

Finnish and Estonian Schools in St. Petersburg Province, 1885–1914: The Successes of Local Initiative*

von Steven T. Duke

To begin with a paradox: The 1897 census counted more than 130 000 Finnish speakers and more than 64 000 Estonian speakers in St. Petersburg Province (*guberniia*).¹ The number of Estonian speakers in the province reportedly climbed to more than 100 000 by 1918, with 50 000 or more in the city itself.² Yet despite the large and growing number of Finnish and Estonian speakers, little has been written in English about the ethnic communities they formed in and around St. Petersburg. In fact, when judging by the published historiography on St. Petersburg,³ few historians – westerners and Russians included – actually know about the

* Research for this study was supported in part by two grants from the International Research & Exchanges Board (IREX), to Russia in 1995/96 and to Estonia in 1996, with funds provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the United States Information Agency, and the U.S. Department of State, which administers the Russian, Eurasian, and East European Research Program (Title VIII). A Pre-Dissertation Travel Grant from the Office of International Programs at Indiana University and a Research Grant from the David M. Kennedy for International Studies at Brigham Young University also facilitated research. None of these organizations is responsible for the views expressed herein. Earlier versions of this paper were presented at the 6th World Congress of the International Council for Central and East European Studies in Tampere, Finland, and the lecture series of the Center for Russia, East Europe and Central Asia, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

¹ *Pervaiia vseobshchaia perepis' naseleniia Rossiiskoi Imperii 1897 g.* (First general population census of the Russian Empire). 89 vol., ed. by N.A. Troitskii. St. Petersburg 1897–1905, here vol. 37, pp. 92f.

² August Nigol, *Eesti asundused ja asupaigad Venemaal* (Estonians settlements and places of residence in Russia). Tartu 1918, pp. 10f.

³ James H. Bater, *St. Petersburg: Industrialization and Change*. London 1976; Victoria E. Bonnell, *Roots of Rebellion: Workers' Politics and Organization in St. Petersburg and Moscow, 1900–1914*. Berkeley 1983; Katerina Clark, *Petersburg, Crucible of Cultural Revolution*. Cambridge, Mass. 1995; Christine Hinshaw [Ruane], *The Soul of the Schools: The Professionalization of Urban Schoolteachers in St. Petersburg and Moscow, 1890–1917*. Phil. Diss., Berkeley 1987; Victoria King, *The Emergence of the St. Petersburg Industrialist Community, 1870–1905: The Origins and Early Years of the St. Petersburg Society of Manufacturers*. Phil. Diss., Berkeley 1982; Robert B. McKean, *St. Petersburg Between the Revolutions: Workers and Revolutionaries, June 1907–February 1917*. New Haven 1990; Richard Pipes, *Social Democracy and the St. Petersburg Labor Movement, 1885–1907*. Cambridge, Mass. 1963; Walter Sablinsky, *The Road to Bloody Sunday: Father Gapon and the St. Petersburg Massacre of 1905*. Princeton 1976; Gerald D. Suhr, 1905 in St. Petersburg. Labor, Society, and Revolution. Stanford 1989; Solomon Volkov, *St. Petersburg: A Cultural History*. New York 1995; Reginald Zelnik, *Labor and Society in Tsarist Russia: The Factory Workers of St. Petersburg, 1855–1870*. Stanford 1971.

more than one dozen sizable non-Russian communities in the Imperial capital in the years before the First World War, even though the Russian-speaking proportion of the city's population never rose about 83% between the censuses of 1869 and 1910.⁴ Much work remains to be done to explain how the non-Russian and non-Orthodox communities of St. Petersburg developed and evolved, to what extent they were influenced by political, socio-economic, and religious trends, how nationalism, revolutionary movements, and war affected community members, and what roles education, religion, and social movements played in their development.

In this paper the author briefly explores one aspect of this broader historiographical puzzle: the history of primary education among the Finnish and Estonian speakers of St. Petersburg Province from 1885 to 1914. I argue that religion, language, and ethnicity were key factors in the creation and functioning of their schools. I also contend that local initiative played a central role in the creation of schools and other community-based institutions and the preservation of their autonomy in the face of challenges launched by various institutional actors. On the whole, the Finnish and Estonian-speaking communities of St. Petersburg succeeded in advancing formalized schooling and in achieving some of the highest literacy rates in the province. Their history also illustrates the challenges and rewards of living in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious Imperial capital like St. Petersburg.

⁴ Exceptions include N.V. Iukhneva, *Etnicheskkii sostav i etnosotsial'naia struktura naseleniia Peterburga: Vtoraia polovina XIX – nachalo XX veka* (The ethnic composition and ethno-social structure of the population of St. Petersburg: 2nd half of the 19th to the beginning of the 20th century). Leningrad 1984; *Etnograficheskie issledovaniia Severo-Zapada SSSR: Traditsii i kul'tura sel'skogo naseleniia: Etnografiia Peterburga* (Ethnographic studies of the northwestern region of the USSR: Traditions and culture of the rural population: Ethnography of St. Petersburg), ed. by idem. Leningrad 1977; *Staryi Peterburg: Istoriko-etnograficheskie issledovaniia* (Ancient St. Petersburg: Historical ethnographic studies), ed. by idem. Leningrad 1982; *Peterburg i guberniia: Istoriko-etnograficheskie issledovaniia* (Petersburg and guberniia: Historical ethnographic studies), ed. by idem. Leningrad 1989; *Etnografiia Peterburga-Leningrada* (Ethnography of Petersburg-Leningrad). 3 vol., ed. by idem. Leningrad/St. Petersburg 1987–1994; Benjamin Nathans, *Conflict, Community, and the Jews of Late Nineteenth-Century St. Petersburg*, in: *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 44 (1996), No. 2, pp. 178–216; Anders Henriksson, *Nationalism, Assimilation and Identity in Late Imperial Russia: The St. Petersburg Germans, 1906–1914*, in: *Russian Review* 52 (1993), No. 3, pp. 341–353; idem, *The St. Petersburg Zeitung: Tribune of Baltic German Conservatism in Late Nineteenth-Century Russia*, in: *Journal of Baltic Studies* 20 (1989), No. 4, pp. 365–378; Mikhail Beizer, *The Jews of St. Petersburg: Excursions Through a Noble Past*. New York/Philadelphia 1989; Alexander Orbach, *The Pogroms of 1881–1882: The Response from St. Petersburg Jewry*. Pittsburgh n.d.

Finnish Communities in St. Petersburg Province

Balto-Finnic-speaking peoples, including Finnish speakers, have inhabited the East Baltic region in the area of modern-day St. Petersburg for centuries. Sweden-Finland acquired the region in the Peace of Stolbova in 1617 and created the provinces of Ingermanland (Ingria) and Kexholm (Käkisalmi). While Ingria was under Swedish control, many of its Orthodox inhabitants, including Russian, Izhorian and Karelian speakers, moved eastward toward Tver and Novgorod and were replaced by incoming Finnish speakers. Due to substantial immigration the region had become roughly three-fourths Finnish by the late 1600s, and Sweden's Lutheran church had begun to organize congregations and establish schools in the region.⁵ However, Peter the Great's conquest of the region in the early 1700s led to the enserfment of the local population and a substantial immigration of Russian speakers. The influx of Orthodox Russians into rural Ingria gradually began to change its ethnic and religious composition, although many localized regions remained culturally and linguistically Finnish until the early twentieth century.⁶

Many of Ingria's Finnish speakers remained in contact with Finland proper even after Alexander I invaded Finland and acquired the Grand Duchy of Finland from Sweden in 1809. The Peace Treaty of Borgå (Porvoo) of that year brought more than one million Finnish speakers into the Romanov empire. However, the Grand Duchy's subjects were governed not by the Imperial Senate or State Council but by the Finnish Senate in

⁵ Eino Jutikkala, Kauko Pirinen, *A History of Finland*. New York 1988, pp. 81-84; Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia*. 4th ed., Oxford 1984, p. 176; Jill Lisk, *The Struggle for Supremacy in the Baltic 1600-1725*. New York 1968, p. 62; David Kirby, *Northern Europe in the Early Modern Period: The Baltic World 1492-1772*. London 1990, pp. 118-123; Heikki Leskinen, *Inkerin asutus ja väestöryhmät (Settlements and population groups in Ingria)*, in: *Itämerensuomalaiset: Heimokansojen historiaa ja kohtaloita (The Balto-Finns: The histories and fates of kindred peoples)*, ed. by Mauno Jokipii. Jyväskylä 1995, pp. 165 ff. See also the following articles in: *Inkeri: Historia, kansa, kulttuuri (Ingria: History, people, culture)*, ed. by Pekka Nevalainen a. Hannes Sihvo. Helsinki 1992: Pirjo Uino, *Inkerinmaan esihistoria (The prehistory of the Ingrian region)*, pp. 11-34 and Heikki Kirkinen, *Inkerin keskiaika ja uuden ajan alku vuoteen 1617 (Ingria's medieval and early modern history to the year 1617)*, pp. 35-66.

⁶ Ian M. Matley, *Demographic Trends and Assimilation among the Finnic-speaking Peoples of North-western Russia*, in: *Ural-altaische Jahrbücher* 48 (1976), pp. 167 ff.; Kirby, *Northern Europe* (note 5), p. 161 a. 245 f.; O.M. Fishman, *Karely (The Karelians)*, in: *My zhivem na odnoi zemle: Naselenie Peterburga i Leningradskoi oblasti (We live in one land: the population of St. Petersburg and Leningrad Oblast)*, ed. by K.V. Chistov. St. Petersburg 1992, pp. 148 f.; Leskinen, *Inkerin asutus* (note 5), pp. 167-171; Veijo Saloheimo, *Inkerinmaan asutus ja väestö 1618-1700 (Settlements and population of the Ingrian region, 1618-1700)*, in: *Inkeri* (note 5), pp. 67-82; Hannes Sihvo, *Savakoita, äyrämöisiä, inkerikoita (The Savakkos, Äyramöinens, and Izhorians)*, in: *Ibidem*, p. 180.

conjunction with a group of Finnish and Swedish-speaking officials with offices in St. Petersburg. The administrative transfer of ethnically Finnish regions north of St. Petersburg – so-called Old Finland – to the Grand Duchy of Finland in 1812 brought Finnish borders to within 20 kilometers of St. Petersburg itself.⁷

Three main groups of Finnish speakers can be identified in St. Petersburg Province in the mid-nineteenth century. The first group consisted of rural inhabitants whose roots in the area of Ingria went back to the 1600s and even earlier. This first group of Russian subjects, which I will call the Ingrian Finns, comprised two subgroups, known as the Äyrämöiset and the Savakot. According to the Baltic German scholar Peter von Köppen, nearly 43 000 Äyrämöiset and nearly 30 000 Savakot lived in the province in the early 1850s.⁸ The second main group of Finnish speakers were Russian subjects who lived in St. Petersburg. Many in this group had family roots in Ingria or Old Finland and comprised the majority of the Imperial capital's Finnish-speaking population. These people were the working poor who inhabited the so-called Finnish slums, where disease festered and poverty reigned. Finnish-speaking Russian subjects also inhabited other cities outside St. Petersburg, such as Gatchina. The third main group, subjects of the Grand Duchy of Finland who lived in St. Petersburg, stood in rather marked contrast to the second. Most individuals in the third group traveled to St. Petersburg to take advantage of commercial opportunities such as transporting agricultural goods, timber, and raw materials to the Imperial capital, or to participate in the many trades, including clockmaking and silversmithing, that were in high demand. Subjects of the Grand Duchy also staffed the Finnish government offices in St. Petersburg, owned a substantial number of Finnish businesses, including various bookstores and commercial ventures, and worked at the Finland train station in the Vyborg district of the city.

⁷ Jutikkala, Pirinen, *History of Finland* (note 5), pp. 112, 117f. a. 120. Vyskochkov notes that 17% of the residents of Kopore, Shlisselburg, and Iamburg Districts (data for St. Petersburg District were lacking) in 1732 were „new Russian immigrants“, while just under 10% of the residents were „old Russians“ whose forefathers had lived in Ingria prior to the period of Swedish control. Ingrian Finns constituted more than 37% of the population in those same districts, while Izhorians constituted 24%. See L.V. Vyskochkov, *Ob etnicheskom sostave sel'skogo naseleniia Severo-Zapada Rossii (vtoraia polovina XVIII–XIX v.)* (On the ethnic composition of the rural population of northwestern Russia [second half of the 18th to the 19th century]), in: *Peterburg i guberniia* (note 4), p. 113.

⁸ Peter von Köppen, *Spisok inorodtsam Evropeiskoi Rossii, s pokazaniem gubernii, v kotorykh oni nakhodiastsia* (List of the non-Russians of European Russia, with an illustration on the provinces in which they reside). St. Petersburg 1852, sixth unnumbered page.

Finnish speakers who lived in St. Petersburg initially attended the Lutheran congregation of St. Catherine along with Swedish speakers; the Finnish congregation of St. Mary was established in 1745 following disputes among St. Catherine's two main groups. Most of the nearly 5 000 members in St. Mary's congregation in the early 1800s came from Ingria and Old Finland. The congregation's membership rose to around 16 000 by the 1880s, and by the early 1910s plans were underway to divide St. Mary's and create a second Finnish Lutheran congregation, although those plans remained unfulfilled due to the First World War.⁹

Estonian Communities in St. Petersburg Province

The Estonian communities in St. Petersburg Province had a much different history than the Finnish communities in the same region. Most Estonians living in St. Petersburg and the surrounding region in the early 1900s were recent emigrants or the children of emigrants from Estonia proper. Only a few thousand Estonian speakers lived in the region by 1750, and Köppen counted only 7736 Estonian speakers in the rural parts of St. Petersburg Province in 1852.¹⁰ The Estonian speakers who moved to the province from the mid-nineteenth-century onward generally left Estland and Livland Provinces in search of land or work. Legal changes in the 1850s and 1860s, including the Passport Law of 1869, made this movement possible, while a public distrust of Baltic German landowners led many Estonian farmers to believe that moving away from their homeland was their best option for land ownership.¹¹ According to Nigol, the eastward migration of Estonians took place in three stages. The first emigrants settled in the Crimean Peninsula and in Samara Province in the 1860s; a few years later, other groups of immigrants moved to the Caucasus region, Siberia, and European Russia; the last wave departed between

⁹ Varpu Myllyniemi, *Pyhän Marian suomalainen seurakunta Pietarissa 1890–1917* (The Finnish congregation of St. Mary in St. Petersburg, 1890–1917). Helsinki 1990 (Church History Thesis), pp. 4–12; Juuso Mustonen, *Inkerin Suomalaiset seurakunnat* (Ingria's Finnish congregation). Helsinki 1931, pp. 24f.; Max Engman, *St Petersburg och Finland: Migration och influens 1703–1917* (St. Petersburg and Finland: Migration and influences, 1703–1917). Helsinki 1983, pp. 81 a. 190; idem, *Migration from Finland to Russia During the Nineteenth Century*, in: *Scandinavian Journal of History* 3 (1978), pp. 167f.

¹⁰ Raimo Pullat, *Peterburi eestlased: Ajaloolis-demograafiline käsitus XVIII sajandi algusest kuni 1917. aastani* (Estonians of St. Petersburg: Historio-Demographic Research from the Beginning of the 18th Century till 1917). Tallinn 1981, p. 4; von Köppen, *Spisok* (note 8), n.p.

¹¹ Pullat, *Peterburi eestlased* (note 10), pp. 5f.

1907 and 1910 in response to tsarist policies, and largely settled in Vologda Province and in Siberia.¹²

Estonian immigrants settled in many parts of St. Petersburg Province. In addition to the imperial capital, they took up residence in Gdov (Oudova in Estonian), Iamburg (Jamburi in Estonian), Gatchina, Kronstadt, and in nearly one hundred other settlements in Gdov, Iamburg, Peterhof, Tsarskoe Selo, Luga, and Shliusselburg Districts (*uezdy*).¹³ In some areas, Estonians comprised a substantial share of the local population by 1918.

Significant differences existed between the Estonian settlement in the imperial capital and those in the surrounding countryside. Most Estonians in St. Petersburg worked in factories or as house servants, although a small yet growing group involved themselves in business ventures, served as civil servants, attended institutions of higher learning, or joined the growing *intelligentsia*. August Janson, director of a business school and a mutual credit association, was elected to the St. Petersburg City Council in 1912. By about 1909, the influx of Estonian workers, businessmen, civil servants, students, and intellectuals into St. Petersburg gave that city the second largest group of Estonian speakers in the world (the city with the largest number was Tallinn, capital of Estland Province).¹⁴ In contrast, the Estonian emigrants who moved to rural parts of St. Petersburg Province, as well as to other destinations throughout the Russian Empire, primarily sought land for farming. Many of those settlers looked to the Estonian community in St. Petersburg for guidance, direction, and even financial support in their efforts to maintain their Estonian identity, culture, and language.

¹² Nigol, *Eesti asundused* (note 2), pp. 10f.; idem a. J. Meomuttel, *Eesti asunikud laialises Vene riigis: Esimene katse sõnumid kõikide Eesti asunduste üle tuua* (Estonian Settlers in the Russian Empire: First Attempt to collect News about all Estonian Settlements). Tartu 1900, lists the names of Estonian settlements in the Russian Empire grouped by province. Both authors accept that economic pressures were the underlying cause of the outmigration. (Nigol, *Eesti asundused* [note 2], pp. 10f. and Nigol, Meomuttel, *Eesti asunikud* [note 12], p. 3)

¹³ Nigol, *Eesti asundused* (note 2), pp. 14-24; Viktor Maamiagi [Maamägi], *Estonskie poselentsy v SSR (1917–1940 gg.)* (Estonian settlers in the USSR, 1917–1940). Tallinn 1976, pp. 17-49. The naming of geographical places is tricky in multilingual regions because many languages use different words for the same towns, cities, rivers, and religions. In this essay primarily Russian geographical place names for areas of present-day Russia were used, except for cities with established English equivalents (St. Petersburg and Moscow). When mention is first made of geographical places that are known by more than one name, I will place alternative spellings in parentheses.

¹⁴ *Postimees* No. 259, 19 November 1897, p. 2; *Peterburi Teataja* No. 29, 11 March 1909, p. 1; No. 9, 21 January 1912, p. 1; No. 10, 24 January 1912, p. 1; Pullat, *Peterburi eestlased* (note 10), pp. 28ff. a. 35-42.

Finnish Schools in St. Petersburg Province

Despite the existence of around two dozen Finnish primary schools and widespread literacy before 1700, formalized schooling spread only gradually in the Finnish communities of Ingria. So-called confirmation schools, in which Lutheran teenagers prepared for confirmation during weekend retreats and summer classes, had been in existence since the sixteenth century, yet the seventeenth century efforts of Sweden-Finland to establish schools in Ingria came to naught after Peter the Great acquired the region in the early 1700s and closed those schools. The first Finnish school established under Russian rule was opened in 1785 at Kolppana, near Gatchina, by the future Tsar Paul I, who funded the school entirely with royal funds. The next Finnish school in the rural parts of St. Petersburg Province was not established until 1839. Then, over the following three decades, another two dozen Finnish schools were opened, and formalized education began to spread again in Ingria.¹⁵

From the 1840s onward, the Finnish Lutheran congregation of St. Mary in St. Petersburg sponsored the most prominent Finnish schools in St. Petersburg Province. St. Mary's congregation opened its first school in the city in 1844. Although a few schools in Finland had provided basic instruction in the Finnish language prior to 1820, St. Mary's school was among the first to advance beyond basic reading and writing to include history, geography, singing, and the Russian language as a subject. In 1860, St. Mary's began to open additional primary schools in different parts of St. Petersburg and its environs with tuition in Finnish and Russian. Eleven such schools – seven inside the city limits and four outside – had been founded by the 1886–1887 school year. These operated under the direction of a specially appointed Finnish school inspector and church-school council. Together, these schools enrolled more than 900 pupils in fall 1892, and more than 1 000 in 1897.¹⁶

The branch schools run by St. Mary's congregation were crucial in making educational opportunities available to Finnish-speaking youth in St. Petersburg and its environs, but the congregation's higher primary school attracted more attention. In 1885, St. Mary's school council

¹⁵ Juuso Mustonen, *Inkerin kansanopetuksen alkuvaiheita* (The beginning phases of popular instruction in Ingria), in: *Koulu ja Meneisyys* 1 (1935), pp. 77–85.

¹⁶ Antti Inkinen, *Suomalainen koululaitos* (The Finnish school system in St. Petersburg), in: *Koulu ja Meneisyys* 4 (1939), pp. 93–101 a. 113–116; Alpo Juntunen, *Suomalaista kulttuuria Nevan rannoilla: Piirteitä Pietarin suomalaisen siirtokunnan kulttuurielämästä 1900-luvun alussa* (Finnish culture on the banks of the Neva River: Descriptions of cultural life in St. Petersburg's Finnish colony in the early 1900's). Turku 1970, pp. 18–21.

(which included Uno Cygnaeus and other individuals who later became important in expanding popular education in Finland proper) voted to transform St. Mary's original church school in downtown St. Petersburg into a „higher“ (*ylempi*) primary school. Twenty years later the school was transformed into a unified school (*yhteiskoulu*) providing both primary and secondary levels of instruction. This unified school provided tuition in Finnish and allowed Finnish speakers in Ingria and St. Petersburg to complete a seven-year course of study similar to that available in the Grand Duchy. An eighth year of instruction was added but had to be dropped for financial reasons. Upon completing the unified school, students could transfer to a secondary school in Finland for an additional year and take the University of Helsinki's entrance examinations.¹⁷

Other educational opportunities were also available to Finnish-speaking youth, particularly those from middle-class or upper-class backgrounds. Pupils who completed the course of study in one of St. Mary's three or four-class church schools had good chances of being admitted into a secondary school in the city, such as a gymnasium, at the Finnish government's expense. A total of 57 enrollment slots were created specifically for Finnish pupils in nine secondary schools in St. Petersburg in the mid-nineteenth century. Most of these positions were created at the command of Tsars Alexander I, Nicholas I, and Alexander II for the purpose of training individuals to serve in Finnish government offices in St. Petersburg and Helsinki.¹⁸

After the peasant emancipation of 1861, popular education also spread in Finnish Ingria. The first substantial increase in the number of rural schools occurred between 1874 and 1876, when 20 schools were established in Ingria, while the next two decades saw little growth. New schools were created steadily from 1897 to 1905, yet registered a sharp drop in 1906 and 1907, before rebounding strongly in 1908. By 1913, 229

¹⁷ Mustonen, Inkerin kansanopetuksen (note 15), pp. 84f.; Kalevi Kajava, Pietarin suomalaisen kirkkokoulun vaiheista (About the phases of the St. Petersburg Finnish church-school), in: *Koulu ja Meneisyys* 15 (1963), pp. 44-47, 50ff. a. 59-66; Inkinen, *Suomalainen koululaitos* (note 16), pp. 89-103; Juntunen, *Suomalaista kulttuuria* (note 16), pp. 19 a. 24-29; Kalevi Kajava, Pietarin suomalaisesta yhteiskoulusta (About the St. Petersburg Finnish Unified School), in: *Koulu ja Meneisyys* 17 (1965), pp. 13f. a. 20f.; Myllyniemi, *Pyhän Marian* (note 9), pp. 96-104 a. 107-114; *Pietarin Suomalainen Yhteiskoulu: Kertomus lukuvuodelta 1909–1910* (The St. Petersburg Finnish Unified School: Report on the 1909–1910 school year). St. Petersburg n.d., p. 3; *Pietarin Suomalainen Yhteiskoulu lukuvuonna 1912–1913* (The St. Petersburg Unified School during the 1912–1913 school year). Viipuri 1913, p. 3.

¹⁸ Antti Inkinen, *Suomalaisen nuorison opinkäyntiä Pietarissa venäläisen valtakauden aikana* (The schooling of Finnish youth in St. Petersburg under the tsarist regime), in: *Koulu ja Meneisyys* 9 (1959), pp. 7-20; idem, *Suomalainen koululaitos* (note 16), pp. 118f.

public schools were in operation in the Finnish settlements of Ingria (not including St. Petersburg). Most of the schools were established by local communities or congregations, but many others were created and funded by local *zemstvo* organizations.¹⁹

In 1913 a commemorative volume was published that contained data on these 229 schools. These data are fascinating, as a few highlights demonstrate. For example, data on the background of pupils show the schools were open to children from a variety of backgrounds: Of the 10 777 pupils enrolled in these schools in the 1910/11 school year, 8 180 were Lutherans and 2 597 were non-Lutheran. Unfortunately, because the data on pupils are given only in terms of religious background, they conceal the extent to which German, Estonian, and Latvian-speaking Lutherans also attended these schools, although Tynni asserts that virtually all of the Lutheran pupils spoke Finnish. The data also hide the number of Finnish, Karelian, Izhorian, and Estonian-speaking Orthodox believers who attended the schools, although the grouping for „non-Lutherans“ was probably dominated by Russian speakers. Of the Lutheran pupils, there were 4 890 boys and 3 290 girls, while 1 417 male and 1 180 female non-Lutherans also attended these schools.²⁰

Data about teachers also reveal a variety of backgrounds: a total of 265 teachers served in these 229 schools, of whom 136 were Finns, 17 were Estonians, and 112 spoke primarily Russian. Several authors writing in 1913 seemed distressed by the fact that some Finnish pupils were taught by Russian teachers. However, given the significant number of non-Lutheran pupils in certain areas – who were probably Russian Orthodox children – an ethnically mixed group of teachers is understandable. For example, Tynni identifies 34 of the 37 teachers serving in schools where less than half of the pupils were Lutheran as Russians. However, Russian-speaking teachers were also present in schools with predominantly Lutheran students. In schools where Lutherans comprised the entire student

¹⁹ K.T. [Kaaupre Tynni], *Hiukan tilastoa Inkerinmaan suomalaisen väestön keskuudessa toimivista kansakouluista* (A bit about popular schools functioning among the Finnish population in the Ingrian region), in: *Kolppanan Seminaari 1863–1913* (The Kolppana Seminary 1863–1913). Viipuri 1913, pp. 93–103; *Kolppanan Seminaari 1863–1913*, in: *Ibidem*, pp. 104–112; Mustonen, *Inkerin kansanopetuksen alkuvaiheita* (note 15), pp. 85 f.; Kaaupre Tynni, *Inkerin kouluolojen kehitys ennen vallankumousta ja sen jälkeen* (The development of Ingria's school conditions before the 1917 revolution and after), in: *Suur-Suomen koulu* (The school in Greater Finland), ed. by Jyväskylän Seminaarin Karjala-Seura. Jyväskylä 1930, pp. 180–183. Incidentally, the number of Finnish public schools in Ingria rose quickly to 313 by the end of 1918, according to Tynni's data (p. 184).

²⁰ K.T., *Hiukan tilastoa* (note 19), pp. 93 a. 96–99; *Kolppanan Seminaari 1863–1913* (note 19), pp. 104–112.

body, nine of the 52 teachers were identified as Russians and two as Estonians. In addition, Russian speakers comprised nearly one-fourth of the teachers in schools in which Lutheran pupils ranged from 80% to 99% of the student body.²¹ By educational background, the largest group (of the 265 teachers) were Russian teachers (112), followed by Lutherans who had graduated from the Kolppana Teachers' Seminary (85), Finnish speakers who had completed the necessary course of study (probably in Finland) (36), and Estonian speakers (17) and Finnish speakers (15) who had graduated from Russian teachers' seminaries.²²

The availability of trained teachers played a crucial role in the creation and content of the public schools and Sunday schools in Finnish areas of St. Petersburg Province. The ways in which Ingrian Finns worked to meet the need for teacher training differed substantially from the efforts, or lack thereof, pursued by other ethnic groups in this regard. In 1863, a teacher training seminary was established in Kolppana by the Lutheran Church for the explicit purpose of preparing Finnish-speaking youth to teach in Ingrian Finnish settlements. According to Haltsonen, the idea of establishing an institution for training teachers had been discussed for more than one decade, and the Teachers' Seminary founded in Tartu (Livland Province) in 1823 served as an important model and inspiration. Kolppana, a small town near Gatchina in the central part of Ingria, was considered an ideal location for the school, both in terms of geography and the prevalence of progressive educational models based on Pestalozzi's ideas. The Kolppana Teachers' Seminary opened in the fall of 1863 with 13 students between the ages of 15 and 23. At the end of the three-academic-year term, in spring 1866, it graduated its first cohort of eleven teachers. In contrast to Russian teacher training institutes and seminaries, the Kolppana Seminary admitted a new cohort of students – all men – only once every three years at first (every four years after 1888), and these students remained together in the same class for the entire period of TR, living and eating together in a dormitory attached to the school. Altogether, more than 200 students graduated from the school between 1866 and the outbreak of the First World War, many of whom grew up in central Ingria.²³

²¹ Tynni, *Inkerin kouluolojen kehitys* (note 19), pp. 180–183; Mustonen, *Inkerin kansanopetuksen alkuvaiheita* (note 15), pp. 85 f.

²² Tynni, *Inkerin kouluolojen kehitys* (note 19), p. 182.

²³ Sulo Haltsonen, *Inkerin suomalaisen koulun ja kansanvalistuksen vaiheita* (The phases of Ingria's Finnish school and popular education), in: *Inkerin suomalaisten historia* (The history of the Ingrian Finns), ed. by idem. Helsinki 1969, pp. 189–197; Tynni, *Inkerin kouluolojen kehitys* (note 19), p. 180; J. Raski, *Kertomus Kolppanan seminaarin vaiheista* (A report of the phases of the Kolppana Seminary), in: *Kolppanan Seminaari 1863–1913* (note 19), pp. 19–26.

Public schools were not the only type of school operating among the Finnish population in St. Petersburg Province. Sulo Haltsonen identifies a significant Lutheran „Sunday school“ movement that began among the Finns in Ingria in 1874. In 1902, 1 809 teachers were involved with 11 936 pupils in 482 Sunday schools, while in 1912 562 Sunday schools, with 1 591 teachers and nearly 13 000 pupils, were reported. Approximately 330 Sunday-school teachers and 13 Lutheran pastors traveled to an organizational meeting in Venjoki in 1912 to discuss their schools' needs. Haltsonen relates that all of these Sunday schools were run without a tuition fee by Lutheran pastors and local volunteers.²⁴

In summary, Finnish speaking children in both St. Petersburg and Ingria had a growing number of schools available to them during the late tsarist era. The quality of instruction and teachers in these schools was generally good and rising. Most pupils could expect to learn and study both Finnish and Russian, although Finnish generally predominated in areas where Finnish-speaking teachers were available. Finnish speakers had some of the highest literacy rates in the area, and this was due partly to the longevity of the church-school and Sunday School systems, which remained potent focal points of community activities. Popular initiative in setting up schools and finding the funds for them enabled the Finnish school networks to remain relatively well-defined and cohesive as the empire's educational system matured in the early 20th century, although rapid growth in the number of schools and the resulting need for additional teachers potentially could have overwhelmed the Finnish school networks. In general, I find that popular initiative was the strongest indicator of success among Finnish schools in the area in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Estonian Schools in St. Petersburg Province

Many of the same observations can be made about schools established by Estonian speakers in St. Petersburg and the rural parts of the province. Local initiative remained the driving factor behind the creation of new schools for Estonian settlers through the end of the tsarist era. In Estonian communities, as in Finnish ones, demand for education and literacy cut across socio-economic lines. However, in contrast to the Ingrian Finns, most children attending these schools had only recently settled in the region. St. Petersburg became the unofficial focal point for Estonian-

²⁴ Sulo Haltsonen, *Inkerin suomalaisen kirkon vakiintumisen aikakausi (1800–1917) (The Ingrian Finnish Church's period of stabilization [1800–1917])*, in: *Inkerin suomalaisten historia* (note 23), pp. 175 ff.

speaking settlers and workers in the province, and for this reason the Estonian community in the Imperial capital exerted a strong influence on Estonian speakers in towns and villages in the region.

The backbone of the Estonian schools in St. Petersburg Province was the Estonian Lutheran congregation of St. John. The congregation opened its first Estonian school in January 1844 with 26 pupils in attendance. Between 1849 to 1877 the congregation also operated a second school with German as the language of instruction. Although the congregation's Estonian school reportedly suffered in the late 1870s under pastor Freifeldt, by the 1890s the school was regularly forced to turn prospective pupils away because it lacked space to seat more than about 130 children. St. John's constructed a new, larger building for its church school in the mid-1890s, after several decades of planning and collecting money. This new building allowed the school to increase enrollments to more than 180 pupils per year and to introduce more advanced subjects than had previously been offered. The church school opened a fifth class in 1897, and offered a sixth year of instruction beginning in 1905. This additional year of tuition brought the school on a par with officially sanctioned *progymnasias*, thereby allowing pupils who completed the course of instruction at St. John's to enter government secondary schools directly. Efforts to open an Estonian secondary school in the Imperial capital modeled on the prestigious German school run by St. Peter's congregation were underway by 1910, but never reached fruition. Financial difficulties were one important reason for the lack of success; by 1909 St. John's Church Council discontinued giving the church school supplemental support, thus forcing it to rely exclusively on tuition fees to pay for day-to-day operations. Faced with dissolution or financial ruin, the church school was transformed into a private school in 1913.²⁵

Even during its best years, St. John's congregation was unable to meet the educational needs of the increasing number of Estonian speakers in the Imperial capital. To help meet those needs, the St. Petersburg Estonian School Society (SPSS) was established in 1885.²⁶ By fall 1889, the

²⁵ Postimees No. 99, 5 May 1897, p. 3; Peterburi Teataja No. 1, 14 September 1908, p. 2; No. 10, 28 November 1908, p. 2; No. 41, 27 May 1909, p. 3; No. 20, 11 March 1909, p. 1; No. 61, 5 August 1909, p. 3; No. 62, 8 August 1909, p. 3; No. 84, 24 October 1909, p. 3; No. 113, 29 December 1911, p. 1; Pealinna Teataja No. 4, 6 January 1916, p. 1f.; St. Peterburi Eesti Jaani kirikukooli õpetuse eeskawa (The teaching plan of the St. John Estonian church-school in St. Petersburg). Tartu 1910, p. 3; St. Peterburi Eesti Kooli Selts 1885–1910 (The St. Petersburg Estonian School society 1885–1910). St. Petersburg 1910, pp. 12–15.

²⁶ Peterburi Eesti Kooli Selts 1885–1910 (note 25), pp. 14–17; Felix Kinkar, Eesti Haridusseltside ajaloo (History of the Estonian Education Societies). Tartu 1996, p. 95. The society's articles of incorporation were published as Ustav S.-Peterburgskago

SPESS had already established four schools and had entered a period of noticeable growth, yet it suffered declining fortunes from 1897 to 1904 before experiencing another phase of strength and growth from 1905 to 1914. The ebb and tide of the SPESS' fortunes can be seen clearly in enrollment statistics of the organization's primary schools and its membership rolls. Enrollment in the society's schools peaked around 160 from 1895 to 1898, then declined sharply in 1900 before gradually rebounding. Enrollments tripled from 1904 to 1911, rising from 192 to 578 in just seven years. In part this growth was facilitated by the establishment of three new schools outside the St. Petersburg city limits, but it was also due to a sharp increase in the number of pupils enrolled in School 4. The highest known enrollment in these schools occurred in fall 1914, when 616 pupils attended seven schools that employed 16 teachers.²⁷

SPESS membership lists also reveal the organization's changing fortunes. In 1885, the organization received just over 86 rubles in total income, ostensibly from a small number of individuals. By the mid-1890s more than 200 individuals had joined the organization. The turning point came in 1903, when membership rose to 262. By 1909/10, the SPESS's successor organization, the St. Petersburg Estonian Education Society (SPEES), had 596 members, and this number rose to over one thousand by 1914, as new members joined the organization in St. Petersburg and branches of the society were established in at least one dozen Estonian settlements outside St. Petersburg. Income from membership fees naturally followed the same path as overall member enrollment, rising gradually to above 500 rubles in 1902 and to 1 117 in 1907/8.²⁸

Many of the children who attended SPESS/SPEES schools were actually not Estonian speakers or Lutherans. The religious and ethnic make-up

Obshchestva ubezhhishcha i uchilishcha dlia maloletnikh detei oboego pola estonskogo proiskhozhdeniia / Põhjuskiri St. Peterburi Eesti mõlemat sugu alaialiste laste warjupaiga ja kooli Seltsile (Statutes of the St. Petersburg society of the Poor-House and School for Minor Children of Both Genders of Estonian Heritage). St. Petersburg 1897. Kinkar lists the other school societies and organizations involved in educational activities, together with the dates they were formed, in: Eesti haridusseltside ajaloo (note 26), p. 213-218.

²⁷ St. Peterburi Eesti Kooli seltsi (SPEKSi) aruanne, 1897 (Report of the St. Petersburg Estonian School Society, 1897). Tartu 1898, p. 5; SPEKSi 1900. aasta aruanne. Tartu 1901, p. 15; SPEKSi 1903. aasta aruanne. Tartu 1904, pp. 26 ff.; Otchety S.-Peterburgskogo Estonskago Obshchestva Obrazovaniia i Prizreniia Sirot za 1908-9 i 1909-10 otchetnye gody (Reports of the St. Petersburg Estonian Society for the Education and upbringing of orphans for the 1908-9 and 1909-10 reporting years). St. Petersburg 1911, p. 10. See also Steven T. Duke, Estonian School Societies, in: *Journal of Baltic Studies* 31 (2000), No. 4, pp. 358-387.

²⁸ (SPEKSi) aruanne, 1897 (note 27), p. 5; SPEKSi 1900 (note 27), p. 15; SPEKSi 1903 (note 27), pp. 26 ff.; Otchety (note 27), p. 10; St. Peterburi Eesti Kooli Selts 1885-1910 (note 25), pp. 48 f.

of the schools changed gradually, from more homogenous in the 1890s to more diverse in the 1910s. In 1906 School 1, located near the Narva Gates on Peterhof Street, was only half Lutheran, while Schools 2 and 3 in downtown St. Petersburg were over 99% Lutheran. School 4 – recently opened outside St. Petersburg in a neighboring village, Smolensk – enrolled only 21 Lutheran pupils in a class of 44. Altogether, of the 286 children enrolled in fall 1906, there were 193 Estonian, 63 Russian, nine German, three Latvian, two Jewish, and 15 Polish pupils, plus one listed under „other nationality“. The situation was quite similar in fall 1914, when 321 of the 616 pupils identified themselves as Lutherans and only 325 called themselves Estonians. The other half of the student body that year included 232 Russians, 23 Poles, 19 Latvians, ten Jews, five Germans, and two listed as „other“.²⁹

Beginning in 1908, affiliate branches of the SPEES began to be established in Estonian settlements outside the Imperial capital, and by 1912, 16 such branches were in operation. Less is known about the operation of SPEES schools in the rural parts of St. Petersburg, in large part because no scholar study has investigated their activities. News and reports published in the Estonian newspaper in St. Petersburg, „Peterburi Teataja“, indicate that affiliate branches of the SPEES were first and foremost social organizations. One gets the impression that the promotion of education was a secondary purpose of these new organizations, although contemporary members would certainly dispute this observation. Two other school societies were also established, in Gdov and Narva, which were not affiliated with SPEES. In 1909 the school run by the Oudova (Gdov) Estonian School Society (hereafter OESS) reportedly enrolled 70 pupils and employed two teachers. The Narva School Society increased enrollments at its school from 41 in 1909 to 122 just five years later.³⁰

Elsewhere in St. Petersburg Province, Estonian speakers also took the initiative to establish schools for their children; and, as in St. Petersburg, they were also forced to open these schools to individuals from differing ethnic and religious backgrounds. In some places, such as Gatchina, the

²⁹ SPEKSi aruanne, 1897 (note 27), pp. 2f.; St. Peterburi Eesti Kooli seltsi ja Heategevuse Seltsi Aruanne 1906 ja 1907 aasta tegewuse üle kuni 1. augustini 1907 (The report of the St. Petersburg Estonian School Society and the Voluntary Society for activities, 1906 through 1 August 1907). Tartu 1908, p. 10; Petrogradi Eesti Hariduse Selts: 1914/1915 a. aruanne (1. augustist 1914 kuni 1. augustini 1915 a.) (Report of the Petrograd Estonian Education Society, 1 August 1914 through 1 August 1915). Petrograd 1916, p. 7.

³⁰ Peterburi Teataja No. 9, 31 January 1909, p. 3; No. 98, 22 November 1911, p. 1; Narva Kooliseltsi 1909. aasta aruanne (Report of the Narva School Society for 1909). Narva 1910, p. 11; Narva Kooliseltsi 1914 a. aruanne (Report of the Narva School Society for 1914). Narva 1915, p. 7.

Lutheran church played a leading role in sponsoring and operating primary schools, where German-, Estonian-, and Finnish-speaking Lutheran children predominated. After 1906, many newly established SPEES branch affiliates chose to support local Lutheran church schools, rather than create rival schools and face the challenges of paying qualified teachers and attracting pupils. Elsewhere, as in Narva and Gdov, Estonian residents set up independent school societies to provide education for their children. These schools tended to enroll Russian-speaking children in addition to Estonian speakers in an effort to increase cash flow from tuition payments, simply in the effort to help the schools stay afloat financially. In still other areas, *uezd zemstvos* sponsored the only schools available within 20 miles, and Estonian-speaking children attended those schools because no alternatives existed. In many Estonian settlements, the teacher in the local church school also served as the assistant pastor (*Küster*) and was therefore kept quite busy with his church responsibilities, in addition to his teaching duties. These individuals played a significant role in the spiritual and intellectual life of their communities, but the nature of their profession increased their mobility. Communities often struggled to find qualified individuals to fill the position left vacant by school teachers who had moved on, for as happened in Mäsnikova in 1911/12, the teacher's departure meant the end of the school.³¹

While complete data are lacking about the schools attended by Estonian-speaking children, some information does exist. Nigol's data, for example, indicate that education was generally available to most Estonian-speaking children in St. Petersburg by the mid-1910s. Nigol's data also clearly demonstrate that education, religion, and Estonian social organizations were often seen as integral and necessary components of a more generalized Estonian national identity for many at that time. The Estonian settlement at Dubnitsa, in Gdov *uezd*, was typical of Estonian settlements with over 300 residents: it possessed both a school and a Lutheran house of prayer (*palvemaja*). Altogether, 20 of the 38 settlements Nigol identifies possessed a school, and 16 of those 20 had both a school and a house of prayer. Many of those settlements also contained an Estonian social organization of some type, such as a credit union or farmers' society, which often functioned under the same roof as the school or

³¹ Peterburi Teataja No. 10, 28 November 1908, p. 1; No. 14, 24 December 1908, p. 2; No. 2, 7 January 1909, p. 3; No. 95, 2 December 1909, p. 3; No. 37, 14 May 1911, p. 3; No. 114, 31 December 1911, p. 1; No. 47, 21 April 1912, p. 1; Ivika Maidre, *Jamburgi maakonna eesti asunduste kiriku- ja hariduselu XIX sajandi teisest poolest 1905 aastani* (The Church and educational life of the Estonian settlements in Jamburg District [St. Petersburg Province] from the second half of the 19th century to 1905), in: Forseliuse Sõnumid 1 (1995), No. 4, pp. 1-6.

house of prayer. In Iamburg uезд, where Estonian speakers were more spread out geographically, Nigol identifies only four schools. By contrast, Estonian zemstvo schools were widely available in the Estonian settlements of Peterhof, Luga, and Shliusselburg uездy, although many of those settlements, such as Klopitsa in Peterhof uезд, also possessed an Estonian school society that cooperated with the zemstvo in funding and administering local schools. In settlements with substantial Finnish populations, such as Kronstadt and Kattila, Estonian children attended Finnish schools.³²

In summary, the structural arrangements of educational institutions among Estonian speakers in St. Petersburg Province was a bit different than that of Finnish speakers in the region. The creation of the St. Petersburg Estonian School Society (later the Education Society) shifted the focus away from the Lutheran Church to other forms of popular initiative, at least within the Imperial capital. Most of the growth in popular schooling came in the early 20th century and built upon the earlier traditions of literacy and confirmation schools. Popular initiative in establishing school societies and promoting locally directed schools reveals that education had successfully become a vital part of ethnically Estonian communities.

Conclusion

Four conclusions can be drawn from the foregoing analysis about Finnish and Estonian schools in St. Petersburg Province. First, these ethnic communities were successful in their efforts to create and finance schools largely at will through the outbreak of World War in 1914. Although there is some evidence that the Ministry of Education attempted to exert more control over this process in individual cases, in practice only the communities themselves imposed limits their own abilities to establish schools and fund them as they saw fit. Lutheran churches, community associations, school societies, and individuals all faced challenges related to the financial constraints of their communities. For the most part, minority linguistic communities in the Imperial capital were dominated numerically by people from working-class and lower-middle-class backgrounds, as socio-economic data from St. Mary's Finnish congregation demonstrate. Indeed, the financial limitations of St. John's Estonian Lutheran congregation and the reluctance of parishioners to increase their voluntary con-

³² Nigol, *Eesti asundused* (note 2), pp. 14-24.

tributions were two main factors behind the creation of the SPESS in 1885. Thus, the most powerful limitations affecting new-school creation came from within each community; only rarely were direct limitations imposed from outside.

Second, Lutheran congregations played a leading role in the creation and financing of non-Russian schools throughout the tsarist regime. Although the influence of these congregations in the realm of primary education began to wane in the late 1800s, they remained the backbone of the educational systems that developed among Finnish and Estonian speakers in St. Petersburg Province. St. Mary's congregation served as the keystone of an extensive church school system in St. Petersburg and Ingria, and the Estonian congregation of St. John offered the most extensive educational program available outside Estonia that included at least partial instruction in the Estonian language. The importance of these congregations was also strong outside St. Petersburg, where churches offered a combination of weekday schools for children, and Sunday schools and evening classes for adults and children alike.

A third conclusion is a corollary of the second: religious institutions provided much of the early initiative and incentive for establishing primary schools but were unable to fully meet the educational needs of their constituents. In most communities the need for additional educational sponsors was recognized sometimes between about 1880 and 1900. The first community-run educational organization in St. Petersburg Province was established in 1885, when Estonian community leaders in St. Petersburg created the SPESS. It later merged with the SPEBS, in 1906, to create the SPEES. Other non-Russian communities set up their own educational societies in the decade of the 1900s. This trend toward community-based schools increased noticeably after 1908. The spread of the SPEES's branch societies throughout the province beginning in 1908 is a case in point.

Fourth, the activity level of *uezd zemstvos* and the Ministry of Education toward primary education as a whole had a direct influence on the creation and funding of non-Russian schools. It is striking that the number of non-Russian schools in St. Petersburg Province jumped significantly at the precise times when *uezd zemstvos* and the Ministry of Education launched major campaigns to increase school funding throughout the empire. When *zemstvo* funding priorities shifted in the 1890s, *zemstvo* organizations at the *uezd* level devoted their resources to public education on a large scale. The number of primary schools in Finnish settlements of St. Petersburg Province also jumped markedly in the late 1890s and early 1900s. Primary schools of all kinds, including many non-Russian community schools, accepted annual financial assistance from the

zemstvo. A different dynamic appears to have influenced a new wave of school creation that began around 1908. Although the central government allocated additional tens of millions of rubles each year thereafter, through the Ministry of Education, for the exclusive purpose of assisting primary schools throughout the empire, it is unclear how much of that money was allocated to Finnish and Estonian community schools. Thus, it appears that a more public attitude toward popular education after 1908 was the most important cause of this latest wave of new-school openings.

Overall, this analysis has shown that the Finnish- and Estonian-speaking communities of St. Petersburg Province were experiencing a period of dynamic change in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The relatively rapid creation of social organizations, newspapers, native-owned businesses, and schools beginning in the last two decades of the 19th century marked the transformation of these communities from small groups of immigrants and farmers into conscious centers of separate religious, linguistic, and ethnic identities. Religion, language, and ethnicity were important forces that set these groups apart from those around them, despite their integration into the local economy. Local initiative played a central role in the creation of schools and other community-based institutions and the preservation of their autonomy during the late tsarist era. On the whole, the Finnish and Estonian-speaking communities of St. Petersburg succeeded in advancing formalized schooling and in achieving some of the highest literacy rates in the province. Their history illustrates that life in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious center like St. Petersburg was full of challenges as well as rewards, particularly because this large industrial and imperial capital which was built on immigration. This study also demonstrates that religious, linguistic, and ethnic borders and identities were constantly being challenged by the significant economic, political, social, and demographic changes taking place in tsarist Russia in the years preceding the First World War.