

# ***ELITES AND THE STATE. ORGANISATION, DISSOLUTION AND RE-INVENTION OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT, 1725–1925***

## **ЭЛИТЫ И ГОСУДАРСТВО. СОЗДАНИЕ, РАСПАД И ПЕРЕОСМЫСЛЕНИЕ ГОСУДАРСТВА И СИСТЕМ УПРАВЛЕНИЯ, 1725–1925**

### **PREFACE**

In the current issue we publish several articles based on the contributions to the third Finnish-Russian Conference on Elite Studies *Elites and the State. Organisation, dissolution and re-invention of state and government, 1725–1925*. It took place in St. Petersburg on September 12–14, 2018. The conference was organised by the *Imperial Era Network* (<https://keisariaika.wordpress.com/>), with the financial support of the Finnish *Kone Foundation* and in cooperation with *Consulate General of Finland*, St. Petersburg, the *Finnish Institute in St. Petersburg* and the *Aleksanteri Institute*, University of Helsinki. The organising committee consisted of docent, Dr Kristiina Kalleinen, Dr Alex Snellman, docent, Dr Marina Vituhnovskaja and Dr Marja Vuorinen.

The first conference in this series, with Professor Timo Vihavainen as the chairman of the organising committee, was held on November 7, 2014. It was titled *Encounters of Finnish and Russian elites in the 19th and early 20th century: nationality and citizenship as crucial factors defining the relations*. The second conference, organised by the present committee, in cooperation with Russian academics and institutions, titled *Elites in times of change*, took place on September 14–15, 2016.

As the interest for our conference has been steadily growing, this time it was organised as a three-day event. The venue of the first conference day was the Finnish Institute in St. Petersburg (Dom Finliandii, Bolshaia Koniushennaia 8), housed in a building the roots of which as the centre of Finnish activities in St. Petersburg go back to the 19th century. The second and the third conference days took place in the Consulate General of Finland (Preobrazhenskaia Square 4).

This time, all presentations were simultaneously translated between English and Russian. In the previous two conferences, the papers were either divided into all-English vis-à-vis simultaneously translated Finnish-Russian sections (days), or translated between Finnish and Russian in its entirety.

The opening remarks were given by Consul General Anne Lammila and Sani Kontula-Webb, the director of the Finnish Institute, on behalf of the housing institutions, followed by docent, Dr Kristiina Kalleinen, coordinator of the *Imperial Era Network*, the organiser of the conference, and professor Vladimir Vitalievitch Noskov as representatives of the Academia. In his speech, professor Noskov strongly suggested

that the participants should expressly define their main concepts, particularly that of ‘elites’. Several speakers later took up this challenge and discussed their concepts in their presentations.

The conference opened with a session on *Reorganisation of state structures: before and after the 1917 revolutions*. The topics ranged from Russian political thinkers N. A. Berdiaev and Viktor Chernov to the role of Finland in the Soviet foreign policy in the 1920s. After a coffee break, the programme continued with another theme session, titled *Rethinking systems of state control during the 18th–20th centuries*, including papers on Iakov Esipovich as a developer of the Russian judicial system, and on the education of future Russian bureaucratic and other elites. The first conference day ended with an informal get-together with wine and canapés.

The second conference day, now at the Consulate General, opened with a session on *Formation of national elites before and after the end of the empire*, with papers about the role of Belarussian elites in imperial unification in the 19th century and the ethno-cultural ideals of the Revolutionary period.

The first session on *Regional-national elites*, with the sub-topic of *the Old Finland and the Grand Duchy*, shed light on the intermarriage of Russian soldiers and Finnish women in the period of 1750–1850, and the establishment process of the Finnish Military High Court in the 1810s. After lunch, the session continued with presentations on N. H. Pinello, a “deviant” Finnish nobleman with bourgeois-liberal ideas, and on the civil uniforms of the Grand Duchy as agents of Imperial power.

The second session on regional-national elites focussed on *Soviet Karelia*, with papers describing the formation, composition, internal relations and conflicts of the Karelian Workers’ Commune, and the role of Swedes in the national construction of Soviet Karelia in 1920–35.

In the evening, there was a reception by the Consul General of Finland Anne Lammila at her residence, situated at a historical palace on Ulitsa Chaikovskogo built in the 1830s.

The third conference day opened with a session on *Elite identities, self-presentation and presentations of power*. The first two papers spanned the period of 18th to 20th century, describing the several generations of the Counts Zubov, and the social position of rich Russian merchants. They were followed by two 19th-century cases pertaining to the Grand Duchy of Finland and focusing on the role of the Governor-General and Russian Officers in the founding and operating of the Russian State Theatre in Helsinki in 1868–1918, and the Governor-General Nikolai Adlerberg as the representative of Russian Elite (1866–81).

The last session, titled *Elites and revolution*, focused on key individuals and groups as agents of revolution and resistance, such as Konni Zilliacus and Brutus Lagercrantz,

on the Finnish side, and the Russian political prisoners who formed the so-called *Schlisselburg Republic* of 1917.

During the closing discussion, the organisers asked the participants for ideas about the theme of the next conference. Several suggestions emerged, including individuals and processes, women and gender, childhood, and generations. Seeing that the theme of *Generations* actually included all the above suggestions, and furthermore was inclusive enough to be applicable to a wide range of individual topics, it was agreed that the general theme of the next conference will be *Generations*.

The fourth conference on Finnish and Russian elites is scheduled to take place in the autumn of 2020 in St. Petersburg.

**M. Vuorinen**