

AN ESTONIAN SCHOOL TEACHER IN TBILISI.  
 JOOSEP ROBERT REZOLD: HIS "LETTERS FROM THE CAUCASUS" AND  
 CONTRIBUTION TO ESTONIAN COLONISATION IN THE CAUCASUS.

ესტონელი სკოლის მასწავლებელი თბილისში.  
 ჯოზეფ რობერტ რეზოლდი: მისი „წერილები კავკასიიდან“ და წვლილი კავკასიის  
 ესტონური კოლონიზაციის პროცესში.

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**Abstract**

In the 1880s, Estonian peasants established their villages named Linda (later divided into Upper and Lower Linda) and Estonia in the Sukhum district. The first inhabitants of the villages were Estonian settlers from the Samara governorate, and other settlers soon arrived from Estonia as well. In 1886, 637 Estonians lived in the Sukhum district. The migration of Estonians to the Sukhum district was triggered by articles written by Joosep Rezold, a secondary school teacher in Tbilisi (Tiflis), that appeared in Estonian newspapers. This article examines Rezold's activities in Georgia and analyses his writings, which generated a great response in Estonia and created conflicts for the writer with several newspaper editors. It demonstrates how Rezold, against his will, became an migration apologist in Estonia and was criticised primarily in the background of the patriotic home-country discourse of the evolving Estonian national ideology.

**Key words:** Migration, Colonisation, Tbilisi, Estonian settlements, Abkhazia.

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**აბსტრაქტი**

1880-იან წლებში ესტონელი გლეხების მიერ მოხდა ორი ჩასახლების დაარსება, ლინდა, რომელიც მოგვიანებით ზედა და ქვედა ლინდად დაიყო და მეორე, სოხუმის ესტონური უბანი. ამ ჩასახლებების პირველი მკვიდრები იყვნენ, ეთნიკური ესტონელები სამარის გუბერნიიდან, რომელთაც მოგვიანებით სხვა ახლად ჩამოსახლებულები შეუერთდნენ ესტონეთიდან. 1886 წელს სოხუმის ესტონურ უბანში 637 ადამიანი სახლობდა. ესტონელების სოხუმის უბანში ჩამოსახლება განაპირობა ჯოზეფ რეზოლდის სტატიებმა, რომელიც განხდათ მასწავლებელი ქ თბილისში და ხშირად იბეჭდებოდა ესტონურ გაზეთებში. წინამდებარე სტატია აანალიზებს რეზოლდის საქმიანობას საქართველოში და მის პუბლიკაციებს, რომლებმაც დიდი გავლენა მოახდინა მოსახლეობაზე ესტონეთში, რის შედეგადაც მას წარმოეშვა კონფლიქტი რამდენიმე

რედაქციასთან ესტონეთში. წინამდებარე სტატიაში განვიხილავთ, რეზოლდს, რომელიც, უნებლიედ გახდა ესტონეთში მიგრაციული პროცესების დაწყების მიზეზი, რომელსაც ხშირად აკრიტიკებდნენ სამშობლოში, რადგან მისი პუბლიკაციები ეწინააღმდეგებოდა ესტონეთის ეროვნულ იდეოლოგიას.

**საკვანძო სიტყვები:** მიგრაცია, თბილისი, ესტონური ჩასახლებები, აფხაზეთი.

### **Introduction:**

In the second half of the 19th century, an emigration movement erupted in Estonia, whereby a large number of Estonians found themselves in Siberia, Volga region, northwest Russia, as well as the Caucasus. In the 19th century, the territory inhabited by ethnic Estonians in tsarist Russia was divided between the Estonian governorate and the Livonian governorate, where the so-called “Baltic special regime” was in force, which meant that the laws that applied there differed from those in the rest of the Russian state. The greatest difference was associated with the privileges enjoyed by the Baltic-German nobility, but the situation of the peasants also differed. The Estonian peasants were freed from serfdom in 1816 (in Estonian governorate) and 1819 (in Livonian governorate), however, they were not granted the right to emigrate beyond the borders of their governorates. They acquired this right in the 1850s when new peasant laws were enacted. This precipitated a wave of emigration to Volga region in 1850-60, and thereafter, to Crimea in the 1860s, to the North Caucasus in the 1870s, and the Kuthaisi and Black Sea Governorates in the 1880s. At the end of the century, Siberia was added as a new emigration destination. While emigration was increasing, the national movement in Estonia was also developing – Estonian national ideologues were formulating the needs and perspectives of the nation, in which patriotism played an important role, and putting the greatest emphasis on loyalty to the homeland. In Estonian patriotic poetry, the homeland, beautiful, but poor, was glorified and those who left heedlessly were severely criticised. Against this background, the Estonian public generally condemned the emigrants. Those who dared to promote emigration were also criticised in the press. This included the Estonian colonists who had already settled abroad and were inviting others to join them, as well as, schoolteachers and other intellectuals who lived in other regions of the tsarist state and were introducing the conditions of their new homeland and the possibility of emigrating there in the Estonian press.

This article takes a closer look at Joosep Robert Rezold (1847–1909), an Estonian secondary school teacher who lived in Tbilisi and published a number of articles about the Caucasus in the Estonian press. With his texts, he inspired potential emigrants, although this was not initially his intention. In the Estonian press, Rezold became the target of those who opposed emigration and was criticised in various publications. And his critics were not interested in whether and to what extent he had actually encouraged emigration. The article examines the process by which Rezold was made into an apologist for emigration. He did not consider himself to be one, and based on his writings, he could not be considered to have been one. The reasons for making him a scapegoat actually lie elsewhere.

### **Biographical data**

Joosep Robert Rezold was born in 1847 in Kadrina parish in Estonian governorate and, from 1867 to 1870, he studied to be a teacher at the Kuuda teachers' seminar. Later, he worked as a teacher at the Palmse rural municipality school. In 1873, Rezold went to the St. Chrischona

mission school (today, the Theological Seminar St. Chrischona) near Basel Switzerland, where he studied until the spring of 1875 (Neumann, 1928: 115; Isakov, 1967: 294).

After attending the missionary school, Rezold worked as a teacher in a 7-grade public school in Barmen, Germany (Rezold, 1884a: 2-3). Thereafter, he returned to his homeland but unable to find a suitable job (Nebokat, 1884a: 15), he went to Tbilisi in 1877. In April, the Russian-Turkish war had broken out, and when the Russian army captured the Ardahan fortress from the Turks in the summer, Rezold sent an article about the celebration of this victory in Tbilisi to the Estonian newspaper *Eesti Postimees* (Rezold, 1877a: 149). In the same year, his small book of poetry called *Uued sõealaulud* (New War Songs), which was apparently inspired by the ongoing war, was published. As a patriotic citizen, he glorified the power of the Russian weaponry and described the acts of violence perpetrated by the Turks (Rezold, 1877b: 9-12).

But, how and why did Rezold suddenly ended up in Tbilisi? It is known that he was looking for a position as a schoolteacher, and in 1877, started working at the Tbilisi First Secondary School as an assistant teacher (Neumann, 1928: 115; Isakov, 1967: 293). Apparently, this school was not his first choice. Namely, it is clear from one of his letters that he was quite well acquainted with the school conditions in the German settlements of the Tbilisi Governorate, and it is possible that he initially hoped to find a job there. These settlements had been established 60 years earlier, mainly by emigrants from Switzerland and southern Germany, who had been motivated, at least in part, by religious reasons. They were served by several missionaries from the Basel Mission Society. Rezold had heard about the German colonies and conditions there while studying in Switzerland. At an educational conference in Switzerland, he had met the pastor of the German settlement of Elisabeththal in the Caucasus. In July, after arriving in the Caucasus, Rezold visited the pastor in his home village (Rezold, 1879a: 9).

However, after taking a closer look at the conditions in the local school, Rezold was somewhat disappointed. He found out that German settlers paid their schoolteachers good salaries (500-1,000 roubles per year, which was much more than, for example, the salaries paid in the Estonian schools that were later established in the region). But, Rezold did not like the chiliastic beliefs of the sectarians (e.g., the imminent coming of the Antichrist and the arrival of the 1,000-year peaceful state in the Caucasus), which schoolteachers were also supposed to attest to. Therefore, he decided that in these settlements the profession of schoolteacher was not a desirable one (Rezold, 1878b: 205).

Although he did not become a schoolteacher in the German settlements, Rezold became friendly with the local pastors. From 1865 to 1884, the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of the South Caucasus was headed by Karl Rudolf Roos, a Baltic German born in Tallinn who had graduated from the Faculty of Religion at the University of Tartu (Amburger, 1961: 73; 130-131; 1998: 26, 153, 450). In addition to serving the church's parishioners, Roos was also the director of German settlement schools (Rezold, 1879a: 9). Rezold developed a close relationship with the latter, as well as with other people associated with German the settlements. In the autumn of 1878, he went on a trip with two pastors and their wives to the province of Kakheti, and that same year, he was invited to a wedding in the German settlement of Katharinenfeld (Rezold, 1879b: 74-75). The next year, Rezold, with Pastor Roos and another clergyman, visited Elisabeththal, where he stayed with the pastor for a few weeks (Rezold, 1879c: 139).

In 1882, Rezold changed jobs and became an assistant teacher at the Tbilisi Secondary School. There he was paid a salary of 300 roubles a year (Isakov, 1967: 294; 1969: 102), a salary considerably lower than the ones paid in the German settlements.

### Rezold's "Letters from the Caucasus"

The first article Rezold submitted to an Estonian newspaper from Tbilisi was published shortly after he arrived in the Caucasus in 1877, and it was soon followed by others. Between 1878 and 1883, he published a series of articles, many of them under the heading "Letters from the Caucasus". These articles were about Caucasus history, nature and local people, and later, about the Estonian settlements that were established there.

In his first of his long series of Letters from the Caucasus, Rezold focused on the nature and local population. By that time, he had been in the Caucasus for about a year and, according to him, travelled quite a bit. However, Rezold's descriptions of nature betrayed his reliance on basic German literature. For example, he describes the roads in the Caucasus mountains, as being hewn into the hillsides at a height comparable to the tower of the Münster Church in Germany (Rezold, 1878a: 199). But did the height of Münster Cathedral, with its northern tower that is 58 metres high, mean to an Estonian reader? After all, a comparison could have been made with St Olaf's Church in Tallinn, the height of which (60 m), even without its steeple, is comparable to the height of the church in Münster. And are there no mountain trails in the Caucasus that are as high as the St Olaf's Church steeple (123 m)?

Comparisons with familiar objects is a technique that has been used in travel literature for a long time, and Rezold's letters also contain comparisons with things familiar to the Estonian peasants. The grapevines that were unknown for Estonians at that time, "wrap themselves around the elms and oaks like hops around a lath." Rezold describes the cedars in the Caucasus as "tall green towers". Rezold introduces the geological forces active in the mountains as follows: "the interior of our Earth is filled with fire like the yolk of chicken's egg, and since the Earth's yoke needs air to breathe, it creates holes in some places, and suddenly the ground rises up like bubbles in soup, or domes in steel /.../ When such an underground force is at work, the earth trembles and shakes like porridge in a pot until a hole is created, from which a greater force roars and rises up to the sky." Rezold also describes the various climatic zones of the mountains and their vegetation (Rezold, 1878a: 199).

Based on a theoretical climatic scheme that indicates the interdependence of nature and man, Rezold finds that regal nature has provided the natives of the Caucasus with a proud spirit and valiant mind. According to Rezold, the Adighé (Adyghe) are the most equitable but also the meekest and most courageous of the people in the Caucasus – however, it is unclear how meekness and courage can co-exist. Apparently Rezold had received this information from some books because himself he had scarcely seen any Adyghe at that time. According to him, the Adyghe are a breed of Circassians and "a righteous and fair chivalrous people". He is basing this characterisation on the image of the Circassians that became entrenched in Europe as a result of the war in the Caucasus. Rezold also characterises the Mingrelians, Imeretians, Svan and Laz, but here too, his reliance on German literature is discernible. Since no Estonian equivalents for these ethnonyms existed at that time, he clearly derives the Estonian-language names from the German: he calls the Imeretians "*imererid*" (cf *die Imerer* in German), and the Laz, "*laasenid*" (cf *die Lasen* in German). According to Rezold, the Abkhazians do not have the chivalry of the Adyghe, the prowess of the Georgians, the diligence of the Chinese, or the poetic nature of the Mingrelians and Imeretians. And the Abkhazians are the "the most brutal, bloodthirsty and vengeful people in the Caucasus, in terms of both their hearts and customs." (Rezold, 1878a: 199). It is known that Rezold had not visited Abkhazia at that time, thus one can again assume that a book he had read was the source for this opinion. Most probably it was the work of the German traveller Friedrich Martin von Bodenstedt, which had been published few decades earlier, in which the Abkhazians are described as being vindictive, bloodthirsty, thieving, treacherous, and predatory (Bodenstedt 1849: 172). Although the wording of Rezold's and Bodenstedt's descriptions of the Abkhazians are very similar, it is not impossible that the characterisation could have been derived from another

common source. According to Rezold, Armenians are “the worst people” in the Caucasus. He primarily associates Armenians with money, in the name of which they are supposedly ready to behave very wickedly. He cites a large number of examples of their unfair trading practices. However, as a schoolteacher, Rezold had to admit that the Armenians were good students, eager to study and alert (Rezold, 1878b: 205). Rezold had been in Tbilisi for only a few months, so he could hardly have been referring to his own experiences. Rather, the source may have been a colleague from the Tbilisi First Secondary School.

However, it wasn't long before Rezold's personal experiences with the locals started to be included in Rezold's letters. When stopping in a village on a tour in Georgia in 1878, he found that the local accommodations were quite poor. And his assessment of the local villagers was quite harsh: “Although the people seemed stupid, and actually were, they knew how to take money, for all the things we bought from them.” (Rezold, 1878c: 265).

In any case, Rezold's letters from this first period are at times adventurous, but mostly spiked with book wisdom and rather clichéd descriptions of the nature and people of the Caucasus. And no special apologia for colonisation can be gleaned from them. For instance, he writes quite dispassionately about the life in the German colonies around Tbilisi and there's no indication that a wish to attract Estonians to the Caucasus had hatched in his brain. When, in a letter from 1878, he cites rumours that people in Germany have again expressed a wish to settle in the Caucasus, and this time in Abkhazia, Rezold seems to disapprove and assumes that the German colonists will face “roughness and bitterness” because of the savagery of the locals (Rezold, 1878a: 199). At the time, Rezold did not know that six years later, in 1884, the Germans would establish two villages, called Gnadenberg and Neudorf, in Abkhazia. They would be located quite close to the Estonians' Linda village, the establishment of which Rezold apparently did not even dream of in 1878. In Rezold's first Letters from the Caucasus, he is critical of the emigration apologists (Rezold, 1878b: 205).

However, inspired by Rezold's Letters, some readers of the Estonian-language newspapers began to hatch their own plans to emigrate to the Caucasus. In the winter of 1880-81, Rezold receives a letter from the Estonian colonists in Samara region, who were disappointed by the living conditions in Samara and asked Rezold about the conditions for colonisation in the Caucasus. On 7 July 1881, Peeter Piir and Jaan Kilk, two Estonian colonists from Samara arrive at Rezold's in Tbilisi where he provided them with accommodations. Documents had been received from the administrator of the state lands, addressed to the officials of Kars, Batum and Sukhum, instructing them to show the Estonians the plots that were available for colonists. Piir and Kilk asked Rezold to accompany them. They set out a week later on June 14<sup>th</sup>. As the records indicate, Abkhazia was not the men's first choice. First, they travelled by train to the port city of Poti, and from there, by ship to Batum, which, as a result of the Russian-Turkish war (1877-78), had just been transferred from Turkish rule to the Russian Tsarist state. However, when the three men arrived, it turned out that the land ownership issues related to the Turkish population had not been resolved. The Estonians visited some land in the vicinity of nearby Khobulethi and then boarded a ship to Suhum-Kale. Around Suhum-Kale, they visited several available plots and reserved a place for Estonians about ten kilometres from the city, where the future village of Linda would be located. When a lively discussion broke out between those favouring and opposing emigration among the local Estonian colonists in Samara, Rezold distanced himself from them and emphasised that everyone must make up their own minds when making the decision to emigrate (Rezold, 1881a: 118). Everyone must have realised that Rezold was not going to encourage emigration fever.

A few months later, Rezold published a letter to the Estonians of Samara in the *Eesti Postimees* newspaper, which included a translation of the letter from the authorities in the Caucasus, saying that there really was free land to be had there. However, Rezold admonished

Estonians to carefully consider whether undertaking a new emigration was really worth it. And he warned them against malaria and the unfamiliar farming conditions in the Caucasus (Rezold, 1881b: 198).

However, many did not heed Rezold's warnings, and later on, he would continue to receive letters from both Estonia, as well as other Estonian settlements elsewhere in Russia – always with questions related to emigrating to the Caucasus. In an article in 1882, Rezold warned that only those who had sufficient money should travel to the Caucasus (Rezold, 1882: 3).

However, a year later, in the autumn of 1883, Rezold did publish some articles which could be viewed as justifications for emigration. By that time, the Estonian villages of Linda and Estonia in the Sukhum district had already been established. For example, he published an account of a trip he made in the summer of the same year from Tbilisi to the Sukhum district in order to acquaint himself with the life of the Estonian colonists in the settlement called Estonia. Rezold described the surroundings of the village as being very beautiful. The vegetation and crops grew well, especially the corn. Rezold also outlined their future prospects, explaining that the residents could become millionaires by setting up a sawmill on the river, and then milling and exporting the expensive species of trees that grew locally (Rezold, 1883b: 3). The positive outlook presented in Rezold's description could actually have attracted readers and started to shape his reputation as an emigration apologist. As the Estonian press was clearly anti-emigration, Rezold initially had difficulty finding a newspaper to publish his article. It was finally published by the *Eesti Postimees*. A few months later, he published another article in the same newspaper in which he reiterated that he was not inciting anyone to emigrate, and stressing the risk of malaria in the Sukhum district. However, he also added that if the land there were cultivated, that could help to eliminate this danger (Rezold, 1883d: 3). Of course, he was right about that – at that time there were active plans to drain the marshy areas on the Black Sea coast in order to reduce the risk of malaria, and this eventually did happen.

However, these few articles, which spoke favourably about emigration, should not be viewed as reason enough for Rezold to be labelled as an apologist for emigration and made into journalism's whipping boy. Then a scandalous incident took place, which solidified his role as the enemy of the Estonian press.

#### Rezold's dispute with the Estonian press

The scandal broke out in the autumn of 1883, when Rezold published an "analysis" of the current state of the Estonian press in the *Eesti Postimees* newspaper. A bold venture, which proves that Rezold actually did subscribe to all the most important Estonian newspapers while living in Tbilisi and closely followed what they were publishing. The article was critical in tone, and perhaps motivated by personal grievances, since many of the newspapers would not publish his articles (Rezold, 1883a: 2). The article criticised almost all the major Estonian newspapers and ranked their quality. For example, Rezold said the newspaper called *Valgus* was of poor quality and a cruel vituperator; the editor-in-chief of the *Virulane* had a narrow worldview; the editor of the *Olevik* was too vainglorious; the quality of the *Sakala* had supposedly declined over time; and the *Kündja* was the weakest newspaper in terms of content. Rezold considered the *Eesti Postimees*, which published most of his articles, including the scandalous one, to be the only excellent quality newspaper (Rezold, 1883c: 3).

A great storm was brewing. Two weeks later, a rebuttal was published by the editor-in-chief of the *Virulane*, who labelled Rezold an incompetent writer (Virulane 1883: 1-2). While this rebuttal did not turn any attention to Rezold's activities in the Caucasus, Jaan Nebokat, the editor of the *Kündja*, did so two weeks later. He explicitly accused Rezold of inciting emigration to the Caucasus and argued that emigration was detrimental to the homeland (Kaukasiast, 1883: 617).

Rezold and Nebokat were old acquaintances. Both had studied to be schoolmasters at the Kuuda seminary – Nebokat a few years earlier than Rezold. From 1867 to 1870, Nebokat worked as a teacher at Kuuda, and also taught Rezold. In his rebuttal to Rezold's article criticising the Estonian press, Nebokat also highlights aspects of their time together at Kuuda, and casts doubt on Rezold's reputation in several respects, e.g., Rezold had not been able to cope with his assignments at school; he had been quarrelsome; and had even been taken to court for writing a threatening letter. Nebokat also included Jaan Kilk's letter from the Caucasus in his article. The same Kilk who had visited the Caucasus with Rezold in 1881 and who eventually settled there as a colonist. Nebokat uses Kilk's letter to show how bad the living conditions of the Estonians in the Sukhum district really are. Kilk wrote that the summer rain rotted the potatoes; there are good crops of corn and tobacco, but Estonians still don't know how to properly cure tobacco. With pleasure, Nebokat printed Kilk's request, i.e., could Nebokat send him his newspaper, although, at the moment, Kilk could only pay him one rouble for the subscription (*Kaukasiast*, 1883: 617). Nebokat's message was clear: the Estonians who had travelled to the Caucasus encouraged by Rezold's Letters from the Caucasus had not fared well, and Rezold is to blame. We know that in the past Rezold was, in fact, relatively reluctant to praise the Caucasus, and thus could not be directly accused of encouraging emigration. But Nebokat was offended because Rezold had labelled his newspaper the worst in Estonia. From that point on, the Estonian press treated Rezold as a scapegoat and whipping boy in the emigration discourse.

Initially, the main accuser was the offended Nebokat himself. He continued to accuse and defame Rezold during the following year of 1884. In another article, Nebokat again painfully recalls Rezold's criticism and finds it is unseemly for a student to judge his teacher. In his article, Nebokat refers to matters which he believes prove that Rezold did not even deserve the title of schoolmaster – Rezold allegedly forged the school certificate based on which he had been admitted to a missionary school in Germany (actually, in Switzerland). And Nebokat again raises the issue of Rezold's main "sin", i.e., enticing the Estonians who had migrated to Samara to move to the Caucasus. Nebokat accuses Rezold of disseminating disinformation about the local living conditions (Nebokat 1884a: 15).

When Rezold responds to Nebokat's article with two letters and requests that they be published in Nebokat's newspaper, the latter refuses. At the same time, Nebokat did not keep this information to himself, but informed his readers that Rezold's letters were dripping with slander, falsehoods, profanity, and obscenity. "Our newspaper is not your mud gutter," Nebokat wrote (Nebokat 1884b: 40-41).

Rezold was provided the opportunity to answer Nebokat on the pages of the *Eesti Postimees*. Let's remember that this was the only newspaper that Rezold did not vilify in the article in which he had dissected the quality of Estonian journalism. Rezold denies Nebokat's allegations that he forged his school certificate, and declares that he has never enticed people to emigrate. However, the article also proves that, by writing his story characterising the quality of Estonian journalism, he had also damaged his relations with the editors of the other newspapers – they no longer accepted his articles for publication. Angry and offended, Rezold now accused Ado Grenztein, the editor of the *Olevik*, of defamation, and criticised the editor of the *Virulane* Jaak Järv, for supposedly publishing articles filled with spelling mistakes (Rezold, 1884a: 2-3).

In other words, by 1884, Rezold, with his brisk style and clearly hostile behaviour, had ruined his relationships with the editorial boards of Estonia's main newspapers. And although Jaan Nebokat, his main opponent in this war of words, was forced to retract his unjust statements, which primarily concerned the forgery of the school certificate and a non-existent threatening letter (*Kündja toimetus* 1884: 1; Rezold 1884b: 3), the reputation of being an emigration instigator continued to plague Rezold. As early as late 1883, the *Olevik* newspaper declared that it would not print Rezold's texts on emigration, nor did it favour the emigration of Estonians (*Mis teevad*

tõised ajalehed, 1883: 2). Two weeks later, the *Kündja* issued a similar declaration (Kaukasiast 1883: 617). The *Olevik* reiterated its position at the beginning of the next year. As the doors of several newspapers were closed to Rezold, but letters from potential emigrants continued to flow in, during the spring of 1884, he placed a classified ad in the newspaper *Wirulane*, and declared that he no longer wanted to have anything to do with people travelling to the Sukhum district and recommended that they not travel there, citing the danger of malaria as the reason. The *Olevik*, referring to this ad, maliciously gloated: “Weren’t we right when we were among the first to criticise Rezold’s letters?” (Olevik 1884: 2). Thereafter, Rezold was especially criticized by the *Tallinna Sõber* newspaper, which, as the mouthpiece of the Baltic German nobility, was particularly concerned about the emigration of Estonians, which were providing them with cheap labour. The Baltic German manors were in danger of losing their workers. So the *Tallinna Sõber* started attacking the *Eesti Postimees*, since they continued to publish Rezold’s articles (Omalt maalt 1884: 1).

### Rezold’s subsequent fate

During 1884, a stormy year for Rezold, when he succeeded in antagonising almost all the most important Estonian-language newspapers, he resigned his position as schoolmaster in Tbilisi. Whether these two events were connected is unclear. In the same year, he started making plans to start publishing an Estonian-language magazine called *Mailm* in Tbilisi. Literary historian Sergei Isakov has associated this with the tightening of censorship in Estonia in the 1880s, which resulted in attempts to start publishing newspapers and magazines outside of the Baltic governorates (Isakov 1967: 293-294). However, if we consider Rezold’s conflict with the leading figures of Estonian journalism, this explanation seems incomplete. It’s more likely that Rezold wanted to enter the publishing market alongside the other major Estonian-language newspapers and magazines, and thereby, become independent of their publishers. In any case, Rezold’s plan was ambitious: his new magazine was to start publishing articles on literature, economics, trade, the life of the Russian and Estonian people, history, politics, pedagogy, medicine, criticism, epigrams, feuilletons, anecdotes and various genres of art. However, his plan never came to fruition, because the General Directorate for Press Affairs, the highest censorship body in St. Petersburg, rejected Rezold’s application in December of 1884 (Isakov 1967: 294; 1969: 103).

Rezold soon returned to Estonia. In the middle and second half of the 1880s, the emigration of Estonians to the Caucasus was very often covered in the Estonian press; lots of articles, i.e., so-called “loss stories” were published about how people got sick and encountered economic difficulties while travelling to the Caucasus. Rezold’s name was often mentioned in a negative light in these stories as someone who had convinced people to go to the Caucasus. Rezold himself no longer participated in this discussion. Until 1891, he worked as a judge in a rural court (Neumann, 1928: 115). However, his reputation as an instigator of Caucasian emigration still accompanied him. When he allegedly left his residence in Estonia surreptitiously on 19 October 1891, rumours began to spread that he had fled from his creditors. Simultaneously, the *Sakala* newspaper floated the question: Maybe he’s left for the blessed land of Sukhum, which he previously acclaimed? (Pärnumaalt, 1891a: 2). However, a little more than a month later Rezold showed up in St. Petersburg and promised to sue the correspondent who had spread rumours about him in *Sakala* (Pärnumaalt, 1891b: 3). Later, he worked as a private lawyer in Tallinn (Neumann, 1928: 115).

In Estonia in the 1890s, Rezold wrote several books on history, law and poetry. He did not deal with the emigration of Estonians to the Caucasus. His works rarely received a positive response, and the reviews tended to be negative. His own passionate nature is evidenced by the fact that he responded to negative criticism with aggressive objections in the press. In 1899,



Rezold fought a legal battle against Jakob Kõrv, the editor of the *Walgus* newspaper, since it did not publish a text that Rezold had translated from Russian, citing the poor quality of the translation. The court decided in favour of Kõrv, as did the next court, to which Rezold appealed. Rezold was ordered to pay the court costs (Kirjandusline kohtu-asi, 1899: 3).

In 1904, Rezold moved to the Kuznetsk district of the Tomsk province, where he became a police officer and eventually an assistant to the provincial governor. In 1905 he spent the summer in Estonia (Neumann 1928: 115; Isakov 1967: 293). He wrote one more article about emigration, this time in Siberia, which had become the main destination for Estonian emigrants during the first decade of the 20th century. However, the cautionary tone of the article seemed to be warning for potential emigrants. He must have had painful memories of how the Estonian press had chastised him for his articles on the Caucasus. Rezold's death in the Tomsk Hospital in 1909 went unnoticed by the Estonian media.

### Conclusion:

For Estonians, the second half of the 19th century opened borders and expanded horizons in many ways. The peasant laws passed in the middle of the century enabled Estonians to start looking for places to settle outside the borders of their governorates. In the 1850s, stealthily and cautiously, but more boldly and vigorously in the following decades, the search for challenges in other parts of the tsarist state and abroad began. Estonians were no longer bound by law to a restricted area and this offered opportunities for horizontal mobility. On the other hand, vertical mobility was also occurring, and the emerging Estonian intelligentsia began to successfully demand positions in the local social hierarchy alongside the Baltic Germans. However, the national awakening required ideology, and for this purpose, nationalistic romanticism, with its patriotic homeland discourse, developed. Soon the two discourses -- the homeland and the emigration -- came into conflict. In patriotic national romantic poetry, the beautiful homeland was glorified and those who turn their backs on it thoughtlessly were criticised. And those who encouraged others to emigrate were condemned even more. One could become a scapegoat somewhat undeservedly, as happened with Joosep Rezold. The man, who had worked as a schoolteacher and tried other careers later in life, was a national enlightener at heart. For several decades, he published articles in various Estonian publications, which seemed to be motivated mainly by the need to enlighten, mediate and teach. This motivated him to publish literary travelogues and topographical descriptions from Germany, from the Caucasus, and finally from Siberia. His Letters from the Caucasus were really nothing more than schoolmaster-like surveys of distant places written for Estonian peasants. In any case, based on his writings, it is impossible to say that his goal was to encourage Estonians to emigrate. He certainly went too far with his lecturing by in addition to providing information about the Caucasus, starting to assess the general level of Estonian journalism from Thbilisi. As we have seen, he was not forgiven for doing this.

Partly out of personal resentment, and perhaps, partly due to their sense of justice having been offended, the leading figures in Estonian journalism began to thrash Rezold, crushing him between the gears of the emigration and homeland discourses, which were at odds with each other. Although Rezold had been relatively restrained in describing the colonial conditions in the Caucasus and was not, in fact, an emigration apologist, this did not matter to the offended newspaper editors. Rezold's fierce nature did not help him in the process, when sometimes while trying to defend himself; he would unleash his own sharp attacks.

However, the Estonian villages established in the Sukhum district in the 1880s were actually founded by those who had read and been inspired by Rezold's newspaper articles about

the Caucasus. Since Rezold had also helped those select suitable plots of land, his role in the Estonian colonisation in the Caucasus can certainly not be ignored.

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