the Baltic Archives together with the Swedish State Archives organized the Days of the Baltic Archives in the conference hall of the State Archives, inviting also 7 researchers from Estonia. The welcome address was said by Ingemar Carlsson, the department head of the State Archives who also presented a paper "Records of Recent Baltic History in the Swedish State Archives". It was followed by papers of Estonians: Peeter Olesk spoke about the sources of the Estonian cultural history, their present location and identification; Tiiu Oja's paper was on the church archives in the Estonian archives; Imbi Kannike gave a survey of the archives of the History Committee of the Estonian Heritage Society (*Eesti Muinsuskaitse Seltsi ajaloo toimkonna arhiiv*). The second conference day was opened by the Swedish State Archivist Sven Lundkvist. Kalju Lepik, the director of the Baltic Archives, gave a survey of his archives. Janika Kronberg spoke about the Karl Ristikivi Museum, Peep Pillak about the damage caused to the Estonian archives by the Soviet regime. Katrin Raid spoke about the underground journalism in Estonia in 1967–1985. Urmas Oolup had entitled his paper "Divorce and Comeback. The Journey of the Records of Tallinn in

1944–1990”. The Swedish side was represented by David Papp who spoke about Estonian material in Swedish archives. The Days of the Baltic Archives ended with a discussion moderated by Aino Lepik and Anna Talve of the organizing board.

List of the Personal Archives Deposited in the Swedish State Archives by the Baltic Archives

The archives of **Karl Ast-Rumor** have records of the years when Ast was the press representative of the Stockholm Estonian Embassy. The time span is July 10, 1939–July 23, 1940.

The archives of **Tõnis Kint** contain personal data, correspondence, speeches, texts and studies, and documents revealing his political activities.

The archives of **August Koern** gives an idea about the Estonian Embassy in Copenhagen, and of the Estonian National Council (*Eesti Rahvusnõukogu*), the Estonian National Fond, the Baltic Committee and other organizations in Denmark. The archives include the records of Estonian refugees in Denmark handed over to Koern as the refugee camps were closed. These give a good idea about the circumstances of Estonian refugees in Denmark. Of greatest value are the lists and the card file of the refugees.

The archives of **Heinrich Laretei** record the activities of the Estonian embassy in Stockholm since 1937 when Laretei was appointed an ambassador in Scandinavia. It also documents the political and cultural activities of Estonian refugees in Sweden. Of interest are the documents on political resistance in Estonia in 1940–1944, and the reports on the Estonian occupations in 1940–1944.

The archives of **August Rei** shed light on the life and work of the remarkable statesman, especially in exile. The BA has issued two lists for the archives: the basic list and the list of documents received later.

The same is valid for the archives of **Aleksander Warma**, the last Estonian ambassador in Finland. It has also two lists: the basic and the supplementary one.

The archives of **August Gailit** are not big. There are personal records, correspondence and a few manuscripts. Mention could be made of the original copy of “Do You Remember, My Love?” (“Kas mäletad, mu arm?”) and the German and Swedish copies of “Toomas Nipernaadi”.

Of greatest value in the archives of **Karl Konstantin Ristikivi** are his diaries. The Literary Diary from 23.10.1941–16.5.1943; The Literary Dairy 12.1.1944 –19.1.1944; Diaries from 1.8.1957 – 21.6.1968. There are also unpublished manuscripts written under pen-names: Christian Steen "Södergök är dödergök", Kent Jansson "Varning för blindgångare" and "Att se i blindo". "Södergök är dödergök" (“Hurmakägu on surmakägu”) which has been translated by Jaan Kross and was published by Kupar in 1992 in Tallinn.

The archives of the composer **Juhan Aavik** contain personal records, correspondence, and lists of music, articles, and manuscripts. Of special value are the memoirs “Tracking Music. Memoirs and reflections” (“Muusika radadel. Mälestusi ja mõlgutusi eluteelt”) I–VI.

Only Part I has been published by Orto in 1959 in Toronto. The archives of Juhan Aavik include also the records of his wife Alma Aavik. The creative work, either published or manuscript pieces of music, is not in the Baltic Archives. This is or will be given to the Tallinn Music Museum.

The archives of the cartoonist and book illustrator **Eugen Bach** contains cartoons, portraits, book illustrations, newspaper cuttings.

The archives of **Endel Kõks** has correspondence, data on artists and art shows, and the correspondence and records of the Centre of Estonian Artists.

The archives of the artist and the writer **Ants Murakin** records art shows. It also has manuscripts of unpublished works, like “Magic Mirror. Memoirs and Impressions of Childhood” (“Võlupeegel. Mälestusi ja elamusi lapsepõlvest”).

The major part of the archives of the ethnographer **Helmi Kurrik** is the material on Estonian folk costumes. Of her manuscripts mention should be made of “The Ecclesiastical and Educational Life in Tartumaa 1766–1768” (“Tartumaa kiriku- ja kooliolud 1766–1768”), “Blood in Food” (“Veri söögimajanduses”), “Estonian Hemstitch” (“Eesti pilu”), “On the History of Our Museums” (“Meie muuseumite arengust”), “The Summer of 1938 at the Peipus Russians” (“Peipsivenelaste juures suvel 1938”).

The archives of the founder of the Lender Girls’ School **Elfriede Lender** include correspondence giving a good idea of the life and work of Estonians in exile in many countries.

The archives of **Henno Lender** records correspondence, memoirs, data on the Estonian Students’ Union (*Eesti Üliõpilaste Selts*), studies, and copies of old records.

Unfortunately my time limit does not allow me to characterize all the personal archives in the Baltic Archives. What follows is just the list of the archives we have: the member of the Constituent Assembly, the chairman of the Veterinary Chamber August Arras; Colonel Lieutenant Karl-Evald Liivola; Professor Birger Nerman; Literary scholar Olev Parlo; School headmaster and the editor of “Kirik-Kool” Ants Roots; Leo Päts, the son of President Konstantin Päts; Georg Wehm; Major Harald Viirsalu. The archives of Michel Dequeker, the translator of Marie Under into French, have material on the selected poems of Marie Under, and on the dictionary of Andrus Saareste. Besides, there are a number of smaller archives containing among other records lists, like those of the Estonians seen in the Soviet Union and the German war prison.

The archives of institutions and organizations deposited by the BA to the State Archives

Balti Humanistlik Ühing

Eesti Akadeemiline Koondis Rootsis

Eesti Büroo in Helsinki and newspaper „Malevlande”

Former students of the *Eesti Noorsoo Kasvatuse Seltsi Tütarlaste Gümnaasium* in Sweden

Eesti Teaduslik Instituut

Eesti Veterinaararstide Ühing Rootsis

EKNNÜ in Gothenburg

Kommittén för kulturellt baltiskt samarbete
Baltiska Kommittén
ENMKÜ in Lund
Eesti Laulukoor in Lund
Eesti Noorte Näitering in Lund
Eesti Täienduskooli Koolitoimkond in Lund
Eesti Kristlik Noorte Naiste Ühing in Stockholm
Eesti Rahvuslik Liit
Refugee Camp in Germany *Uchte-"Kungla"*
The Estonian Red Cross Hamburg Committee

A special collection in the Baltic Archives form the documents arranged under the title “**The Republic of Estonia 1918–1939**”. These were known to a few people in the Swedish State Archives and the Baltic Archives only. Naturally, the reason was the fear that the Soviet Union would ask for the documents of the Republic of Estonia. The special collection had 31 items – records of the foreign delegation of the Republic of Estonia, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and of the Foreign Commission of the Parliament from the years 1918–1939. Of greatest importance, of course, was the Tartu Peace Treaty signed by the Republic of Estonia and the Russian Soviet Federal Social Republic. In March 1940 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent important state documents to the Estonian Embassy in Stockholm. Probably they were taken to Stockholm by the embassy’s press representative Karl Ast on board of “Suur Tõll”. In July 1940, after Estonia’s occupation, part of the documents was taken back to Estonia, but the most important ones stayed. As Heinrich Laretei, the Estonian ambassador to Stockholm, had to give the embassy over to the Soviet embassy, he kept the state documents. After the death of August Rei, the Prime Minister of the Exile Government in the office of the President, in 1963 in Stockholm, his archives reached the Baltic Archives. Besides his personal records, his widow Therese Rei gave to the archives also the state documents. The Baltic Archives handed these state documents, preserved for decades of exile in Sweden, to the National Archives, and now they are in the Estonian State Archives, belonging to the state of Estonia. For those interested, I recommend the exhibition catalogue “Back Home” describing the documents of the Republic of Estonia given by the Baltic Archives to the National Archives.

Why the collections of the Baltic Archives have not been moved to Estonia?

The Baltic Archives is of the mind that the collections of the archives, except the state documents mentioned above, have been created in exile and outside Estonia, and have to be preserved for the reason in Sweden. The principle can be observed in case the conditions of preservation are safe and the records accessible for research. The depositories of the Swedish State Archives, of course, are safe, and anyone interested in the records can obtain the research permit.

To get the permit, one has to write a written application to the chairman of the board of the Baltic Archives Aino Lepik. The board includes Aino Lepik, Kaljo Käärrik, Anna Talve, Mats Estonius, Katrin Meerits, Evi Eichorn. The long-time member of the board Aleksander Terras died recently.

The research permit can be given by the Baltic Archives only. The archives follow the decision of the board from March 30, 1977 saying that the archives deposited by the BA to the Swedish State Archives can be studied by researchers supervised by a university or any other research institution.

Since Estonia has regained its independence, the Baltic Archives receives no new material to be arranged and deposited in the Swedish State Archives. It is important to guarantee the preservation of the unarranged material of the Baltic peoples and organizations in exile that has not been deposited safely yet.

Translated by Anne Lange