

*Estonian Life* No.2 January 15, 2016

Editorial

Elle Puusaag ( 1945- 2017)

18 January 2016 --- 60 years have passed since the State Elder and the first President of Estonia Konstantin Päts died. It means that we have a good reason to pay tribute to K. Päts and remember his role in the history of our country.

The journalist Heiki Suurkask has defined Konstantin Päts the man who gave us the Republic of Estonia and who broke down together with Estonia ( D, 23.02.14). It is said that in Soviet times it was even compulsory to offend him (Päts) and even nowadays one has shown him as a traitor *versus* to be the leader. If Päts had not given his signature we would not have had the Republic of Estonia.

He had to experience too much, persecutions, escapes, imprisonments, disappointments, sorrow etc.

Päts was arrested on 30 July, 1940 in his own home in Kloostrimeta and was deported with his family to Russia.

We know but little about his sufferings in the machinery called Gulag.

Wikipedia gives an emotionless chronology about the President of Estonia who was deported from one prison to another, from one mental hospital to another between 18 to 29 December.

In 1954 Päts was in Jämejala Psychiatric Hospital in Viljandi County. Linda Anton who worked there as a nurse spoke how crowds of people arrived there day and night like to the place of pilgrimage in the hope to have a glimpse at our first president who was kept behind several locked doors. The recognition by the locals and too much attention resulted him being sent to Burashevo psychiatric hospital in Kalinin Oblast (now Tver Oblast) where he died at the age of 81 in loneliness after 15 years of detention.

He was buried in an unmarked grave in the forest near the hospital. On 21 October, 1990 the remains of Konstantin Päts were buried in the Cemetery Metsakalmistu, Estonia, at the initiative of the Estonian National Heritage Society.

In the newspaper *Postimees* (09.01) appeared a remarkable article by the journalist Jaanus Piirsalu with the information that the Russians in Burashevo take care of the late burial site of K.Päts. The schoolchildren of Burashevo are aware of the fact that soon there will be his death anniversary. The journalist is wondering how many Estonian schoolchildren could say that the 18th of January is the date that commemorates those 60 years that have passed since the death of K.Päts – our first President and one of the founders of the Republic of Estonia.

At the local school in Burashevo there is even the so called Päts corner with the exhibition of the books about his life as well as photos and students`reports on the topic. The schoolchildren visited the burial site of Päts on his birthday where the memorial plaque was mounted.

The children know by heart that February 24 is the anniversary of the Republic of Estonia and Päts was among the others who declared the independence of Estonia.

**Piirsalu confirms it to be a miracle that commom Russian inhabitants have kept the memory of Päts in Burashevo despite of all the difficulties. At the same time the Republic of Estonia has not supported financially the recordings of the death site of his first President and one of its founders.**

**Whatever one has said or written about K.Päts - he was the great figure of the Republic of Estonia whose name is immortally written in the history of Estonia with capital letters. It should be the mission of the Republic of Estonia to praise and stately keep his memory.**

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