Reforming Habitus: Identity and the Revival of the Estonian Swedish Cultural Heritage on a Former Collective Farm in NW Estonia

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In August 1991 Estonia became, once again, an independent nation. The subject of this thesis is an investigation of the subsequent processes of reforming habitus, or in other words the changing aspects both of everyday life and of a deeper sense of identity, in relation to the Soviet past and to the new state. More specifically, the thesis investigates the local project of restoring the Swedish cultural heritage in Estonia, in the context of the social life on a former collective farm, which, for historical reasons, was the centre of the revival.

The Swedes formed Estonia's third largest minority group before the war, totalling some 8,000 people, primarily fishermen and farmers. They did not form a coherent minority until the 1920s, when interest from Sweden led to various measures to preserve the Swedish cultural heritage in Estonia, and to improve the condition of the people. During the war, the majority of the people were evacuated to Sweden, and the ones who remained rapidly became assimilated to avoid discrimination. The present revival of the culture is analysed in this thesis in the context of other aspects of Estonian identity. Throughout the thesis, the relationship between the collective farm and the larger entities of Estonia and Sweden, is central to the analysis.

Following the introduction, and a discussion of place, methodology, and context, the thesis presents a historical overview, addressing the question of the cultural heritage of the Estonian Swedes, roughly from the 1870s to the Second World War. This is followed by an analysis of Soviet notions of culture, looking particularly at the objectification of ethnicity and traditional culture. The thesis then moves to the local and ethnographic, beginning with a semiotic analysis of the post-Soviet changes, followed by a chapter on the restitution of the pre-war festivities, and the abolition of the Soviet ones. Finally, two chapters deal specifically with the restoration of the Swedish cultural heritage, beginning with an analysis of the events of the revival, followed by a consideration of its economy, looking specifically at exchange, consumption, and aid. The reformations of the present, including the contemporary process of de-collectivisation, is predominately a process of normative and collective change, which tends to be presented as a national movement towards 'normality'. The conclusion, therefore, focuses on the notion of the 'normal', looking at the meaning of the aspiration towards normality in the context of the post-Soviet changes.
For my husband,
Dennis
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1. Introduction

1.1 The Historical Revival
1.2 The Contemporary Revival of Swedish-ness
1.3 Description of Chapters

2. Place, Methodology and Context

2.1 The Collective Farm
2.2 Demography and Language
2.3 Methodology
2.4 Traditionalism and Modernity: Anthropology of Soviet and Post-Soviet Cultures
2.5 Soviet Ethnography

3. The Formulation of the Estonian Swedish Identity: 1870-1940

3.1 The Swedish Missionary Project: a Case Study
3.2 The National Question
3.3 Modernism and the preservation of Swedish-ness

4. National Heritage in the Soviet Union

4.1 Stalin and the People
4.2 Post-Stalinist Representations of Estonian Nationhood
5. Signs of the New Nation: 148-189

5.1 Semiology and Space
5.2 Signs of Transformation
5.3 Signs of De-Collectivisation
5.4 The Relationship to the Land

6. Independence: the Revival of the Old Festivals 190-210

6.1 The Soviet and the Western Calendars
6.2 The Song Festival

7. Building the New Community: The Local Revival of Swedish-ness 211-249

7.1 The Swedish Heritage: Ownership and Restoration
7.2 Authenticity and Sentimentality
7.3 The Management of the Revival

8. The Economy of Dependence: Gift Exchange, Consumption and Aid 250-278

8.1 Gift Exchange
8.2 Consumption
8.3 Aid: the Relationship to Sweden

9. Epilogue: Normal Life 279-283

9.1 Observation and Representation

Appendix 284-300

Bibliography 301-313
List of Illustrations

Chapter 2.

1. Milk canisters along one of the roads of the peninsula

2. The most recently built block of flats

3. An old farm building repaired with Soviet materials

4. The abandoned check-point on the road out of the peninsula

5. Ceremonial structure in the abandoned army headquarters of the peninsula. To the left, a map of the Soviet Union, and to the right, a new Estonian flag.

6. The new sign for the collective farm.

7. The sign for the branch of the bank which replaced the sign for the collective farm.

8. The back of the culture house. There are two cars parked on the square. The school is hidden from view behind the building.


10. The finished facade. Note the contrast between the front and the side of the building.

11. Heap of coal outside the building which housed the central burner
List of Illustrations/ Chapter 4.

1. Sergej Gerasimov: 'Lenin at the 2nd Council Congress amongst the Farmer Deputies' (1935-6)

'Lenin på II rådskongresen bland böndernas deputerade' 1935-36
Petrova, E./ Kiblitsky, J. 1996

2. Aleksandr Samochvalov 'Lenin Appearing at the 2nd All-Russian Council Congress' (1940)

'Lenin framträder på II Allryska rådskongressen'
Petrova, E./ Kiblitsky, J. 1996

3. Aleksandr Gerasimov: 'A Hymn to October' (1942)

'En hymn till Oktober'
Petrova, E./ Kiblitsky, J. 1996

4. Juri Kugatj: 'Praised be the Great Stalin!' (1950)

'Årad vare den store Stalin!'
Petrova, E./ Kiblitsky, J. 1996

5. Boris Joganson: 'Our wise leader and dear teacher (Stalin amongst the people in the Kreml)' (1952)

'Vår vise ledare och käre lärare (Stalin bland folket i Kreml.)'
Petrova, E./ Kiblitsky, J. 1996

6. 'Harvest at the Viru Collective Farm, one of the largest of its kind in our republic.'
Pangsepp, R. 1985: 96,98
7. 'Art comes from the heart of the people'
Salmre, V./Tomberg, T. 1975

8. 'In der Republik leben Vertreter von 104 Nationalitäten und Völkerschaften - Esten (68.2%), Russen, Ukrainer, Finnen, Belorussen...'
'Representatives of 104 nationalities and peoples live in the Republic - Estonians (68.2%), Russians, Ukrainians, Finns, Byelorussians...'
Snegow, S. 1980

9. 'Alte Traditionen werden Sorgsam Gepflegt'
'Old traditions are carefully nurtured'
Snegow, S. 1980

10. 'The USSR People's Artist Elza Radzina (right) participating in the Festival of Fishermen' 'The Port Zvejniekciems'
Goris, A. 1987

11. 'Tartu State University is our oldest and the most famous higher-educational establishment; that is why the celebration of the 350th anniversary of alma mater Tartuensis was a great event not only for the University and the town of Tartu but also for the whole of the Estonian SSR.'
Palamets, H./Maastik A./Pangsepp R. 1986:86-87

12. 'On July 21, 1940, the Latvian Parliament - People' Diet - under the leadership of professor Augusts Kirhensteins proclaimed Latvia a socialist republic. In the name of working people Soviet power was restored in Latvia'
Goris, A. 1987

13. 'Pindala poolest teisel Eesti NSV saarel - Hiiumaal - asub meie väiksem raioon. Ja ehkki hiidlased on ka visad põlluharijad, annab Hiiuma raioonile õige näo ja teo kalurikolhoos 'Hiiu Kalur'.
'The smallest Estonian district lies on Hiiumaa, the second biggest island of the Estonian SSR. Although the islanders are diligent farmers, the collective Fishery 'Hiiu Fisherman is the enterprise that is really characteristic of Hiiumaa.'
Pangsepp, R. 1985:198
14. 'Ode to Brotherhood' (on Ukraine)  
Kravchuk, L. 1988

15. 'Between the XXI and XXII Latvian YCL Congresses (1978-1982) over 1.5 thousands of young people with Komsomol passes have gone to the construction sites of the Soviet Union. Photos: (below) Builders of BAM (Balkal-Amur Line) and their visitors from home (above).'
Goris, A. 1987

16. 'A public holiday. The youth of Tallinn stepping out to celebrate.'  
Salmre, V./ Tomberg, T. 1975


18. The Song Day of the South-Estonian mixed choirs at Põlva, 1983.'  
Pangsepp, R. 1985:229

19. 'The tradition of Song Festivals dates back to the time of the Estonian national awakening. In 1869 the first Estonian Song Festival was held in Tartu. After the war, those great festival of music were revived again.'  
Pangsepp, R. 1985:228

20. The Estonian are a singing nation. This is evidenced by the republican song festival arranged every five years, the tradition having been initiated in 1869. The Jubilee Song and Folk-Dance Festival of 1969 was attended by 30,230 performers from all over the Republic and a public of 200,000. The joy in music was augmented by a feast for the eyes - an unforgettable display of colourful Estonian national costumes worn by the singers and dancers.'  
German, G. 1979:46-47
List of Illustrations/ Chapter 5.

1. New Signs 'Oru Shop' 'Oru Bar'

2. 'Sport Hotel. Bar Restaurant Sauna Pool Tennis Court Satellite TV'

3. 'Haapsalu Goods. Wholesale Centre'

4. Signs on the Collective Farm: 'Bar. Gorbiland.'

5. 'Cafe and Farm Shop'

6. Local shop window: Swedish food poster from the large chain ICA

7. Seasonal Swedish signs in local shop: 'Happy summer with Skogaholm's bread'

8. 'Happy holiday with Skogaholm's bread'

9. Satellite dishes on one of the blocks of flats on the collective farm. Note the empty flagholder to the right of the door.

10. The back of the workshops. Obsolete machinery.

11. Bundles of wood for the new woodchip burner, replacing the coal burner which provided all the heating and hot water for the blocks of flats on the collective farm.
List of Illustrations/ Chapter 6.

1. Vase of Christmas Poinsettas decorated with a sticker saying 'Michael Jackson' and a sticker from an orange, 'Dole Costa Rica'.

2. Soviet envelope celebrating the 8 of March, Women's Day. Still for sale in the post-office during the time of my fieldwork.
List of Illustrations/ Chapter 7.

1. Interior from farmhouse

2. Traditional farmhouse repaired during Soviet era

3. Farmhouse extended with typical white bricks, Soviet era

4. Electrified farmhouse

5. The manorhouse of Birkas in the process of being renovated

6. The interior of the church

7. Soviet structure, midway between completion and abandonment
List of Illustrations/ Chapter 8.

1. Empty and half empty western bottles of shampoo decorating a bathroom shelf.

2. A bathroom shelf with empty Finnish and Swedish bottles of shampoo, an empty cover for Swedish toothpaste, and, above, western soap.

3. The central heating system from outside.

4. Entrance to heating system, with piles of coal outside.
Chapter 1. Reforming Habitus: Identity and the Revival of the Estonian Swedish Cultural Heritage on a former Collective Farm in NW Estonia:

Introduction

In August 1991 Estonia gained independence from the Soviet Union. The state of independence precipitated a liminal stage of re-building the nation which initially tended to be referred to as an essentially restorationist project, bringing back the inter-war republic which constituted the only previous period of national independence. Increasingly, however, as contacts with the west grew, it was referred to in terms of transforming Estonia into a 'normal' western country. The subject of my thesis is an investigation of the subsequent processes of re-forming habitus, or in other words the changing aspects both of everyday life and of a deeper sense of identity, in relation to the Soviet past and to the new state. I am focusing on a particular local manifestation of this process; the project of restoring the Swedish cultural heritage in a remote coastal area.

My fieldwork was located on a former collective farm on an isolated peninsula on the north-west coast. Before WW2 the population on the peninsula, then about 4,000 people, was just over 50% Swedish-speaking. In all of Estonia there were about 8,000 people whose ethnicity was identified as Swedish, living mainly on the islands and coastlines of the north west of the country. The majority of the Swedes escaped or were evacuated to Sweden during the war, and the area was partially re-settled by the German army with Estonian refugees from the front. Despite some subsequent Soviet efforts to re-populate the area, the population today is still less than a quarter of what it was before the war. The central village, which before the war consisted of the manor house, a village school, and a small number of scattered farms, with a population of 153 people, now also has a number of Soviet workshops, 2 shops, a defunct dairy, and 9 apartment blocks, built between the early 1960s and the late 1980s. The village also housed the administrative office of the collective farm, and was still the centre for the local political administration. The population in 1993 was about 320 people, the only village on the peninsula whose population had increased between 1934 and 1994.

The revival of the Swedish heritage had several aspects, involving the establishment of an Estonian Swedish association; the transformation of the local school to a 'Scandinavian orientated school'; the organisation of public celebrations of the heritage in connection with organised group visits from the
Estonian Swedes who fled during the war; and the reception of aid and the conciliation of contacts from Sweden. From the local point of view, the purpose of the restoration of Swedish-ness was two-fold, on the one hand providing an alternative identity after the rupture from the Soviet past (when the remaining Swedes had become almost completely assimilated), and on the other hand attracting interest and aid from Sweden in order to build an economic future for the area. The most important aspect of the latter is the twin town agreement with a small Swedish town (pop. ca. 15,000), which at the time of my fieldwork (1993-4) had provided material aid to the value of over £100,000, mostly through voluntary donations, and whose continuing work for the community represents one of the new external forces in relation to which the post-Soviet identity of the village is being re-constituted. The aid, consisting of agricultural machinery, a communal freezer unit and a new wood chip central burner to replace the worn out coal burner, a number of fridges, cookers and bathroom equipment, and large amounts of clothes and books, had the effect of leaving a number of Swedish 'signs' spread around the village, both in public and in private. In private, the objects (clothes, decorations, and western equipment, which were also given by relatives abroad, or purchased locally) played an important part in developing (and continuing) notions of distinction by signalling both a western style and western contacts: powerful, if complex, resources in the former Soviet republic as well as in the post-Soviet state.

The other important factor for the re-establishment of the 'Swedish-ness' of the area is the local school which has been developed into a language orientated school, specialising in Swedish. The high-school attracts students from all over Estonia, and functions as a state boarding school, whereas the lower forms constitute an ordinary local school, except for the fact that Swedish is taught with a view to reviving the dormant heritage. Apart from the aid and the school, there is a third focal point to the revival of Swedishness; the Estonian Swedish association 'Estlandssvenska Samfundet', which, founded in 1988, claims to be the first contemporary ethnic association to be permitted in the Soviet Union. It publishes a journal, and has founded a library of about 1,500 volumes, financed largely by the Swedish governmental development agency. During the time of

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1 The director of the school is married to the former director of the collective farm, who now is the head of a new share company, a garage in the local town. In this, he typifies the popular notion of the easy transition of the Soviet leadership class to the private sphere, aided by contacts and access to capital. In the Soviet times they had a strong influence on the local area, and whilst the school director still ran the school in a fairly 'Soviet' manner, the teachers were beginning to complain about what was widely seen as an arbitrary and at times dictatorial use of power.

2 The so-called language orientated schools formed part of the Soviet system of specialised and/or elite secondary schools.
my fieldwork, the library was so far still lodged in the private flat of the history teacher of the school. The association also started a 'folkhögskola', a Swedish orientated adult education college with roots in the interwar republic. They as yet had no building, and attendance was modest. These institutions collaborate with Swedish Estonian organisations in Sweden, which also work for the revival of the heritage. In addition, there is considerable interest from the Swedish embassy, the media, and, to a lesser extent, the Estonian government.

The area is also twinned with a mainly Swedish-speaking Finnish area, which gives a more culturally orientated support, with a number of exchange visits and support for visiting students in Finland. The defence of Swedish-ness in Finland provides the most immediate model for the restoration of Swedish-ness in Estonia, although it should also be pointed out that the Swedish community in Finland consisted both of a coastal minority of fishermen and farmers, similar to the Estonian Swedes, and of a traditional upper class, in some ways comparable to the Baltic Germans in Estonia. The two twin town contracts provide powerful incentives for the two main institutions of the village, the school and the area council, to encourage 'Swedish-ness'. Thus the head of the village council, whose family background is partly Swedish, has learnt to speak Swedish almost fluently, and the director of the school and all the teachers speak some Swedish after having been invited for an intensive language course in Finland.

One of the meanings of the revival of the heritage, then, is the attempt by the two main institutions in the village to link the area in various ways to Sweden, Finland and the 'West', with all their connotations of peace, affluence, and 'normality'. After such a long period of rupture from the West, this is inevitably to some extent also a process of inventing tradition (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). Large parts of the contemporary Swedish-ness in the village is invented, or perhaps more appropriately enacted, with the help of the discourse and actions of the three institutions described above, and the Swedish objects such as clothes and machinery which are now spread around the village. This process, which might be called the 'Swedification' of the area, was mainly directed from above, essentially conforming, despite the introduction of a democratic form of government, to a Soviet model of political developments. The leaders openly expressed a measure of contempt for a particular section of the people, who were seen as wasters and alcoholics, which was invariably somewhat shocking to the Swedish official visitors. Very few of the people had a spontaneous sense of kinship with the Swedes: the remaining Estonian Swedes were too few, and assimilation had been too complete during the Soviet times. The process of
reviving the heritage, therefore, was mainly politically constructed, conforming to the top down Soviet political model. The genuine expression of kinship was instead primarily constituted by the relationship between the visiting Estonian Swedes who had fled to Sweden and the place itself: the land, and the old farm houses. The local people were associated with the Soviet blocks of flats, and the large culture hall, the poverty and conformity of the architecture reflected in the foreign 'Soviet-ness' of the people. It was a complex meeting of peoples, which was deeply embedded in the cultures of both the Swedish visitors and the local Estonians.

The Historical Revival

The Swedish-speaking people (before the war, ca. 8,000, in a population of 1 million) had been intensely investigated before and during the 1st Estonian Republic (1918-1940), mainly from an ethnographic point of view. In Sweden, reflecting a contemporary preoccupation, they were usually depicted as representing an essence of Swedishness which industrialisation and homogenizing modernity had eroded in Sweden itself. The incorporation of modern-ness into the concept of Swedish-ness, was, then, paralleled by the notion that genuine Swedish-ness was the property of people whose everyday culture could still be described as 'folk culture'. For the Estonian Swedes, who previously had little sense of themselves as a national minority (the dialects were often mutually unintelligible, and they tended to live isolated island lives) a process of objectification was under way which led to the construction, not only of a community of Swedes in Estonia, but also to a situation where, in the end, it was said that every Swede in Estonia had become an object of study.

The peninsula of my fieldsite was, before the Second World War, the main centre for the Swedish minority of Estonia. Activities were centered on the Swedish agricultural college³ housed in the manor-house in the village which was to become the centre of the kolkhoz, or collective farm. Students, all boarders,

³'Swedish' in this context refers to the fact that it was established for the Estonian Swedes, with mainly Swedish teachers and directors. The Estonian state was originally the main contributor to the school, supplying, in 1921, about one third of the total income. By 1937 the Swedish state was contributing more than half of the total, whilst the contribution from the Estonian state had diminished to less than a quarter. Up until the 1930s Estonia had a generous minorities policy for the 4 national minorities; the Russians, the Germans, the Swedes, and the Jewish people. After the right wing coup in 1934, and the ensuing policy of Estonianization, support for the school became uncertain, and changes to the curriculum, such as an increase in the hours of Estonian, were enforced (Nyman 1971:53-54).
came from local and isolated cultures, where people from other islands or parts of the coast tended to be regarded more or less as foreigners. The school, led by directors and teachers mainly appointed from Sweden, was instrumental in forging a sense of common nationality and culture, as well as in introducing 'modernism', both in terms of the ideas of modern agricultural techniques, and in terms of encouraging a 'school spirit' of the cheerful and egalitarian comraderie intrinsic to the discourse of Swedish modernism.

Most of the Swedish population fled to Sweden during the war: an often dangerous journey over the Baltic Sea back to the country which was still in some respects regarded as 'home'. The peninsula was partially re-settled by the German Army with evacuated refugees from the approaching Eastern front. There was, of course, some friction between the refugees and the remaining locals: coming from a war zone, and having no sense of permanence as regards the houses they had been assigned, the refugees were accused of disregarding the common rules concerning re-cycling, storage and the proper care of animals: houses were destroyed, furniture was used as firewood, and animals were mistreated. The forced collectivisation, however, which begun in 1949, eventually over-rode these concerns, not least through the associated nation-wide deportations of that year. Also, an alternative moral system which focussed on transformation rather than re-cycling was imposed on the previously dominating morality of thrift. Both the individual and the agricultural system were intended to be transformed by the collective, which was designed to be a factory of agricultural production and a scene for the enactment of 'collectivity' rather than, in the traditional sense of the word, a farm. The new and dominating discourse, in other words, attempted to move the moral imperative from thrift to production, and from the home to the collective, through the creation of a public drama of meetings, elections, slogans and speeches. It is important, however, to emphasise that the result was at best partial and gradual, creating a persistent gap between the public and the private.

It would be a mistake, however, to regard the previous system in primarily functionalist terms: this was not a *modus vivandi* which had evolved over the

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4 On March 25-26 1949 at least 20,700 people were deported. This was the second large wave of deportations, and it was intended to weaken resistance to the collectivisation of the land. The first wave began on June 14 1941, when 10,000 people were deported before the invasion of the German army on July 5. In comparison, during the preceding year of Soviet occupation approximately 1,000 people were arrested and deported. In 1949 the standard term was the so-called 25+5, 25 years of labour camp + 5 years of internal exile, but after Stalin's death many of the prisoners were released. On the peninsula of Noarootsi, 60 people, including 25 children, were on the list, of which 14 people escaped. Of the 46 5 died in the camps, but many never came back, either because they did not receive permission to come back, or because having lost everything and suffered considerably they did not want to.
centuries, but rather a way of life which was deeply influenced by the revivalist movement which had swept over these areas from Sweden during the latter half of the 19th century, and by the 1920s and 1930s movement of modernising agriculture and rural life. The cleanliness, thrift and order which characterised the discourse prior to the Second World War, were not, then, 'traditional' in the sense that this was how people had lived for a long time. There are many descriptions by 19th century Swedish evangelical missionaries sent out to what were called the Swedish areas of Estonia which focus on the dirt and alcoholic misery of the peasant homes. The goal of the missions encompassed schooling and instruction for the children, improved hygiene in the home, and the formation of local branches of the sobriety movement, as well, of course, as religious conversions. The missions, then, were an important force in the formation of 'Swedish-ness' in Estonia, establishing the notion that a sense of nationality has a moral dimension, which concerned itself with cleanliness, thrift and sobriety. The latter in particular was important since alcohol was regarded in the missions as a tangible instrument of the devil, and hence a direct cause of physical and spiritual misery.

The nexus of ideas which informed the missions were to a large extent taken over by the secular movements which were active in the 1920s and 1930s, such as the sobriety movement, the sports movement, the choirs, and the drive towards a modernisation of agriculture. Hence the creation of a notion of Swedish-ness in the interwar Estonian republic was also entangled in ideas of the modern, of historical progress and of democracy (cf Thomas 1991). To be engaged in Swedish-ness was to be both modern and moral, defending the national identity against the easier path of assimilation, which represented, to the activists, a form of corruption similar to the corruption of alcohol and lethargy.

The Contemporary Revival of Swedish-ness

The collectivisation initiated a historical trajectory which still informs the habitus of the former kolkhozniks, or collective farm workers. The official closing down of the collective farm, however, (following a referendum of the members where only 1 vote was cast in favour of continuation), in conjunction, of course, with the fall of socialism and the break-up of the Soviet Union, means that many people are now forced to invent new livelihoods as well as new identities. Hence the present is in the process of being re-formed, both on a national, a regional and an individual level. The re-establishment of Swedish-ness presents a new official
model, replacing the Soviet one, covering most aspects of life in the village: the economy, the culture, and the material culture.

The re-formations of the present, however, was something that people were only partly actively involved in. It was also a process of normative and collective change, which tended to be presented by most people as a movement of the whole community towards the 'normal'. The Estonians were regarded, and more importantly regarded themselves, as the only 'Westerners' in the Soviet Union. An important part of the present normativity was the enactment of a sense of indifference to new Western products. Feelings of helplessness or excitement were avoided, not least because of the notion of the Russian inclination towards an excessive display of emotion, which was commonly, and derogatively, regarded as a contrast to Estonian irony and detachment. The concept of national characteristics was an important feature in the nationalities policies of the Soviet Union, and, at least in Estonia, now forms part of an everyday discourse about national self-identity. The process, then, of covering up 'Soviet-ness' and enacting a familiarity with the West was an important mechanism of the reformation of habitus where the acting constituted a form of appropriation and reification, informed, also, by notions of 'authenticity', i.e. of roots and traditions with trajectories of potential knowledges which ostensibly reached beyond the Soviet state, but which were also, at least partially, framed by Soviet notions of nationhood and ethnicity (cf. Kandiyyoti 1996).

This thesis is loosely divided in two parts, chapters 1-3, which form a historical and contextual background to the present, and chapters 4-7, which constitute an ethnography of the present, and should be read with reference to the previous chapters. The rationale for giving over a substantial part of the thesis to history is justified not so much by the general importance of history in all societies, but rather by the fact that this particular society was self-consciously re-constituting itself with reference to history. My own view of 'history' is closer to Lévi-Strauss' than, for example, to Comaroff and Comaroff: the experience of historicity is, I believe, a socially constructed, rather than an innate, phenomena (Lévi-Strauss 1981, Comaroff and Comaroff 1992). My focus on history, therefore, is intended to reflect my informants' own pre-occupation with their past, and hence to provide an ethnographic analysis which is aligned with their own world-view.

It should also be noted that the second part of the thesis has by now also become history: changes, and particularly the local appropriation of western-ness, which
the revival of Swedish-ness formed a part of, were taking place at a fast pace. The process of assimilation which every ethnographer experiences was in my case speeded up by the community's rapid assimilation of the culture which I belonged to. My familiarity with the western material culture they were accumulating initially instilled a sense that I recognised, and hence understood, their culture (cf Herzfeld 1987, Jackson 1987). This feeling was emphasised by the fact that the provenance of the majority of the material culture was Sweden, consisting, moreover, mainly of Swedish objects from my childhood, which, having left Sweden 17 years ago, were in many ways more familiar to me than contemporary Swedish objects.

The sense of kinship which the objects were intended to signify was of course inevitably to some degree deceptive. The fact that most of the objects were in fact old masked the fact that the present 'Swedish-ness' of the collective farm was newly acquired; a revival of the Swedish-ness of the area orchestrated by people who mostly had no connection with Swedish-ness themselves, but who saw an economic future in stronger links with Sweden. The culture of the people, including the culture of the revival, was in fact constituted within a Soviet culture, which was considerably more remote from my own experience. If the Swedishness was communicated through material culture, the Soviet culture was mainly communicated through verbal references, often to old slogans, deliberately hidden meanings which had to be de-coded. Responses to my survey, for example, which were often strikingly normative, frequently contained such hidden references.

This scenario constitutes a sketchy background for the central question of the thesis, which is an investigation into how the people on the peninsula of Noarootsi harnessed the historical trajectories described above, as well as other concepts of 'western-ness', in the re-formation of habitus following de-collectivisation, the introduction of the free market, and the present nation-building process. The setting, then, is essentially a community and a society in transformation, in a process by which the present is being re-formed with reference to the past, as well as to what is perceived as Western, contemporary, and, importantly, 'normal'. Whilst those two sets of references are not commonly regarded as paradoxical, since it is specifically the independence period (1920-1940) which is being evoked as a model, it is also clear that the appropriation of contemporary western-ness is gradually becoming more important than the re-enactment of the past.
Chapters:

2. Place, Methodology and Context

This chapter is intended to cover three separate areas, creating a context for the thesis as a whole. In the first part, I briefly describe the history of the collective farm, followed by a passage on the spatial lay out of the village, and a discussion of the local economy, including new enterprises and aid. I then look at the question of demography, in which the relationship to the Russian population of Estonia tended to get articulated. In the section on methodology I outline the methods used, looking in particular at some of the problems of practicing ethnography in the former Soviet Union, as well as the specific situation I encountered in the field of doing field-work 'near-at-home', in an area neither radically different, nor the same as my own culture. The last part sets out to provide a theoretical context, looking at some of the relevant literature for the arguments pursued in the body of the text. It is not intended as an exhaustive review of the anthropology of the former Soviet Union, but aims rather to provide a context for the arguments within the thesis.

3. The Formulation of the Estonian Swedish Identity: 1870-1940

In this chapter the pre-war links between Sweden and the Estonian Swedish community will be discussed in terms of missionary revivalism and modernism, two movements which transformed the Swedish community in Estonia, much as they had transformed Sweden itself. They provided a frame for the notion of modern Swedishness in Estonia, which included a moral agenda of hygiene, thrift, and honesty. The Swedish-ness of the Estonian Swedes, moreover, was seen as a national identity which had to be preserved with some effort, defeating the forces of assimilation.

The first part of this chapter consists of a case study of one of the 5 missions established amongst the Estonian Swedes by the Evangeliska Fosterlandsstiftelsen, the National Evangelical Society in Sweden, between 1873
and 1887. It is based primarily on an auto-biographical account written by one of the missionaries. The middle part of the chapter forms an analysis of the national question in Estonia, from the 1870s to 1940, the end of independence. This section is intended to historically contextualise the project of preserving Swedishness amongst the Estonian Swedes, which had much in common with the national aspirations of the Estonians within the Russian Empire. The construction of a coherent Estonian Swedish community in Estonia formed part of a wave of national aspirations sweeping through northern and central Europe at the time. The last part, finally, looks at the work for the preservation of Swedish-ness during the independence period (1920-1940), when the ideas of modernism, partly imported from Sweden, informed the project of preserving the Swedish ethnicity.

4. National Heritage in the Soviet Union

The intention of this chapter is to attempt an analysis of how the current revival of Swedish-ness in Estonia is influenced by Soviet concepts of culture and ethnicity, and particularly by the Soviet objectification of folk culture. I begin by analysing 2 paintings of Lenin and 3 of Stalin, all painted during the Stalinist era, in order to show how the notion of 'the people' came to include representations of ethnic nationalities, symbolising the voluntary Union of the Soviet peoples. This part of the chapter is followed by a section on representations of Estonian nationhood, through an analysis of a number of images from Soviet 'coffee table books' about Estonia. In order to support my argument that this form of representation of nationhood was a specifically Soviet pattern of representation, I have also included images from books on Latvia and Ukraine. The identical format of the books reveals the homogeneity which, paradoxically, they were designed to conceal, in the project of representing national specificity (cf. Wilks 1995). Despite the fact, however, that this was an essentially managed form of representation, one should not assume that it was not successfully appropriated by the people: on the contrary, to my informants it was an important ingredient in the notion of what constituted Estonian-ness.
5. Signs of the New Nation

The concept of a semiotic of 'communism' and 'capitalism' represents the widest circles of signs of who people in post-Soviet Estonia are. This chapter involves a close look at the aesthetic geography of the fieldwork location, focusing on the notion of signs, and includes substantial visual material. The main focus is a detailed contextualisation of the material culture in the public sphere on the collective farm, from the point of view of the political changes. I look at a number of new enterprises, focusing on the symbolic meanings of two of them in particular, in terms of the systemic and cultural transformation on the farm. The last section constitutes an analysis of the Estonian, and the local, relationship to the land. The political transformation has meant that certain areas, for example most of the coastline, which were previously closed to access are now open. This part of the chapter includes an ethnographic consideration of the re-appropriation of previously forbidden areas, including the transformation of structures of authority, such as the watch towers and the army headquarters.

6. Independence: the Revival of the Old Festivals

In chapter 5 the new Calendrical year and its significance for the re-formation of habitus is analysed. The celebrations of pre-war holidays, as well as the appropriation of some relatively recent western ones, are analysed. I consider the notions of time and progress in the Soviet Union, drawing some comparisons from writers on modernity. The main part of the chapter aims to provide a thick description of the celebrations on the collective farm, some continuing since the Soviet times, some revived, and some altogether new. I consider what these celebrations mean in terms of the different aspects of independence; the wish to restore the former Republic, and the wish to appropriate a contemporary form of Western-ness.

7. Building the New Community: The Local Revival of Swedish-ness

After having looked at the political changes through historical, semiotic, and time-related references, this chapter constitutes the main description of the local process of de-collectivisation, and the revival of the notion of 'Swedish-ness'. It includes an analysis of what the revival of Swedishness means to the people who left during the war and settled in Sweden, both through my own interviews, and
through an ethnographic reading of the journal for the Estonian Swedes in Sweden, 'Kustbon' (Verdery 1991). The question of power is central to this chapter: the process of objectification implicit in the revival of the heritage, and the marginalisation of the people in the blocks of flats in the central village in relation to the revival. In that context, the gap between the official presentation of the village as 'Swedish' and the lack of Swedish roots of most of the local people, many of whom were descendants of war refugees from the Eastern front, will also be addressed.

8. The Economy of Dependence: Consumption, Gifts and Aid

In chapter 8 the revival of the links with the west is examined in terms of the consumption of western goods, as well as the aid and gifts coming into the community, mainly from Sweden. Gifts from abroad tend to merge with the notion of aid, with particular implications for the relationship between the community of Noorootsi with the larger Swedish communities in Finland and Sweden itself. From the point of view of the Swedes it is seen as an act of solidarity rather than politeness, one of the meanings of which is also to encompass the 'Swedish areas' of Estonia into a larger union of 'Swedish-ness', or 'the north', and Swedish interest, which operates within a Scandinavian model of a network of formal and informal links where the borders of the nation-states are encompassed by the wider political union of 'the North'. To the locals, the aid shipments tend to be both welcome and, at times, humiliating. A large part of the aid, which is mostly but not exclusively given to the community rather than to individuals, comes from the twin town of Åtvidaberg in Sweden, and involves a significant amount of interaction between the officials from Sweden who manage the aid project, and the local population. The question of aid will be analysed with reference to this interaction. The process by which the objects of aid, and particularly the clothes, are appropriated will also be examined.

9. Conclusion: 'Normal Life'

In chapter 9, finally, the previous chapters are drawn together in an analysis of the re-formations of habitus on my fieldsite (Bourdieu 1986). Within the context of the current appropriation of western-ness, I look at some particular problems of observation and representation. I consider the question of normativity and the use of the term 'normal' in the sense of what should ideally be rather than what is,
and the associated derogatory sense of the expression 'not normal', which is often used to describe the common manifestations of the old system.

This thesis, then, attempts to analyse the revival of the Swedish cultural heritage on a collective farm in coastal Estonia. In that process, it is important to look both at the historical aspects of cultural identity, ethnicity, and nation-hood, and at the contemporary processes, primarily the relationship to the west and western goods, which frame the various aspects of the revival of Swedish-ness. The thesis consequently deals with a variety of questions, ranging from the historical (both pre-war and Soviet) construction of a sense of Estonian-ness, to the present shifts of identity. At times these may seem difficult to reconcile. The attempt, however, to include both the Estonian Swedish and the Estonian, as well as the pre-war and the contemporary, in the analysis within the thesis, reflects a parallel struggle of re-conciliation for the villagers. Their contemporary search for new identities, then, is represented in the search of identity of the thesis: both are situated somewhere in between history and ethnography, searching for their own form of 'normality'. In that sense, I can at least hope to have adequately reflected, if not represented, my informants.
Chapter 2. Place, Methodology and Context

The Collective Farm

In February 1993 the collective farm, named, like hundreds of farms throughout the Soviet Union, after Lenin, ended.\(^5\) The collective farm was started in 1949, when collectivisation was carried out throughout Estonia. The original 32 villages on the peninsula were turned into 23 collectives between the 28 January and the 30 April 1949. In that year, the largest wave of arrests took place, when, on March 25-6, 20,700 people were deported during a two day operation. All except one of the collective farms in Noarootsi, the Lenin Kolkhoz, were founded after the March deportations, in which several families from the peninsula were arrested. On the 25 of March, 60 people from the peninsula were on the list for deportation, of whom 14 were let off. Of those 46 people, 5 died in Siberia, all of whom were born between 1866 and 1889. 25 of the original 60 people on the list were children, 7 of them under 10 years old.\(^6\) The death of Stalin in 1953, and the subsequent liberalisation under Krushchev, meant that many of the deported so-called kulaks were released, as well as waves of other political prisoners. Some, however, were not allowed to return to their home countries, and others were not allowed to return to their home villages.

The deportations were a deliberate measure designed to weaken resistance to collectivisation. 'Red Dawn' (formerly Kolanis) was formed on the 29 March, 'Hero' (Birkas, in Swedish, or Pürksi in Estonian) on the 30 March, and 'Red Star' (Österby, or Esterbi), one of the last ones, on the 18 April. The names, obvious and normative representations of communism, are repeated throughout the Soviet Union: 'Red Flag', 'Kalinin', 'New Way', 'Forward', 'Avenger', 'Hero', 'Partisan', 'New Life', 'Lenin'. The smaller collective farms were re-organised regularly, and merged into larger entities, until 1976, when there was only one remaining collective farm in the area, 'Lenin', which included most of the peninsula, and parts of the coastal area to the north and south of it. The final merger was welcomed by the leaders of the collective farm, since the larger farms had a greater degree of autonomy from the county collective farm commission, which controlled production, whilst leaving the timing of harvests and so on to the

\(^5\) The formal, Estonian, name of the collective farm was, 'V.I. Lenini Nimeline Kolhoosi'.
\(^6\) Figures from the exhibition organised by SOV, the organisation for Estonian Swedes, at the culture house of the collective farm, in connection with the Estonian Swedish memorial days in June 1994. They have not been checked for accuracy.
agronomer on the collective farm board. The collective farm was re-named the 'Narootsi kolkhoz' in 1990, and was finally closed down in February 1993.

The developments on this particular collective farm broadly followed developments elsewhere in Estonia, as outlined by Butkiavichius, Teret'eva and Shlygina, whose article on peasant settlements of the Baltic areas describes rural settlements from the early archaeological data, to the feudal period, the 'years of capitalist dictatorship', and the consequences of the establishment of Soviet power (Butkiavichius 1967:3-17). The authors argue that the effects of the land reforms of 1920 was to break up the old villages, and create a system of strips of land, which were difficult to manage (Butkiavichius et.al. 1967:18). Collectivisation, therefore, was deliberately aimed at un-doing the effects of the land reform, not only by doing away with the narrow, individually owned, strips of land, but also by creating large, central, villages (Butkiavichius 1967:18). In the 1950s, these planned central villages were envisaged mainly on the basis of individual homes, funded by long-term government loans and other material assistance (Butkiavichius et.al. 1967:19). In the 1960's, however, due to the policy of 'organizational-and-economic growth' of the collective farms, the policy changed towards creating urban-type settlements, mainly in order to raise the standard of living in the country-side to the level of the towns (Butkiavichius 1967:20). My field site had been defined as the central village on the peninsula, the only village, in fact, where modern houses were being built.

The 1976 merger meant that all the administrative functions in one of the previous collective farm centres on the mainland, were shifted to the village of my field site, which became the centre of the larger collective farm. The mainland village thus became a sleeper settlement, a smaller model replica of the central village in terms of the identical blocks of flats, but de-centred by the merger into not much more than a bus stop on route to the nearest town. With the exception of electrification, which was introduced everywhere in the 1950s, the other villages were not much changed since the pre-war era. The winding roads, dotted with milk tables where canisters of milk awaited collection, were reminiscent of photographs of the area from the 1930s (see plate 1). The old farm buildings were sometimes unintentionally traditional, kept unchanged through years of Soviet poverty, forming a strong contrast to the modern, if equally neglected, blocks of flats in the central village (see plate 2). At other times the buildings were repaired with Soviet materials creating a particular style (see plate 3). Post-Soviet life on the farms was often easier than in the flats, since people had some private land, and the reliance on traditional wood burning stoves meant
that heating - probably the main problem in the flats both in terms of cost and availability - was much cheaper. Heating, electricity, and rent were all subsidised in the Soviet Union. The end of those subsidies, in addition to mounting unemployment, had led to a relatively recent sense of impoverishment in the village, although the 1980s had been more difficult than the 1970s, showing a gradual decline, particularly in the availability of goods and produce.

The peninsula where the farm was located was defined as a border protection zone, and was therefore isolated from casual visitors. There was a checkpoint on the only road out, where papers were checked, and there were troops stationed in some barracks at the site of a ruined manor-house outside one of the villages (see plates 4-5). In November 1993 the relatively new sign for the collective farm, renamed the Noarootsi Kolhoos after the name of the peninsula, was finally replaced by a sign for a new bank which had opened a branch in the village (see plates 6-7). Illustrating much of the contemporary process of change, although the new sign remained, the branch itself closed down within a few weeks.

The central village, with a population of 323, was the only settlement on the peninsula which had increased its population since the war. It formed the centre of the collective farm, housing certain standardised functions, including the administrative office, the culture house, the crèche, and the school, as well as 8 blocks of flats built between the early 1960s and 1990. Spatially, the village was organised around a dusty unpaved square, formed by the school and the culture house (see plate 8). Also, there was an old manor house, which during the Soviet times had fallen into a state of dilapidation and which was under renovation during the time of my fieldwork, in order to be turned into an annexe for the

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7 The extent of the depopulation of the area since the war is shown by the following figures for the population of the villages on the peninsula and the mainland belonging to the collective farm in 1934 and in 1994. The villages all had Swedish and Estonian names, and the Swedish names here are the second ones.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village</th>
<th>1934</th>
<th>1994</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kudani/ Gutaniis</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saare/ Lyckholm</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pürksi/ Birkas</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skatanäs</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Österbi/ Österby</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Einbi/ Enby</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paslepa/ Paslep</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sutlepa/ Sutlep</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aulepa/ Dirslatt</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hara/ Storharga</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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31
The manor house, which previously had faced a few acres of now overgrown park landscape, backing onto a field, had now symbolically been turned around, as the road had leading up to the front had disappeared, and the new square had come to define the Soviet parameters of the centre.

In addition to the manor-house and the blocks of flats, the old village included some 10 old farms, spread out in the surrounding area. There was also a dairy, defunct since the 1970s, and a small shop placed next to it. This shop, the old co-operative, now had to compete with the new, private, farm shop, housed in one of the old work-shops (see illustrations 9-10). Whilst the new one concentrated on food and a small cafe operation, the old one also sold household stuff, pots and pans, exercise books, shoes if they got an assignment. It was altogether a more Soviet space, with Russian jars of jam and pickles with rusty lids and falling-off labels and a dusty shelf by the big glass window where the alcoholic old men sat and drank. The distinction between the two, however, tended not to be expressed in terms of one being 'private' and the other 'Soviet'. Both were described as 'co-operatives', the old one belonging to a county-wide chain, or system, of collective farm shops, whilst for the new one the term was more or less nominal, stemming from the interim period between 1989 and 1991 when free enterprise was allowed in the Soviet Union under the label of 'co-operatives'. Both, also, were still predominantly perceived as communal services, acting in the interests of the community as a whole.

There is only one road connecting the peninsula with the mainland. Since the area, in common with all border land, including all coastal areas, was a border protection zone, inaccessible without special permits, there was a watch tower and a barrier about a mile from the turn-off, where papers were checked by soldiers. This road continues to the village, where it veers off in two separate directions, leading to the southern and western tips of the peninsula. Towards the west, which leads to the neighbouring village, the road goes past the dining room, the kindergarten, and 2 new houses, completed a few years ago. At first glance they look identical - small houses built in grey concrete set on a lawn, but a closer look reveals that the one furthest out is slightly bigger, and incorporates a

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8 The current renovation of the manor house closely follows its renovation after the First World War, when the 1st Estonian Republic was created. (Peace of Tartu, 1920) Then, as now, the renovation was partly financed from Sweden, with the aim of setting up a Swedish school. Then, the school was agricultural, bringing modern agricultural techniques to the Estonian Swedish farming population. Now, the 'Swedish-ness' is more tenuous, based on the Soviet system of specialised high schools. It is, however, central, in the discourse of the revival of Swedish-ness in the area.
garage as well as a balcony. This house belongs to the elected village mayor, and the other, appropriately, to the builder who built them both. These, together with the rather more substantial new house of the former kolkhoz director and his wife, the head of the school, in another village, were the only new houses in the area, although during the time of my field work 2 other houses were under construction, one belonging to a builder, and the other to one of the teachers and his wife. Both projects were more or less at a standstill for most of the time because of a lack of money.

A typical farm house was built in wood, sometimes painted and otherwise grey, and consisted of an entrance, with a second front door inside a small space for boots and buckets, sometimes a second entrance used as a cold room, a kitchen, a living room, and 1 or more bedrooms. Often there would be a bed in the kitchen or the living room as well. The furniture was usually old and traditional, decorated with several crocheted doilies and anti-macassars. There were normally no bathrooms, but there was usually, but not always, running water in the kitchen. Outhouses and wood heated saunas in small separate houses were common. All of the farms ran small, subsistence, agricultural operations, more or less according to the parameters of what was allowed in the Soviet Union, but perhaps with the recent addition of 1 or more cows. The farm operations were normally manual, and run according to traditional methods. People kept cows and chickens, sometimes pigs, and grew fruit and vegetables.

Most of the people living in the blocks of flats had no plots of land. They bought at least some food, normally staples like potatoes and cabbage, from the farmers. The interiors of the modern flats were at least as normative as the interiors of the farmhouses, reflecting a particular development in the relationship between space and self expression (cf. Gullestad 1984). In the older blocks, the flats were, in fact, not unlike the traditional farm houses. The heating was provided by wood burning tiled stoves, built into the walls, which was standard on the farms. The staircases were wooden and narrow, quite unlike the crumbling concrete of the modern blocks. The rooms were smaller, and the kitchens had ranges rather than electric cookers. The new flats represented, in contrast, progress and modernity, albeit in a rather jaded form, with central heating, electric cookers, fridges and bathrooms. They consisted of a hall, kitchen, bathroom, 1-3 bedrooms, and a living room. The furniture was normative, with little individual variation. The living room, for example, invariably comprised a wall unit with shelves and cupboards, housing books and decorative objects, a sofa, chairs, and tables. Poorer families used the living room as an extra bedroom, but this was not
common. Even objects of decoration were not seemingly used to express individual identity: rather they conformed to a model, in much the same way as the flats themselves, and the collective farms, conformed to particular models.

The population on the entire peninsula was 940 people. Of those, 320 (of a working population of 460) were employed by the collective farm. Although not everyone had lost their job, since the farm to some extent was still running, unemployment was a problem in the community. The most significant loss was the large pig farm, which at its best had 1,400 pigs, and was now closed down. The elected mayor had attempted to persuade people to fund co-operatives to take over the production, but with no success. There were also considerable local taxes, in relation to the small amounts people earned. Working people paid a flat tax totalling 51%, of which 18% was a council tax, 20% a 'social tax', and 13% a health insurance tax. Companies paid a 35% income tax to the state, and no council tax. Generally, there was a feeling that this was a community in decline, which, without the school and the aid from Sweden, would rapidly become depopulated.

The privatisation measures on a national level included the distribution of living space. For each year people had worked, they received the rights to 1 square meter of space. Couples could combine their work points, so that a couple who had both worked for 10 years, had the rights to 20 square meters for free. Rents, however, were still low. At the time of my fieldwork, average rents were about 10 kroons per month (ca. 50 pence), compared to 30-130 kroons (£1.50-£6.50) per month for electricity, and about 350 kroons (£17.50) for heating, water, and sewage. Those were considerable costs, previously subsidised, and now difficult to pay even for working people. Unemployed people received a subsidy of 180 kroons (£9.00) per month for 6 months, if they registered as unemployed, which many were reluctant to do, uncertain of what the consequences might be. In addition to increasing unemployment, inflation, kept around 50%, meant that most people in the community were significantly poorer than they had been during the time of the collective farm. On the other hand, the availability of food and other products had improved.

9 The most striking example of the normativity of decorative objects I saw was a collection of exotic beer cans, which looked unique, but which turned out to be precisely replicated in another flat. Otherwise, the same books and the same glass objects and crocheted doilies were repeated in nearly all the flats, with the exception of the poorest households, which were more bare.

10 See also appendix for an analysis of the survey conducted in the central village, which includes attitudes towards the present system.
Some people commented, however, on the current lack of 'bread and work' for the people: a coded complaint which originated in one of the original Soviet slogans during the coup in 1940. This statement constituted a critique of the new system, stated implicitly, partly by force of habit and partly because people were still generally careful of what they said, and wary of openly criticising the authorities. According to my survey, nearly half of the population, or 49%, stated that they were more satisfied with life during the time of the collective farm, whilst 36% were more satisfied now, and 15% were undecided. One person, however, who had originally stated that she was 'undecided', changed her mind, and became openly critical of the new order, when she found out that I was not sent by the elected mayor. It is unclear, therefore, how many people were genuinely undecided: my assumption, judging partly from their responses to the other questions, is that the majority of them felt more negative than positive about the changes, and that the un-indecisiveness itself constituted a form of passive resistance to 'the changes', which, by extension, included my investigation.

The collective farms were based on centrally designed models, specifying certain social functions. In the central village, there had been a school, a library, a crèche, a collective dining room, a medical centre, some workshops, a shop, a post-office, and a culture house. Of these, the dining room had been closed, and the school, which in the Soviet school system had been a specialised language school, had changed directions and become a rather successful state funded Swedish oriented high school which catered for boarding pupils from all over Estonia, housed in one of the blocks of flats. The culture house, of course, remained, but the cultural programme, which had included weekly film showings, visiting theatre groups, music evenings and folk dancing, had more or less closed down, although one kulturnik, or cultural worker, still organised some activities. The medical centre, run by a local nurse, was also staffed by a visiting doctor once a week. The facilities were poor, and many people preferred to rely on their own medicines, often antibiotics sent by family members working abroad, usually taken on a somewhat ad hoc basis. There was also a good deal of reliance on alternative supplements and practitioners, often so-called psychics who would diagnose ailments and prescribe remedies. The tradition was notably more mystical and less scientifically oriented than in the west.

The collective farm still framed the experience of local life, even though it formally voted itself out of existence in February 1993. During the time of my fieldwork (1993-4), the land and buildings owned by the collective had been taken
over by a transitory commission organising privatisation. De-collectivisation, therefore, was an on-going process which primarily had led to a loss of work and security: about 17% of the people were unemployed, but many of the ones who were employed got by on temporary jobs. There were, however, some public restoration projects, primarily of the manor house and the old vicarage, both of which had become derelict during the last decades. Like the private house-building projects, the work, however, was at a standstill for months at the time, due to a lack of funds.

Aid from Sweden had made some changes to the community, such as a new library, stocked with the an eclectic assortment of old books sent in boxes from various parts of Sweden. It was as yet almost completely un-used by local people, few of whom spoke Swedish well enough to be able to read Swedish books. There was also a freezer hut, built by two un-employed young people from Sweden, where people could rent freezer compartments. The most important aid project, however, was the new central heating system for the entire village, which was completed towards the end of my fieldwork, after a winter of virtually no central heating and outside temperatures ranging between -5 and, unusually, -30 degrees. District heating was standard in the Soviet Union, and people on the whole used to suffer more from over heating than from the cold. The lack of coal, due to the end of the trade in subsidised coal from Russia, and a subsequent fault in the system, meant that heating was not available other than through privately purchased electric radiators, which was, to many people, a sign of the failure of de-collectivisation and the new system of privatisation (see plate 11). The fact that the village authorities continued to issue bills for the non-existent heat, which, significantly, were paid by almost everyone, of course emphasised the sense of failure.

This part of the chapter was intended to describe the collective farm, and the peninsula of Noarootsi. It should perhaps also be said that the nearest town, which was situated some half an hour away by car, or 10 minutes by boat, was an old spa town, and that the seasonality of the region is emphasised by an influx of mainly Estonian tourists to the town in the summer months. The little cinema, for example, which showed 1 film a week, and survived on subsidies with a weekly audience of a handful of people during the winter, blossomed in the summer with audiences over 50 people, and daily shows. The tourists would point out the little sign to each other which stated that the film would only be run if there were at least 6 people in the audience: as a sign, it was a perfect illustration of the Soviet preservation of traditionality. Although Noarootsi itself was not a resort, local
inhabitants, much as they did in the 1920s and 1930s, hoped that it might become one, bringing work and money to the area.

**Demography and Language: the Relationship to the Russians**

Before independence, demographic anxieties dominated the Estonians' sense of themselves as a people (Sandström 1991:21, Ahlander 1992:27). Any book on Estonia, and many of the current writings on the former Soviet Union, will have extensive demographic statistics. In relation to Estonia, the numbers show the decline of the Estonian population since the pre-war era, both as a percentage of the total and in absolute numbers, and the corresponding rise of the Russians. Khazanov, for example, in his 1995 study of CIS ethnicity, nationalism and policy, includes extensive demographic data, relating not only to the Commonwealth of Independent States, but to all the former Soviet republics. Thus, for example, he shows that the percentage of Estonians in the Estonian Republic decreased from 92% on the eve of World War 2, to 74.6% in 1959, and 61% in 1988 (Khazanov 1995:7). Between 1979-1989 the total number of Estonians in Estonia rose by 15,500 people, whilst the number of Russians rose by 60,000 people, and the total number of Slavic people by 82,500 people (Khazanov 1995:19). Estonia had the smallest population of all the Union Republics, 1.565 million according to the 1989 census (of which about a million were of Estonian ethnicity), and it had the 4th highest proportion of Russians of all the republics, 30.3%, following Russia (81.5%), Kazakhstan (37.8%), and Latvia (34%) (Khazanov 1995:247). Finally, he shows some figures for the in and out migration of Russians Estonia in 1989, 1990 and 1991, showing, in the end, a net emigration of some 4,300 people. Perhaps more noticeable, however, is that even in 1990 and 1991, 4,350 and 3,133 Russians still immigrated to Estonia, down from 6,958 in 1989 (Khazanov 1995:252).

Cynthia Kaplan, similarly, begins her chapter on Estonia in Bremmer and Taras' book, *Nations and Politics in the Soviet Successor States* (1993) with a paragraph on contemporary Estonia as a 'plural society', and continues with some demographic statistics. In 1934, she writes, the Estonians constituted 92.9% of the population, of whom 67.2% resided in rural areas (Kaplan 1993:207). By 1950 the Estonian proportion of the population had dropped to 76% (Kaplan 1993:207). She continues, 'The demographic situation stabilized during the 1950s, but turned against the Estonians during the 1960s and 1970s, when industrialization planned by Moscow attracted Slavic immigrants' (Kaplan...
In 1989, important industrial towns in the east, like Narva and Kohtla-järve, were predominantly Russian: 85.1% and 60.4% Russian respectively (Kaplan 1993:208).

Similarly, the Swedish Sovietologist Per Sandström includes a chapter entitled *Politisk demografi*, political demography, in his book on developments in the Baltic states (Sandström, P.1991:21-27). He states, 'In order to understand the current political development in the Baltic states it is necessary to be familiar with certain basic facts concerning the national composition of the population' (Sandström, P.1991:21). Walter Clemens, in his book on Baltic independence, makes a stronger statement, writing that, 'The tiny populations of the Baltic republics - especially the Latvian and Estonians - feared that the time was now or never to save their gene pool and culture from assimilation with outsiders. No other titular peoples of a Soviet Union Republic were so threatened by extinction' (Clemens 1991:2).

The centrality of demography in the contemporary discourse about Estonia is, then, related to the attempt to show the effects of the Soviet occupation. Even communist observers, however, such as the Swede Sven Bjelf, whose book about Swedes in the Soviet Union (*Anna, Erika, Ture och andra Svenskar i Sovietunionen* 12 1984), wrote that in 1979 3 Estonian marriages out of 10 are childless, and a further 3 out of 10 had only one child. The average Estonian family, therefore, consisted of 3.1 people, whereas the figure for rural Tadzhikstan was 6.6, and the average for the USSR as a whole, 3.5 (Bjelf 1984:140). He continues, 'What is highly worrying, above all to the planners, but also to others, is the steady decrease of the size of the family' (Bjelf 1984:140).  

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11 'För att rätt förstå den politiska unvecklingen i dagens Baltikum är det nödvändigt att känna till vissa basfakta om befolkningsens nationella sammansättning. (Sandström, P.1991:21-27)'  
12 'Anna, Erika, Ture and other Swedes in the Soviet Union'. The following quote, from an interview with one of the Swedes he meets, most of whom were communist immigrants from Sweden in the 1930s, exemplifies the tone of the book: 'Jag och alla sovjetmedborgare har fått det bra. Vi har helt enkelt blivit bortskamda, så bortskämnda att vi faktiskt glömmer bort hur bra vi har det. Vem tänker egentligen på självklarheter, som att hyran är lika låg om för 50 år sedan. Vem tänker på att läkarbesöken är gratis, och att läkemedlen är så billiga, några kopeks bara. I varje fall vi pensionärer, jag vet inte hur det är med de yngre, får nya tänder helt gratis' (Bjelf 1984:59) ('Me and all Soviet citizens have a good life now. We are spoiled, actually, so spoiled that we forget how good life really is. Who thinks about obvious things, like the fact that rents are as low now as they were 50 years ago. Who thinks about the fact that visits to the doctor are free, and that medicine is so cheap, just a few kopeks. At least the pensioners, I'm not sure about younger people, get new teeth completely for free.) This statement also exemplifies the fact that what the Soviet Union promised, above all, was material advancement, which, in fact, it failed to deliver, particularly during the 1980s.  
13 'Något som i allt högre grad oroar, framför allt planerare, men också andra, är den ständiga minskningen av familjestorleken' (Bjelf 1984:140).
Soviet ethnographers, also, noted the small families of the Baltic states. Terent'eva, in 'The Latvian Peasant Family' (1984), emphasises the dominance of small, one-generation, families amongst collective farm workers. She writes, 'Another noticeable feature was the extremely small number of families of three generations, and, on the other hand, the existence of quite a large group of families in one generation' (Terent'eva 1984:150). She states that there are few children, usually 1-2, sometimes 3, and only rarely 4-5 (Terent'eva 1984:150). This feature of Latvian (and Estonian) society was probably more striking to a Russian ethnographer than to a northern European one, since families of more than two generations are less common in northern Europe than in Russia. Despite the fact that my findings were similar to Terent'eva's, then, I did not find the fact of small families particularly striking, since, with the addition of probably more single mothers, and the fact that people tended to have children at a younger age, they corresponded rather closely to the family formations in Sweden or the UK.

The figures used in the western works quoted above were mostly, of course, produced by Soviet researchers, who were equally interested in the questions of ethnicity and demography. Gantskaia and Terent'eva, for example, have written about the ethnic processes in the Baltic area, primarily from a demographic point of view (Gantskaia/ Terent'eva 1965). The fact of the Russian immigration into the area is acknowledged, but regarded as a positive force, contrasted to the nationalism of the interwar period (Gantskaia/ Terent'eva 1965:30-33). Integration, they state, is taking place through contacts in the work place, through various institutions, and through an increasing number of mixed marriages (Gantskaia/ Terent'eva 1965:33-34). Thus, 'The Soviet Baltic area is witnessing the disappearance of the vestiges of the former rigid differences in mode of life of the Russian, Belorussian, and other non indigenous population elements, and a determined struggle against the remnants of nationalism in human relationships is being pursued' (Gantskaia/ Terent'eva 1965:33).

Demography, then, mediated the always problematic relationship to the Russians, in some small measure legitimated through the Russians' own demographic anxiety over the expansion of the Muslim populations. In 1978 official Moscow policy to increase the role of Russian in the non-Russian republics was implemented, which had the effect in Estonia of increasing dissent, backed by the fear of cultural extinction (Kionka 1990:46-47). Looking backwards, at least a quarter of the population had fled or been killed during the war, and the percentage of Estonians to Russians had been sinking steadily since: from 97.1%
in 1945\textsuperscript{14} to 61.3\% in 1986 (Küng 1990:26). Following independence, the president, Lennart Meri, in an interview in 1989, stated that, 'Our greatest task in Estonia is to liberate the population from the biological and social terror of belonging to a people which is dying out. That fear is the basis for all our tensions, and above all for the antagonism between different ethnicities in our republic. (Küng 1990:29)\textsuperscript{15}

Meri's statement referred to the antagonism between the Estonians and the Russians, who were not given automatic citizenship in the new republic, unless they could prove that their family had lived in Estonia since before the war. They could, however, apply for Estonian citizenship, for which they needed to pass a language test of about 1,500 words. Since only 12.9\% of Russians (1979 figures) had learnt any Estonian whilst resident in the country, that was not an easy requirement (Misiunas, R. 1990:215). Perhaps more importantly, there are 5 language categories all together, with access to the highest civil service jobs theoretically available only to people who speak Estonian well enough to pass the most difficult language test. The new language laws, moreover, demanded that all official and public business be conducted in Estonian. Previously, it was common to find only Russians working in various public places such as the ticket office of the railway station, but now most non-Estonian speakers have disappeared from the public scene. Some of the Russians who don't speak Estonian, then, were sacked from public posts, and all signs in Russian only have been taken away. Street signs tend still to be bi-lingual. The citizenship laws are of course controversial. They symbolise the restorationist objectives of the post Soviet Estonian state, but they also conform to Soviet notions regarding nationhood and ethnicity (see chapter 4).

The loss of Russian, however, affects the Estonians as well as the Russians. Estonian was primarily a private language, whereas Russian was the language used to deal with the world outside the small community of Estonians. Now that the 'outside' has shifted so fundamentally from east to west, many people who

\textsuperscript{14}In 1945, of course, most of the minority populations present in Estonia before the war were gone: the Germans, called back by Hitler after the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, which secretly assigned Estonia, Latvia, and most of Lithuania to the Soviet Union, the Swedes, most of whom had fled during the war, and the Jews, who had either fled or been killed during the Nazi occupation of Estonia. In 1934, the largest minority group was the Russians, constituting 8.2\% of the population, followed by the Baltic Germans, 1.5\%, the Estonian Swedes, 0.7\%, and the Jewish population, amounting to 0.4\% of the total (Fjuk et.al. 1992:23, Pettai 1996:245).

\textsuperscript{15}Var framsta uppgift i Estland är därför att befria människorna från den biologiska och sociala skräcken att tillhöra ett folk som håller på att dö ut. Den farhågan är själva grunden för alla våra spinnningar och framför allt för motsättningarna mellan olika folkgrupper i vår republik. ((Küng 1990:29)
know Russian, but not English, feel lost: their capacity for dealing with the external world has suddenly been dramatically reduced. In consequence, people everywhere, from well known dissidents and intellectuals to collective farm workers, are learning English. It is important in this context to remember that before the present century Estonian was essentially seen as the language of peasants and serfs. The aristocracy consisted primarily of the Baltic Germans, and the bourgeoisie and artisan classes were German or German-speaking Estonians. In the Soviet Union, of course, Russian was the Lingua Franca, to the extent that ordinary Russians moving to other parts of the Union normally did not generally try to learn the local languages. Furthermore, my Estonian informants tended to be proud of their knowledge of Russian. The repeated adage that was current during the time of my fieldwork regarding Russians and Estonian; that it is 'normal' when you live in another country to learn the language of that country, and that, consequently, the Russians had failed to behave 'normally' therefore represented a new political configuration, less to do with what was actually 'normal' than with what should be the norm (see chapter 9).

Going shopping with informants they would often slip into Russian immediately if they noticed that the shop assistant or stall keeper was Russian, even though the conversation would begin in reasonable Estonian. On asking one of my informants why this was, she replied that the Russians usually only know about 200 words, despite having lived in Estonia for years. Clearly, however, the purchase of half a kilo of tomatoes could perfectly well be conducted in the sellers faulty Estonian: this was not a culture where consumption usually involved a great deal of conversation. Rather, keeping the exchange in Russian revealed the ambivalence people felt about genuinely incorporating the Russians into the Estonian nation. Ironically, the Soviet notions of nationhood, which was predominately seen in terms of ethnicity, gives some support to the considerable reluctance now to incorporate the foreign, and historically hostile, body of

16 On the question of language, see for example the memoir An Estonian Childhood by Tania Alexander, which depicts a Russian/ Baltic German aristocratic family in Estonia after the Russian revolution and the Estonian land reforms, which involved the removal of the family from a large manor house, confiscated by the newly independent state, to the summerhouse on the estate. 'From early childhood we spoke Russian, German and English at home, and learned both to read and to write in those languages. At that time Estonian was still a developing language. We spoke it mostly with villagers and servants. We learned by ear to speak it fluently, but never to write it.' (Alexander 1967:11) Similarly, Marion Foster Washburne, who travelled in Estonia before the 2nd World War reports a Baltic German Baroness as saying, 'I suppose you know what a point these people make about the Estonian language. They have changed even the names of places. Dorpat is Tartu, now. But I must explain to you that it is a very primitive language, not suited to the uses of high culture. There are no words in it to convey philosophical ideas, or with which to make poetry or literature' (Washburne 1940:221).
Russians into the Estonian nation. Hence situations where the Russians try to be 'Estonian', by using the language, whilst encouraged by the state, are not usually welcomed by most Estonians. At the same time, the statement that 'they lived here for 40 years and didn't bother to learn our language' is so commonly stated that it has acquired the status of an informal slogan against the former Soviet occupation, and the present relationship with Russia and the Russians.

**Methodology**

The interpretative practice of fieldwork in the former Soviet Union is affected by the fact that Soviet everyday culture, or habitus, is constituted by ideology to a greater degree, or at least to a more obvious degree, than in the west. Contemporary ethnography is generally critical of distinctions between culture and ideology, which tend to imply an imagined (and artificial) opposition between authenticity and imported modernity, or the primitive vs. the civilised (e.g. Weiss 1996:25). Nevertheless, work in the former Soviet Union needs to pay some attention to the question of this distinction since, whilst Soviet ideology has entered into the culture, or mentalité, in the sense that informants are only partially aware of it, the fact remains that for the part they are aware of, some informants subscribe to it and others don't. The current changes also involve a process of becoming conscious of previously taken for granted aspects of culture, and of moving them from the realm of 'culture', i.e. the intrinsically (Soviet) Estonian, to the realm of 'ideology', i.e. the remnants of the Soviet Union. The question of the relationship between ideology and culture, therefore, pre-occupied my informants. For them, it was not an abstract question, but rather an intricate component of the appropriation of western-ness which was part of Estonia's transition from a Soviet Republic to independence. The attempt, on my part, to de-code references to ideological allegiance, Soviet and Western, both in the realm of material culture and in speech, therefore, forms an important part of this thesis.

In addition, as the demographic example from Terent'eva quoted above shows, there are particular problems of practising ethnography 'near-at-home'. Dragadze, in her study of rural families in Georgia, points out that Georgia in many ways belongs to the Mediterranean sphere of cultural belonging, with the characteristic centrality of notions of honour and shame (Dragadze 1988:38). 17 Similarly,

17 cf. Goddard/ Llobera/ Shore 1994:4-11 on the 'invention of the Mediterranean'.
Estonian culture, with its emphasis on balance, harmony, and reciprocity, has much in common with a cultural belt stretching over north west Europe. As in Georgia, however, the overlapping category of 'Soviet' culture, means that in many ways the culture and mentalité differs significantly from, say, that of Sweden. There is the obvious risk, therefore, of a particular kind of ethnocentricity, where the familiar is taken for granted, and only the unfamiliar is considered noteworthy. Clearly the fact that I grew up in Sweden influenced my perception of the culture of my informants. Moreover, I was aware that the community's search for a lost Swedish-ness in some sense reflected my own feelings about assimilation and cultural loss. The general lack of interest amongst most of my informants in the revival of Swedish-ness, however, in conjunction with the pervasively anti-sentimental attitude of both the remaining and the returning Estonian Swedes was at all times an effective antidote to over-empathising.

My fieldwork consisted altogether of 3 separate periods, beginning with two initial field trips in November 1991 and April 1993, in order to find a suitable field site, and to familiarise myself with the country. I then spent one year in the field, from August 1993 to August 1994, staying on the former collective farm, with occasional trips to see informants in Tallinn, the capital, and other locations. On the farm, I lived in three separate locations, starting out in the 'hotel', a 3 bedroom flat available to visitors. My plan was to live with a local family, and, after about 3 weeks, I was offered a room with a family of 4, a husband and wife and their 2 children. The offer was negotiated by the headmistress of the school, who knew the family well. My stay with this family was both interesting and ethnographically rewarding, but it gradually became clear that they belonged to the sphere of influence of the headmistress, who had initially invited them to come to the farm about 5 years previously. There were important political divisions within the village, clustering around the head mistress, who was also the wife of the former kolkhoz director, and the elected mayor. All were variously accused of corruption and abuse of power during the transition from the Soviet rule. In February 1994, therefore, I rented a small flat from one of my informants in one of the other blocks, where I was able to expand my circle of informants, and where I stayed until the end of my fieldwork.

My fieldwork was mainly constituted by 4 separate methods, or activities, the first, and most important, being a continuous process of participant observation. This primarily involved long ethnographic conversations with informants, during which I would usually take notes. In addition to my field notes I kept a detailed
diary, and wrote regular reports to my supervisor. My second area of activity was teaching English in the school. Initially I taught one class of the 9th grade, later increased to 3 classes when the teacher sent out by the Peace Corps abruptly left. Within 2 months, however, the school had managed to secure another teacher, which meant that I was able to cut down on my teaching load, which by then was beginning to take up a little too much time. The school, however, was the main institution of the village, and teaching gave me valuable access to the other teachers in the common room. The students, in addition, gave me much information, not least through their essays, which were always illuminating. I also taught an evening class for adults, which helped me to get to know some people I might otherwise not have met. Although people were aware that I was doing fieldwork, the additional role as a teacher was helpful, not least because it created a balance between giving and receiving, which was considered important (see chapter 8).

The third component of my fieldwork was to design and carry out a formal survey of the community, covering, broadly, demographic and kinship data, contacts abroad, exchange, views about the collective farm, and expectations of the future. There were 28 questions, covering the areas outlined above. The focus was on households rather than individuals, the intention being that I would, in the end, have one completed questionnaire for each household in the blocks of flats, excepting the student boarders, whose lives were too peripheral to the collective farm to be relevant to the survey. Thus out of a total of 62 households I got a response rate of 59, the three exceptions being one family which was away, one well-known alcoholic man, also away, and another alcoholic man, who was the only person to refuse to take part in the survey. 4 of the questionnaires, covering the three foreign teachers, and one person who had in fact just moved to another community, were not included in the analysis, leaving a sample of 55 completed questionnaires.

Whilst I was designing the survey, some of my informants recommended that I gave it to people to complete in their own time. People would feel uncomfortable, they said, having to answer questions face to face. I decided on the contrary to take it around myself, reckoning that the additional information to be gained from having visited every flat on the farm, as well as the possibility of extended conversations with people who I didn't yet know, was worth the possible

\[\text{cf. Strathern 1987:20-24, for a consideration of notions of exploitation in the interaction between ethnographer and informants.}\]
difficulties. As it turned out, people usually knew about the survey before I turned up, and had already familiarised themselves with the thought of being asked a number of questions by a relative stranger. There were, however, illuminating instances: for example, about midway through the survey, one informant, who I knew well, told me that one person in particular had assumed that I was sent by the mayor, and that the answers would be available to him and his office. Her responses became markedly more negative about the present situation on the farm after I had assured her that that was not the case. I then made sure that all respondents from knew that I was not sent out by the mayor's office, but it's uncertain how many people had already somewhat moderated their responses in that belief. Since the informant in question was about 60, and the older generation were significantly more wary of authority than the younger, it may in fact only have applied to a few older respondents. The results of the survey are presented in appendix 1, and have also been utilised throughout the text.

Finally, I made use of extensive written material, ranging from newspapers, to Soviet schoolbooks, coffee table books, tourist books and short stories. The writings dating from the Soviet era in particular provided an important theoretical and ideological context, since the worldview and culture of my informants was at least partially constituted by interiorised, and thus unconscious, fragments of Marxist thought, as well as ideological, conscious, political opinions. Marxism, therefore, was simultaneously a worldview and an ideology, a culture and a point of view, mixed with other layers of culture and ideologies. The current appropriation of western-ness, therefore, involves not only an appropriation of material culture, but also a process of gradually separating elements of Marxism from everyday (internal and external) discourses.

**Traditionalism and Modernity: Anthropology of Soviet and Post-Soviet Cultures**

This section, as stated in the introduction, is not intended to present an exhaustive survey of the anthropology of post-Soviet societies: rather, it is written to provide a context for the thesis as a whole, focusing on the particular theme of tradition and modernity which forms part of the theoretical background to the thesis. It does not, therefore, include all the literature which is referred to throughout the thesis. The review is divided into 2 sections, beginning with a discussion of 4 western anthropological studies of Soviet and/or post-Soviet societies, followed by a brief discussion of a selected part of the relevant Soviet ethnography. I have
not, however included either the large body of literature which deals with nationalism and ethnicity in post-Soviet societies, nor the ethnographic studies of the traditional culture of the Estonian Swedes, which was particularly relevant for chapter 3, since neither category is sufficiently relevant to the theoretical issues of this thesis.19

From the point of view of the focus of this thesis, the four most useful works of Soviet cultures are all concerned with rural cultures, and, specifically, the relationship between the 'traditional' and the 'Soviet/ modern'. Caroline Humphrey's study of the economy, society and religion of two collective farm communities in Siberia, published in 1983, originally formulated the question of the simultaneously 'traditional' and 'modernist' nature of Buryat (and, by extension, other Soviet minority cultures) culture. The Buryats, she argued, maintained their 'traditionality' precisely because of their integration into the Soviet political economy, which, paradoxically, whilst framed in the ethos of modernisation also served to maintain (and transform) some of the traditional structures of Buryat society (Humphrey 1983:442).

Similarly, Dragadze, in her study of rural families in Soviet Georgia (1988), looks at the question of how the Soviet regime, despite its explicit hostility to local social structures and traditions, paradoxically functioned to strengthen them (Dragadze 1988:27). In her view, the Soviet effort to modernise and transform rural structures failed, primarily because of the shortcomings of the economy, and the oppressive nature of the state, which led to a forced reliance on family, local traditions, and a sense of 'Georgian-ness', which even party functionaries could be expected to display (Dragadze 1988:22, 27, 39).

In both of these studies the state's intention to modernise was foiled by the failures of the economy and the political system. The resulting traditionality, therefore, is regarded primarily as a pre-existing cultural form, to which the intent and ideology of the state is basically opposed. Bruce Grant, however, in his study of the Nivkh people on Sakhalin island north of Japan, questions the categories of

19 The ethnography of the Estonian Swedes is extensive. I found the collection 'En bok om Estlands Svenskar', ('A book about Estonia's Swedes'), published in 5 volumes by SOV, the Estonian Swedish cultural organisation based in Stockholm, particularly useful (Lagman 1961, 1964, 1979 (3a), 1990 (3b), Åman 1992) SOV has also published a collection of oral history memories from the period up until the end of the 2nd world war, which was helpful (Heyman/Karlsson 1987). For an idea of the life of the Estonian Swedes who remained in Estonia after the war, the collection of life-stories gathered and edited by Ain Sarv gives vital information (Sarv 1994). Finally, the SOV Jubileumsskrift celebrating 25 years since the return of the Estonian Swedes to Sweden gives much information about the life of the Estonian Swedes in Sweden after the war (Nyman 1968).
'modern/Soviet' and 'traditional'. The cultural consciousness on which an awareness of one's own 'traditional culture' depends was, he argues, constituted within a Marxist-Leninist theoretical framework. In other words, the Nivkh concept of 'traditional culture' as distinguished from their pan-Soviet identity, was in itself essentially a Soviet concept (Grant 1995:14-17).

The ASA monograph on socialism, edited by Chris Hann, provides a useful anthology of post-Soviet anthropology, together with chapters on socialism and culture in other societies (Hann ed. 1993). Michael Stewart's chapter, 'Gypsies, the Work Ethic, and Hungarian Socialism', is particularly relevant, since it provides a case study of the dichotomy between modernisation and traditionality discussed above. Thus the attempt of the Hungarian government to assimilate the half million or so Hungarian gypsies, whose culture was regarded as incompatible with socialism, is identifiable as the modernising intent of the state described by Humphrey and Dragadze (Stewart 1993:189). The campaign failed, essentially because the assumption of the link between economic progress (regular waged employment) and social progress/assimilation, was not correct. On the contrary, gypsies tended to use their improved economic status to further subsidise their particular life-style (Stewart 1993:193). In this case, therefore, 'traditionality' was not maintained through the failures of the economy. Rather, the historical dichotomy between the gypsies and the non-gypsies, meant that assimilation, which would have involved an acceptance of the socialist (and, by extension, peasant) work ethic, did not occur (Stewart 1993:194-5).

Soviet Ethnography

The Soviet ethnography dealing particularly with the Baltic states which I am familiar with tends to be less based on informants' accounts of their own lives than on general trends, usually focusing on the positive developments during the Soviet period, contrasted to the poverty and narrow nationalism of the interwar era. Kalits, for example, in an article on the life of the peasants of Kihnu island (one of the more isolated Estonian islands), focuses almost exclusively on the progress made since 1940 (Kalits 1961). The establishment of a fishing collective farm, in particular, he argues, substantially improved the economy of the island (Kalits 1961:29-30, 35).20

20 In a contemporary account from a collection of life-stories the relative wealth of the fishing collectives compared to the agricultural collectives is confirmed, due to the fact that in the early days the fishermen, unlike the farmers, received their wages in money rather than in kind. The fishermen were said to live expensively, at times even going to Moscow to celebrate (Sarv, A. 1994:99).
Kalits has also written about contemporary wedding ceremonies on Kihnu island, published in a collection of articles entitled 'Introduction to Soviet Ethnography' (Dunn/Dunn 1974). The article consists of a simple description of the wedding ceremonies: there is a notable absence of analysis regarding the thoughts and feelings of the informants (Kalits 1974). To a lesser extent this is true also of Chkoniia's chapter in the same collection on the rural family in Georgia, although she does mention specific informants, all Heros of Socialist Labour, by name, together with brief outlines of specific, usually economic, aspects of their lives (Chkoniia 1974).

Apart from the necessity to protect individual informants, and the possibility that their views differed widely from the politically acceptable, the reliance on 'objective', rather than 'subjective' data was a systematic feature of Soviet ethnography. Thus, for example, Kushner, in his article on contemporary kolkhoz families, writes about demographic statistics: There can be no debate on the importance of these data for the ethnographer who is studying the family. It is also unnecessary to prove the importance of linking these statistics with concrete everyday material' (Kushner 1974:202).

In addition to the leaning towards 'scientific' and 'objective' work, social relevance was also important. Thus Kushner, quoted above, ends his article with the following statement: 'We call upon ethnographers who are concerned with the study of contemporary Soviet life to expand the dimensions of research on the family and family life of the kolkhoz peasant. The more scientific institutions that agree to this, the more quickly the development of this problem will be advanced. The Soviet public should know what the kolkhoz peasant is like at the present time, the role of the peasantry for each people and, possibly, what legal measures may be undertaken to facilitate and hasten the socialist transformation of the way of life of kolkhoz peasants' (Kushner 1974:212). Bromley, similarly, in his introduction to the volume 'Soviet Ethnology and Anthropology Today', writes about the post-revolutionary developments of Soviet ethnography: 'What, however, played a dominant part in the development of ethnographical studies in the post-revolutionary years was the dovetailing of these studies with the practical requirements advanced by the new social regime. The tasks of Lenin's national policy and the need for radical changes in the life and culture of the formerly
backward peoples called for thorough research into the ethnic composition of their populations and the national peculiarities of their cultures (Bromley ed. 1974:18).

Gellner, notably, has provided an analysis of the differences between Soviet and western anthropology (Gellner, ed. 1980). He argues that Soviet ethnography is important partly because it reflects the Soviet conceptualisation of social and philosophical problems, in relation to which he identifies four separate issues: the specific relationship between the economy and the polity, the related problem of the typology, evaluation, and evolution of human societies, the question of the nature and role of ethnicity in human history and in contemporary society, and, finally, the relationship between ethnicity and culture (Gellner ed. 1980:xiii-xvi). Soviet ethnography, then, is relevant to contemporary ethnographies of post-Soviet societies essentially for the reason which Gellner suggests: the themes he identified are ubiquitous reflections of Soviet, or Marxist-Leninist, ideology, identifiable in all productions of the state, including, in the form of interiorised fragments, parts of the (former) Soviet people's worldview and culture.

Whilst the works discussed above create an initial framework for the question of traditionality and modernity, which constitute one of the dialectics in which Estonia is presently moving forwards, they provide little information regarding the Soviet encouragement of objectified forms of traditional/ethnic cultures, which, together with the theoretical conception of culture discussed by Grant, provided Soviet peoples with a powerful concept of the conflation between national and traditional culture. Chapter 4 of this thesis, therefore, specifically addresses the Soviet objectification of traditionality, which is important for an understanding of the Estonian post-Soviet relationship to the notion of the ethnic boundaries of the nation and the question of cultural heritage and identity.

**Conclusion**

The intention of this chapter was to provide an initial context for the thesis as a whole by considering the questions of place, methodology, and theoretical context. The first part of the chapter consisted of a short historical overview and spatial description of the collective farm, as well as a section on demography and the relationship to the Russians. In the section on methodology I outlined the different methods I used, as well as looking in particular at some of the problems of practising ethnography in the former Soviet Union. I also considered the specific situation of doing field-work 'near-at-home', in a culture ambivalently in
between 'home' and the 'other'. The last part provided a brief theoretical context of post-Soviet and Soviet ethnography, focusing on the question of traditionality and modernity in the Soviet Union.

**List of Illustrations/Chapter 2.**

1. Milk canisters along one of the roads of the peninsula.
2. The most recently built block of flats.
3. An old farm building repaired with Soviet materials.
4. The abandoned check-point on the road out of the peninsula.
5. Ceremonial structure in the abandoned army headquarters of the peninsula. To the left, a map of the Soviet Union, and to the right, a new Estonian flag.
6. The new sign for the collective farm.
7. The sign for the branch of the bank which replaced the sign for the collective farm.
8. The back of the culture house. There are two cars parked on the square. The school is hidden from view behind the building.
10. The finished facade. Note the contrast between the front and the side of the building.
11. Heap of coal outside the building which housed the central burner.
NOAROOTSI HOLHOOS

PÕHID KULTUUREMAA
Chapter 3. The Formulation of the Estonian Swedish Identity: 1870-1940

Introduction

In this chapter the two main movements, missionary revivalism and modernism, which provided the impetus behind the link between Sweden and the Estonian Swedes before the Second World War, will be discussed. It is clear that, apart from the important connections with Sweden, the struggle for nationally defined political rights and national cultural definition amongst the Estonian Swedes had, on the level of discourse, much in common with the Estonian struggle for independence. In addition, therefore, this chapter aims to provide a brief analysis of the national question in Estonia, from the 1870s up to the Second World War, in order to provide a wider frame for the project of preserving Swedish-ness amongst the Estonian Swedes.

The purpose of the discussion in the other two sections is not so much to provide a historical overview, as to attempt to show how the nexus of ideas implicit in both the revivalist and the modernist movements crystallised the notions of what constituted modern Swedish-ness, a web of national characteristics which also implied a moral agenda of rational self-improvement. The newly defined Swedish-ness of the Estonian Swedes therefore constituted a focused and concentrated version of what was going on in Sweden itself: as the Estonian Swedes began to form an idea of themselves as a Swedish minority in Estonia during the 1920s and 1930s, Sweden was going through a similar process of cultural self-consciousness promoted in the modernist Social Democratic idea of 'folk-hemmet', the nation as the 'home of the people'. The intention behind the idea was to turn the old, hierarchical, system around in order to promote the modern and egalitarian values and aesthetics which later came to incorporated into the very notion of what it meant to be Swedish (Frykman/ Löfgren eds.1985).

Whilst being themselves engaged in a parallel process of formulating 'Swedish-ness', the Estonian Swedes also played a marginal part in this nation-wide project within Sweden, which was primarily articulated in terms of their perceived cultural authenticity. They were generally regarded by Swedish observers as living in an ancient Swedish culture, which had long since disappeared in Sweden itself, but to which the observer was connected through ties of nationality. Ironically, despite the modernising efforts of the Soviet state, the failures of the economy means that contemporary observers tend to make
similar remarks about the rural inhabitants of the area today. From the point of view of local Estonian Swedish activists, saving the Estonian Swedes from national assimilation in Estonia was a key factor in the process of increasing cultural self-consciousness. However, economic progress was generally regarded as more important than cultural aims, since the First World War had left the newly independent Estonia poverty stricken. Agricultural improvements, therefore, were merged with attempts to relate the Swedish-ness of the Estonian Swedes to mainland Sweden: to make the Estonian Swedes actively, rather than passively, Swedish, and to, in effect, create a coherent Swedish minority in Estonia.

Missionary revivalism will be related to the notions of cleanliness, thrift, honesty, and sobriety, focusing on an autobiographical account of one of the missionary priests sent from Sweden to the Estonian Swedish areas during the 1870s. The argument will be that the moral ideas of revivalism transmitted by the missions later became important in the local formulation of Swedish-ness in Estonia. Protestantism, including, for the moment, revivalism, has done much to inform the moral world-view of the Estonians, including, importantly, the process of distinguishing themselves from the Russians. The discourse of the present period is frequently framed in terms of this differentiation, where the Russians are said to be extravagant, having no thought for tomorrow, given to drink, exaggeration and excessive socialising, whereas the Estonians are said to be thrifty, quiet, individualistic, and essentially honest and reliable. The nexus of ideas related to thrift, honesty, cleanliness, and sobriety, can be historically contextualised in terms of protestantism and the revalist missions, which added some impetus to pre-existing protestant ontologies (cf Kapferer 1988). In addition, the central notion in the later discourse about the preservation of Swedish-ness, 'self to self-help', can be traced back to the missionaries, who did much to improve the living standard amongst the Estonian Swedes, and who are, indeed, frequently and affectionately quoted by the modernisers of the 1920s and 1930s.

In the last part of this chapter, 'Modernism and the Preservation of Swedish-ness', I will attempt to show how, in the period between the two World Wars, the Estonian Swedes had become 'Swedish' in a way that they had not been in the earlier period, both in terms of having become objects of ethnographic investigations, and in terms of becoming recipients of aid, primarily objects and food, from Sweden: a process which was interrupted by the war and the Soviet era, but which is now continuing in a similar, if not identical, spirit. This part of the chapter, then, constitutes an investigation of the local, rural, appropriation of modernist ideas and the related notion of Swedish-ness. I will show how the
conceptualisation of the Swedish community in Estonia was linked to ideas of progress and local activism; and how those ideas transformed the conception of the backwardness and poverty of the community.

The analysis begins with a detailed look at another autobiography focusing on a missionary experience, but this time beginning in 1923, and ending in 1930. It continues with a detailed reading of the weekly journal for the Estonians Swedes, *Kustbon*, as well as other contemporary texts and later reminiscences. The main place for the dissemination of the ideas of modernism and Swedish-ness was the agricultural college of Birkas, based in the old manorhouse of Birkas on my field-site in the then village, and later collective farm, of Pürksi. Through a reading of various autobiographical descriptions of the college and the contemporary local environment, I will show how 'modernism' and 'Swedish-ness' merged, forming a new agenda for what it meant to be Swedish-speaking in Estonia, focusing on transcending their heritage of poverty and conservatism, whilst at the same time preserving their cultural heritage of Swedish-ness.

The experience of modernism in Sweden contributed to the interest in what was thought of as the essentially Swedish. Since this was generally assumed to be under threat from modernism itself, the Estonian Swedes, living what were seen as virtually pre-modern and un-changing lives, were regarded by many as having preserved a living culture of Swedish-ness which was disappearing in Sweden itself. It is important to remember that this idea was not generally shared by the Estonian Swedes themselves, who traded extensively around the Baltic sea and sometimes further, and who were therefore in some ways more 'international', if considerably poorer, than their Swedish counterparts. Many people also emigrated to America, or back to Sweden. The dominating notion of Swedish-ness in the Estonian Swedish journal mentioned above was that the Estonian Swedes were part of a diaspora of Swedes, who were all under similar pressures to assimilate. Emigrating to America would therefore not profoundly affect their identity, since they would remain part of *förskringen*, the scattering, or dissemination, of Swedes abroad.

There was, however, a repeated theme of Swedish-ness dying out. One of the interesting aspects of this theme is the way in which it has repeated itself over the century. The melancholy descriptions of the malaised nation-hood of the Estonian Swedes from the late 19th century to the present time are curiously interchangeable. Assimilation is seen as a constant threat, as much today as it was a hundred years ago. The fear of assimilation, depicted specifically as the *death*
of an ethnically distinct group of people, is a particular part of this cultural trajectory. It is a powerful notion both in Sweden and in Estonia, where the fear of the Estonians dying out, and the entire culture becoming assimilated to the Russian Soviet one, was strong. Assimilation, however, is not always and necessarily associated with death - it can also be incorporated into, for example, the contemporary notion of a form of rich and fertile hybridity, transcending essentially oppressive notions of cultural (or racial) purity (e.g. Rushdie 1992, Gilroy 1993). In Sweden, the Estonian Swedes became symbols not only for the fear that a rural and traditional way of life, which constituted a particular form of Swedish-ness, was dying out as a result of modern industrialisation, but also for the danger that 'Swedish-ness' itself was under threat from (American) modernism. Ironically, the elements of modernism which initially were regarded as a threat to Swedish-ness were later incorporated into the notion of what it meant to be Swedish. Clearly, however, modern and urbanised Estonian Swedes in Estonia would not remain 'Swedish' for many generations, but rather their Swedish-ness would succumb to the pressures of Estonian nationhood. The present resurrection, therefore, of the Estonian Swedish culture, after the very real assimilation process during the Soviet regime, is an important example of the malleability of culture, and the fact that cultural death is not a real death: cultures, unlike people, seem to have an innate ability to resurrect themselves (cf Gilroy 1993).

The Swedish Missionary Project: a Case Study

Between 1873 and 1887, 5 missionaries were sent to the Estonian Swedish settlements by Evangeliska Fosterlandsstiftelsen, the National Evangelical Society in Sweden. One of them, L.J. Österblom, wrote an account of his stay in Ormsö, the island situated nearby the peninsula of Noarootsi, which was predominately Swedish-speaking. His account is partly a justification of the mission, which was eventually closed by the Russian authorities on the prompting of the Estonian Lutheran Church, which saw its congregation move over to its low-church rival. It also, however, provides a comprehensive account of daily life on the island, as well as an idea of how people from mainland Sweden regarded the Estonian Swedes at the time. Finally, the text provides a detailed account of how he attempted to improve the living conditions of the Estonian Swedes.

Österblom clearly regarded not only Ormsö, but also the rest of Estonia, as an outpost of wilderness in the Russian Empire, which itself was wild, inefficient,
and despotic. He describes the noise and disorder of Tallinn on arrival from Finland; a babbel of Estonian, German, Russian, English and Polish, people grabbing his luggage and shouting to get heard in the multitude of languages. The noise and wild-ness of the people which is so far removed from the present self-identity of the Estonian people, continued outside Tallinn. On the way to the island the carriage he was travelling in stopped at a bar in Noarootsi, in order to change the horse: 'At least 6 men were busy lifting our things, and getting the horse ready. But oh, what a barrage of shouting and noise, and what a long time it took. Well, eventually we were ready, and we were on our way, the loaded carriage in front and us on foot behind. People who we tried to speak to on the way would quickly run towards the forest, and others simply stared at us' (Österblom:8).

Clearly his account of the mission, which was written as a defence as well as a memoir, benefitted from an emphasis of the physical and spiritual degregation of the people prior to his arrival, and the physical improvements associated with being 'saved' in the evangelical mission. Keeping in mind a possible exaggeration of the misery of the people, his description is still a lesson in how poor and primitive this part of Estonia was. The island itself was owned by a Baron von Stackelberg, and the people were obligated to give him certain hours or work, as well as taxes and a proportion of their own crops. There were at the time 2,600 people on the island, of whom about 2,450 were Swedish-speaking.

Alcohol played a key part in Österblom's description of the island. Drinking was associated with all the various festivities in the villages, as well as being a routine everyday activity. In Österblom's account, drinking led to thieving, in order to afford the drink, which in turn led to lying. Things were mainly stolen from ship wrecks and from the baron: 'During the night the wool was stolen which had been cut during the day, and the seed which should have been sown, and when nothing came of it it was said that the worms had eaten it. It was vain to employ anyone as a guard, because he would steal more than anyone' (Österblom:11).

He continues: 'One speaks about the curse of drinking, but here

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21'Men o, vilket skriande och väsnande, och vilken tid det tog. Nå, äntligen var det färdigt, och vi lunka iväg, lasset före och vi efter. Personer, som vi sökte tillsatta på vägen, sprungo hastigt till skogen, andra styrade blott på oss. (Österblom 1927:8)'

22'Så bortstal man om natten ullen, man om dagen ki klippt, säden som skulle sås i jorden, och då ingen blordd brodd kom upp, hette det, att masken åtit upp den. Det var fåfängt att sätta någon till väktare, ty denne stal allra mest' (Österblom 1929:11).
was a living illustration of it. The people went around dressed in rags. Dirt, vermin, grief and illness were consuming them' (Österblom: 12-13).

The evangelical church was founded on the notion of dramatic and sudden conversions, when the holy spirit entered into the convert, with a consequent change in lifestyle as well as beliefs. Witnessing was important, where converts gave accounts of their lives before and after the conversion. The opposition to alcohol was firmly grounded in the evangelical church, as the following witnessing, quoted by Österblom, shows: 'We lived like heathens, yes, worse than heathens, we lived like animals, yes, worse than animals. We stole the food from our wives and children, and when the mothers protested, we hit them. Whatever we could scrape together we took to a house where there was alcohol. Some we traded for this, and if there was any left we men cooked it together, ate, drank, smoked, played cards, argued, swore, and we didn't give a moments thought to our children who were dying of hunger. As a consequence of our way of life our fields were badly managed, there was not much bread, but what we had in plenty was alcohol' (Österblom: 10).

Second to alcohol as a factor contributing to the misery of the people, according to Österblom, was dirt. Alcohol and dirt were gendered sins: whilst alcohol consumption was primarily the sin of the men, the dirt in the homes was the sin of the women. Gluttony and sloth, then, in terms of the 7 deadly sins which provide the framework for Österblom's conception of the unreformed, or lapsed, state of the people, formed the major part of their sinfulness. Traditional western Christianity made a distinction between the sins of the spirit and the sins of the flesh, pitting pride, envy and anger against gluttony, sloth and lechery, leaving avarice to vacillate between the two (Bossy 1985:35). Whilst Österblom's account constitutes a religious tract, the focus on the living conditions of the people of the evangelical church contributed to later discourses about 'help to self-help', from the 1920s to the present day. He had no interest in social reform, but rather in how to reform the spiritual condition of the people through the revival.

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24 'Vi levde som hedningar, ja, värre än hedningar, vi levde som djur, ja, sämre än djur. Vi stulo maten från våra hustrur och barn, och när mödrarna satte sig däremot, såg vi dem. Det vi sålunda kunde sammankapa förde vi samman till ett hus, där det fanns brännvin. En del bytte vi ut för denna vara, och om något blevo över, kokade vi män detta till sammans, åto, drucko, rökte, spelade kort, trätte, bannades och tänkte icke ett ögonblick på våra av hungernöd döende barn. Till följd av ett sådant levnadssätt blev vår åker dåligt skött, brödet ringa, men vad som fanns i överflöd var brännvin' (Österblom 1929:10).
so that they would themselves improve their living conditions, somewhat like the moderate anti-assimilationist activists of the 1920s and 1930s advocated self-improvement through membership in voluntary associations, improved hygiene in the home, and abstention from alcohol.

Dirt and disorder, the one reflecting the other, were the main factors in Österblom’s narrative of the misery of the farmhouses: ‘The farmhouses on Ormsö were, at the time of my arrival, quite awful. The houses had no chimneys. The floors were often constructed from stonechips and clay, and where there was a wooden floor, it was so dirty that it could not be distinguished from an ordinary clay floor.’... ‘The roof was made out of straw, but was often in such bad repair that the rain would come through.’... ‘In these smoky and dirty cottages lived up to 4 families, where each family had a corner of the room, and one bed. One of the men was the farmer, and the others were born servants. These servants had no wages, simply food, and some clothes. Sometimes the situation was so bad that one didn’t know who was the farmer and who was the farm worker. This was because according to custom the eldest son took over the farm. But sometimes the father would die before the boy was old enough to take care of the farm. The widow would then re-marry, and her second husband would take over the farm. When the boy had grown up and wanted to take over the farm the new husband wouldn’t want to step down and become a servant, and instead the two would fight over the farm. (Österblom: 13-14)’

The disorder and poverty of the homes was contrasted to the excessive order of the established church. Österblom describes some of the customs of the islands, beginning with Christmas, and going on to weddings, which always took place during Christmas, as part of the Christmas celebrations (17). In a reformist spirit, Österblom complained both about the fact that marriages were arranged, and about the ceremonial, mechanical, customs surrounding the sacraments, where a ring and a veil were required for women, as well as a day of fasting, and the

custom of kneeling two or three times before or after the sacrament. In addition, he added sarcastically, any sin was expiated by 14 days labour at the vicarage of the Estonian Lutheran church in the autumn, and 14 days at spring (Osterblom:18-20).

Osterblom's mission was made difficult by the fact that officially he was sent as a teacher (otherwise he would not have received the required permission), and there were strict laws constraining religious practice: people were not allowed to gather for spiritual purposes under the guidance of a layman except during household prayers, and then they were restricted to reading from the bible or from one of Luther's tracts. Consequently, he began his mission by reading to a small gathering of people from Luther, which ended with the entire congregation sleeping peacefully on their benches: 'These people were unusually good at sleeping. If they had the opportunity to lie down on a bench, they were soon snoring away. That they fell asleep during my reading was less strange, since they didn't understand what I read. Partly they weren't used to my pronunciation, and partly our Swedish had grown away from theirs, which wasn't able to develop alongside ours. When I understood that, I let the book lie open in front of me, but read between the lines. Then I could use the same words which they used in their everyday speech, and the same dialect. Then the people woke up and became very alert' (Osterblom:22-23).

The beginning, however, was slow: 'Everybody I met I talked to about the saving of their souls. People therefore became afraid of me, so that it wasn't easy to get hold of anyone. If I met anyone in the forest, he would steal away amongst the bushes, like a fish diving down into the water. Sometimes I would see them step over a high stone wall, and walk across the fields to escape me. If anyone was travelling in front of me, the horse would speed up as soon as I became visible. If anyone was behind me, however, they never could catch up, however much I slowed my steps' (Osterblom:23). Finally, however, he asked a congregation

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at his school whether anyone wanted to be saved, and one woman cried out that she wanted to, upon which she was visibly and immediately changed, filled, she stated, with peace and joy. Now people were torn between Österblom and the Lutheran priest, or, as some saw it, between anti-christ and the church: 'What was distinctly to my disadvantage was that the seer had predicted that during the year in which I came, anti-Christ would arrive on Wormsö' (Österblom:24). Eventually, however, the revival took off, and people were regularly saved during the meetings, which usually took place in the forest. People would kneel down, exclaiming 'Lord God forgive me for my sins!', or, 'Lord God, give me your Holy Spirit!' until they received 'peace': 'When the peace streamed into their souls they usually jumped up into the air for joy, shouting loudly: I am saved, I am free, and thanked God for a long while' (26).

After the first revival wave, Österblom called the women to a so-called 'mother meeting', where he told them the story of David and Goliath. After having talked for a long while about the terrors of Goliath, he told the women that Goliath existed on Ormso too, and asked them to put up their hand if they wanted to help to defeat him. They were all so eager to help him that they put up not one hand but two. 'After I thus captured them in the trap, I told them that the Goliath I was referring to was dirt and uncleanness' (Österblom:31). He then talked to them about the dirt in their homes until they wept, after which he made them promise to clean, under the threat of future inspections. The next day he set off, and saw cottages completely covered in water, where the women were digging the dirt up from the floors. If they found a wooden floor underneath, however, they had no idea how to scrub it, so Österblom arranged for them to come to his home and be taught by his wife how to do it (Österblom:32). Similarly, he encouraged the people to build chimneys in their homes. Before his arrival, the smoke from the fires was caught in the rooms, and could only escape through the door. Most people, therefore, had damaged eyes from living in a constant cloud of smoke, and with no access to doctors there was not much they could do about it. After one farmer had saved his eyes by building a chimney, following Österblom's advice, however, chimneys were soon built in all the cottages. 'When the smoke

[28]Vad som avgjort blev till min nackdel var, att sibyllan hade förespått, att just det år, som jag kom, skulle antikrist komma till Wormsö (Österblom 1929:24).
[29]'Herre Gud forråt mig mina synder!' 'Herre Gud, giv mig din Helige ande!' 'Då friden inträmmede i deras själar, gjorde de vanligen ett glädjesprång i luften, i det de uppgav ett genomträngande glädjeskri: Jag är frälsst, jag är fri, och tackade Gud en lång stund' (Österblom 1929:26).
[30]'Då jag nu fångat dem i den uflagda snaran, talade jag om för dem, att den Goliath jag syftade på var smuts och orenlighet (Österblom 1929:31).
and the dirt were done away with people became very grateful to us. They used to say: 'We don't know how we could have lived in the smoke and dirt before'(32).³¹

Österblom was by now generally revered, given food for free, and rides whenever he needed them. He was called in by the baron, who appreciated his works since it improved the living conditions of the people, to talk to striking villagers, whom he managed to persuade to stay and work (Österblom:42). The poverty of the people, and their submission to the baron, should not be underestimated. The head master of the Swedish college of Birkas tells of hearing a story in the 1920's by an 80 year old woman from Ormsö, about a tenant farmer who had stolen some seed from the baron which he had paid in rent. The man was discovered, and was consequently so badly whipped that he died 2 days later. Such practices were not legal, but the tenant farmers had no practical recourse to law. In addition to the rent paid in kind, they also had work duties on the estates, with the result that the women had to do much of the farming on the small plots near the cottages (Söderbäck 1971:110-111). The Stackelberg family had been notoriously cruel and oppressive landlords, to the point where one baron, in the early 1840's, was, in an unprecedented measure, actually removed from an executive position on the manor by the general governor of Estonia, von der Pahlen, who feared an insurrection because of the bad conditions on the island (Aman 1992:18).

Österblom, on the other hand, was rather close to the present baron, who supported his mission, to the point of inviting him to live at his house, and who appreciated the transformation of the people (Aman 1992:56).

Nowhere in his description of the mission is there a sense of kinship with the Swedish speaking people of the island. He sees them as wild and funny, difficult, but also innocent. The revival has transformed them into honest and sober workers, sought after even on the mainland for factory work as well as work as servants or wet-nurses. Before the revival, on the other hand, he writes, the Swedes had a bad reputation on the mainland, for thievery, laziness, and drunkenness: 'In the towns they often appeared in small flocks, dressed in rags, and always begging. You gave them money or whatever they wanted at once, to get them out of your doorway as soon as possible so as not to catch vermin from them' (40).³² Österblom, regarding the question of kinship, was closer to the

³²'I städerna uppträdde de ofta i små flockar, klädda i trasor och alltid tiggande. Man gav dem pengar eller det de begärde genast, för att så fort som möjligt få dem avlägsnade från sina dörarr för att icke få ohyra av dem' (Osterblom 1929:40).
Swedish captain of a ship which, in 1830, had run ashore on the island, which he subsequently visited as the guest of the baron. He wrote an account for a daily newspaper in Sweden which was published the following year, where he tells of how the people, when seeing the approach of the baron’s carriage, would drive into the ditch or off the road into a snowdrift, whereafter they would kneel down in the snow, leaning forward in deep kneeling bow. The baron, on his side, would throw them abusive comments, or at times even hit them with his whip. The author claims that the serfs in Russia were less enslaved: 'At least you would see them happy, and hear them sing; the coastal Estonians, or Swedes, as they are still called, did not know any songs and did not seem to know what happiness was' (quoted in Aman 1992:20).\textsuperscript{33} In the captain's account there is not really any sense of kinship at all: the phrase 'coastal Estonians, or Swedes, as they are still called', indicates that claims to Swedish-ness are not particularly relevant to the author, particularly when compared to accounts published in the late 19th Century, when the 'Swedish-ness' of the Estonian Swedes is seen as a powerful national bond.

Similarly, a member of the board of the Evangeliska Fosterlandsstiftelsen, the evangelical national society, wrote an account of a visitation on the island, following a number of accusations directed against Österblom stemming from the Lutheran Church, which nearly closed down the mission. The account is quoted in full in Österblom's book. The visitor wrote about the 'strong wind of mercy' which has transformed the way of life on the island: 'As a consequence there is now not a single bar left on this island inhabited by about 2,000 people, and nobody now dares to drink and steal publicly, whereas before Ö.s' arrival there were a large number of bars, and stealing, drinking, and fighting were openly practiced. This religious and moral transformation has gained a great deal of positive attention' (Österblom:79).\textsuperscript{34} The account ends with the following statement: 'Of the stated above it should be obvious, both that the board has left no stone unturned in order to bring light to the matter concerning the innocence of Österblom, and that his activity has gained the richest success and blessing of any of the Society's branches of activities, and that he is therefore deservant of the sincere prayers of the Friends of the missions, as well as a strong measure of

\textsuperscript{33} Dem säg man åtminstone glada och hörde dem sjunga; kust-estländningarne eller svenskarno, som de ännu kallas, kunde deremot inga visor och tycktes ej veta hvad glädje ville säga' (Aman 1992:20).

\textsuperscript{34} Till följd härav finns igen (sic) enda krog mer på denna nu av omkring 2,000 människor bebodda ö, och ingen vågar nu mer där offentligen supa och stjäla, dä däremit före Ö:s ankomst ett stort antal krogar funnos, och stöld och dryckenskap med ty åtföljande slagsmål och ovasen öppet bedrevos. Denna religiösa och sedliga omskapelse har väckt stor och glädjande uppmärksamhet' (Österblom 1929:79).
support, in order for his mission not to be ended, particularly since we have here
descendants of Swedes, who, even though they have been separated from the
motherland in a foreign country for hundreds of years, still speak a Swedish,
albeit ancient, tongue, so that the question of language is no hinder in their
education. They have at the occasion of the visitation asked to convey their
kindest regards and warmest thanks to the board and the friends of the mission for
what has been done for them, and, furthermore, have asked to be included in our
prayers' (Österblom:82). This is the only statement in the book which indicates
a sense of kinship, and even this is articulated more in terms of the practicalities
of a shared language than in sentimentality. In February 1887, the mission, which
had then been running for 14 years, was finally closed down by the authorities,
and Österblom was summarily deported from the Russian empire following an
interview with the governor of Tallinn, Count Scachowskoii. The final accusation
was that he had sacriligously claimed to be Jesus Christ.

The National Question

The question of nationhood, as we have seen, was not an important part of
Österblom's narrative of his experiences with the people of Ormsö. The
articulation of the nationhood of the Estonian Swedes was a small fragment of a
greater movement of which Estonian nationalism was also a part: the notion of the
self-determination of small nations, which gained its full expression after the First
World War. In Estonia, the closure of the mission occurred during the era of
Russification, which followed the relatively liberal so-called 'era of awakening'.
The two movements are described as followed in a short new history of Estonia,
translated to English:

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35 'Av det anförda torde vara uppenbart, både att styrelsen lämnat all möda ospard att få ljus i
saken rörande Österblom's oskuld, och att hans verksamhet rönt den rikaste framgång och
välsignelse, som kommit någon av Stiftelsens verksamhetsgrenar till del och därför är förtjänt av
missionsvännernas innerliga förbörer och kraftiga understöd, om den icke skall avstanna, och det
desto mer, som vi här ha svenska ättlingar, som, fastän de i hundratals år i främmande land vari
skilda från moderlandet, dock ännu tala med svensk, om än uräldrig tunga, så att språket icke
lägger några vidare svårigheter i vägen för deras undervisning. De hava vid visitation bett om sina
hjärtligaste hälsningar och varmaste tacksägelser till styrelsen och missionsvännerna för vad som
för dem blivit uträttat och ahällit att bli inneslutna i våra förbörer' (Österblom 1929:82).
The Era of Awakening (1860s-1885)
More peasants bought farms, Estonian-language journalism began (Johann Voldemar Jannsen), Estonian intelligentsia developed. At the beginning of the national movement, petitions were presented to the Russian central authorities; the era of awakening was effected through major national events: a collection for the establishment of an Estonian-language secondary school for peasants (Estonian Aleksander School), song festivals (from 1869), folklore collection. Agricultural and cultural societies and a national theatre were founded; research was begun into Estonian topics, such as philology, ethnology, history, etc (sic). Estonians became aware that they constituted a nationality' (Fjuk et.al. 1991:18).

'Era of Russification (1885-mid 1890s)
'Russian nationalism strengthened in order to tie the peripheral provinces to the centre. Although the Baltic-Germans' special status was restricted through reforms by the central powers, the intense Russification policies also suppressed the activities of the era of awakening. Russian became the language in government institutions and schools, local authorities became increasingly under the control of the Russian centre, the importance of the Russian officialdom increased. Organizations in the national movement were closed down; conversion to the Russian Orthodox Church was encouraged in a further attempt to Russify the indigenous population' ( Fjuk et.al.1991:19).

The era of national awakening led to a national awareness where the notion of the Estonians as a people was central. The ethnological collections from that period are amongst the largest in Europe, particularly the collections of folk-songs. This of course was not a unique phenomenon - it formed part of a wave of romanticism sweeping over Europe. Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803), the German thinker and poet, introduced the re-evaluation, or objectification, of folk songs and folk culture through his collection *Volkslieder* ('folk songs'1778-1779, later editions entitled *Stimmen der Völker in Liedern*) , which included 8 songs from Estonia (Taagepera 1993:28). Ethnology and the interest in 'folk cultures' stretched across Europe, particularly the central, eastern and northern parts (c.f. Berlin 1978; 136-150, Gellner 1983). In Estonia, however, in common with, for example, Latvia, the movement was framed, and strengthened, by the search for an incipient national identity, gradually combining the notion of the people with the idea, or the ideal, of the nation. It was, however, a gradual movement. As a province of the Russian empire it was not until the revolution of 1905 that ideas concerning political autonomy were publicly voiced, and full independence was not regarded
as a feasible goal until the First World War and the Russian Revolution (Taagepera 1993:36).

At the time of the national awakening (1860s-1885) Estonia was ruled by an at times uneasy coalition between the Baltic German feudal landowners, who constituted less than 4% of the total population, and the Russian imperial state. The urban elite was primarily German, and secondarily Russian, but included a small minority of German and Russian speaking Estonians, the Undeutsche, or non-Germans, as the Germans tended to call the subjugated peoples of the Baltic states (Taagepera 1993:23, 35). With the romantic movement, however, emerged the so-called 'Estophiles', the (mainly German) lovers of things Estonian, who promoted a change in the image of the Estonian from an ignorant serf to a primordial peasant, whose store of mystical knowledge, including the language, was just beginning to be excavated. The Learned Estonian Society started earlier, in 1838, with the aim of researching and promoting Estonian culture, and included some university educated Estonians (Taagepera 1993:30). Jonn, translated in the 1989 Estonian-English dictionary as 'obstinacy, stubbornness', translated by Taagepera as grit, persistence, endurance, stubbornness, self-will, wilfulness, caprice and spite, and representing a somewhat ambivalent correspondence to the more positive Finnish Sisu, which denotes resilience and courage, became defined as a ruling national characteristic (Taagepera 1993:6). Jonn, then, the grit and obstinacy of the peasants came to stand for the nation as a whole.

The project of forming a national identity, which was central to the 'national awakening', was closely bound up with the question of language. It is important to emphasise that Estonian was regarded as a 'vernacular', the unwritten language of the peasants (cf. Kross 1992, Alexander 1989). Taagepera points out the extent to which the peasants were defined by their language, which effectively impeded class circulation (Taagepera 1993:21). Estonian publications were non-existent before the former sexton Johannes Voldemar Jannsen (1819-1890) started a weekly newspaper in 1857, which in 1891 was turned into a daily. He was also the main force behind the first song festival in Tartu, in 1869, which was to become a defining event for the nationalist movement. Kalevipoeg, the national epic which corresponded to the Finnish Kalevala, was collected and put together from folk songs and traditional stories by the self-professed Estonian country doctor Friedrich Reinhold Kreutzwald (1803-1882), and was published in a German-Estonian bi-lingual edition (1857-1861), followed by a popular Estonian edition printed in Finland in 1862 (Taagepera 1993:30-32). Lydia Koidula (1843-1886), Jannsen's daughter, was to become the first major poet in the Estonian
language. However, it was not until the 1870s that the northern dialect gained the upper hand over the southern one, and henceforth became a national language, written with a new orthography borrowed from the Finnish. (Taagepera 1993:33, Lieven 1993:116)

Russification, which started in 1885, was connected to two events; the ascension of the slavophile and reactionary tsar Alexander III in 1881, and the German unification of 1871. From the point of view of Russia, the latter increased the risk of German expansion and the complete Germanization of the Baltic peasantry, whilst the former led to the dissent from the generally reformist policies of tsar Alexander II, which included the abolition of serfdom (1861), the institution of the _zemstvoes_, the elected, although dominated by the nobility, provincial governments, the modernisation of the juridical system and the army, and the introduction of a lighter system of censorship (Joll 1981:70, Taagepera 1993: 34). Given that Alexander II's regime ended in his assassination in 1881 in a bomb attack orchestrated by the populist revolutionary group 'The Will of the People', it is perhaps not surprising that the rule of his son came to be characterised by repression and Russification (Berlin 1979: 233). Censorship was extended, and the church, the bureaucracy, and the secret police were harnessed in the attempts to control dissent. Widespread anti-Semitic violence went hand in hand with the policies to Russify the non-Russian peoples of the empire (Nationalencyklopedin, vol. 1: 179).

The Russification measures in Estonia included the removal of some of the power of the Baltic German nobility to Russian officials. The administration of the police and the judicial system, for example, was removed from the Baltic Germans, and Tartu University, previously German speaking, became a Russian speaking university. Instruction in schools had to be conducted in Russian, despite the fact that often neither the teachers nor the children knew more than a few words. Generally, the children were not allowed to speak Estonian, even during the breaks. Russian was mandatory even before Russification began. Österblom, however, in an article for the missionary journal for the national society, _Fosterlandssstifelsens Missionstidning_ tells of how a commission came to visit his school on Ormsö. The inspectors, all German, asked whether Russian was part of the curriculum. He answered that he didn't know any Russian, whereby they told him to simply add it to the curriculum, without, he implies, having to actually teach it (Kustbon vol 8, no.19 1925:73).
The article was originally written in 1873, i.e. well before Russification began. The German inspectors were later replaced by Russians, who were unlikely to be as lenient regarding the language. Some Estonians, however, regarded the Russification process with some ambivalence, since the restrictions on German power were on the whole regarded as positive, helping to liberate Estonian culture from the near-hegemonic German influence (Taagepera 1993:34). For the Estonian Swedes, the later movement of Estonianisation, particularly following the right-wing coup of 1934, tended to be a greater problem than Russification, and followed a similar pattern. However, the increasing intolerance for the national minorities became a problem before the coup. Kustbon, for example, the journal for the Estonian Swedes, reported that Estonian Swedish children were forced to speak Estonian in schools, even during the breaks, and were punished if they spoke Swedish (Kustbon, vol. 12, no. 45 1929: 179).

In Estonia, the Russian revolution of 1905 combined national aspirations with revolutionary ideas. In November, an Estonian Congress, split between the reformists and the radicals, demanded autonomy. Ten days later, martial law was imposed, which led to a wave of burning of manor houses, where 120 manors were destroyed, leading to violent repression and the execution of some 300 people (Fjuk and others 1992:33). Meanwhile, along with the rest of Russia, rapid modernisation was fundamentally changing the country (Taagepera 1993:36). In Russia, the Duma, the elected, albeit on a restricted franchise, parliament, was set up, and there was a brief and unprecedented freedom of debate, followed by a renewed wave of repression (Joll 1981:73). In Estonia, Jaan Tõnnison, later prime minister and head of state (1919-1920, 1927-28 and 1933), legally established the Estonian Progressive People's Party, and national autonomy, for the first time, began to seem a realistic, as well as an idealistic, goal (Taagepera 1993:57,37).

The final achievement of independence, with the Tartu peace treaty (2 February 1920), was closely bound up with the first world war and, to a lesser extent, the Russian revolution (February 1917) (Lieven 1993:57). At the outbreak of the Russian-German war in 1914, the Baltic states were lodged in between two hostile empires. Initially, the association between the Baltic Germans and Germany in

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36 In Latvia, by comparison, 184 manor houses were destroyed, and 635 Germans, 85 of whom were members of the nobility, were killed. In the ensuing repression, between 900 and 2,000 Latvian and Russians were killed or executed, and 2,652 people were deported to Siberia. (Lieven 1993:51)

37 Jaan Tõnnison, along with most of the prominent politicians and intellectuals of his time, was later deported by the Soviet authorities. The time and place of his death are not officially known.
Estonia meant that the majority of the population were probably more sympathetic to Russia than to Germany. Two months after the revolution, some 40,000 Estonians demonstrated for independence in what was then Petrograd, the name denoting the intermediate state of the revolution, between St Petersburg and Leningrad. As a consequence, the provisional government, under the leadership of Kerensky, agreed to form an autonomous region of Estonia and the Estonian-speaking northern parts of Livland, now bordering on Latvia. After the Bolshevik seizure of power in October 1917, there was an initial coalition between the new Estonian representative assembly, the *maapäev*, (elected 1917) and the Estonian Bolsheviks, led by Viktor Kingisepp (1888-1922). Meanwhile, the German invasion of Estonia had begun, and there was some hope that a declaration of independence might stop the invasion, and keep the Estonian territory out of the war. At about the same time that Lenin disbanded the all-Russian Constituent Assembly the leading Estonian Bolsheviks refused to agree to a declaration of independence (Taagepera 1993: 40-43).

In late February 1918 Estonia was fully invaded by Germany. However, an underground delegation from the disbanded Maapäev declared Estonia independent on the 24 of February of that year, which was largely ignored by the German forces. The occupation lasted until the defeat of Germany in November 1918. The allied forces made the German surrender of the Baltic states a condition of the peace process, but, in an attempt to secure Baltic independence, and thus add a buffer zone to Bolshevik Russia, added the proviso that the Germans should also resist any returning Bolshevik troops. Clearly, also, it was in the interest of Germany to retain some influence in the Baltic states. This was the beginning of the war of independence, which to some extent was confused by the considerable number of Estonian Bolsheviks, such as Viktor Kingisepp (1888-1922) and Jaan Anvelt (1844-1937), who headed the Estonian Workers' Commune in Narva (29 November 1918 - June 1919) (Taagepera 1993: 44-46). Despite the fact that by the end of December 1919, two thirds of Estonia was occupied by Bolsheviks troops, the war was finally won by the anti-Bolshevik Estonian side, with some help from the British navy and Finnish volunteers. Meanwhile in Latvia, the parallel war for independence was fought primarily against the forces of the Baltic German Landeswehr, with the aid of Estonian troops (Taagepera 1993:46). The war of independence, then, was in effect fought against both Russia and Germany.

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38 Kingisepp subsequently was court-martialed and shot in 1922, as a Soviet agent (Taagepera:55).
After independence a radical land reform was brought in, and parliamentary democracy was instituted. During the 1920s, right-wing parties gradually increased in strength at the expense of the liberal centre. In 1924, a Comintern assisted coup failed, which further increased the power of the right, and particularly the extreme right wing Veterans' Organisation. On March 12 1934, the Prime Minister Konstantin Päts instigated a non-violent right-wing coup with the aid of the armed forces. The purpose was, primarily, to undermine the Veterans' Organisation, whose proposed new constitution was regarded as a threat (Fjuk and others 1992:34). A relatively mild right-wing authoritarian regime was thus instituted, partially lifted in 1938, when elections took place for the presidency. The regime had little in common with the mass movement of National Socialism, although it did share some of the aims and rhetoric of Italian fascism, without its accompanying violence against opponents. However, multi-party democracy and guaranteed minorities representation of early independence were over, with adverse effects for all the minorities, not least the Swedish one.  

It should probably also be pointed out that the generous minorities legislation of Estonian, which guaranteed cultural autonomy to the 4 largest minorities, the Russians, the Germans, the Swedes and the Jews, was instigated on the prompting of the League of Nations in 1922, and was not a spontaneous expression of Estonian liberalism (Kustbon vol.5 no.3 1922).  

The interest in the improvement of the circumstances of the Estonian Swedes as a coherent group, as well as the preservation of their culture and nationhood, was originally formulated by two men, both teachers in Nuckö (Estonian Noarootsi), Johan Nymann and Hans Pöhö. The historian Elmar Nyman quoted the program from Nymann's diary, which was formulated just before the end of the century, as: 'The unification of the Swedes (in Russia), to make them feel proud of their language and nationality, and to develop their spiritual and material state.' (Nyman 1971:10) This program, which echoed the aspirations of the Estonian nationalists, could not be openly published during the policies of Russification, but they did hope to establish a lending library in Noarootsi. The rules of censorship at the time made even such a relatively modest goal difficult. At that time an Estonian Swede named Jakob Blees, a student in Sweden, arrived with a

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39 The 1934 census revealed that of the minority populations the Russians was the largest group, forming 8.2% of the population, followed by the Germans with 1.2%, the Swedes with 0.7%, and the Jews with with 0.4%. The Estonian proportion of the population was 88.2%, and the total number of inhabitants was 1.136 million, which, by 1945, had decreased to 854,000. (Fjuk 1992:23)

40 'Att ena svenskama (i Ryssland), att få dem att känna stolthet över sitt språk och sin nationalitet, att utveckal utveckla deras andliga och materiella ting.(sic) (Nyman 1971:10).
Swedish colleague, Gideon Danell, a linguist interested in the Swedish Nuckö (Noarootsi) dialect. Danell became interested in Estonian Swedish culture, and attempted to spread information about it in Sweden, with the result that in 1901 an article from Nymann was published in Sweden about the need for Swedish literature for the Estonian Swedes, which led to a public discussion about the life and problems of the Estonian Swedes (Nyman 1971:12).

After a lengthy application in Russian the permission to open the library was granted, on condition that a list of the books was delivered to the local school inspector, in order to ensure that no forbidden publications were available. There was a long delay, and meanwhile the library was forced to buy some Russian and Estonian works which were on the official list for libraries, whilst the books which arrived as aid from Sweden had to be hidden in the villages (Nyman 1971:13). During the delay Nyman and Pöhöhl wrote a Swedish calendar, which, to their surprise, passed the censorship, and was published in the beginnings of 1903. Meanwhile, the question of legal forms of organisation occupied their minds, resulting in the idea to start a nykterhetsförrening, a temperance society, which, again after lengthy application, and a year's waiting time, was granted by the state (Nyman 1971:16). Questions of general education and national problems were discussed during the meetings, and contact was made with temperance societies in Sweden, which sent books, journals, and financial assistance. In 1904 Nymann was called to the police headquarters in Haapsalu and was accused of hiding and lending books which were hostile to the state. His defence was that the books did not belong to the library, but had been gifts to the temperance society, and that, furthermore, they were not detrimental to society. In 1905, after the question of the library had reached St Petersburg, it was decided that no Swedish books were to be allowed, either in the temperance society or in the library. The 2,000 or so titles collected in Sweden were thus banned from circulation (Nyman 1971:17-18).

The revolution of 1905 led to a temporary political climate of liberalisation. The Baltic Germans founded the Deutscher Bildungsverein, and a number of German schools, previously banned, were established. In 1907 Jaan Tõnisson, the liberal leader of the new Estonian Progressive Party, was involved in the foundation of the Eesti Kirjanduse Selts, The Estonian Literary Society, and in 1908 the society Svenska Odlingens Vänner (SOV), Friends of Swedish Culture, was founded with the goal to, 'promote education and culture amongst the Swedish population in Estonia' (Nyman 1971: 19-23). The almanac for the Swedish population in Russia of 1909, first published in 1903, began with an open letter to the readers,
announcing the foundation of the new organisation. It is worth quoting it at length:

'Beloved Countrymen!
Each time we send you, our beloved countrymen, this little publication, memory and hope run in two different directions in the attempt to capture the attention of the soul.

Deeply moved and respectful we think about our fathers who were sent by fate to build and live here on the Estonian islands and coastline; of the battle for existence which was their lot; of the hard and varied destinies they have lived through. With deep sadness we hear and see that many of our hidden and forgotten countrymen have been forced to 'die out' as far as Sweden is concerned, and disappear into the dispersal. But a not insignificant part have still been faithful to their Swedish origins, and, fathers and mothers of ancient Swedish stock, we salute you, your children, with love and respect. If your lot has been to battle and suffer, to wait and bide your time - we have greater hopes of a brighter future. The national movement which presently is passing through our land does not have any other than peaceful and cultural goals for the preservation of our language and our nationality. May we, beloved countrymen, more and more realise the necessity to unite for this our common goal, and always regard each other with a warm feeling of solidarity.

Unity gives strength! Unity amongst us also unites us with our dear kin in the ancient homeland on the other side of the Baltic Sea. And the mother tongue is a lasting tie, even when the political ties break off.

In order to better be able to preserve and promote a true and sound enlightenment on national ground, we have succeeded in founding a society, The Friends of Swedish Culture in Estonia. May we unite around this with rapture, and, above all, love and promote what is our own.

With kind regards, and with the pronunciation of the warm wish that the spirit of brotherhood and unity, alongside the blessing of God, may rest over all our enterprises and acts, this little almanach is published' (Kalender 1909).
The introduction is followed by an article about the last Swedish descendant on Dagö, an island from which more or less the entire Swedish-speaking population was moved in the 18th Century, and re-settled after a momentous journey on land in the Ukraine, where the survivors of the journey formed a Swedish village, *Gammalsvenskbyn*. This piece is strikingly different from the rest of the almanac, which combines agricultural information with bland household tips, such as 'Do you want to make a happy home?' (on the virtue of patience), 'How to preserve a youthful exterior' (by being nice to others), and 'how to re-heat boiled, cold, eggs', which posed no challenge to the censors (*Kalender* 45, 47). During the time at which this article was written, there were no other Swedish-speaking people left on Dagö, and the tone is both sentimental and melancholic. The elderly lady interviewed knew that there was a Swedish country where Swedish was spoken, but knew nothing else about it. 'She pulled a hymn book from her chest, an old worn out book, the only Swedish book she owned.' 'I often use it, it is my dearest treasure, given to me by my mother', she said, deeply moved.

'Would you sing or read something', the interviewer asks, and with a 'trembling

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Varje gång vi utsänder denna lilla publikation till eder, ålskade landsmän, löpa minne och hopp i var sin olika riktning i försöket att fångsla själens uppmärksamhet.

Med djup rörelse och vördnad tänka vi på våra fäder som av ödet skickats att bygga och bo härute på de Estländska öarna och kusterna, på den kamp för tillvaron som fallit på deras lott, på de hård och växlande öden de fått genomgå. Med djup sorg höra och se vi att många av våra undangömna och bortglimtade landsmän tvingats 'dö ut' för det svenska samhället och försvinna i forskrigningen. Men en icke så ringa del har dock blivit trogna mot sin svenska härkomst och, fäder och mödrar av den urgamla svenska stammen, hälsa vi, edra barn, med kärl och vördnad. Om er lott har varit att kämpa och lida, att vänta och bia - ha vi nu bättre förhoppningar på en ljusare framtid. Den nationella rörelse som för nuvarande går genom våra bygder, ha inga andra änfredliga kulturella ändamål för vännandets av vårt språk och nationalitet. Må vi, ålskade landsman, allt mer och mer inse nödvändigheten att sluta oss samman för detta gemensamma mål och alltid betrakta varandra med varm känsla av sambörjighet.

Enighet ger styrka! Enighet bland oss härute, förenar oss ideellt med dessa stamförvanterna i det urgamla hemlandet på andra sidan Östersjön. Och moderna är ett band om häller, även när de politiska banden brista.

För att bättre kunna vårna och befrija en sann och sund upplysning på nationell grund, ha vi lyckats grunda en förening, Svenska odlingens Vänner i Estland. Må vi med hänförelse fylka oss samman kring densamma och framföra det så som är vårt eget.


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44 *Gammalsvenskbyn*, 'the old Swedish village', still exists. They were recently visited by a small delegation of Swedish business people investing in Ukraine, and, in an account reminiscent of other accounts of visits to Estonian Swedish areas earlier in the century, they were deeply moved to be met by a group of older people singing hymns in Swedish, as well as by the general condition of the village, which is now extremely poor. In 1929 some of them were given permission to return to Sweden, where unemployment and uncertainty led quite a few of them to return to the Ukraine a few years later, to a hero's welcome, but, of course, later to be faced with the war and Stalinist repression.
The establishment of SOV, the Friends of Swedish Culture, was followed by the publication of the Estonian Swedish weekly journal, *Kustbon* (1917), which continued publication in exile in Sweden after briefly being turned into a pro-Soviet journal, *'Sovjet Estland', 'Soviet Estonia'* , after the occupation. The journal espoused the two main themes of SOV, the preservation of Swedish-ness, and the improvement of the low material standard of the Estonian Swedes. Since ca. 6,000 of the 8,000 Estonian Swedes were farmers and fishermen, the latter goal was fulfilled mainly by disseminating agricultural advice and encouraging the formation of dairy societies, mutual insurance societies, and agricultural control societies (*kontrollföreningar*), which tested the quality of the milk for the improvement of the dairy stock. They also published some news, mainly from Soviet Russia and Germany.

It is clear from a reading of *Kustbon* that the Estonian Swedes were regarded, and regarded themselves, as somewhat inferior to their Estonian neighbours. As some Estonians tried to gain admission into the German nationality, so some Swedes tried to become Estonian, married Estonians, and looked down on the Estonian Swedes. One article, for example, defending the local Swedish dialect in Noarootsi, states; 'Was it not considered smart to show off with Estonian, smart to marry an Estonian girl, smart to have Estonian as the main language at home, and smart to belong to the Estonian church.'... 'Enough: our poor dialect was and is a despised underclass language' (*Kustbon* vol. 5 no.32/33 1922). Similarly, half of the front page in a later issue is devoted to an insulting article in the Estonian daily newspaper *Päevaleht*, about the Swedes on the Rågö islands, said to be lacking in culture, as well as physically and spiritually stunted (*Kustbon* vol. 12 no.31 1929). The prevalent poverty of the Estonian Swedes should not be underestimated. Combatting alcoholism, hopelessness, and a general backwardness are recurring themes in *Kustbon*, much as they had been for the evangelical church. The missionaries' efforts to raise the living standard of the people, always localised to the geographical areas of their missions, were, however, re-produced in the discourse of the SOV activists. These are the points of departure for the

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45 *Hon tog fram ur kistan en psalm-bok, en gammal utsliten bok, den enda svenska bok hon ägde. 'Den begagnar jag ofta, den är min dyrbare skatt, som jag fått av min mor.' sa hon med djup rörelse.* "Vill ni sjunga eller läsa något" frågar intervjuaren, och "med darrande stamma", "bittra tårar", "vemodigt klagande" sjunger hon en psalm. ('Kalender eller Almanack för året 1909. För Svenskarna i Ryssland'. vol. 7:39)
attempts to organise the Estonian Swedes. In the following section I will look at how the goal to preserve Swedish-ness increasingly came to be merged with the movement of modernism, which in Sweden itself formed the central ideology of the 1930s.

Modernism and the Preservation of Swedish-ness

During the 1920s and 1930s the work of preserving Swedish-ness in Estonia became entangled in the modernist movement. In Sweden itself, modernism was becoming hegemonic, in the sense that it was gradually merging with the notion of what constituted Swedish-ness. Sweden was, in Orvar Löfgren's words, 'nationalising modernity' (Löfgren 1991:104). The romantic movement of the late 19th Century, when rural life, including the way of life of the Estonian Swedes, was defined as culturally authentic, as opposed to what was seen as the cultural disorder of the urban poor, was waning in favour of notions of progress and modernism.

The most famous piece embracing the romantic view of the Estonian Swedes was a text published in 1905 by Albert Engström, the well-known Swedish satirist, in the weekly journal Strix, edited by himself. It was an account of a trip to Estonia together with the painter Anders Zorn, and another companion. Engström (1869-1940) could be described as a bohemian with strong leanings towards the folky and traditional, famous, particularly, for his rather malicious cartoons of the wealthy bourgeoisie. He and his companions travelled to Reval (Tallinn), and to various other places in Estonia, among them the small island of Odensholm, inhabited by Estonian Swedes. He writes about how one of them guided their boat through the difficult waters: 'Proud as a viking he walks with naked feet on deck as securely as on his own cottage floor. Suddenly he asks: 'Are you Swedish?' 'Yes.' 'Then we are of the same stock. God bless!' And he gave us his hand. It was as if we had greeted one of our forefathers ten generations back in time. His speech flowed calmly and clearly without unnecessary words, and with dignity and composure. When we eventually came to harbour and he had gone aboard his pilot boat we felt as if we were the welcome guests of the whole island' (Engström 1905 Strix 33/9, also quoted in Kung 1990a:73).46

46 'Hans gång på vårt däck är stolt som en vikings och med sina nakna fötter går han säkert som på sitt eget stuggolv. 'Så säger han plötsligt: 'Ar ni svenskar?' Ja: 'Vi är av samma stam. Gud välsigne!' Och han räckte fram handen åt oss. Det var som om vi skulle ha hälsat på någon av våra förfäder 10 släktled tillbaka i tiden. Hans tal flöt lugnt och klart utan onödiga ord, värdigt och vackert, och
The account continued in the following issue of Strix: 'We continue on our way and soon we reach the village. Ash-trees shadow the grey reed-covered houses, and as dusk falls one gets a feeling of the Middle Ages. Home ought to have looked something like this 500 years ago, and I am sure it did. Out of a barn a woman pads along in her sealskin shoes and we speak to her. She answers in a strange old dialect, and whilst we talk other people join us. Within a few minutes we are understood, welcome, and guests in one of the cottages, which soon fills up with all the men and women in the village. Because we are Swedes, real Swedes from the old Sweden, and blood binds. Why can't I be sentimental? Let me be unfashionable ('omodern', meaning, literally, un-modern) and for a few moments feel how tears fill my eyes, tears of joy for having been allowed to come here.'... 'In the large and clean cottage, blackened with smoke, our supper is dished up by stout blue-eyed women. On the benches next to us sit our old blond vikings with beautifully hewn faces and ask us about Sweden, whilst we overwhelm them with questions about Odensholm' (Kung 1990a:73 Engstrom 1905 34/9).

The notion of kinship which Engstrom articulates in his account of the Estonian Swedes resonates with his descriptions of other parts of Sweden, particularly his lyrical account of a trip to Dalarna, the county of Dalacarlia in central Sweden. The language of the Dalacarlia people is described as 'Old Swedish' ('fornsvenska'), and he writes of a scene in a cottage which is reminiscent of the scene described above. People are playing and singing in the light of the fire, and he senses, he writes, that he is in the very heart of Sweden. The shadows run after the tides of the fire and the colour is alive and speaking to me. The shadow devours a face here, a gesture there, to be transformed to light the next moment. This entire symphony of life's expressions, the light's and the peoples', makes me feel the purest of all joys, the joy of painting. How much would the honourable...
consul and the knight pay me for about a quarter of an hours worth of this product?' (Engstrom/ Strix no.8/vol.9 1905).

The implication throughout the piece, which is that rural people are blessed with a cultural vigour and authenticity which urban people have lost, resonates with his description of the Estonian Swedes as well as with the rural Swedes. Both groups of people represent, to him, an essential Swedish-ness, encompassing a measure of strength and creativity which was disappearing in urban Sweden.

Engstrom's account of the Estonian Swedes formed a part of a wider contemporary preoccupation with the threat posed by the machine age to national specificity and to what was perceived as the cultural strength and authenticity derived from a rural and ancient way of life (cf. Alsmark 1985:298). The opposite view saw modernity as beneficial, bringing much-needed development to the countryside. Gunnar Schantz, who arrived in Estonia from Sweden in 1913 as an unemployed agronomist, tended towards this view. He was working at a Baltic German estate, where the class divisions of society were kept distinct by ethnicity as much as by wealth, with the aristocratic Baltic German land owners at the top, followed by the priests, doctors and veterinarians, who also tended to be German. Under them were the tenant farmers, the stewarts, administrators and post superintendents, who were generally Germanised Estonians, the derogatively called 'kadakashakas', the 'juniperbush Germans' who Germanised their names and pretended to be of German extraction, followed in the hierarchy by the 'Undeutsche', the Estonian non-German farmers and peasants (Schantz 1967:26). 'And the farmer?', he writes, 'I see him walking with slow, well measured steps up the paved walkway to the office, holding his cap with both hands pressed against the chest. His exaggerated submissiveness was completely alien to me as Swedish and filled my heart with bitterness and compassion' (Schantz 1967:26).

He also, however, had a certain affection for the Baltic Germans: 'The Baltic Germans in the countryside had a great need to turn to each other in the various trials of life at the time. The Russification measures of the Russian state, with the
agitation against everything German, and the occupation of all key posts only with Russian officials, were hard for them. In addition there was the fresh memory of the bloody revolutions in 1905-1906, when farmers and workers in great bands marched from estate to estate burning and murdering. Some of the manor houses had not yet been rebuilt, and I often saw stone barns in ruins on the fields. The young Estonian intelligentsia, conscious both of the nation and their own goals, grew stronger from day to day, in constant opposition against the Baltic German 'feudal system'. For the first time I experienced the conditions of a national minority, crowded from all sides, from above as well as from below. There was something enchanting, entertaining, unconventional and witty in the company of the Baltic Germans around the samovar, the constantly humming companion, chatting to itself, as it were, in all the Russian and Baltic German homes' (Schantz 1967:29-30).51

Schantz returned to Sweden after the First World War, with none of the capital he had hoped to save to buy land of his own, and, moreover, faced with widespread unemployment. After a period of time he turned to the church, and, in 1923, became a priest, trained in missionary work, on his way to the Estonian island of Runö (Est. Ruhnu). This island was the most isolated of the Estonian islands, and was inhabited entirely by Estonian Swedes, whose old-fashioned way of life was already becoming famous in Sweden. He brought with him boxes of books, toys, Christmas tree lights and other gifts, donated, probably, by private people, although the text is not clear on that point (Schantz 1967:62). With him were also two researchers from Nordiska Museet, the large ethnographic museum in Stockholm. They, Ernst Klein and his assistant Gösta Selling, did several months of field work on Runö during the summer, which resulted in a publication entitled 'Runö: Folklivet i ett gammalsvenskt samhälle' (Runö: Social Life in an Old Swedish Society) (Schantz 1967:63).

Schantz had had some experience of the Estonian Swedes during his previous stay in Estonia, when, working as an agronomist, he would encounter Swedes

from Ormsö, who frequently took temporary work on the mainland estates during the summer. 'They were well liked and always welcome', he writes (Schantz 1967:45). In 1917, during the war, he went to Ormsö in order to persuade 4 young men and 6 young women to come with him to the mainland and work for him, which they did, until the proximity of the war caused them to leave. He quotes their letter asking to be released from service, lofty and badly spelled, quoted with some affection, but mainly in order to show the lack of education of the Estonian Swedes (Schantz 1967:46). Schantz was not particularly interested in them as ethnographic subjects, not even in the inhabitants of Runö, who were generally regarded as the most 'authentic' of all the various groups of Estonian Swedes. Runö, importantly, was also different from some of the other islands in that there was no feudal system: the people owned their own land, and traded with the mainland, primarily with seal skins and train oil. Unlike, for example, the people of Ormsö, who, until the land reform of 1920, were subject to the baron landowner of the island, they could therefore more easily be incorporated as ancient and authentic Swedes within the modernist notion of Swedish-ness, providing ethnographic proof for the notion that a form of sturdy, upright, democratic independence was part of the essence of Swedish-ness.

His arrival on the island was unexpected, but as soon as the boat was perceived, people went down to the water: 'Children wearing colourful costumes playing, men and women of all ages, barking dogs, rows of flat wagons each with a pair of small and ragged horses, this ancient Nordic race of horses which since a long time had remained on the island. A ship with the Swedish flag had anchored! - an event of the first order on the isolated island' (Schantz 1967:64). That first evening he gave the people two important presents: hymn books and grind stones. In addition, he also gave some tobacco plants to the länsman, the officer responsible for law and order on the island, for later distribution (Schantz 1967:64). Aid and gifts from Sweden played a large part in his work. The archbishop Söderblom wanted him to try to improve the living conditions of the inhabitants of the island alongside his work as priest, and he endeavoured to do so, albeit not always successfully (Schantz 1967:147). He tells of his attempts to import sheep (the imported ram got loose and killed 3 indigenous rams in one day, and had to be killed), to improve the dairy life stock (the bull calf descended from the imported cow took to jumping fences like a deer, and no-one wanted anything
to do with him), as well as more popular measures such as imported rails for taking the boats up on land, small boat engines, and, importantly, guns. These could be bought with interest-rate free loans from a special fund consisting of money collected in Sweden by Riksföreningen för Svenskhetens bevarande i utlandet, the National Society for the Preservation of Swedish-ness Abroad.

Schantz also, after an injury at which he nearly lost a leg because of the delay at getting to a doctor, insisted on the construction of a faster boat for the community. The editor of a Stockholm daily newspaper, Nya Dagligt Allehanda, Margareta von Konow (a so-called 'friend of Runö'), published a plea for an engine (Schantz 1967:150). A civil engineer named Frank Hirsch consequently donated a petrol engine, an anchor, sails and a compass for the new boat. In 1925 AB Baltic ('Baltic ltd') donated a radio receiver, which meant that the island was now connected by radio. The only radio on the island was situated in the Schantz' household, and the elderly people used to congregate on Sunday evenings to listen to the Sunday service from Sweden. In another instance Schantz asked another 'friend of Runö', the captain of the ship Waxholm II, Gustaf Gustafsson, if he could collect money for an organ for the church, which he did. At that time, Schantz notes, Runö and the entire Estonian Swedish population was a popular cause in Sweden (Schantz 1967:150).

In 1928 the harvest failed on Runö, following excessive rain. Since the economy of the island operated more or less on a subsistence level, starvation threatened. After having tried for help in Estonia, and been officially encouraged to ask for help in Sweden instead, Schantz started a campaign in the Stockholm newspaper mentioned above, under the headline, 'Who wants to help the people of Runö?' (Schantz 1967:154). At the end of November, a boat arrived with a group of 'Runö friends', some of them mentioned above, with a large amount of staples: sacks of rye and wheat, seed rye, potatoes, sugar, paraffin, herrings, groceries, and a Christmas present for each home, consisting of coffee, biscuits, and sweets. Ernst Klein wrote an account of the trip in a weekly magazine, Vecko-Journalen, mentioning the service of thanks conducted by Schantz the same evening: 'It was a great and beautiful service. All thanks where directed by the vicar to where they should go: primarily to God, and then to Sweden. The strong voices of the

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53 'Vem vill hjälpa Runöborna?' (Schantz 1967:154).
congregation, used to storms and gales, resounded strongly in the hymn, 'Now all people thank the Lord' (Schantz 1967:155).  

Schantz writes about the modernising changes which were taking place on the island. With the separation of the church from the state in the new republic, when the state took over the responsibility for national registration, people had to take on new surnames, instead of, as was customary, placing the name of the farm before the first name of the person, such as 'Pass Johan', for example. The notion of the homestead, or (dialect) heima, was the central organising concept on the island. A former Runö islander described it as followed: 'The concept of the 'heima' was stronger than anything else - stronger than family or blood ties. There were no family names, only the names of the farms, which people used as last names. If a farmer's son moved over to another farm, he would then take both the name and the owner's cross of the farm' (Ronor no.8/1990:7). Schantz writes regretfully about how instead many people now took on completely new, and modern, names, such as Ekström, Westerblom and Gran, which were common in Sweden, but which, in his view, lacked the pathos of the old names, such as Pass, Mass, Mågs, Părs, Jons, Berens, Bulders, Benas, Uls, Duskas, and Ellerbusk (Schantz 1967:165).

Apart from the name changes, Schantz writes about how the new Estonian Swedish folkhögskola Birkas in Noarootsi, as well as the new Estonian Swedish journal, Kustbon, were disseminating new and modern ideas, particularly in relation to agriculture (Schantz 1967:166). On Runö, one farmer built a train oil (seal fat) processing cookery, and encouraged the other seal hunters to sell the raw fat to him rather than to cookeries on the mainland. His son subsequently started the first grocery shop on the island, selling fabrics, sowing materials, paper and envelopes, sweets and other things (Schantz 1967:166). Schantz was keen to instigate a land re-distribution programme, since the fields, long and narrow strips of land, were difficult to work. Also, in his view, the fact that all work was traditionally carried out communally inhibited individual enterprise among the farmers when it came, for example, to digging ditches to drain the land (Schantz 1967:167). After several years of talk and small meetings, he finally organised a

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55 'Begreppet 'Heima' (hemmet, gården) var starkare än allt - familj, blodsband. Det existerade inte familjenamn, endast gårdsnamn, som alla på gården bar. Om någon bondson flyttade över till en annan gård, där den manliga arbetstjyrkan inte var fulltlig, antog han samtidigt den nya gårdens namn och bömärke. Vid mitten av 20-talet kom detta namnbyte helt ur bruk i och med antagandet av familjenamn. (Ronor no 8/1990:7)
large meeting, where the issue was discussed, and voted on. 23 people voted for, 11 against, and some 10 were neutral. The shift came about 3 years later, after a thorough measurement and grading of the land had been carried out by an Estonian land surveyor from the mainland (Schantz 1967:168). Other improvements continued after Schantz’ departure in 1930, including the opening of a healthcare centre with a Swedish nurse, and successive visits by a Swedish agronomist who attempted to teach the farmers to improve their land and methods through lectures and experiments in crops and fertilisation.

Schantz’ mission combined the improving ethos of the earlier evangelical missionaries with the modern aim of the Estonian Swedish activists to raise the living standards amongst the Estonian Swedes through secular means. They were mainly active, as we have seen, through the organisation Svenska odlingens Vänner, or SOV, the Estonian Swedish society founded in 1908. Their activities fell into three categories, which could be summed up as promoting national self-consciousness, improving the spiritual and material level of life, and promoting hygiene. They instituted small schools, arranged evening courses, and, on Noarootsi, began an experimental farm. The notion of a folkhögskola, a college for adults, slowly took form, until 1913, when the Russian authorities confiscated all the relevant papers from the working group, without, however, formally forbidding the idea of the school.

The war put an end to the cultural work of SOV, but the Russian revolution opened up new possibilities for long suppressed national minorities. The Estonian Swedes, led by Hans Pöhl, started their own political party, Svenska Folkförbundet, The Swedish People’s Party, which lasted until 1935, when the rightwing authoritarian regime banned all political parties. The Estonian independent republic was regarded with some ambivalence by the Estonian Swedes: mainly as positive as the end of the Russian empire, but with the added danger that with Estonian as a national language, the danger of assimilation was increased. The perception of this danger made the need for a Swedish speaking college more urgent, and since they had support also from Riksforeningen för Svenskhetens bevarande i utlandet, the National Society for the Preservation of Swedish-ness Abroad (founded 1908), and valuable information from similar colleges in Sweden and Finland, the decision was taken within SOV to start a college in Nuckö (Noarootsi), funded by a mixture of private, organisational and state (Swedish and Estonian) means (Nyman 1971: 27-29, 54).
The goals of the school were to preserve Swedish-ness, in the form of language and customs, as well as to improve the level of general education and to help the students to become capable, moral, and forward-looking individuals. There were theoretical classes in Swedish, Estonian, history, sociology, geography, mathematics, physics, chemistry, and botany. In addition, there were practical classes in agriculture, animal husbandry, forestry, dairying, gardening, building, agricultural economy, nutrition and household, care of home and children, wood work, health education, surveying, engines and physics, song, and gymnastics. The balance between the theoretical and practical classes (most of the latter were gender specific, whereas the former were not) were always a source of contention, particularly in the late 1930s, when the Estonian state took over more control in the decision making (Nyman 1971:31-39).

In 1920, the first year, the school received 13 boys and 26 girls, more than they ever would again. After that year, the numbers hovered around 10 boys and 15 girls. All in all, nearly 600 students were educated at Birkas, of whom about 63% were girls (Nyman 1971:61). It became a centre for the promotion of Swedish culture in Estonia, and it also promoted new agricultural techniques and modern farm life, revolving around hygiene and nutrition. More than any other institution, it became the focus for the creation of a self-conscious Swedish minority in Estonia. What previously had been islands of Swedish-ness in Estonia, small isolated communities, some of which spoke more or less mutually unintelligible dialects, was on its way to becoming a self-conscious minority. The students, who came from all the various Estonian Swedish communities, had to be taught national Swedish, or, as was sometimes said, Sverigesvenska, Sweden-Swedish, whilst they were also taught to appreciate the 'cultural value' of their own dialects (Söderbäck 1971:151-3).

The combination of modern-ness and Swedish-ness, then, constituted the original conception of the college at Birkas. Early in 1939, Per Söderbäck, the then headmaster of the school, published a book about the Swedish-speaking areas of Estonia. Seemingly oblivious of the bleak future ahead, this is partly a description of the Estonian Swedes, and the work of restoring the old manor house where the school was housed, and starting the school. The book is mainly, however, a guide to the Swedish tourist, and particularly to the modern cyclist who is happy to bed down in the hay lofts of the Estonian Swedish farmers. He describes the latter as 'primitive', 'ingenuous', 'egalitarian', 'poor', but also satisfied; they are not 'herremän', or 'fina', i.e. distinguished, and probably conceited, gentlemen (Söderbäck 1939: 6,19,48,58). He strongly admonishes the tourists not to give
people money, which he thought developed 'primitive begging instincts' (Söderbäck 1939: 101). What the Estonian Swedes needed, he writes, was help to self-help, not 'charity which offends and humiliates' (Söderbäck 1939: 101). As in Schantz' narrative, the Estonian Swedes have come to represent a reflected ideal from Sweden itself: egalitarian and upright men and women who formed the idealised backbone of the Social Democratic notion of the state as the 'people's home'.

Söderbäck also wrote about the work restoring the manor house, which had suffered extensive damage during the first world war when it was used as troops quarters. The restoration was mainly done by staff and students, working together in a modern spirit of cheerfulness and comraderie (Söderbäck 1939: 45). In another account about the school, published in Kustbon, the Estonian Swedish journal which had continued publication in Sweden after the war, in 1971, he primarily emphasised the poverty of the area. He was an improver and a moderniser, seeing the goal of the school as disseminating new ideas and new agricultural methods to the Estonian Swedes (Söderbäck 1971:107). He had no time for the lyrical descriptions of Estonia on the lines of the narrative by Albert Engström quoted above. Stating that when travelling Swedes compare the area to 16th Century Sweden (which they frequently did), they do not only reveal their ignorance about Swedish cultural history, but they also, whilst witnessing poverty, mistakenly define it as a historical form of primitiveness. 'For those writers one supposes that the comparison is there in order to show how retarded this people is, who they still, with a trembling voice, call their Swedish brothers in the dispersion - but the talk about how this people with such a great and moving loyalty preserved their Swedish-ness becomes the older and wealthier brother's pat on the back. With a small thanks to the Lord for having avoided becoming so lazy and un-entrepreneurial themselves' (Söderbäck 1971:108).

He was, nonetheless, deeply moved by the people and their beleagured Swedishness. In 1924, on the second day after his arrival, when, he writes, the fog was so thick it was like a blanket over the chestnut trees, a number of people gathered at the dilapidated manorhouse to welcome the new teacher and his wife. They sang,

56 Following the theme of historical repetitions, it was to suffer identical damage during the Second World War, first during occupation by Russian troops, and then by Germans (Isberg 1971:171, 177).

and then there was a speech by an Estonian Swedish teacher, who had himself been taught at an adult education college in Sweden. He talked about the feeling of belonging with a people and a land they had never seen, i.e. Sweden, which belonged to their stories, and from which they hoped they might perhaps get some help (Söderbäck 1971: 117-118).

The ambivalence surrounding sentimentality, which constituted one of the pivots of modernism, here rose to the surface. Like Engström, Söderbäck is moved almost to tears, and makes an unplanned speech about Swedish-ness: 'I thought I could sense meeting a Swedish-ness which had battled and hoped, and which now believed it could find a way 'home', partly through the work of Birkas. Sentimental? Highflown? I don't understand people who make a face and talk about sentimentality as soon as there is a question of strong emotional experience' (Söderbäck 1971:119).58 In order to show something of his state of mind at the time, as well as providing a sense of the prevailing Zeitgeist, he quotes from his diary of 1924: '---because one has to understand and admit that this is the last phase one sees and experiences of the long and hard battle for the preservation of Swedish-ness out here --- and which battle to death is not gripping. Sometimes the task of the school seems doubtful - will it make the last battle more difficult or easier? For us mainland Swedes it is still a duty to show this people that they do not stand alone - that this isn't an isolated island of people, which should , and which will disappear for the greater and more powerful, but that it has a right to its own little place in the sun' (Söderbäck 1971:119).59

Nine years later, Carl Mothander, a Swede who had volunteered for the Estonian war of independence, and subsequently married and stayed in Estonia, and who had been instrumental in helping the Estonian Swedes, published an article in Kustbon, criticising the overly romantic, objectifying, view of the Estonian Swedes, and emphasising the harsh poverty of Estonia: 'The tourist propaganda paints everything a rosy red - the Swedish interest in Estonia is almost entirely a tourist interest, and a love for the old romance resting over the old towns which

once belonged to Sweden.'...The Swedish people build their knowledge of
Estonia on travel columns and sentimental descriptions of Sunday folk festivals.
Because of that they think everything is fine, and relax with a pleasant feeling of
being able to enjoy their holiday cheaper than in other places. The small world of
the Estonian Swedes and the century old Baltic cultural world has become a kind
of greater Skansen, where peoples' desire for a spectacle is satisfied. Skansen is
a great and beautiful thought, but it is not right to regard the battle of a living
people from its point of view' (Kustbon vol.16 no.24 1933) (see also Aman

Five issues later, in a leader entitled 'The Battle against Poverty', Mothander
repeats his argument that the romantic view of the Estonian Swedes is
fundamentally detrimental to the attempts to improve their living standard. He
writes about Birkas College as the central institution in the project to improve the
material standard of the people, without which, he argues, there can be no
'cultural' improvement. He further suggests a number of model farms, which
would get one-off grants in order to apply Birkas' agricultural methods. There
would be no further subsidies, but the success of the methods would be part of the
incentive for the other farmers. He further suggests that a fishing co-operative
with the capacity of preserving fish funded from Sweden would be an effective
measure in the project of preserving the Estonian Swedish culture, since the
poverty of the fishermen was partly caused by the fact that all fish had to be sold
fresh. He then returns to the dangers of objectifying tourism, and, again, the
notion of Skansen: 'The idea of Skansen is and remains the most dangerous enemy
of the Estonian Swedes' (Kustbon vol.16 no.29/30 1933).

Mothander, clearly, is a moderniser, in favour of economic progress rather than
what he sees as the museumification of the Estonian Swedes. He writes

60 'Skansen' was the first open-air museum in Europe, founded in 1891 by Artur Hazelius in
Stockholm. It aimed to show how rural people lived and worked in different regions in Sweden,
ways of life which he thought were under threat from modernity and industrialisation. A number
of Estonian Swedish folk costumes were an early part of his collections.

61 'Turistpropagandan målar allt i rosenrött - det svenska folkets intresse för Estland är så gott som
helt turistintresset och kärleken till den romantik som vilar över de gamla städer som en gång
lydde under kronan Sverige.' 'Det är resekäseriet och de sentimentala skildringarna från
folkfesternas söndag som svenska folket bygger sin kännedom om Estland på. Därför tror man att
det är bra som det är och slår sig till ro med en behaglig känsla av att kunna njuta sina ferier
biliigare än på andra håll. Estlandssvenskarnas lilla värld och den månghundraåriga baltiska
kulturvärlden har blivit ett slags stort Skansen, där man tillfredsställer sin skädelystnad. Skansen
är en stor och vacker tanke men det är icke riktig att se på ett levande folks kamp under Skansens
synvinkel' (Kustbon vol.16 no.24 1933).

62 'Skansenidéen är och förblir estlandssvenskarnas farligaste fiende. (Kustbon vol.16 no.29/30
1933)'
somewhat despairingly: 'It has really become a fact that there are signs that the
work to preserve Swedish-ness threatens to degenerate to a syrupy sweet and
childish doting, and a tendency to see the people you want to help as children and
under age'(Kustbon vol.16 no.29/30 1933). Similarly, a year later, he writes
about the need for the development of the economy of the Estonian Swedes,
through a credit scheme, and proper aid from Sweden within the principle of 'help
to self-help' (Kustbon vol.17 no.14/15 1934). In the spirit of modernism he also
wrote an article on 'Some wishes for 1934', which included proper funding for the
journal, funding for filmshowings in the countryside, since films were one of the
most important factors in cultural work, proper Swedish libraries, Swedish
language courses for teachers, and the introduction of educated youth
leaders:'Many people probably don't really know what is meant by that, namely
people who know how to give the Swedish youth a healthy, cheerful, entertaining
and educational occupation during their free time, and to give the development of
the young person support in the right direction' (Kustbon vol.16 no.33/34
1933).64

By 1934 the link between the preservation of Swedish-ness and modern
economic development is firmly in place. An article in Kustbon with the title
'Help Yourself, Estonian Swedish People!', argues that voluntary youth help for
the farmers, as instigated by the Baltic Germans, would be a step in the right
direction. Societies and teachers must organise themselves and others, because
development can not be left to the individual. 'Above all you need knowledge
about the laws of economic life, and to set your sights on a line of development
which creates the external conditions for a flowering of the Swedish culture
within the Estonian Swedish lineage.'... 'The Swedish-ness in Estonia should be
propagated as a Swedish-ness of action. It is about awakening the desire for
action, organising and leading it in the direction of a determined goal: to put the
lineage on its own two feet, to make it independent of foreign help, and a valuable
resource for the Estonian state' (Kustbon vol.17 no.22 1934).65

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63 'Så har det gått därhän att tecken verkligen är för handen, att arbetet på svenskhetens bevarande
delvis hotar att urarta till ett sirapssött och barnsligt jöltande och en böjelse att se på dem man vill
hjälpa som på barn och omyndiga' (Kustbon vol.16 no.29/30 1933).

64 'Mången har nog inte riktigt klart för sig vad därmed menas, nämligen personer som förstå sig
på att ge den svenska ungdomen sund, hurtig, roande och lärorik sysselsättning på sina lediga
stunder och ge den unga människan utveckling ett stöd i rätt riktning. (Kustbon vol.16 no.33/34
1933)

65 'Hjälp dig själv, estlandssvenska folk!' 'Framför allt måste man ha kunskap i det ekonomiska
livets lagar och sikta på en utvecklingslinje, som skapar de yttre förutsättningarna för en
svensk kultur- ors blomstring inom den estlandssvenska stammen.' 'Svenskheten i Estland skall
förkunna som en handlingen svenskhet. Det gäller väckande av lusten till handling, denna lust
skall organiseras och ledas i riktning mot ett bestämt mål: att ställa stammen på egna ben göra den
By the following year, the right-wing rule of the president, Konstantin Päts, led to articles about the need for a central organisation which could properly represent the Estonian Swedes in the new political climate (*Kustbon* vol.18 nos.1, 3/4 1935). Ironically, a year later, the journal itself was temporarily closed, since its publisher, *Svenska Folkförbundet*, the political organisation representing the Estonian Swedes, alongside all other political organisations, had been banned. The publication was taken over by SOV, and continued more or less as before. The threat to the national minorities in Estonia, and in Europe, was of grave concern to the editors of *Kustbon*. In 1935, one lead article stated; 'During the past year we have seen how the increasingly powerful nationalist policies [in Europe] have been used against the foreign peoples who live within the common realm of the state. Some countries, which have not left any constitutional guarantees for their national minorities, have begun regular extermination campaigns, whilst other countries where foreign minorities have an important place have in every way striven to restrict their constitutional freedoms' (*Kustbon* vol.18 no.1 1935). It was clear that the rights of minorities were being infringed, particularly of course in Germany, but also in some eastern and central European countries, including Estonia.

In an even more dangerous development, in September 1939 the journal reported from the new agreement between Estonia and the Soviet Union, where Estonia agreed to allow Soviet military bases on some of the Estonian islands as well as in the harbour town of Paldiski, in return for the keeping of the peace agreement of 1920, and the non-aggression pact of 1932 (*Kustbon* vol.22 no.29 1939). Two weeks later the journal was mainly devoted to the sensational news that the German government called the Baltic Germans, about 14,000 people, back to Germany. There was, however, also a short article entitled 'No cause for Nervousness', about the movements of Russian troops in Estonia. It ends, memorably: 'In the areas where Russian troops will be stationed there are rumours about how the local people would be forced to evacuate their farms, leave their belongings, or even have their things confiscated. No-one needs to fear anything

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-oberoende av främmande hjälp och till en värdefull tillgång för den estniska staten' (*Kustbon* vol.17 no.22 1934).

66 'Under det gånna året har man sett hur den allt starkare frambytande nationalistiska politiken [i Europa] löper till storms mot de främmande stammar, som leva inom den gemensamma statens ram. Vissa länder, som icke i sin grundlag lämnat garantier åt sina nationella minoriteter, ha helt enkelt fört en regelrätt utrotningskamp, medan andra, där främmande minoriteter intaga en rätt betydande plats, på alla sätt sträva efter att inskränka dessas grundlagsgaranterade frihet' (*Kustbon* vol. 18 no.1 p1).
like that (Kustbon vol.22 no.30 1939). Less than a year later, following the full occupation of Estonia, the same journal reports on the evacuation of the inhabitants of Odenholm, the island visited by Engström and his companions in 1905 (Kustbon vol.23 no.13 1940). The people of the Rågö islands, and the island of Nargö were also forced to evacuate in order to make place for Soviet military bases (Sarv 1994).

The secret protocol to the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact between the Soviet Union and Germany (23 Aug.1939), which precipitated the evacuation of the Baltic Germans, planned for the annexation of Finland, Estonia, Latvia, and most of Lithuania by the Soviet Union, and the annexation of the rest of Lithuania and Poland by Germany (Taagepera:58). Following the agreement, it was clearly just a matter of time before the annexations took place. On the 16 of June, Latvia and Estonia received ultimatums from the Soviet Union, to which both, following the course of Lithuania, capitulated. Two days later Estonia was an occupied country. The Soviet regime staged a 'popular uprising', with the intention of establishing a puppet government, which took place on the 21st of June. Subsequently, all non-Soviet public activity was proscribed. In the following month (14-15 July), elections to a so-called 'People's Assembly' took place. The Soviet Estonian Working People's League officially gained over 90% of the votes in the election, which, from the point of view of an objective measurement of the people's support for communism, was rendered meaningless by the fact that it was basically the only party which was allowed to stand, and that the results were largely falsified. Furthermore, the voters were intimidated by the new newspaper Rahva Hääl.

67 'I de trakter, där de ryska trupperna skola förläggas äro rykten i omlopp som om den lokala befolkningen skulle bli tvungen att utrymma sina gårdar, lämna sin egendom eller att denna helt och hållet skulle ifrånagas dem. Något sådant behöver ingen frukta för' (Kustbon vol.22 no.30).

68 Soviet sources of course describe the event somewhat differently. As one book states, 'Invention of political myths based on falsehood and misinformation has regrettably become an inalienable part of the West's ideological contention with the USSR. Among the invented legends are those about the 'seizure of Estonia' and the 'enslavement' of the Estonian and other Baltic nations, intended to question their choice in favour of socialism and unity with the USSR. (Sedykh 1987:7)' The same book quotes from Rahva Hääl., the new Soviet newspaper, describing the events on the 21 June: 'Sirens rang out almost simultaneously at 9 o'clock in the morning from Tallinn's biggest factories and plants. It was a signal for the workers to take action. Crowds were gathering at the worker's gym in the Pärnu highway, forming columns of people.'...'We don't need policemen! We'll establish order ourselves,' the workers shouted. The policemen who had just arrived at the square retreated. And the Estonian workers proved they were not a motley group of people torn by internal contradictions but a united front, as strong as steel, welded together by common desires and ideas. The meeting was held in a very orderly fashion. The crowd of 30 or 40 thousand pepople gave their full endorsement to the speeches and resolutions made in Freedom Square. (Sedykh 1987:92)' It is undoubtedly true, however, that there was some measure of popular support for the Soviet regime, and that many people may not have known that the uprising was, in fact, part of the plans for the annexation of Estonia.
(People's Choice), which wrote that 'It would be extremely unwise to shirk elections...Only people's enemies stay at home on election day'(Taagepera: 62).

In Kustbon, the elections were reported on the first page on the 20 July, under the heading 'Exceptional Participation in the Parliamentary Elections' (Kustbon vol.23 no.13 1940). They wrote about the mass participation in the elections, ending with the statement that it is not known when the new parliament will begin its work, but that the delegates have been ordered to arrive in Tallinn. There is, in the beginning and end, a faint undertone of distancing from events which were generally perceived as extremely dangerous. They further state that each farm must acquire a Soviet flag, for which they give precise dimensions, and that all banked assets have been frozen until further notice. On the next page, there is a critical article about the previous government's treatment of the minorities, with a few examples of laws restricting their rights. There is another article about the events of the 21 of June, stating: 'This day will become a day of note for all times in Estonian history. The walls, which had been built up around society during the previous 6 years in order to restrict the admission of fresh air, have now tumbled' (Kustbon vol.23 no.13 1940).

This was in fact the last issue of Kustbon. On the 5 of October the first issue of its replacement, Sovjet-Estland (Soviet Estonia) was published. The tone is now entirely Soviet; cumbersome prose calling the people to celebrate the October revolution; 'Together with the working people of the entire Soviet Union the working people of the Soviet Estonian Socialist Republic will freely celebrate the 23:rd birthday of the great October revolution. Under the leadership of the Communist Bolshevik party the working people of the Soviet Estonian Socialist republic have begun the building of a new, free, and happy life, exterminating capitalists and squires' (Sovjet-Estland vol.1 no.1 1940). The people are admonished to '...work socially...', to '...follow their work programs with honour, to increase work productivity, to develop our socialist industry, to raise our socialist culture, in order to quickly catch up with the other free peoples of the great Soviet Union and to build the socialist society. (Sovjet-Estland vol.1 no.1 1940).

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69 'Enastående anslutning till riksdagsvalen' (Kustbon vol.23 no.13 1940).
70 'Denna dag står för alla tider i Estlands historia såsom en märkesdag. De murar, som under 6 års tid byggs upp kring samhället för att förhindra tillförseln av frisk luft, ha nu ramlat' (Kustbon vol.23 no.13 1940).
71 'Under ledning av det kommunistiska, bolshevistiska partiet har den Sovjet-Estniska Socialistiska Republiken skapat en nytt, fritt och glatt liv, utrotande kapitalister och patroner' (Sovjet-Estland vol.1 no.1 1940).
This was followed by an article on the new, and happier, future of the Estonian Swedes, whose 'sanitary conditions' would be improved by the new government, in addition to the new plans as to the improvements of the socialist culture of the Estonian Swedes, which explicitly followed the Soviet formula of 'national in form, socialist in content' (Pearson 1990:410, Bremmer 1993:10).

Almost exactly a year later, on the 22 of June 1941, the war between Germany and the Soviet Union began. On July 5 1941 German forces entered Estonia, fighting their way towards Tallinn. According to contemporary Estonian sources, 35,000 people voluntarily joined the Red Army, and a further 33,000 were conscripted (Fjuk 1992:37). The German forces, however, were victorious, establishing Estonia as part of Nazi Germany's 'Ostland', the subjugated colonies east of Germany. Most of the Jewish community (about 4,000 people) who did not escape to Russia, (and who had not already been deported during the Soviet occupation) were killed, and other summary executions were common. In February 1944, the Red Army began its advance towards Tallinn, which included bomb attacks on residential areas. About 40,000 Estonians joined the German army, and a number of people were forcibly mobilised. In the end, Estonia was again independent for a period of 4 days, between the 18th and the 22nd of September. At least 70,000 people had fled, which in combination with losses in the war, executions and deportations, had led to a decrease of the population of between a third and a quarter of the total (Fjuk 1992:28-38, Ahlander 1992:27, Pettai 1996:30).

In 1943, when the German army began to mobilise the men from the Swedish-speaking community as well as from the Estonian one, the illegal flights to Sweden - which had been going on since the beginning of the war - increased dramatically. People fled in small boats, risking the twin dangers of the sea and discovery by military patrols. In the summer of 1944, after long and secret negotiations with Sweden, local SS officers allowed the Estonian Swedes to leave Estonia for Sweden. About 7,000 of a total of 8,000 people moved to Sweden. In September, on the same day that the Red Army invaded Tallinn, Hitler's foreign minister Ribbentrop gave his belated consent to the move (Kung 1990:31).

72 'De uppfodra det arbetande folk att arbeta socialistiskt, att fylla med ära sina arbetsprogramm, höja arbetsproduktiviteten, utveckla vår socialistiska industry, höja vår socialistiska kultur, för att i raskt tempo hinna fatt den stora Sovjet-Unionens andra fria folk och uppbrygga det socialistiska samhället' (Sovjet-Estland vol.1 no.1 1940).
During the war, the manor house in Pürksi where the Swedish agricultural school was housed was subsequently occupied by Russian troops. After much negotiation Fridolf Isberg, the then headmaster who was himself an Estonian Swede, managed to get the school, which was in a bad state after troop occupations, re-opened in 1940 (Isberg 1971:167-171). The curriculum, however, had to be changed, replacing geography, history, and Estonian with 5 hours of Russian and 2 hours of Stalin's constitution (later changed by the Germans to 5 hours of German). Also, the model farm of the school was transformed into a soχhos, and a number of 5 year plans were required. All religious literature from the library had to be sent to Tallinn, and a 'red corner' was established in the common room, with portraits of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, on red paper, as well as a number of common slogans. A year later, the accountant and one of the teachers of the school were deported (Isberg 1971:174).

After the war a few families returned from Sweden, but the work for the preservation of Swedish-ness was over (Sarv 1994:10). All Swedish speaking schools were closed, and the Estonian Swedish population was rapidly becoming assimilated. Per Söderbäck, the headmaster of Birkas between 1924 and 1927, wrote in 1971, about the Soviet occupation: 'The history of Birkas was definitively over. The door had been closed after the last disappearing pupil. The Song of the Motherland (an Estonian Swedish song) had fallen silent forever' (Söderbäck 1971:160). That, of course, was not the case, as we shall see in later chapters when the restoration of the Estonian Swedish culture in contemporary Estonia, and particularly Birkas (Est. Pürksi), is discussed.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, then, we have looked at the process whereby the Swedish minority in Estonia became a self-conscious and coherent national minority, identifying with the aspirations and vocabulary of other contemporary European minorities. Furthermore, the threads of hygiene, sobriety, and self-help have been traced from the evangelical missionaries of the 1870s to the Estonian Swedish activists of the 1920s and 1930s. 'Swedish-ness' became an active, moral choice for the activists, associated with the moral questions of sobriety, and order and hygiene in the home. The Estonian Swedish activists, then, were advocating the assumption of Swedish-ness as a responsibility; a cultural heritage which involved a certain amount of cultural work, such as teaching your children Swedish, and getting involved in various associations, like the dairy association or the choir. It was a
stance for cultural preservation against the slide into assimilation and absorption into the nation.

In that sense, the aspirations of the movement for the preservation of Swedish-ness amongst the Estonian Swedes had much in common with the movements of other national minorities in Europe. What made the Estonian Swedes a particular case, however, was the extent to which the movement had merged with a contemporary movement in Sweden in which 'Swedish-ness' itself was in the process of being re-defined. As we have seen, in Sweden the interest in the Estonian Swedes was limited until the end of the 19th Century, when the work of Dr. Hazelius, the founder of Skansen, the first open air ethnographic museum in Europe, and the National Museum, the accompanying ethnographic museum, generated a considerable amount of interest in rural folk cultures, which were seen as under threat from the processes of industrialisation and urbanisation.

The culture of the Estonian Swedes was defined as uniquely intact, both in terms of their language and their customs. Despite the fact that their living conditions were primitive, and their customs seemingly old-fashioned, this definition is not immediately obvious. There had always been a certain amount of intermingling with the Estonians, and the Estonian Swedish dialect was influenced both by Estonian and German. In 19th Century Sweden the threat to 'Swedish-ness', however, was defined as a factor of time rather than space: of the process of modernisation rather than the proximity of other cultures. It was the perceived age and purity of their culture, then, rather than their 'race' which was seen as significant. In addition, there was a great deal of sympathy extended to them for having lived through the tyranny of the Russian Empire, the terrors of the First World War, and the insecurities and shortages of post-war Estonia.

Despite the fact that the nation-state itself is usually seen as a modernist project, individual modernists are generally associated with assimilationists: with being concerned with progress and the realisation of the individual in global society rather than within obsolete cultural parameters (eg. Berman 1982). In the case of the Estonian Swedes, however, the incorporation of the 'modern' into the definition of Swedish-ness, meant that for them being at the same time modernists and anti-assimilationists was no contradiction. The work for Swedish-ness was, as we have seen, linked to notions of improvement, originating in the work of the

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The Estonian Swedes here resembled the Volksdeutschen, or ethnic German minorities in Eastern Europe, who also sought to define their essential German-ness at a time where the notion of what it meant to be German was extensively debated in the Vaterland itself.
missionaries, who were only moderately interested in the Swedish-ness of their subjects, but who spent a great deal of time attempting to improve their standard of living and their moral conduct.

The missionary work of the 1870s and the movement for the preservation of Swedish-ness in the 1920s and 1930s formed one of the historical trajectories which informs the present revival of Swedish-ness. During the time of my fieldwork, the manor house of Birkas was being restored for the third time this century, in order to become, again, a Swedish school. In order to fully understand the contemporary process of cultural restoration, however, it is also necessary to analyse the notion of culture and nationhood within the Soviet Union, which, for the Estonians, provides the framework for the present cultural work of restoring Swedish-ness on the peninsula. In the next chapter, therefore, we will look at the Soviet cultural heritage in Estonia, and its implications for the present aim of restoring, or re-inventing, the Estonian Swedish cultural heritage.
Chapter 4. National Heritage in the Soviet Union

Introduction

The last chapter documented the creation of a self-conscious minority of Estonian Swedes in Estonia: a national minority whose struggle for national consciousness and political rights mirrored the national movement of the Estonians within the Russian Empire. In this chapter, I will investigate the Soviet notions of national/ethnic heritage, which also frames the present revival of the Swedish heritage in Estonia. Representations of ethnic traditional culture in the Soviet Union were powerful symbols, representing the opposite of the so-called 'bourgeois nationalism', a stock Soviet description of expressions of national consciousness or opposition to the central regime associated with the notion that Soviet Russia had illegally occupied and incorporated some of the other Soviet republics. Not all ethnic cultures were represented, however: rather, representation was mainly limited to those cultures which had Union Republic status. Jewish folk culture, for example, was not officially encouraged, along with many other ethnic groups across the Soviet Union (Lieven 1993:155). 'Bourgeois nationalism', then, was, from the point of view of the Soviet state, inherently divisive, whereas representations of ethnic traditional culture functioned both to show diversity, and to contain it. Objectified representations of folk culture, evident in virtually any Soviet official celebration in the form of televised processions and dance performances, were ubiquitous symbols, representing the particularly national within a modular framework. In this sense, they were similar to Wilk's 'structures of common difference', i.e. representations of difference and (national) specificity (in his case, beauty contests in Belize) presented in global formats (cf Wilk 1995). Similarly, in the context of the Soviet Union, what appeared to be representations of national specificity, invariably conformed to a Soviet typology of texts and images. The normativity of the representations of folk (or national) cultures stemmed not only from the general tendency towards modularity in Soviet culture, but also from the fact that they were pivotal in the so-called 'nationalities question': the lasting political problem of how to represent the Union according to the ruling ideology, i.e. as a voluntary association of peoples of equal rights and power (e.g. Smith 1990, Bremmer/Taras 1993, Hajda/Beissinger 1990).

74 Note that the Estonian party was purged in 1950 for not clamping down on 'bourgeois nationalism' (Hiden/Salmon 1994:140).
The Soviet conception of nationhood was based on ethnicity, which was an inherited state, usually implying certain characteristics, and associated with specific territories (Bremmer/Taras 1993:3-29). Whilst, however, there were over a hundred ethnic (or 'national') groups, only 53 of these, the 'titular' nationalities, were given official recognition of association with particular areas of land. There were 4 separate categories of ethnic relationships to land, which, in descending order, were: the Soviet Socialist Republics (15), the Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republics (20), the Autonomous Regions (8), and the Autonomous Areas (10) (Bremmer/Taras 1993:5). Passports were stamped with the ethnic nationality, and the Soviet citizenship, of the bearer. When the Soviet Union broke down, therefore, the concept of citizenship within the old SSR's, as opposed to within the Soviet Union, was largely defined in ethnic terms. In Estonia, as we have seen, only ethnic Estonians were given automatic rights to citizenship. Non-Estonians who could trace their own or their family's residency in Estonia back to the pre-war era were also granted citizenship, whereas immigrants from the Soviet era were only given residency rights, albeit with the potential right to apply for citizenship after fulfilling certain language and residency requirements.

Bruce Grant, in his book on the Nivkhi people of Sakhalin islands, has addressed the question of the relationship between Soviet and Nivkhi culture, arguing that we should not assume that the former represents 'modernity' and the latter 'tradition' (Grant 1995:14) (see also chapter 2). Rather, he argues, the complex forms which constitute Nivkhi culture were re-constituted within Soviet culture. The collapse of that culture, therefore, has led to the collapse of both the 'modern' and the 'traditional', both modes of identification co-existing within a Soviet cultural identity (Grant 1995:16). Others, notably Humphrey and Dragadze, have noted the process whereby ostensibly modernising Soviet structures in fact have the effect of preserving local and traditional structures (Humphrey 1983:442, Dragadze 1988:22, 27, 203). Whilst a great deal of this effect was due to the short-comings of the Soviet economic system, it was also part of the political programme of the Soviet Union. This chapter aims to address the specific and intentional part of the process of the Soviet preservation and objectification of tradition. I argue that the traditional representations of folk cultures was a central part in the self-presentation of the Soviet Union, providing visual symbols for the ideology of the voluntary and equal union of the 'brother peoples'. The production of representations of 'traditional culture' formed a useful contrast to the otherwise pervasive and homogenising style of Soviet modernism. The official
encouragement of traditional folk cultures as representations of the essence of the
diverse nations of the Soviet Union was not, of course, accidental: the (itself
partially invented) peasant culture which constituted the representations formed
an association between 'folk', and the 'people', as opposed to the 'bourgeoisie'. It
was, therefore, a bridging symbol, transcending the problems of ethnic/national
nationalism through the modularity of the format, which effectively harnessed
ethnic nationalism to the project of Soviet nationalism.

This particular expression of Soviet nationalism became institutionalised during
the Stalin era. Whilst the Second World War of course gave a great deal of
impetus to the movement, it preceded the War, and is connected to Russian
nationalism and expansionism, in combination with the totalitarian personality
cult of Stalin. The war, however, provided a raison d'être for Soviet nationalism
which gave it a lasting sense of legitimacy. Lenin's 'nationalities problem', and the
hope of independence for the non-Russians of the Russian Empire following
the revolution, was managed by Stalin during the war through the construction of
a form of Soviet nationalism, which survived in a specific and normative form.
The frequently broadcast celebratory processions of separate ethnic groups in
folk costumes mirrored the processions of the troops, representing an ideological
victory over the internal, as well as the external, enemy, i.e. (external) Fascism
and (internal) 'bourgeois nationalism' (e.g. Tiheda 1980).

In so far as the folk costumes were historically authentic, their origins lay with
the wealthier peasants; the Russian kulaks and the country people from the other
nations who were sufficiently well off to be able to afford the intricate and
expensive clothing. The official representations of healthy rural folk cultures,
then, ranging from the paintings of Stalin with men and women in folk costumes,
representing the Union Republics, to later Soviet televised processions and folk
dance events, also, and perhaps deliberately, functioned to mask the virtual
annihilation of the kulak culture in connection with Stalin's violent policy of
forced collectivisation. Ironically, then, as the kulaks were shot or herded into

75 The Baltic states fought for, and achieved, independence following the First World War, which
lasted until the Second World War. Georgia was independent between 1918 and 1920, under a
Menshevik government, which was overthrown by the Red Army. Ukraine, along with the
countries of Central Asia and Transcaucasia had similarly declared independence in 1918, which
formally ended with the Union Treaty in 1922, when the Union Republics within the Soviet
federation were established, giving the larger nationalities the formal right to secession, and some
administrative and cultural independence. The treaty was essentially the outcome of the victory of
the Red Army in the civil war which followed the revolution (Smith 1990:5).

76 The kulaks were the wealthier members of the 'peasant class'. It is still not clear how many
kulaks were killed during the collectivisation of 1930-32, or during the subsequent mass starvation
in Russia and Ukraine. It has been estimated that about 15 million people were 'de-kulakized', and

106
labour camps, their folk costumes became official symbols of the wealth and
diversity of the Soviet Union, denoting a peaceful, voluntary, and equal union of
peoples. Meanwhile, the suffering of the Russian people in the war, and
particularly the siege of Leningrad, was used by Stalin to legitimise the pre­
extisting domination of Russia, the so-called 'elder brother', in the Union (Smith
1990:7). It is significant in this context that in the frequent all-Union parades and
festivities where other ethnic groups were symbolised by folk costumes, the
Russians often wore plain uniforms, representing the Union itself rather than a
specific ethnic group. As we will see, the 'ethnification', then, of the
representatives of the other Union Republics, whilst ostensibly expressing
cultural specificity in fact represented a particular Soviet form of normative
modularity. The rituals and celebrations were not, however, rendered meaningless
through their intentionality: they appeared to have been appropriated and enjoyed
by most of my informants, who generally considered them important to their
sense of Estonian-ness during the Soviet times.

This chapter is divided into two parts. In the first part, I will consider 5 paintings,
2 of Lenin and 3 of Stalin, all painted during the Stalin era. The paintings will be
used as an illustration of a specific argument regarding the question of Soviet
national and cultural heritage; that Stalin's policy on nationalism developed, and
to some extent transformed, the early Soviet concept of the nations within the
Soviet Union, producing a particular form of Soviet nationalism. The difference
between Leninism and Stalinism in this respect is less than it might appear, since
it became clear soon after the revolution that the new government was not willing
to grant independence to the former territories of the Russian Empire. However,
the images of ethnified Soviet subjects became codified during Stalin's epoch,
creating a modular form which was re-produced until the fall of the Soviet
Union.

that of those 1 million men were sent to labour camps. The average life expectancy in the camps
between 1929 and 1934 was probably 1-2 years (Conquest 1990:311). Molotov's commission of
1929, whose aim was to liquidate the kulaks as a class, specified the division of the kulaks into 3
groups: the counterrevolutionary kulak activists, to be sent to camps or shot, and whose families
were to be deported to the most remote regions, non-activists, who were to be deported to remote
and infertile areas, and the poorer kulaks, who would be evicted from their properties. All
property was incorporated into the collective farms. Estimates of the extent of the deportations
and deaths vary. Radzinsky, in his recent biography of Stalin states that some 50,000 families were
deported in cattle wagons by the commission. By 1933, he writes, another 240,000 families had
been deported. People were killed in their homes, died on the trains, or died in the mass starvation
which followed in the wake of the destruction of the kulaks and the forced collectivisation
In the second part, I look at post-war images of Estonian ethnicity, which, like the paintings of Stalin discussed in the first part, function to express the comfortable union between the preservation of ethnic cultural heritage and the implementation of Soviet socialism. A comparison between Soviet images in books from Ukraine and Latvia reveals the normativity of the format. This, then, is a modular form of images, which is utilised to convey national specificity, with the specific purpose of warding off the criticism that the Soviet Union was, in the words of one of my students (reflecting a contemporary slogan), 'a prison for nations'. The fact, however, that these images were in essence propaganda, did not mean that the official encouragement of particular forms of folk cultures was not successful: the local appropriation of folk culture on the collective farm, particularly through the performances of the folk dance team and the choir, was not associated with Soviet policy, and had strengthened the local sense of Estonian-ness during the Soviet times. It was also a form of culture which had, so far, survived the fall of the Soviet Union, although there were fewer possibilities to perform outside the collective farm.

Stalin and the People

In this section I will consider 5 paintings, 2 of Lenin and 3 of Stalin, which show the leaders with representatives of the people. My focus, primarily, is on the difference in the representation of 'the people' in the paintings of Lenin to those of Stalin. The two earliest paintings, Sergej Gerasimov's 'Lenin at the 2nd Council Congress amongst the Farmer Deputies' (1935-6) (see plate 1), and Aleksandr Samochvalov's 'Lenin appearing at the 2nd All-Russian Council Congress' (1940) (see plate 2), both show Lenin in movement. In the first painting he is receiving and reading a document, leaning forward as if he had just arrived, surrounded by a group of men, pressing near, wearing coats and hats signifying their own recent arrival, as well as the absence of bureaucratic protocol. The focus of the painting is the document in Lenin's hand, which the men behind him are straining to read over his shoulder. A man to the right of Lenin is pointing to it, and seems about to explain its context. Elsewhere in the

77 The illustrations used in this chapter are taken from the catalogue of a Swedish exhibition shown at Liljevalchs Konsthall in 1996, 'Agitation för Lyckan: Sovjetsk konst från Stalintiden'; 'Agitation for happiness: Soviet Art from the Stalin Era' (Petrova 1996). The names of the painters, therefore, follow the Swedish rather than the English spellings, and there may be small discrepancies. The English titles are my translations from the Swedish.
78 Sergej Gerasimov: 'Lenin på II rådskongresen bland böndernas deputerade' 1935-36.
79 Aleksandr Samochvalov: 'Lenin framträder på II Allsryka rådskongressen' 1940.

108
large hall, tight groups are gathered, including some troops with bayonets, giving the impression that other meetings are being conducted. The painting indicates a sense of informality and continuous movement and, importantly, of the intentional proximity between Lenin and 'the people'.

In the second painting, Lenin is marching down a red carpet, in the same forward leaning, progressive, stance, surrounded on both sides by deputies, mostly men, who seem to be cheering him on. The people in both paintings look poor, even dishevelled, and are not wearing traditional costumes - indeed, there are no ethnic markers in the paintings. In the second painting there are signs, instead, of the war: some of the men have rounds of machine gun ammunition slung across their shoulders, others are holding guns. There are only two chairs in the painting, forming a pair of opposites: a plain wooden chair on the right, and a large gilded chair on the left, upholstered in a burgundy red. At first glance, the wooden chair seems to represent the people, whilst the other one, expensive and comfortable, seems to belong to the vast hall with its massive stone pillars and chandeliers. There is no doubt concerning the class origins, as it were, of the two chairs. The expensive chair seems also to have been used by a wounded soldier, recently risen in honour of Lenin, leaving a brown blanket draped across it, somewhat in the manner of a royal cloak. The gilded chair thus appears to have transcended its own identity as an accessory to the Russian Empire, transformed to a functional seat for the wounded soldier, which simultaneously contains elements of a throne, signifying, in the elevation of the common man, the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The 3 paintings of Stalin to be discussed here, Aleksander Gerasimov's 'A Hymn to October' (1942)80 (see plate 3), Juri Kugatj's 'Praised be the Great Stalin!' (1950)81 (see plate 4), and Boris Joganson's 'Our wise leader and dear teacher (Stalin amongst the people in the Kreml' (1952)82 (see plate 5), are both more stationary and more grand. Gerasimov's painting depicts the 25 year jubilee of the revolution, and shows a theatre, with Stalin, floodlit from above, at a pulpit facing the audience. There is a vast imperial bust of Lenin at the back, covered in flowers, with a background of a red and golden drape. Above Lenin, a round silhouette of Stalin forms the centre of the upper half of the drape. The audience are watching in rapt attention, looking more orderly, and considerably better dressed, than the people in the paintings of Lenin discussed above. The only note of disorder is a little girl in white and blue, with red ribbons in her plaited hair.

80 Aleksandr Gerasimov 'en hymn till Oktober' 1942
81 Jurij Kugatj 'Årad vare den store Stalin!' 1950
82 Boris Joganson 'Vår vise ledare och käre lärare (Stalin bland folket i Kreml.)' 1952
leaning against the stage gazing up at Stalin. In the audience, there are also various non-Russian nationalities, in festive oriental costumes.

In this painting 'the people' are no longer represented exclusively as working people: there are women with tiaras and pearl ear rings, and corpulent men in suits and medals. Rather, there is a sense that the audience symbolises the Soviet Union itself. The largesse of the painting, the candelabras and tiaras, as well as the imperial signs of Lenin and Stalin, speak of culmination rather than revolution. The insertion of people in oriental costumes amongst the audience seems to symbolise the equality of nations rather than of classes, whilst the grandeur of the occasion speaks of the success of the Union. If the audience represents the Union, the position of the girl forms a specific relationship to Stalin, whose role as benevolent 'father and teacher' of the nation is thus emphasised (Radzinsky 1996:5).

The sense of culmination in the painting also signifies the assumption of party control over art, as well as in virtually every other sphere of life. Thus Gerasimov, known as Stalin's 'court painter', and head of the Union of Soviet Artists stated in 1938: 'Enemies of the people, Trotskyist-Bukharinite rabble, Fascist agents who have been active in the art front and have attempted in every way to brake and hinder the development of Soviet art, have been unmasked and neutralized by our Soviet intelligence service under the leadership of Stalin People's Commissar Comrade Yezhov' (Elliot 1996:188). The painting, then, importantly signifies the assumption of total control of the Soviet Union by Stalin, through the symbolism of the jubilee.

The second painting, Kugatj's 'Praised be the Great Stalin', shows Stalin at the top of a staircase, with a red carpet un-folding before him, surrounded by people on both sides applauding him. There is a clear differentiation in the painting between the people on the same level as Stalin, a group of men in plain suits and some military leaders, and the people who are flanking the steps, or leaning against the balustrades. Everyone is applauding, but whereas the applause of the men near him is measured, the applause of the people below looks almost religious, their hands stretching out in classic gestures of supplication and adoration. Whilst the people near Stalin - all men - lack any obvious 'ethnic' markings, most of the people lower down are obviously of other nationalities, with ethnic costumes predominating for both men and women. Stalin, then, at the top of the stairs, surrounded by other functionaries, is celebrated by the people below, who are representatives of the republics of the Union. Unlike the last painting, then,
which showed 'the people', i.e. the audience, as pre-dominantly non-ethnic, or in other words probably pre-dominantly Russian, this painting distinguishes between the 'non-ethnic' functionaries at the top, and the 'ethnic' people below and to the sides. This is not to say that there are no Russians below: probably the children carrying flowers, and the small group of people next to them, are intended to be Russian. The important point, however, is that the sense of division between 'the people' and the leaders is primarily expressed in terms of ethnic signifiers.

In this respect, the message of this particular genre of Soviet art was significantly different from Nazi German art, where the common ethnicity of the leaders and the people is assumed. Igor Golomstock, who has argued that 20th century totalitarian art forms one coherent category, which can be analysed with reference to the common totalitarianism of the political ideologies of Stalinism, Nazism, Fascism, and Maoism does not, unfortunately, include many paintings of the peasantry in his otherwise impressive pictorial material (Golomstock 1990). The resemblance between the two genres is in this respect, however, somewhat misleading. Whilst the Nazi art embodies the exclusiveness of the racist ideology, where non-Germans were, to varying degrees, defined as non-members of 'Germany', this particular form of Soviet art focused on the inclusive-ness of the Union, primarily in order to justify the expansionism of the state. Post-war images from the Baltic states in particular often have an eerie resemblance to Nazi images. They are not, however, intended to portray the supremacy of the Estonian (or Latvian, or Lithuanian) people, but rather to convey a sense of continuity between the folk culture of the past (the culture of 'the people' as opposed to 'bourgeois nationalism) and the socialist culture of the (then) present.

The last painting, 'Our wise leader and dear teacher (Stalin amongst the people in the Kremlin)' by Joganson (see plate 5), shows Stalin standing in the centre, communicating with a man in a plain grey suit, surrounded by people in various kinds of folk costumes, many of whom are wearing medals: Soviet badges which act to unify an otherwise seemingly disparate group of people. In addition, there is a scattering of people in military uniform. This is a quieter picture than the previous one: the people are focusing on Stalin, listening silently and intently, and Stalin himself is listening to the man opposite, with whom he is clearly in a conversation. The identity of the man in grey is not clear: that he is of 'ethnic' origin is hinted by a man who might be a mirror image, standing opposite, whose tanned face, black hair and moustache, identifies him as non-Russian. The magnificent chandeliers light up the vast hall with thousands of candles, the gilded doors and carved pillars reveal a sense of reconciliation between the old
empire and the new, which is in sharp contrast to the treatment of a similarly grand background in Samochvalov's painting of Lenin. In that painting, the sense of contrast between the people and their formerly imperial surroundings is signified by the transformation of the gilded chair, as well as by the sense of movement and noise as opposed to the immobility of the vast hall. In Joganson's painting, there is no contrast between the people and the surroundings: the golden chandeliers and the grey pillars seem to frame the people, reflecting the grey suits as well as the golden threads of the traditional costumes. The movements of the people, mostly still and quiet, are in perfect accordance with the background: the people paying close attention to the leader.

These paintings, then, show the extension of the notion of 'the people' in the paintings of Lenin, when they were predominantly portrayed as workers, to those of Stalin, when the focus had largely shifted from the working class to the ethnic nationalities within the Soviet Union.\(^\text{83}\)\(^\text{84}\) The transformation of the style of representation also signified the Stalinist project to end the liberalising effects of the NEP policy\(^\text{85}\) of the previous decade (cf. Groys 1992). In two of the paintings, the conceptualisation of 'the people' was symbolised by objectified signifiers of folk culture, symbolising the representative essences of the diverse nations within the Union. The completion of the revolution meant that the former concept of 'the people' as, exclusively, the working class was no longer sufficient: the revolution would not have been successful if the division between 'the people' and 'the bourgeoisie' had remained in place. Instead, the construction of a Soviet form of nationalism, depicting the unity of 'the brother peoples', came to dominate the iconography of the Soviet Union. The paintings discussed above, then, were part of the foundation for a mode of representation of the Union, which consisted of an objectified and highly symbolic show of ethnic traditional cultures.

Ironically, as we have seen, the representation of ethnicity was derived from the better off class of peasants, the kulaks, who were deliberately destroyed by Stalin's renewal of revolutionary terror, and policy of forced collectivisation. The references in the paintings, then, were not only references to a Soviet conception

\(^{\text{83}}\)c.f. Boris Groys for an argument concerning the widening of the notion of the art of 'the people' during Stalinism, to incorporate 'progressive' art from all historical periods, e.g. the art from Greek antiquity, the Italian Renaissance, and 19th Century Russian realism (Groys, B. 1992:46).

\(^{\text{84}}\) Note, however, that the roots of the so-called 'National Bolshevism' go back to the civil war, when the Bolsheviks deliberately used patriotic, and particularly anti-Polish, propaganda in order to recruit former white officers to their cause (Figes 1997:699-700).

\(^{\text{85}}\)NEP - The New Economic Policy introduced in 1922 involved a liberalisation of the economy, allowing a measure of free trade.
of the brother nations coming together to build socialism, but also contained a subtext of the continuing prosperity of the country, expressed in the well-dressed and well-fed images of traditional culture, in the face of the calamitous wave of murder, theft, and starvation which constituted Stalin’s regime.

In relation to Estonia, where collectivisation took place in 1949, the following quote from a book entitled, 'Bloodsoaked Traces of Bourgeois Nationalism' expresses the official view of the kulaks in 1980: 'The formation of collective farms decisively undermined the basis for the kulak nationalist actions especially after the integration of collective farms was begun in 1950. It was an economic necessity that at the same time contributed to the strengthening of collective farm managing boards, elimination of kulak-minded people from these bodies and better preservation of collective farm property. All these measures also brought along a further strengthening of Soviet power all over the country and allowed to get ready for the final crushdown of the armed nationalists' (sic) (Tiheda 1980:62). It has been estimated that in 1949 about 80,000 people were deported from Estonia, and that the total number of deportations between 1944 and 1952 was about 124,000. During the Soviet occupation in 1940-41 the number of people deported or killed was nearly 60,000. Furthermore, the Nazi occupation meant that virtually the entire Jewish population in the Baltic states was killed. In Lithuania, which had the largest Jewish population, there were only some 2,000 survivors after the war, compared to the pre-war population of about 250,000 people (Hiden and Salmon 1996: 129, 115, 119). In Estonia, the Jewish population was much smaller, consisting of about 4,000 people. With the exception of the people who fled, or were deported, to Russia, they were, again, virtually all killed during the Nazi occupation. Also, a large number of communists and communist sympathisers were executed by the Nazis.

The Soviet Union’s own history of the suppression of ethnic groups means that the historical context for the objectification of the traditional cultures was essentially violent. The near extinction of some ethnic groups, for example the Crimean Tartars who were practically all killed under Stalin, and the various policies of Russification which the Soviet state carried out, show that the objectification of folk culture was essentially a means of controlling and directing the non-Russian cultures within the Soviet Union. The slogan, then, of the Soviet state, that it was 'national in form and socialist in content', along with other objectified images of ethnic cultures, obscured a history of violent ethnic suppression which constitutes the historical framework for the contemporary nationalisms within the former Soviet Union (Pearson 1990:401).
Post-Stalinist Representations of Estonian Nationhood

This part of the chapter is intended as an illustration of the argument, outlined in the previous part, that whilst expressions of folk culture may have appeared to be an expression of the essentially national, or ethnic, in this case Estonian, in opposition to the homogenising tendency of Soviet culture, they actually formed part of a string of more or less identical expressions of 'folk cultures' across the Soviet Union, which constituted normative and formulaic expressions of national specificity. Above, I attempted to analyse the historical roots of the Soviet objectification of folk culture through an analysis of 5 paintings from the Stalinist era. Here, I will look at a number of illustrations from a particular genre of literature, the large format Soviet books of photographs and text about particular Union Republics, with titles such as 'Nõukogude Eesti', 'Soviet Estonia'. The pictorial material which referred to the ethnic folk culture of the republics invariably forms an important part of these books, posited in structural opposition to the photographs denoting modernity, forming a unified whole. The choreography of the photographs are often similar: modern harvesters on vast fields forming diagonal lines, as if posed for an agricultural march, people in traditional dress moving in processions which are also demonstrations, or celebrations which are also statements (see plates 6-10). Often the photographs show celebrations of particular events, such as the 350 year jubilee of Tartu University, where young people dressed in traditional folk costumes appear as a matter of course (see illustration 11). The consistent message, however, is that ethnic folk cultures were incorporated into the presentation of Soviet culture (see plates 12-14).

There are also other images in the books, notably representations of high culture; opera, ballet, theatre, and images of competitive sport. Each category has a particular relationship to the other, and each represents facets of Soviet culture. The objectification of traditional culture, however, plays a more difficult part in the present re-invention of the Estonian republic than the other cultural forms, since it problematises some common formats for the expression of nationalism. It is associated with Soviet propaganda and cultural kitsch, sarcastically defined by Anatol Lieven as, '... an endless harping on the value of conservative, rural, homely, familial, traditional, folkloric and religious values, all presented in a general glow of kitsch and nauseating roseate sentimentality, much of it by authors who were themselves already thoroughly urbanized' (Lieven 1993:127). Many of my informants on the collective farm, however, were concerned with
the loss of 'Estonian-ness' which the appropriation of western-ness entailed. What seems from the point of view of the west, and hence from the point of view of some western-oriented urban informants, to be artificial, they generally considered to be an authentic part of the expression of Estonian-ness. This form of 'folk culture' therefore, tended to be seen by my informants as a defence against both Soviet and, subsequently, Western cultural domination.

For most people on the collective farm, then, the objectification of folk culture provided apparently cogent images of the freedom of national expression within the Soviet Union, which could easily be reconciled with the ideology of the state. It also corresponded to a high level of local participation in the production of folk culture; a form of appropriation which provided a degree of authenticity to the state images of traditionality. Similarly, Deniz Kandiyoti, in her article on modernisation and traditionalism in the context of the 'Soviet East', points out that representations of ethnic cultures may have been internalised to a greater degree than expected by the members of the groups objectified (Kandiyoti 1996:534).

The following quote, found in an English textbook for the pupils on the collective farm, provides an example of the reconciliation between the ideology of socialism and the promotion of 'folk culture':

'Lesson 17: 'Two young pioneers'

'Enn Lent is nine years old. Soon he will be ten. Then he can become a pioneer. His brother Paul is twelve. He is a pioneer already. Every morning Paul puts on his red pioneer scarf and goes to school. He is proud of his red scarf. Enn knows the duties of a pioneer very well. He also knows that every pioneer must learn well at school. Enn is the top pupil of his class. He is always honest and helpful. He is not afraid of difficulties and he does his work well. He wants to be a good friend to the children of the whole world.

Enn has a pen-friend in the GDR. His friend's name is Klaus. Klaus is a pioneer already. In the GDR Pioneers wear blue scarfs (sic). Every month Enn and Klaus write long letters to each other. They both write about their country, their town, their school and class. They also write about their homes and friends.

As Klaus does not know Estonian and Enn does not know German, they write in Russian because they both learn Russian at school. Next summer Enn and Klaus want to meet at a pioneer camp in our country. They both want to learn more
Russian. So they make plans to meet at a camp where all the pioneers speak Russian.

In his next letter Enn will tell Klaus about October holidays. They will have a party at school and Enn will sing a folk song there, a group of pupils from Enn's class will dance two Estonian folk dances at the party. The parents will also have holidays and the whole family will have a very good time together.

On the seventh of November the children will get bright balloons and they can go to the demonstration together with their parents. Next morning they will take a long walk and go to visit their grand-parents. In the evening they will go to the theatre. Enn likes the October holidays very much (Sotter / Vahtra 1985).

Whilst the relative happiness or difficulties of the former Soviet times was a recognised and controversial topic, the fact that Soviet celebrations routinely contained elements of folk culture, in the passage quoted from the school book a folk song and a folk dance, was taken for granted, and not regarded by my most of my informants as a particularly Soviet form. Rather, it was a form of celebration which had both outlasted the end of the Soviet Union in the various festivities on the collective farm, when the folk dance team and the folk song choir would inevitably perform, dressed in their folk costumes, and which was assumed to have preceded the Soviet era.

The Soviet objectification of traditional folk culture, then, was expressed within a range of different media in order to create a syncretic web of beliefs where traditional folk culture and love for the country was interwoven with Soviet ideology. The contents of the Soviet books of photographs and text, which are highly normative, are divided between representations of modernity, including, for example, material on technological advances on the collective farms, representations of high culture, i.e. art, theatre, and music, representations of sport, nature, and everyday life, and representations of folk culture. They tend to be systematic, presenting a predictable sequence of Estonian life, speaking of progress and the preservation of cultural heritage in equal measure. The texts are about work and leisure, art and child care, nature and culture, presenting captions for the images of the imagined community of the Soviet people working together to 'build socialism' (cf. Anderson 1983).

The tone of the forewords of the books tends to be lyrical, created with the intention of projecting a credible facade combining socialist achievements with
nationalist feelings: 'This album represents fact and events giving evidence of the achievements of the people of our republic during the present five-year period. In the album one can find the beautiful landscapes of South Estonia, the rough beauty of the northern coast, fields and villages and towns filled with new buildings. Here are children and grown-ups, those who make their first acquaintance with the roots of our culture, and those who have achieved its heights; they create sophisticated machines, mine oil-shale, reap the harvest, catch fish in the seas. Here are the happy faces of mothers and children; the faces of the aged people show traces of thoughts and years-long work' (Pangsepp 1985:14).

Another book, published at the cusp of the movement towards independence, states: 'Five thousand years ago the ancestors of the Estonians settled on this little windy corner of land in this remote corner of Europe, on the Baltic coast. They were of Finno-Ugric stock, and they put a great deal of toil and sweat into the land, in return for a meagre living. Millennia have fashioned the people after the face of the land, creating such a strong bond that an Estonian never leaves his or her native land unless under the pressure of danger or real necessity' (Pangsepp/Beekman 1990:190).

Often, however, the signs of ethnicity in the photographs are combined with rather mundane headings, like the two photographs in a book on Latvia, the top one showing a group of 9 people, dressed in national costumes, the women with long braided hair, walking towards the camera in a beautiful mountain landscape, contrasted with the photograph below which shows 4 men, 2 of them obviously workers, appreciatively applauding a speech or a performance. The heading states: 'Between the XXI and XXII Latvian YCL congress (1978-1982) over 1.5 thousands of young people with Komsomol passes have gone to the great construction sites of the Soviet Union. Photos: (below) Builders of BAM (Baikal-Amur Line) and their visitors from home (above) (Goris, A. 1987) (see plate 15).'

Similarly, a book on Tallinn includes a photograph of a procession with young people dressed in folk costumes, carrying flag, with the heading: 'A public holiday. The youth of Tallinn stepping out to celebrate. (Salmre/ Tomberg 1975:76) (see plate 16).' There is commonly a sense, therefore, of a slight discrepancy between the texts and the images, which is at least partly due to the routine nature of the inclusion of ethnic signifiers in processions and celebrations. Partly, however, it also signifies the management of the articulation of the socialist and the national, where the ethnified images are normalised through the texts.
In a pro-Soviet Swedish book with a similar format, entitled 'Estland: en Bildbok med Text' ('Estonia: a Picture Book with Text') (Välme/Gustafson 1976)86, the Soviet notion of folk culture is explicated, within the parameters of Soviet ideology. Indeed, the format and text indicates that the book has been written with a good deal of official help and encouragement from the Soviet Estonian state. The section on 'The Culture of the People'87 has in total 24 photographs, of which 12 are of folk dancing: images of 'traditional folk culture', in other words, dominates the notion of the 'culture of the people'. The first picture shows a folk-dance festival at the Komsomol stadium in Tallinn, with a large banner stating 'Rahvaste Sõprus' ('friendship between peoples') dominating the scene. The text about the 1973 dance festival describes the representations of folk culture which constituted the festival:

'After the solemn finale at the Komsomol stadium the dancers, dressed in their folk costumes, went out on to the streets of Tallinn, bringing the musicians, and carrying people off on a street party which lasted until morning. People played and danced and played games on squares and in parks. It was a manifestation of the culture and life force of the Estonian people. It was spontaneous and could not be stopped. And nobody tried to dampen the joy either.' '...' 'The dancers came from all over Estonia. Almost every kolkhoz and sovkhoz88 have teams of folk dancers and folk musicians. They wear their folk costumes, beautifully embroidered on colourful fabrics. The tradition which amongst us has long been exiled to Skansen89 and to fenced off folk festivals, and the value of which we are now re-discovering, is alive and well in Estonia. The Estonians are a singing and dancing people. Through the song and dance they have succeeded in preserving their specificity, their language and their culture' (Välme/Gustafson 1976:92). 90

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86Välme, R./ Gustafson, S. 1976 Estland: en Bildbok med Text
87Folknets Kultur
88E. collective farms and state farms.
89Skansen: the open air museum in Stockholm.
The book constitutes an apt illustration of the transformation of the culture of 'the people' into 'traditional folk culture', which was a central feature in representations of traditional culture, designed to undermine 'bourgeois nationalism' through showing that Estonian (or Ukrainian, or Latvian, or Georgian and so on) nationhood was, ostensibly, alive and well, even encouraged, within the Soviet Union. Similarly, a Soviet book on Tartu, the Estonian university town, opens with a large photograph of people dressed in folk costumes dancing a ring dance (see plate 17). This is followed over the page with photographs of processions from the 1st of May and the October revolution (Palamets/ Maastik 1986:9-11). These 3 preliminary pages of photographs are not accidental: they are intended to provide a general introduction to the flavour of Soviet Estonia, of culturally specific folk dancing followed by Union-wide processions, of, as stated above, national celebrations merging with 'demonstrations', forming carefully managed images of Soviet socialism.

The Dance and Song Festivals, and perhaps particularly the latter, were important events in the project of incorporating the traditional into the Soviet in Estonia (see plates 18-20). The commemorative song festival of 1965, one hundred years after the first song festival in the university town of Tartu, was followed by the publication of a large format book, mainly of photographs, but including a number of poems and quotes interwoven with Soviet texts. One of the first pages shows 3 photographs, beginning with a section of a men's choir, about 150 people, the first row dressed in traditional white shirts and blue, yellow or red waistcoats, the men behind in black and students' caps. The second picture is a section of a women's choir, about 400 people, all in folk costumes from different regions. The last one is a photograph of a girls' choir, in pioneer costumes: folky skirts, braces, white shirts, white and red checked scarves and orange headbands. They girls are not Estonian, and their inclusion signifies the spirit of friendship with the other nationalities of the USSR. On the other side there is a full page picture of the song festival fire lit at the summit of a high grey brick tower, blue sky behind, and a corrugated fence cutting diagonally across from the top left corner to the middle bottom line. There are 3 red flags blowing in the wind from behind the fence. The fire, the sky and the flags take on an element of timelessness, suggesting the unfolding eternity of the workers' state. The tower and the fence suggest strength and defence, guarding the eternal values of socialism. The two pages are arranged so that the people sing towards the flags.
and the fire, paying homage. The accompanying text, a poem, gives some idea of the tone of lyrical gravity which emanates from the photographs:

'You sharpen your glance and you should compare the sea and the raindrop. Look, ask. Before the flame which is very bright watch the coal among those flaming logs.'

On the second page the poem continues:

'Listen to these ringing bells and try to store in your breast those childishly tender melodies. But the storm of the sound should give a crown to your song' (Rummo, P. 1971: 30-31).

The next juxtaposition is a series of photographs in black and white, 6 on each page, showing the ritual route of the fire as it travels around Estonia towards Tallinn and the song festival grounds. Here, again, the imagery merges the socialist and the traditional: beginning from the top left we see first a number of people standing up in a small lorry, holding the torch; then people driving across an earth bridge in a lorry; and, thirdly, a procession led by three men, the man in the middle carrying the fire, followed by 4 horse riders. The fourth picture is again of the fire travelling in a lorry, decorated with branches, accompanied by a woman dressed in a folk costume on a moped; on the fifth picture the fire is stationary next to a local statue surrounded by people, and on the last picture it's in a small boat, travelling towards the western islands. The pictures on the other side are similar, including a horse and a picture of a large collective farm lorry like vehicle, and the final picture, of two men, both in university caps, carrying the torch, followed by two women in folk costumes. The text, which is a song, accompanying the photographs translates to:

'From this 1st Song festival ground (Tartu), the torch was lit by the sun and was not allowed to die down. This torch was carried with great festivity to the Tahtvere festival grounds to light the festive fire. And when the torch fired the festive light then it was carried through the whole country from lake Peipsi to the Läänemaa sea, from the woods of Munamäe, to the gulf of Finland. Along the South Estonian winding roads, then along the sea until the Muhu dam, then along

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91 Ingrid Sötter, an English teacher and author of English text books for schools helped me with the translations of the texts from this book, and gave many useful comments, for example on the propensity of the Soviet authorities of quoting good poetry out of context, to make it appear supportive of the regime, and of the hyperbolic wordiness of many of the texts, which she regarded as a Russian trait, juxtaposed to the brevity of the Estonians.
the lakes and riverbanks through woods full of bird song, through the flowering meadows, through the pollinating rye fields and the juniper bush and red bilberry grounds, over the bays through the hamlets and the villages and towns. The flaming torch marched on, summoning the Estonian sons and daughters to the big jubilee song festival. It travelled in the firm hands of marching singers on foot or on horseback, on motorboats, on motorcycles, on cars and on ferries, always escorted by local activists (or 'enthusiasts'). So the whole of Estonia lived in the atmosphere of the approaching song festival and the torch added fire to the enthusiasm. When the flame reached different centres of the republic and different culturally important places of the country you could see spontaneous meetings and mini song festivals' (Rummo, P.1971:36-37).

The procession of the fire continues on the next two pages, with increasing crowds and formality as it approaches Tallinn:

'At last the torch reaches the borders of the capital. And in that place of the uprising of St George they give the sun-flame over to the Tallinn people because the men of the Harjumaa were those who over 6 centuries ago under the leadership of the legendary Tasuja sparkled this famous flame of revenge. And in the light of this flame of revenge they attacked the fort of Kalev. But those people who now attacked Tallinn with a song torch, these are again the men and women of Harjumaa, and now the capital receives them with open arms. Because never before has this millennial Tallinn received such a valuable gift. This embodiment of the song flame is accompanied to the centre of Tallinn by people who form a multi coloured throng, lining the way. The noise of the cars of the honorary escort is drowned in the shouts of joy the people' (Rummo, P.1971:38).

It should be emphasised again that the Soviet objectification of the song festival, and other elements of traditionalism, did not generally have the effect of associating these events with the Soviet government. The song festival, for example, was central in the pro-independence movement of the 1980s, and, indeed, led to the term the 'Singing Revolution' to describe the events leading to independence (Thomson 1992). The 'Soviet', on the other hand, was generally associated with what was seen as the opposite of these festivities: the grey and normative modernism of suburbs such as Mustamäe outside Tallinn. The classifications and associations current during the time of my fieldwork, however, were changing rapidly. The changes involved a process of becoming conscious of previously taken for granted aspects of culture, and of moving them from the realm of 'culture', i.e. the intrinsically Estonian, to the realm of 'ideology', i.e.
remnants of the Soviet system. The question of the relationship between ideology and culture, in the form of the Soviet vs. the 'authentically Estonian', therefore, pre-occupied my informants. For them, it was not an abstract question, but rather an intricate part of Estonia's transition from a Soviet Republic to independence. My informants, in that sense, were their own ethnographers: culturally self-conscious, and in transition.

Conclusion

The ethnic policy of the Soviet Union, then, was based on a distinction between 'bourgeois' and 'folk' expressions of feelings for the nation: the former, identified as any expression in support of national independence, were banned as bourgeois propaganda, whilst the latter was constructed and encouraged within a particular historical framework. The different nations in the Union, therefore, were often represented by images of objectified folk cultures. Verdery, in the context of Romania, has argued that the idea of the nation was hegemonic prior the revolution, and so powerful that the socialist Romanian state absorbed it, and in the end was destroyed by it (Verdery 1991:139). Similarly, pre-existing Russian nationalism formed an intrinsic part of Soviet Russian nationalism. In the other republics, however, nationalism, restricted outside the formulaic expressions discussed above, developed into a more complex form of ethnic awareness, which was not simply continuous with an older form of nationalism, and which have had a profound impact on contemporary, post-Soviet, nationalisms.

Love for the nation was encouraged in the context of the notion of the ethnic/national entities of the Soviet Union coming together voluntarily to build socialism. The following passage, quoted from a book about Estonia called 'Equal among Equals' which was published in 1974 expresses the attempt to prove that such equality actually existed: 'The experience accumulated by the Estonian people during the last three decades is vivid proof of the complete equality of the nations in the Soviet Union, it testifies to the fact that the problems of nationality in our country has been solved completely and finally. The tsarist oppression of small peoples as well as the long-incited hatred between peoples is a thing of the past forever' (Vader 1974:12).

In this and the preceding chapter I have considered some aspects of the notion of nationality during the three most important historical trajectories referred to in the present re-building of the Estonian nation, i.e. the periods of 'national
awakening', the period of independence, and the Soviet era. In the next chapter, the focus moves to the specific location of the collective farm, beginning with a consideration of the current changes, primarily the processes of privatisation and the dissolution of the collective, through a semiological analysis. The focus on the spatial changes in the village is intended to emphasise the fact that an awareness of the 'changes' dominated the discourse on the collective farm during the time of my fieldwork. It was a constant topic of conversation, infused, usually, with a sense that the village was going through a crisis: the standard of living had fallen considerably since independence, there was little or no heating in a severe winter, wages were more or less frozen whilst prices were rising steeply, unemployment was spreading, and pensions were losing their value.

Ethnographies of the former Soviet Union are normally pre-occupied with change, not only because the changes taking place are so dramatic, but also because change and history tend to be more central in the Soviet Union and the former Soviet Union than they are in the west (e.g. Verdery 1991, Hann ed. 1993, Holy 1993, Stewart 1993, Humphrey 1995, Dragadze 1988). Thus, for example, the Swedish Estonian author Peeter Puide in his recent book mentions an Estonian writer he met in Finland during the beginning of the Perestroika, who wanted to come to Sweden, amongst other things to get a sense of what it would be like to live in a European country where the Second World War did not constitute a unifying reference point. He was curious about what Swedes had in common, or in other words what historical event they referred to as a sign of communality (Puide 1997:266).

The notion that such points of common reference are necessarily historical is a powerful concept in the former Soviet Union, where, with the exception of the Russians, most ethnic/national groups defined themselves within the framework of Russian colonialism, marked by historical events. Dragadze, for example, in her study of rural families in Soviet Georgia, emphasises her informants' constant references to the pre-Soviet past (Dragadze 1988:9). The Estonians, as we have seen, had many such points of reference: the era of 'national awakening', the achievement of independence in 1920, the loss of independence in the Second World War, the Soviet era, and now, the restoration of independence and privatisation. These were central events to my informants, in which their sense of themselves as Estonians was re-confirmed.

92 'Swedish Estonian' in this thesis refers to Estonians, usually refugees from the war, living in Sweden, whilst 'Estonian Swedish' refers to the minority of Swedish-speaking Estonians, most of whom are now also resident in Sweden.
The awareness of history, then, was one of the ways in which my informants constructed their everyday world (cf. Weiss 1996: 3, 6, 224, Bourdieu 1986). That this worldview happens to coincide, or at least overlap, with our own should not lessen our awareness of it as essentially culturally constituted. The practice of 'anthropology at home' has been addressed in the 1987 ASA volume (Jackson 1987). The practice of anthropology near home, however, where cultures are ambiguously both similar and different, although often practised, has been less often considered as a category, with particular problems and challenges (see, however, Herzfield 1987). The objectified images of traditional culture in Soviet publications and the notion of the alignment between the national and the ethnic, for example, is part of a European tradition, but are no longer produced without a great deal of cultural and political self-consciousness in western Europe, giving them a distinctly dated feel. During the time of my fieldwork, however, it was still a powerful notion in Estonia, which had deeply influenced the citizenship policy in the new republic, as well as framing the process of re-constructing identities.
List of Illustrations/Chapter 4.

1. Sergej Gerasimov: 'Lenin at the 2nd Council Congress amongst the Farmer Deputies' (1935-6)

'Lenin på II rådskongresen bland böndernas deputerade' 1935-36
Petrova, E./ Kiblitsky, J. 1996

2. Aleksandr Samochvalov 'Lenin Appearing at the 2nd All-Russian Council Congress' (1940)

'Lenin framträder på II Allryska rådskongressen'
Petrova, E./ Kiblitsky, J. 1996

3. Aleksandr Gerasimov: 'A Hymn to October' (1942)

'En hymn till Oktober'
Petrova, E./ Kiblitsky, J. 1996

4. Juri Kugatj: 'Praised be the Great Stalin!' (1950)

'Årad vare den store Stalin!'
Petrova, E./ Kiblitsky, J. 1996

5. Boris Joganson: 'Our wise leader and dear teacher (Stalin amongst the people in the Kreml)' (1952)

'Vår vise ledare och käre lärare (Stalin bland folket i Kreml.)'
Petrova, E./ Kiblitsky, J. 1996

6. 'Harvest at the Viru Collective Farm, one of the largest of its kind in our republic.'
Pangsepp, R. 1985: 96,98
7. 'Art comes from the heart of the people'
Salmre, V./Tomberg, T. 1975

8. 'In der Republik leben Vertreter von 104 Nationalitäten und Völkerschaften -
   Esten (68,2%), Russen, Ukrainer, Finnen, Belorusen...'

   'Representatives of 104 nationalities and peoples live in the Republic -
   Estonians (68.2%), Russians, Ukrainians, Finns, Byelorussians...'
Snegow, S. 1980

9. 'Alte Traditionen werden Sorgsam Gepflegt'

   'Old traditions are carefully nurtured'
Snegow, S. 1980

10. 'The USSR People's Artist Elza Radzina (right) participating in the Festival of
    Fishermen' 'The Port Zvejniekiems'
Goris, A. 1987

11. 'Tartu State University is our oldest and the most famous higher-educational
    establishment; that is why the celebration of the 350th anniversary of alma mater
    Tartuensis was a great event not only for the University and the town of Tartu but
    also for the whole of the Estonian SSR.'
Palamets, H./Maastik A./Pangsepp R. 1986:86-87

12. 'On July 21, 1940, the Latvian Parliament - People' Diet - under the leadership
    of professor Augusts Kirhensteins proclaimed Latvia a socialist republic. In the
    name of working people Soviet power was restored in Latvia'
Goris, A. 1987

13. 'Pindala poolest teisel Eesti NSV saarel - Hiiumaal - asub meie väiksem
    rajoon. Ja ehkki hiidlased on ka visad põlluharijad, annab Hiiuma rajoonile õige
    näo ja teo kalurikolhoos 'Hiiu Kalur'.

   'The smallest Estonian district lies on Hiiumaa, the second biggest island of the
   Estonian SSR. Although the islanders are diligent farmers, the collective Fishery
   'Hiiu Fisherman is the enterprise that is really characteristic of Hiiumaa.'
Pangsepp, R. 1985:198

126
14. 'Ode to Brotherhood' (on Ukraine)
Kravchuk, L. 1988

15. 'Between the XXI and XXII Latvian YCL Congresses (1978-1982) over 1.5 thousands of young people with Komsomol passes have gone to the construction sites of the Soviet Union. Photos: (below) Builders of BAM (Balkal-Amur Line) and their visitors from home (above).'
Goris, A. 1987

16. 'A public holiday. The youth of Tallinn stepping out to celebrate.'
Salmre, V./ Tomberg, T. 1975


18. 'The Song Day of the South-Estonian mixed choirs at Põlva, 1983.'
Pangsepp, R. 1985:229

19. 'The tradition of Song Festivals dates back to the time of the Estonian national awakening. In 1869 the first Estonian Song Festival was held in Tartu. After the war, those great festival of music were revived again.'
Pangsepp, R. 1985:228

20. 'The Estonian are a singing nation. This is evidenced by the republican song festival arranged every five years, the tradition having been initiated in 1869. The Jubilee Song and Folk-Dance Festival of 1969 was attended by 30,230 performers from all over the Republic and a public of 200,000. The joy in music was augmented by a feast for the eyes - an unforgettable display of colourful Estonian national costumes worn by the singers and dancers.'
German, G. 1979:46-47
Gerasimov Sergej
Lenin på II rådskongressen bland böndernas deputerade. 1935-36
Art comes from the heart of the people
In der Republik leben Vertreter von 104 Nationalitäten und Völkerschaften – Esten (68,2%), Russen, Ukrainer, Finnen, Belorussen ...
ALTE TRADITIONEN WERDEN SORGSAM GEPFLEGT.
People's Artist Elza Radziņa (right) participating in the Festival of Fishermen
The port Zvejniekiems

Die Volkskünstlerin der UdSSR Elza Radzina (rechts) bei einem Fischerfest
Fischereihafen
On July 21, 1940, the Latvian Parliament — People's Diet — under the leadership of professor Augusts Kirhensteins proclaimed Latvia a socialist republic. In the name of working people Soviet power was restored in Latvia.
Pindala poolest teisel Eesti NSV saarel – Hiiumaal – asub meie väikseim rajoon. Ja ehkki hiidlased on ka visad põlluharjad, annab Hiiumaa raionile õige nõo ja teo kalurikolhoos „Hiiu Kultur“
Kassari rannamaastik
Kanarbikunõlv Kõpus
Kõpu tuletorn (rajatud 1505–1513) oli esimene tuletorn Lääнемere rannikul

На втором по величине острове Эстонской ССР – Хиумээ – находится самый маленький район республики. Но, несмотря на то, что жители Хиумээ трудолюбивые хлеборобы, верное представление о Хиумээцком районе дает рыболовецкий колхоз „Хиу калур“
Прибрежный пейзаж на острое Кассари

Склон, поросший вереском, на полуострове Къпээ
Первым на берегах Балтийского моря был построен маяк на полуострове Къпээ (1505–1531)
ODE TO BROTHERHOOD
(by Boris Oleinik)

In harvest time and under stormy cloud
We've shared it all: a drink, the trenches, fate,
Like brothers, but the root from which we sprout
Still one and undivided has remained.

And from that root a great tree full of vigour
Grows high and proud—'tis our Slavonic race
Our mother tongue to first lines of Prince Igor
And His Campaign we proudly can trace.

There at the Kalka on the front-line border
Of day and night, we stood up for our land.
The Tatars' horses crushed our battle order
The spirit held refusing to be banned.

Nor whip, nor wine could cause its subjugation
In bondage to the Tatars' Golden Horde.
From Kulikovo's gory devastation
To life eternal we became restored.

It happened, strangers even kins would rather
Build right between us a dividing wall
Yet our hearts were reaching to each other
Like ears of corn with love for one and all.

We did believe in unity, kept burning
The flame of faith that shone bright in our eyes.
Pereyaslavl one glorious fine morning
Struck mighty bells for brothers to arise.

May Bogdan's wisdom ever shine in glory
Back to the source he brought us in his ploy
When to the drone of Maidan, goes the story,
He was embracing Russia's first envoy.

And since that time we've shared it all around:
A drink of water, battle trenches, fate.
In harvest time and under stormy cloud
Our common root one whole has still remained.

So even as this land in days of woe
Lay all in ruins, bleeding—not in vain
The folk believed: since Russia there did know
She, sword in hand, would rescue the Ukraine.

A Muscovite near Kiev now lies buried
A lad from Kiev perished for Oryol.
There was a message we, when dying, carried
To live as friends—we carried it to all.

The birch tree sings, the rowan is in flower
The Volga River's by the Dnieper kissed.
Rus, the Ukraine will ever be while our
Broad shoulders touch, our brotherhood exists.

Two birds in springtime plough the peaceful air
Above the Rzsa and the Desna high.
A crane that's white—it's just like you who're fair
A stork that's black—just as black-browed am I.

We've shared it all in days of deprivation
And days of joy, all happiness and woe.
If Word indeed began the world's creation
It must be Brother, yes, it must be so.

Translated from the Russian
by Nikolai Urmayev
В период между XXI (1978 г.) и XXII (1982 г.) съездами ЛКСМ Латвии более 1,5 тыс. юношей и девушек из Латвии по космодельским путевкам отправились на ударные стройки страны. Строители BAM (здесь) и их гости из родных мест (вверху)

Between the XXI and XXII Latvian YCL Congresses (1978—1982) over 1.5 thousands of young people with Komsomol passes have gone to the great construction sites of the Soviet Union. Photos: (below) Builders of BAM (Baikal-Amur Line) and their visitors from home (above)

A public holiday. The youth of Tallinn stepping out to celebrate

The Lenin Monument in front of the offices of the Central Committee of the Estonian Communist Party
The tradition of Song Festivals dates back to the times of the Estonian national awakening. In 1869 the first Estonian Song Festival was held in Tartu. After the war, those great festivals of music were revived again. The schoolchildren’s dance festival at the Komsomol Stadium “Gaudeamus”, the song festival of the students of the Soviet Baltic republics, held on that occasion in Tartu (the respective university towns take turns in arranging the Festival) The Song Day of the South-Estonian mixed choirs at Põlva, 1983 The Setu Song Day at Vär ska, 1980 The Song Day of male choirs in Viljandi, 1983
Chapter 5. Signs of the New Nation

Introduction: Semiology and Space

The concept of a science of signs is linked to the notion of an underlying, hidden, social or linguistic logic, which the signs simultaneously function to reveal and to hide. The dominant concept behind Saussure's semiology, splitting the sign (the word) into the signifier (the acoustic image) and the signified (the connotation or denotation of the word), was that a structuralist analysis involves looking behind the obvious; not at facts but at the meaning behind facts, or facts as 'tokens of something else' (Barthes 1993:111). In Barthes' writings, that 'something else' largely consists of the inherent and systematic social dynamic of bourgeois class society. The signs are organised according to this dynamic, or social order, which is 'naturalised' with the help of myths, the constantly changing and invented narratives of the bourgeoisie which function to cover up the economic structures of power within capitalism. The myths of the bourgeoisie, then, with their hidden powers of signification, support the Gramscian hegemony of this particular economic and social order: a social order which is both a function of history and, as a system of power and distinction, constitutive of history (Barthes 1993: 110).

If the perhaps overly systematic nature of the concepts described above seems open to criticism on the lines of Nicholas Thomas' exposure of Melanesian gift exchange and colonialism as a nexus of entanglements rather than a schematic order constituted exclusively by the power imbalance between the colonisers and the colonised (Thomas 1991), it is worth stressing that Barthes' himself emphasised the vague and shifting nature of the sign: 'In actual fact, the knowledge contained in a mythical concept is confused, made of yielding, shapeless associations. One must firmly stress this open character of the concept; it is not at all an abstract, purified essence; it is a formless, unstable, nebulous condensation, whose unity and coherence are above all due to its function' (Barthes 1993: 119).

Perhaps a more serious, albeit related, criticism comes out of a consideration of the essentially analogical nature of the relationship between linguistic systems and material culture. The systemic nature of semiology, and its applicability on
material culture, clearly rests on this analogy, with its assumption of an at least partially systematic organisation of artefacts. The questions posed in a recent paper by Tilley (1995), forming a critique of the dominance of the structural-linguistic model, and ultimately asking whether material culture can really be regarded as organised in systems at all, and hence whether theories of material culture could reasonably be based on systemic models, are clearly important. Tilley's substitute, material culture as metaphor, although not that far removed from Barthes' nebulous signs, suggests an unboundedness which more closely reflects our actual experience of material culture. Metaphors work through relationships between words or objects, evoking and suggesting ultimately an infinity of other meanings. If the key to material culture, as Tilley suggests, is the phenomena of 'seeing as', then, 'metaphors' rather than 'signs' is perhaps a more appropriate term for the dialectic between the object and its social construction.

Looking at semiology in the context of the Soviet Union, and of the post-Soviet states, presents, however, a different problem from the context of the West. The particularity of state socialism was that the state created its own comprehensive language of signs, open rather than hidden significations formed by the ruling ideology. All public manifestations had to refer to, and be contained by, the state ideology. The meeting between the private and the public, therefore, between, say, a professor and his or her students, or an author and a censor tended to be a locus of ambivalence and hidden meanings. The censor might, for example, allow some hidden messages of dissent but not others, or even take a pleasure in the mutual skills in the 'Aesopian language', the coded dissent of Eastern Europe (Hoffman 1994: 75). The state-produced myths, lacking any ambivalence or mystery, became themselves de-mystified, repetitive and transparent narratives of propaganda towards which some degree of allegiance was demanded. Barthes, on the question of left-wing myths in the West, writes that, 'Finally, and above all, this myth is, in essence, poverty-stricken. It does not know how to proliferate; being produced on order and of a temporally limited prospect, it is invented with difficulty. It lacks a major faculty, that of fabulizing. Whatever it does, there remains about it something stiff and literal, a suggestion of something done to order. As it is expressively put, it remains barren. In fact, what can be more meagre than the Stalin myth? No inventiveness here, and only a clumsy appropriation: the signifier of the myth (this form whose infinite wealth in bourgeois myth we have just seen) is not varied in the least: it is reduced to a litany' (Barthes 1993: 147-8).
The litany of the myths was based on its own critical semiology, in the same way as Barthes, writing later, claimed that denunciation and de-mystification had themselves become doxa, myths, now that 'any student' is a semiologist, denouncing the 'bourgeois' character of this or that (Barthes 1990: 166). He compares the new doxa to the early lexicon of symbolism within psychoanalysis, '...which, without being false, is no longer of interest to it - though of enormous interest to those who dabble in the psychoanalytic vulgate' (Barthes 1990: 167). The radical late 1960s and early 1970s, then, turned what was designed as an analytic tool into a new dogma, in a partial reflection of the objectification of the critical elements of the early Soviet state into a state-controlled production of myths.

Let us take an architectural example of a sign: a Soviet block of flats. The straight, modernist, lines of the building signify progress, the similarity between the flats equality, the reproducibility of the block the pattern, or model, modes of living which combine equality with the 'modern'. All these elements deliberately reflected the ruling ideology: the blocks of flats were built not only to provide housing, but also to stand as visible symbols of Soviet ideology. Ideology, then, was not 'naturalised', in Barthes' sense of the term, where (bourgeois) ideology is hidden by constructed notions of the natural and obvious; 'the way things have always been done' (Barthes 1993:121). In the Soviet socialist context, the signified, rather than being obscured but implied by the sign, is dominant and encompassing. The relationship, then, between the sign and the signified is transparent rather than opaque. Going back to Barthes again, it is of course the process of mystification in bourgeois societies which produce the mythical narratives, and, conversely, the deliberate clarity (between sign and signified) in socialist societies which led to the poverty of myths described above.

It is probably worth emphasising that, in relation to the West, this constitutes a rather different relationship between the building (the sign), ideology, and the state. In the UK, for example, a more or less identical block of flats would signal similar notions of modernity, but the progressive message would be tempered by conflicting ideologies concerned with individualism and the virtues of home ownership. In contrast, in the Soviet context, the denoted (the form) had an open and deliberate relationship to the connoted (the ideology), forming a coherent narrative. To some extent, then, the sign and the signified merged, in the sense that the ideology of the signified/ connoted determined the form of the signifier, moving away from the linguistic analogy and Saussure's and Levi-Strauss' emphasis on the essentially arbitrary relationship between the signifier and the
signified (Tilley 1990: 6). A block of flats, then, would be built to simultaneously aesthetically and symbolically embody 'socialism' - progress, modernity, equality - and to reify it in the form of providing standardised housing.

The relationship between ideology and form in the Soviet Union, then, was an important feature of that society. The current aesthetic transformation of the landscape and the cities, for example in the introduction of advertising, large plate shop windows, and the renovation of houses, therefore constitutes one of the most important changes within the post-Soviet state. Below I will focus on a number of signs of the changes, beginning with a discussion of actual signs, the new street signs which point the way to shops or restaurants. This section, based mainly on material from outside the collective farm, will be followed by a consideration of the local signs of de-collectivisation. The analysis will be primarily structuralist, focusing on the inversion of the previous ideology symbolised by two private enterprises, located in the culture house and the old workshop respectively. The one situated in the culture house, a private bar, represents exactly that which the cultural programme was designed to oppose, encouraging a form of socialising which has no progressive intent, and which is centred primarily around drinking. The second enterprise is a small scale production of garden pavilions, perfect symbols of the leisured decadence which the values embedded in both the architecture and the function of the workshop contradicted. The main objective of this analysis is not primarily to reveal a binary predilection, but rather to illustrate the current transition through an analysis of the range of the transitory values and ideologies encompassed in the various buildings in the area.

After looking at two of the current enterprises in the village, I will move to the surrounding landscape, with a brief analysis of signs of de-collectivisation in three separate areas of the landscape; the forest, the fields, and the coast-line. This is followed by a section on the ways in which the spatial organisation of the landscape reflects both tradition and ideology, beginning with a historical analysis of representations of landscape, including a consideration of the Estonian relationship to the land. The feeling for the land was a major factor in both the first 'national awakening' of the 1860s, and the subsequent waves of national awareness, including the present one. I then look at the Soviet agenda of transforming the countryside, which was conducted through a reproduction of commands, constructing a society where each settlement was a reproduction of a pre-existing model. Having looked at traditions and ideologies, I will then go on to describe some of my informants' relationship to the landscape, looking at how
they are related to both the objectification of the landscape in Estonian nationalism, and to the Soviet notion of the land as a repository of backwardness.
Signs of Transformation

In 1993 to -94 the ruling Isamaa ('Fatherland') coalition was firmly monetarist and pro-market. The ideology of the party partially and uneasily extended to the ideology of the country, and the ideological fusion between this and Soviet ideology was expressed in the often stated aim to 'build capitalism'. On my fieldsite and in Haapsalu, the regional capital of north Western Estonia, the free market was promoted and symbolised by a number of new signs. These tended to be part advertising and part sign-posts, showing the way to various shops, bars or little hotels (see plates 1-3). The signs were 'Western' in style; big colourful letters, the shape sometimes pointing in the direction of the signified shop, Western, mostly Swedish, advertising posters sometimes forming part of them. The relationship, however, between the signs and the shops tended to be tenuous. Imposing and well-made signs, often part of a succession of signs leading on towards the goal, might take you to seasoned little shops which had been there for years, and which didn't tend to live up to the promise of the signs. For example, in Haapsalu, there where 3 big signs showing the way to an electrical shop, the last one incorporating a colourful Swedish poster promising, 'All you need for the heating systems of your home'. The shop itself consisted of a small room, with a few big and clumsy obsolete-looking electrical instruments arranged on dusty shelves, a toilet bowl on the floor, and a small desk at the end, where a very old man sat writing.

On my field site, there were two new signs, one indicating the new shop, and the other the bar. Both signs functioned partly as arrows, with red text on white wood: 'Bar Gorbiland', and 'Cafe and Farm shop' (see plates 4-5). The shop also had some Swedish posters from the food-chain ICA in the window; representations of obviously Western food, communicating 'Western-ness' at a glance (see plates 6-8). The primary function of these signs, I would argue, was not advertising, but rather a display of the aesthetics and ideology of the free market. Certainly in the village, and to a lesser extent in the nearest town, there were not enough shops for any real competition to take place. Everybody knew where the shops were, and which shop to use for what. Since the area gets a significant number of Swedish and Finnish visitors in the summer, it might be argued that the signs were set up for the tourists. The correlation between the signs and the shops where a Western visitor would conceivably buy anything seemed weak, however. The signs, then, I would argue, were there not so much for the Western visitors as to
proclaim a symbolic allegiance with things Western and capitalist, or in other words the ideology which is seen as replacing the previous, socialist, ideology.

Similarly, the pre-revolutionary shopsigns in Russia gradually disappeared following the revolution, just as the pre-war Estonian signs were taken down after the incorporation of Estonia into the Soviet Union. Pasternak, in Doctor Zhivago, describes the visual changes which the removal of the signs entailed: 'Living in Moscow, Yury had forgotten how many shop signs there still were in other towns and how much of the facades they covered. Some of those he was seeing now were so large that he could read the easily from where he stood, and they came down so low over the slanting windows of the sagging, one-storyed buildings that the crooked little houses were almost hidden by them, like the faces of village children in their fathers' peaked cap' (Pasternak 1958:223). Yuri Zhivago's attention to the remnants of pre-revolutionary society far away from Moscow is focused on these obsolete signs of commerce: 'There were round red oil tanks on the skyline, and large advertistements on wooden hoardings. One of them caught Yury's eye; it was repeated twice and read: Moreau & Vetchinkin. Seed drills. Threshing machines. 'That was a good firm. Their agricultural machinery was first-rate' (Pasternak 1958:235).

In Estonia, during the time of my fieldwork, there was still a commercial semiotic of communism, consisting of small and generic signs. Unlike the Western signs, however, the relationship between the signs and the signifieds was perfectly aligned: the old and worn signs for the shops awakened expectations which were consistently matched by the meagre reality of the shops themselves. The ubiquitous slogans, on the other hand, which were posted all over Soviet towns, were dis-aligned with the contemporary reality of the society they signified in a way which might perhaps be compared to the new signs. Both the new signs and the communist slogans represented allegiance to a social order and an ideological system. 'Society' and social organisation was the realm of the communist signs, proclaiming the solidarity, effort and sacrifice of the present and the past which was to produce the future communist state. During the time of my fieldwork, the free market signs, in the Estonian context, also implied a hope for the future, when the goods pictured would actually be available, and Estonia would have become a 'normal' Western country again. The means of the realisation of that future was commonly identified as the free market. Both kinds of signs have little relationship with the present, and if the communist slogans were finally associated with the obvious failures of the system, the capitalist signs seem at least to be regarded with some ambivalence. Whilst they are
sometimes regarded as decorations, as in the case of the ICA food posters in the local shop, they are also associated with a global mass culture which was commonly seen as potentially dangerous to the national specificity of Estonia. In this context, the struggle to construct and maintain autonomy within the Russian Empire and, later, the Soviet Union, has clearly had an impact on the discourses about the new order, in the sense that a similar struggle is commonly envisaged vis a vis the West. It should also be noted that the necessity to support 'Estonian-ness' is experienced on an individual level as well as on the level of a national discourse. A new guide, for example, ends with the statement that, 'Now a new giant has arrived, the 'benign' giant of Anglo-American mass culture. At the same time the nation fears that the dinosaur has legs: that the mighty Red Army will never accept Estonian Independency. (sic)'... 'But the people have their land back, and in a spirit of freedom anything is possible' (O'Brien 1993: 252). This statement closely corresponded to some of the ambivalence expressed by my informants concerning the move towards free-market capitalism.
Signs of De-collectivisation

The collective farm still framed the experience of local life, even though it formally voted itself out of existence in February 1993, with only one vote against abolition. The government, although insisting that each kolkhoz must decide by democratic vote whether or not to continue, made continuation next to impossible by declaring that any state loan, previously free, would have a 38% interest rate. The land and buildings owned by the collective farm were at the time of my fieldwork owned by a transitory commission organising privatisation. De-collectivisation, then, was an on-going process. Primarily, it had led to a loss of work and security: about a third of the people were unemployed, or worked a few days here and there. People still talked in terms of the collective, however. 'Official' projects, like the restoration of the old manor-house, are associated with 'the collective', and many of the unemployed people worked on and off on the restoration projects. Furthermore, the architecture of the place makes for a communal feeling, half-way between a boarding school (which it is for the high-school students), a commune, and a deprived area on the fields far outside some minor town.

Gorbiland: Drink and Culture

There were, however, a number of signs of de-collectivisation. The empty flag holders on every building signalled the end of the Soviet Union, whilst the few satellite dishes constituted signs of the new order (see plate 9). The notion of a coherent power structure, with certain defined functions and responsibilities, was breaking down. Since the collective farm was defunct, the uncertainty of small local share companies, many of them going bankrupt within a few months of starting to operate, was taking over. Of these share companies, there were two in particular which were interesting, standing in clear opposition to the ideology encompassed in the buildings in which they were housed. One of them was the bar, ironically named 'Gorbiland', carved out of the basement of the culture house, with the entry, appropriately, at the back. You entered through a half broken door, and went down a damp concrete stair case. The deterioration of the entrance was in contrast to the bar itself: a small cosy room, with 6 tables, sofas and chairs, and a bar at the end. Several different kinds of beer, vodka, Gin (including an Estonian brand of blue Gin named 'Dzinn'), and liqueurs were available, as well as Western soft drinks in cans, ice-cream, Western chocolate.
bars, packets of Western coffee, cigarettes, Soviet and Western. The whole place, however, was non-smoking, due to the asthmatic tendencies of the owner, an assimilated Estonian Swede. That meant that there was a steady traffic of mostly men coming in and out of the bar, smoking on the stair-case outside, which deterred the more respectable smokers from coming to the bar at all.

One of the most important dividing lines in the community concerned the question of respectability, a question which is most immediately, but not exclusively, definable with reference to alcohol consumption. This has both a Soviet and a particularly Estonian aspect, which combine to form a ubiquitous everyday discourse of drink. The Soviet state, after its bout of Brezhnevan decadence and corruption, tried to control widespread alcohol abuse by regulating both public and individual consumption. One of the effects of excessive alcohol consumption in relation to the state was that the drinking worker simultaneously placed him or herself outside the domain of the workplace, and enacted a scenario which was anti-ideological: irresponsible, individualistic and nihilistic the drinkers created an anarchic and transitory resistance. Significantly, people who in the West would receive a response limited to somewhere between compassion and contempt were regarded with a certain amount of gleeful tolerance on the collective farm. Regarded as more eccentric than sick, and certainly as people with some wit or even wisdom, like characters out of Gorky, their position is now changing. The older alcoholics are now invariably unemployed, and seem increasingly alienated from the new society. The alienation is emphasised by the fact that whereas before they were supported by the collective farm, which itself was partially, depending on the state of the harvest, subsidised by the state, they are now barely supported by the new village council, whose available means is limited to the income from the few tax-payers in the area. It also, however, has to do with a shift in culture: like Michel de Certeau's description of the C16th Everyman, trapped in a common, and humorous, fate, the collective farm alcoholics were often described as essentially funny (de Certeau 1988:1-2). Their funniness, however, was dependent on their fate, i.e. their relationship to the state, which simultaneously supported and berated them: the change of state, and the new emphasis on the concept of individual responsibility and intitiative, drastically diminished their humorous potential.

The particularly Estonian aspect to the question of alcohol can in some ways be defined as a matter of thrift, comparable to the thrift in Schama's description of the Dutch culture of the Golden Age. The most important factor of that age was
arguably the wealth of the republic, the conspicuous abundance which was unsettling both to themselves and to the rest of Europe (Schama 1987: 259). For the Dutch, anti-patrician values merged with anxieties about excessive wealth, to create a moral opposition between permissible and reprehensible foods (the healthy and patriotic cheese and herring, as opposed to partridges, capons, sugar and spices), and strong notions of the dangers of idleness, both to the nation and to the moral state of the individual (Schama 1987: 164-5, 215). Strict cleanliness in the home was mandatory, and expressive of the battle against the sins of sloth and indolence (Schama 1987: 388). Old anxieties around wealth-creation in Europe caused the kind of virulent accusations which Schama sees as analogous to later outbreaks of anti-semitism (Schama 1987: 267). The Dutch were condemned as phlegmatic and sluggish, blunt and coarse, 'impervious to rank and honour', described as, 'The buttocks of the world, full of veins and blood but no bones in it' (Schama 1987: 265). They were regarded, and regarded themselves, as conspicuously different, as the Nederkinder: the children of a new covenant.

Unlike Holland, of course, Estonia does not suffer from an 'embarrassment of riches.' The wealth which so disconcertingly made the Dutch a race apart is conspicuously absent in the former Soviet state. It still, however, plays a part in the perceptions of national identity, where the 'apartness' of the Estonians from the other Soviet peoples is central. Thrift and honesty are regarded as national virtues, whereas the Russians are routinely accused of embodying the corresponding vices, of living for the day with no thought for the morrow, and of getting away with what they can. Russian-ness, then, is identified with a sense of low living, and of having no sense of thrift as a virtue. This, in turn, merges with poverty, as was the case with the family I was living with. The husband was an alcoholic, who got by on a string of temporary jobs on the farms, often paid in kind, and the wife was a caretaker at the school. They were poor enough for pay-day to make a noticeable difference to their food, and the only thing they stored was potatoes, sugar, and apple juice, which they make every autumn. Their fridge was mostly empty, but sometimes contained bloodied chunks of elk or pork, and eggs straight from the farms.

93 As we have seen in chapter 4, the 'apartness', however, also constitutes a similar phenomenon to Wilk's 'structures of common difference', in that the Soviet discourse promoted a sense of national/ethnic 'difference', and the notion of the different peoples voluntarily coming together to build socialism. Whilst this was an important part of communist ideology, it was also part of the deception of the state, obscuring the fact of the involuntary nature of the Union (Humphrey 1995:44, Wilk 1995:111).
The husband would often talk about the drunk and bad-smelling Russians, who eat garlic and drink vodka every day: clearly a low class lot. Then one day we actually had pickled cucumbers with garlic, and I praised them, saying how much I loved garlic. Toivu was visibly happy about this, and told his wife, who hadn't been there - significantly this was during one of her week-ends away when standards, in most ways, used to slip considerably. The cooking then started to improve, in my eyes, with the occasional addition of garlic. It was clear, in other words, that they liked garlic, but assumed I wouldn't, because its status bridges the Russian and the low class. There is a sense, then, in which class notions seep into the notions about 'Russian-ness' and 'Estonian-ness', where the 'low class' and the 'Russian' become interchangeable, so that Estonians tend to be equally reluctant to display 'Russian' habits because they seem 'low class' as they are to display 'low class' habits because they seem 'Russian'.

The bar was mainly, but not exclusively, a male zone. Once a week they showed Western videos such as Rambo, or the Teenage Ninja Turtles, cheaply dubbed into Russian, with one voice performing all the parts. Usually they were watched in silence by the men and boys. The effect was to emphasise the experience of oppositions in the form of a homology: the videos seemed to be to the cultural programme of the former collective farm what the bar itself was to the culture house. If the videos and the bar represented something small and privatised, a fragment of a larger commercial culture which was both tantalisingly out of reach and, at times, perceived as a threat and an imposition, for example in the way people talked about the 'propaganda' of advertising, and the 'unremitting' campaigns for this or that product, then the obsolete cultural programme and the draughty dilapidated culture house ultimately represented both the ideology of Soviet socialism, with its particular attitude to rural life, and the failures of that ideology. More specifically, however, the effect was one of absolute opposites: the culture of alcohol vs. the attempts to disseminate 'high culture', the American videos vs. the weekly film shows they used to have in the hall, of Russian and

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There was also of course a high culture of Russia, which, despite Soviet efforts to the contrary, did not much interest my informants. Urban informants sometimes acknowledged it in the statement that the Russians were 'more intelligent' than the Estonians, who were 'blue-eyed' and 'naïve', signifying the implicit association between goodness and innocence. The juxtaposition between the 'blue-eyed' Estonians and the 'cunning' Russians is reminiscent of the Russian wave of anti-semitism in 1953, in connection with Stalin's invention of the 'doctors' plot', the idea that Jewish doctors, aided by so-called 'Sionists and American Imperialists', were engaged in a plot against the Soviet state. On the 8 of February that year, Pravda published an article entitled 'Simpletons and Scoundrels', listing Jewish names of 'swindlers, saboteurs and scoundrels' whom the 'simpletons', Russians who were no longer sufficiently vigilant, had had dealings with. The article legitimatized, and un-leashed, a wave of anti-semitic violence throughout the country, and may have been part of the preparation for a Soviet holocaust against the Jews, prevented by the death of Stalin in the same year (Radzinsky 1996:542).
European films. It's as if the kernel of daily life which constituted 'culture', in the sense of high culture, has shrunk and turned around: the vast hall vs. the small bar, the huge film screen vs. the TV screen of the video, 'high culture' vs. 'popular culture', the collective vs. the individual.

**Pavilions**

The second set of opposites we will focus on here is the workshop buildings and a new one-man enterprise which rented space in one of the old workshops. The workshops were used mainly for the maintenance of the collective farm machinery, vast machines, many of which were now rusting in an enclosure to the back (see plate 10). They are large buildings with broken windows and dirty floors, but like everything else in the community, the value of the floor space was carefully calculated by the commission which rented it out. The firm in question manufactured small wooden pavilions, primarily for export to Sweden and Finland. As with the case of the bar and the culture house, the new firm is situated within a space which embodies a diametrically opposite ideology to the one expressed in the material culture of pavilions. If drinking constitutes the rougher side of the decadence which Soviet socialism opposed, pavilions represented the more genteel aspect of it. Nabokov, for example, born to a liberal aristocratic family in pre-revolutionary Russia, writes the following about pavilions in his autobiography:

'In order to reconstruct the summer of 1914, when the numb fury of verse-making first came over me, all I really need is to visualize a certain pavilion. There the land, fifteen-year-old lad I then was, sought shelter during a thunderstorm, of which there was an inordinate number that July. I dream of my pavilion at least twice a year. As a rule, it appears in my dreams quite independently of their subject matter, which, of course, may be anything, from abduction to zoolatry. It hangs around, so to speak, with the unobtrusiveness of an artist's signature. I find it clinging to a corner of the dream canvas or cunningly worked into some ornamental part of the picture' (Nabokov 1989: 214).

Similarly, the concept of pavilions must have been clinging on to some part of the post-war Soviet culture in Estonia, providing, perhaps, a symbol for the project of restoring the pre-war independent republic. Furthermore, the specific connotations of pavilions, structures of elegance, leisure and indulgence, copied from the grounds of the aristocracy to the gardens of the bourgeoisie, represent a
structural opposite to the collective farm agricultural machinery, whose industrial and functional appearance constitutes a representation of modernity frequently used in pictorial representations of the Soviet nation (see chapter 4). The notion of an individual enterprise also, of course, forms a contrast to the ideological hegemony of the collectives, forming a powerful opposition. A second homology, then, emerges from the comparison between the production of pavilions and the new private bar, whereby alcohol was perceived of as detrimental to culture in a similar way as the values incorporated in pavilions; leisure and decadence, were in opposition to the promotion of work as ideology.
The Relationship to the Land

The general perception of the contemporary Estonian landscape is constituted by a series of overlapping historical spaces: the pre-war, the Soviet, and the post-Soviet. This section is an attempt to 'read' the social features of the landscape as signs, unravelling the signified webs of significance (Geertz 1973:5). Whilst an analysis of the landscape of the field site is important in any ethnography, the centrality of the landscape within the Estonian cultural heritage means that it is particularly important to analyse not only what can be revealed through the features of the landscape, but also the various discourses of the relationship to the land. These discourses reflect the diverse meanings of the landscape in so far as they are historically as well as socially constituted. They form overlapping discursive fields, in other words, which draw sustenance from sources of the past as well as from present day identities, constituting the contemporary relationships to the landscape (Tilley 1994:11, Bender 1995).

In relation to my field site, then, there is an archaeology of landscape which can be analysed as historically constituted signs, marking the fields and the forests and the small precise vegetable gardens around the farm houses. In the following section I will look briefly at the historical and contemporary role of landscape in the discourses about the Estonian nation, followed by an ethnographic consideration of how informants view the local landscape. I will then look at the landscape from an archaeological point of view, analysing signs of ideologies and events which are physically imprinted on the environment of the collective farm. As with the section on architecture, the focus in this part will be on transition, and the ways in which the Soviet features of the landscape are now changing.

Representations of Landscape

The relationship to the land (maa) is of central importance in the conception of what it means to be Estonian. The semiotics of politics and the questions of national and cultural origin and self-determination are profoundly related to the landscape and the notion of nation-hood which is based on a particular congruence between ethnicity and land (Lieven 1993:xxiii). This notion goes beyond the idea that certain defined geographical areas belong to certain ethnic groups: the people themselves are seen as shaped and formed by the landscape and the climate. The Azerbaijanis, for example, are as 'hot' as their climate, the
Russians as ambivalently perched between Europe and Asia as the land they inhabit, and the Estonians, finally, are as stubborn and quiet as their low-lying stony fields. Within this discourse, then, the landscape is not only the place where the Estonians happen to live, but also a constitutive force of what it means to be Estonian. It is constantly referred to in Estonian literature, as well as on television, where nature programmes, usually with a rather lyrical tone, are frequently broadcast. In this section I will look at the how the question of the land came to occupy such a central place in the mythology of the nation, to be followed in the next section with a close look at how informants actually talked about and experienced the countryside.

Marion Foster Washburn, an American travelling in the Soviet Union and Estonia just before the outbreak of the Second World War, connected the notable Estonian love for the land with the War of Independence towards the end of the First World War. She quotes the following passage from an interview with the mayor of Pärnu: 'Some of the soldiers were tempted by communism, and might have weakened, if we had not promised them land. You see, we had nothing else to offer. We had no money. But the soldiers were almost all peasants, or the sons of peasants, and hunger for land was in their blood. They had been robbed of it centuries before, and had ever since been obliged to work on it as serfs or hirelings without owning it; and each peasant would rather have a good piece of land he could call his own and work in his own way than anything else this world could offer. So we promised them land. We told them if they would stand by independent Estonia, we would dispossess the landed gentry, leaving them only one house and land enough to live on, and distribute their surplus lands to the people. This won them. They did not want communism. They wanted each one a piece of land in his own right' (Washburne 1940:162).

The land reform, then, was of primary importance for the first republic, taking the notion of the importance of the land from the realm of romantic mysticism inspired by Herder, to that of economics and politics. In the process, the objectification of the Estonian relationship to the land was changing, the political discourse of the new nation emphasising the essentially non-arbitrary correlation between land and nationality, rather than the relationship between specific parts of the landscape and individual families. It should be noted that the related German notion of Heimat, the rural home/land constitutive of roots and identity, is significantly different from the Estonian discourse of land since the idea of the Heimat is based on the ownership and transmission of land and home within families over the generations. By contrast, in Estonia, most of the land was owned
by the Baltic Germans, whereas the Estonians, who were serfs and subsequently tenant farmers, had no power of ownership. The notion, rather, was a romantic, totalising, connection between the Estonians as a people and Estonian land, objectifying, initially, the former as a group of people who essentially belonged to nature rather than culture.

As we have seen in the previous chapter, the objectification of traditional culture formed an important part of Soviet representations of the Union Republics. The feeling for land, similarly, was objectified rather than censored, and incorporated into Soviet ideology. Land and the relationship to the land was a central feature of Soviet Estonian literature, not so much, as Lieven has argued, because the Soviet occupation was more apparent in the urban centres, and therefore the countryside was a more appealing topic, as because the objectification of the rural and 'folky' formed part of the Soviet project of undermining 'bourgeois' nationalism (Lieven 1993:126). Also, the self-identity of the Estonians during the Soviet times involved the institutionalisation of the ethnification of the self which was part of the early nationalist movement.

The combined veneration of progress and folk traditions in the Soviet era, including the feeling for the land, is nicely expressed in an Estonian short story by Rudolf Sirge, about a man who now lives in town with his son and daughter-in-law after his farm has been taken over by the collective farm, and who, drawn by the land, eventually decides to return to his collectivised Heimat, the new ideology symbolised by his prospective marriage to his former house-keeper:

'Our people have been tillers of the soil since times of old and our vitality is rooted to the earth. The higher we raise our agriculture the better we'll be off in culture and spiritual things too. If the Estonian peasant, after the abolition of serfdom, was capable of making it to the ranks of the best farming countries in Europe only within 3 or 4 decades, and in the difficult conditions of the bourgeois system, why couldn't the present-day Estonian farmer of the socialist system surpass America?' (Eelmae 1984:44). The story ends with the father going home, leaving the son and daughter-in-law at what passed as comfortable suburbia in Soviet Estonia: 'They looked questioningly at one another - two young people, strong and hard-working, who had decided to grow green grass at their

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95 The text here refers to the ubiquitous slogan that 'we will catch up with in surpass America'. (cf Grant 1995:19)
home under the pine trees but now suddenly were faced with the call of a more ancient lawn. (Eelmae 1984:47)'

The projected relationship to the land, then, was an important part of the construction of an Estonian national identity from the time of the 'National Awakening' onwards. Partially, this was, and is, also expressed through a search for 'Ur' origins, the primordial blood bonds with, linguistically speaking, cousins. To quote from a tourist guide, which sums up what many informants told me about the national identity of Estonians: 'Many common features have been traced between the Finno-Ugric peoples and the Siberian tribes. Two different worlds are opposed to one another - the unbalanced Indo-Germanic world of conquests, strict class boundaries and intolerance on the one hand, and the well-balanced, unambitious world of the Finno-Ugrians, the Siberian peoples, the minority groups of China and the American Indians. (Estonia: a Practical Guide 1990:122)'

The tourist guide quoted above was written at the cusp of the dissolution of Estonia as a Soviet republic, finally achieved in 1991, after the failed August coup in Moscow, and captures the mix of lyricism and ironic urbanity which then characterised the struggle for independence. The passages on the landscape significantly tend towards the former, framed, still, by the romantic tradition: 'Our fathers and forbears have lived in this land for six thousand years. They have tilled the soil and raised cattle by this sea, among these primeval forests and bogs, between these winding rivers and limpid lakes. We have been living here for such a long time that we have given a name to each star in the sky, each spring, each boulder, even each old tree. We have lived, believing that everything has life, everything breathes. Sacred groves were the places where ancient Estonians met their gods. Did our sorcerers really possess the ability to become one with the powers of nature? Were they really clairvoyant? Even nowadays sorcerers and healers with herbs are to be found in Estonia who are visited as if on a pilgrimage by thousands of sufferers. The call of nature still has a strong appeal for all of us. Although we are an urbanised people, we all have our country houses or at least summer bungalows. So who are we - descendants of ancient Asians or successors to the European civilisation?' (Estonia: a Practical Guide 1990: 9-10).

Even allowing for the fact that the lyricism of these passages probably owe as much to Western New Age philosophies as to an indigenous tradition, the 'call of nature' described above is not exaggerated. The lyricism, however, makes it hard to take the message seriously, particularly within a culture where the overly lyrical tends also to be seen as somewhat vulgar and kitsch, the opposites of the
ironic and complex silences which punctuate educated discourses, where language itself is assumed to be tainted by the Soviet past. The vulgarity of the lyrical, however, does not mean that it's new or invented. In a similar discussion, Simon Schama, in his recent book on Western culture and nature, writes about the historical depth behind the clichés about nature: 'The 'cathedral grove', for example, is a common tourist cliché: 'Words of veneration describe this land of ahs", says one particularly breathless book on the old growth forests of the Pacific NorthWest. But beneath the commonplace is a long, rich, and significant history of associations between the pagan primitive grove and its tree idolatry, and the distinctive forms of Gothic architecture' (Schama 1995:14). Similarly, the discourse of nature in the Estonian culture is at the same time authentic and constructed, old and re-invented, forming a vital part of the dialectic between the past and the present which constitutes national identity.

Informants' Relationships to Landscape

If the notion of the relationship between land and people was central to the discourse of the nation, there was, however, also a wide range of informants' views of the landscape. Here, I will look at how different informants, both urban and rural, talked about, and related to, 'the land', which, from the point of view of urban informants with country cottages also included the rural inhabitants.

One of my informants from Tallinn, a well-informed pensioner who had had an important job in the ministry for export, often told me with a certain pride; 'We are a peasant nation.' In her view, the essentially agricultural nature of Estonia (and the Estonians) represented a distinction from both Russia and the Soviet system, with its emphasis on the construction of heavy industry. Whilst often talking somewhat lyrically about the land she was in fact an essentially urban person, who had been raised in a small town, and spent all her adult life in the capital, Tallinn. Her conception of herself was centred around the notion of high culture; theatre, music, and art, situated within the larger sphere of 'Europe'. 'The land' and 'the people', in contrast, represented the backbone of 'Estonia', abstract notions which framed, rather than constituted, her self. It was also clear that her pride and emphasis on the essentially 'low' peasant culture of that backbone was influenced by Soviet ideology, where 'low' and 'high' co-exist in a different dialectic from the Western one.
Her story of the events around the coup and the declaration of independence sheds
some light on the relationship between 'the land', 'the people' and the Soviet past:
In August 1991 Edgar Savisaar, the then prime-minister, called out the men to
protect the telephone tower in Tallinn from the approaching Soviet tanks, and of
course the women came too. In town you heard cars hooting everywhere; the
people who had cars where signalling that they could give lifts to people who
didn't. The radio continuously announced the slow progress of the tanks rolling
towards Tallinn: 200 kilometres away, 175 kilometres, 150 kilometres. The
people stood around in groups after having erected barricades, waiting, prepared
to fight. My informant stood with a group of other women, and about three
o'clock in the morning a 'young Estonian', a man of the people, a blue-eyed man
with such an open, honest face, came up to us and said: women of Estonia! Go
home and protect our homes. Protect yourselves so that the Estonian people may
continue to grow'.

This kind of rhetoric, and even these kinds of emotions, related to me in
November 1991, hardly exist anymore. As one of my students wrote in an essay;
'Now are all those beautiful feelings gone. Nobody sings native landic songs and
makes the speech. Everyone is trying to earn more money, to buy a new good car
and dress perfect. In the place of blue-black-white flags there are hanging multi­
coloured advertisements.(sic)' In chapter 4 I have offered a more detailed analysis
of the relationship between the Soviet notions of nations and ethnicity and the
post-Soviet expressions of nationalism, often misunderstood in the West as a
simple reversion to a form of pre-was nationalism after decades of Socialist
control. There, I have argued that in order to gain a real understanding of the
early, and fleeting, states of nationalism in the post-Soviet republic, it is necessary
to analyse the complex ways in which the Soviet state itself encouraged particular
conceptions of nationalism to do with the relationship between ethnicity, 'the
people', and land.

My rural informants' view of the land was correlated to where they grew up, as
well as to their degree of education, and their present orientation towards the
West. There were quite a few people on the collective farm who had moved there
from towns in order to gain access to apartments or work, or, as one informant
told me, to get away from the Russians, who lived mainly in urban centres of the
north-east.96 This particular informant, a builder and entrepreneur, with some

96 There were only a few Russian families on the collective farm, most of whom had already left
by the time I arrived, encouraged by re-settlement grants from the Estonian state to move back to
Russia. The non-Estonians who remained were fairly assimilated, sometimes in mixed marriages
college education, had strong views on the Estonian national character, as compared with the Russians, or the Caucasians, whom he described as 'hungry'; always eager for a deal of some kind. The comparative calm of the Estonians he ascribed to the connection to nature; a 'naturalness' contrasted to the 'artificiality' of more commercially minded ethnicities. 'Nature', for him, was framed by the old discourse on Estonian-ness, providing a link between ethnicity and land which was rooted in the early Estonian nationalist movement.

Another originally urban informant, again a man, who was in many ways the most 'western' person on the collective farm, having spent some time with relatives in Canada, as well as in Sweden and Finland, had quite a different view. He was a teacher, and had taken a job in the country in order to avoid military service (such was the difficulties of getting teachers to come to the collective farms that they were exempted from military service if they did). He often talked about Noarootsi, the peninsula, as 'the end of the world', which had had an almost accidental revival through the relationship to Sweden. He used to say that when he first arrived, there was 'nothing there', meaning that life was slow and humdrum. He had no interest in the idea of the relationship to the land as the essence of Estonian-ness, but nor was his view of the slow pace or rural life situated within a Soviet frame, including a belief in the necessity to bring 'culture' to the countryside, and a regret for the loss of the functions within the collective farm. He and his girlfriend, each with another marriage behind them, were the individualists of the collective farm; the only people who had some different furniture, built by him, and a satellite dish as well as a microwave oven. They were also the only ones who refused to pay their heating bill, arguing that since they barely had any heating (nobody did, since the central system had broken down), they should not be obliged to pay. In a community where most people were still afraid of the authorities, they were an exception.

Although still living in a flat, they were building a house on a plot of land near the coast, subsidised by his Canadian grandmother. Although they did state that the only places they wanted to live in were either the capital or the 'real' country, as represented by their plot of land, this assertion was not framed by a notion that this was a specifically Estonian desire: rather it was situated within a common northern European assumption that this was a universal wish. Their house

with Estonians or people from other republics. Their children were all bi-lingual, but few of the adults spoke more than a few words of Estonian. All of the adult Estonians spoke at least some Russian, and usually understood it fairly well, so communication between Russian speakers and Estonians was not a problem.
building project transcended both the Soviet and the division between the rural and the urban: their house was not a strict reproduction of either a traditional or a Soviet pattern (although derived from one), nor a summer cottage, but a permanent residence in a rural area for a family with urban roots.

My host family, on the other hand, had a more Soviet attitude to the countryside. Both originally urban, they had moved to the area a few years previously, having been offered work by the headmistress of the local school, a childhood friend of the wife of the family, and her husband, who was the director of the collective farm. They suffered badly from boredom, seeing the settlement as a dead end, where there was nothing to do. Unlike the teacher described above, they were workers, the man now un-employed, getting by on temporary jobs. Some of these were for local farmers, paid in meat or potatoes. They regretted the end of the collective farm, which had meant not only the loss of work for the husband, but also the loss of interesting cultural events and a general sense of security and togetherness derived from being part of a collective. The time of the collective, for them, was a time when there was work and money, when no-one locked their doors, children ran in and out of each others' homes, people ate and gossiped in the collective dining room, and were generally 'active', rather than, as they were now becoming, 'passive'.

Land, and the question of what it is to be Estonian, was not something that they talked about: their topics of conversation tended to be more personal. Unlike my urban informants, who usually saw me as a representative for some larger entity, whether it was 'Europe', 'Sweden', 'Great Britain', or 'the University', and themselves as representatives for similar entities, usually 'Estonia', my hosts' relationship to me was more individualised, and the description of their relationship to the land and what it meant to be Estonian was essentially concrete rather than abstract. This difference, whilst phrased here in terms of the urban and the rural was actually more correlated to degrees of education, where the highly educated had been trained to regard themselves and others as representatives for organisations rather than as free-lancing individuals. The working class, whilst receiving a similar message from the state, tended to lack the confidence to truly regard themselves as 'representatives', particularly given the central place of 'high culture' in the Estonian national identity and the breakdown of most of the working class collective workplaces.

The people described above were all originally from urban centres, immigrants to the area. Informants who had grown up on the peninsula had, as might be
expected, a primarily local and historical view of the landscape. Taking me around, they would tell me about events which had occurred on particular spots, show me ruins and tell me what they had been, or new houses, telling me what was there before. For them, the historical landscape was split between the Soviet landscape and the Estonian, pre-war, landscape, which was retained as a shadow image of the 'natural', transformed by Soviet management into something both more artificial and more ugly: water meadows, heather and juniper bushes planted over with scruffy pine forests, open fields to the back of the manor house, where the modernist collective farm blocks of flats were now standing.

Whilst most informants would simply on occasion take me around, answering questions as they came up, one elderly religious woman wrote a long autobiographical tracts for me. She also took me on tours of the peninsula, pointing out the now ruined chapel where they had continued to meet in secret for prayer meetings during Stalin, or the exact spot where, she claims, some soldiers once tried to kill her, and so on. She was a practising Christian, and originally a teacher, had spent some time in a labour camp, and did manual labour on the collective farm. In her Life Story, she wrote mostly about communism, alcohol, evil and God. She also, however, described the landscape, reproduced here as written:

I wish to witness, to speak what God to do (did) dem Nuckö (Nucköle) (i.e. Noarootsi). Historie speak a sea was over Nuckö, then a little island, small one islet. Then sea go silence away, earth came, to come in sight. God present the Nuckö one richness. This is: sea mud (mire, slime) medicine to cure. Near Nuckö is town Haapsalu, this is a little k(c)uurort - summer-resort. Historie speak: Nuckö beautiful Ramsholm was full visitor - to spend the summer. Nuckö near Wormsi have in sea many, many, many ton - tonnazen (Plural) sea mud. (+ radium)

This seamud to bring sanatorim and there is people coming to cure (to treat) This liquid, flui seamud is cure with water in bath, and in baths. Salty sea mud baths. Must money to give and illness go better. Seamud do illness paremaks. That is Nuckö sea brillant (ruby). This sea name is: Voosi Kurk, 'Voosi throat'. And one bay Nuckö earth, this bay is one sektor water one sektor grassy, covered with grass and little reed - cane.

\[\text{paremaks} = \text{to get better}\]
Nucko is rich apple-trees and apples. Also wickerwork, wicker chair. And many, many plum-trees. Sortiment: 'Noarootsi (Nuckö) red plum.' This name is good sortiment over Eesti. In Nuckö is God very beautiful wood to present. Many, many linden trees (lime trees) For example: medicine-trees: pine trees, great pine woods. Pine-cones! Chestnut trees!

Very good potatoes earth. Nuckö in Eesti age to bring - to carry, to transport potatoes Sweden, Rootsi and red plums and rye (cornflower blew). Every farmer transport this materjal in Sweden. Nuckö people was God beliver people. Was also drunkard % in Nuckö. Many farm was fisher. Fishmarket was Haapsalu town. Fishing - season was fishy. Motorboat little (ship) bring people in Osterby harbour every day three time in town Haapsalu. There in Osterby (haven) is stone warf, pier. A long iron-stone bridge. On earth was portcapitan home. Ants - Sweden man - familie. And kommunist-age a venemaa eestlane Feodorov. This man help me - God present - GPU wrong, untruthful. Praise the Lord God! Feodorov was II port capitain in harbout, is death, is drowned.

In Nuckö is a beautiful fora. Interesant! vegetation, is very medicine plant. (taimestik)

Plentiful (külluslik) berry earth (marjamaa), many stormes (tormid). Stormy days. Redberry in wood (no strawberry). Bilberry, blueberry. Very medicine. Whortleberry. Very good jem (dzemm) with apples. Very delicate. This is God Present. Say God price! Honour! Children be respectful the Lord, Jeesus Christ! Also give good Sky Father in Nuckö the people and children red winter berry in swampy (soine), in marshy, boggi. This winterberry is cranberry...here is red baburitsky berry. This berry wish cold water over to power and sinking over. Oo that is very tasteful, delicious, palatable! Oo how pleasant soiir, acid. That is medical berry.

In Nuckö is very good flowersbase (platform) the bee-keeping. Many kilogramms honey and bee life is good, very little illness. I was (have) also years bee-keeping.

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171

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98Eesti = Estonia
99Venemaa = Russia. Eestlane = Estonian
In Nuckö is also wolf, they came, when communism came Eestimale\textsuperscript{100}. All unfit, unfitness (kolbmatus), immoral, improper (kolvatu) came in Nucko with atheism and red-armee military. And military state of war. That was terrible! Our home was near sea, near Wormsi bay. Wormsi is an island and bay between (vahel) Nuckö 3,5 kilometer. There was three kilometer frontier guard. Border-land-territory. No one step can people no go.\textsuperscript{101}

'Mysterious reign, secret, to dissimulate, clandestine' (sic).

The story, strange as it looks in English, is a real description of the contrast people experienced between 'before' and 'after.' It is important to remember, also, that the descriptions of rural life during independence represented an essentially new way of life, revolutionised by the land reform of 1920. Before that, most of the land was owned by the Baltic Germans, who rented out land in return for work, and whose often arbitrary and autocratic regimes were infamous. The description above, then, is not a description of 'traditional life' contrasted to the Soviet regime, but rather an indication of the expanding economies of the new farmers of the 1920s and 1930s, who, as she says, often combined farming and fishing, and who exported potatoes to Sweden. The spa of Haapsalu brought tourists, who at times also visited the Estonian Swedish farming areas. There were, as we have seen in chapter 3, new journals, almanacs, mutual insurance funds and co-operatives, which did much to relieve the poverty in the countryside. The regular boat from the peninsula to the nearest town, Haapsalu, the images of apples and honey, wickerwork and red plums, bilberries, blueberries and cranberries are sharply contrasted to the Soviet take-over of Estonia: the wolf/communism/ the red army/ atheism/ war: 'Mysterious reign, secret, to dissimulate, clandestine'.

**The Spatial Organisation of Landscape**

The concept of islands, related to the notions of self-sufficiency and isolation, is important to the sense of what it is to be Estonian. In the weather reports on television, for example, Estonia is literally portrayed as an island, Latvia and Russia turned into blue sea with wave symbols, continuous with the Baltic Sea. There was also an important protest-poem during the Soviet times, which lamented the fact that Estonia was not an island, where the people would be able

\textsuperscript{100}i.e. to Estonia
\textsuperscript{101}She is referring to the fact that during the Soviet times the peninsula and the island of Wormsi were defined as protected border zone, with special permission needed for access.
to breathe freely. In this context it is important to consider the actual islands, which, because they were more or less closed to Russian immigration during the Soviet era, mainly because of their sensitive military position, are considered as having escaped much of the corrupting influence of the Russians. They tend, indeed, to be noticeably neater than the scruffy mainland, neatness being regarded as an Estonian trait as compared to the disorder of the Russians. The islands are also associated with Swedish-ness, most of them having been at least 50% Swedish speaking. In this respect, Noarootsi, as a former island, and present peninsula, is halfway there, partially intact and partially corrupt. The reserve which Estonians tend to identify in themselves is also connected with the idea of islands, protected from the (excessive) emotionality of the Latvians and the Russians.

Most of the Estonian coast line, including the peninsula of Noarootsi, was defined as a border protection zone. Access to the coastal settlements was controlled, and there was a deep line ploughed into the sandy beaches about 15 meters from the sea, beyond which local people were not allowed to step. Fishing, consequently, which had been an important occupation in the area, was organised in a fishing collective, and forbidden as a private activity. Along the coast a series of watch towers were constructed, manned by the army and equipped with strong search lights sweeping the coast line. These towers constituted visible symbols of the Soviet power. Now abandoned, they were sometimes the goal of summer outings, including picnics on the beaches and dips in the dirty sea. They were stripped of everything of value, and had the typically Soviet appearance of being somewhere between incompletion and dilapidation, white brick badly put together, concrete poured on the ground to form ad hoc pathways, woodwork rotting on the platforms, signs in Russian rusting on the floors. Informants who took me there would stand on the platforms, talking about how only a few years ago these spaces were absolutely out of bounds, and, sometimes, what it might have been like being a soldier watching the unthinkable: somebody illegally crossing the line and walking towards the sea. To the extent that these towers exist in another historical space, their present state of dilapidation symbolises the experience of moving from one era to another, from the Soviet era to independence. Their transformation from military structures to historical landmarks represents perhaps the most significant local transformation of the landscape.

The fields of the collective farm were invariably large, which, given the local sandy soil and pervasive coastal winds, presented a problem with soil erosion and
dusty winds. The large collective farm fields were structurally opposed to the small private plots, 0.35 ha, where people grew their own potatoes, fruit and vegetables. By extension, the large collective farm machinery, celebrated together with the enormous fields as aesthetic icons of the Soviet Union, were situated in a binary opposition to the private picks and shovels people used for their own land. As discussed above, the size of the fields was related to notions of efficiency and progress, turning the backward and primitive countryside into a progressive collective. During the time of my fieldwork, the land boundaries were being redrawn with reference to old maps, particularly in regards to the numerous land claims from Sweden, and the large fields, temporarily owned by a transitory commission, were being privatised (see chapter 7 for a more detailed account).

Probably about a third of the land of the peninsula, which measures about 10 by 15 kilometres, consists of forest, the majority of which is conifer. There are two types, the old forests, which stretch for miles, criss-crossed with abandoned roads, and the newer plantations. The latter are quite different from their equivalents in Sweden, and evoke critical comments from the various Swedish visitors. The trees are tall and thin, swaying like high grass in the wind, jostling for the light at the top. The methodical thinning out, which is a basic tenet of Swedish forest management, has not been applied here, and the appearance of the forests is quite different as a result. Swedish expertise from the twin town of Åtvidaberg identified a consequent loss of quality in the wood, following the pattern of the ubiquitous Western consultants in the former Soviet bloc, as, in this instance, they judged that the younger forests were of such bad quality that they could only be used for wood chips.

The forest as a space occupies an ambivalent position somewhere between nature and industry, or artifice. As industrial concerns, they were as badly run as most other Soviet industries. Similarly, as nature, they were as decayed as the buildings and spaces of Soviet cities. The suppression of the pre-Soviet independent system of farming was visible in the form of overgrown old roads leading to abandoned, often ruined, farm houses whose orchards were merging with the wilderness of the forest. The Soviet signs took the form of the thin trees, the straight wide lanes for the huge machinery, and the enormous ditches for drainage, and the post-Soviet, finally, was shown in the neat and localised

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102 Given the central place of 'nature' in Estonian culture, I hesitate to use the commonly invoked opposition between 'nature' and 'culture', particularly as these, in the Estonian context, do not appear to be gendered categories. (Ortner 1974. See also Schama 1995: 'Instead of assuming the mutually exclusive character of Western culture and nature, I want to suggest the strength of the links that have bound them together' (Schama 1995:14).
bundles of wood stacked for transport to the new Swedish wood chip burner (see illustration 11). All these features are signs of systems of government, political signs, as readable as the signs of advertising discussed above. They mark the present transition as movement, overlaid with a sense of continuity in the view of the forest as a seasonal and traditional source of food, providing mushrooms, berries, venison and wild boar, the latter two by agreement with the gamekeeper, and limited to festive occasions. The former are commonly gathered in the autumn, and preserved in various ways for the winter. In this way, the thrift and seasonality of the pre-Soviet system of farming were continued, both because of the limitations of the Soviet economic system and because of the present poverty.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have attempted to illuminate the relationships between semiology and space, focusing on a structuralist analysis, where 'Estonia' is situated in a relationship with 'the West' or the 'Soviet', the 'Soviet' with the 'private', and the rural with the urban. These relationships are currently infused by a sense of transition, the movement from the Soviet system to the present one, which dominates most of the contemporary discourses of Estonia. The present system of signs with its particular meanings is therefore unusually transitory: probably some of the constellations described above will already have changed since I did my fieldwork in 1993-94.

The main point, however, is that the experience and perception of space in Soviet society is now changing with independence and the transition to democracy and a free market economy. The current process of national encompassment is replacing the Soviet spatial sense of fragmentation, which was characterised by the fact that so many areas were closed, and the maps were not particularly trustworthy. Consequently, there was a sense of local isolation, and a lack of knowledge about how people lived in different parts of the country. One informant in Tallinn, for example, carefully asked me whether the flats on the collective farm had inside toilets. Visits to the country were more carefully defined than in the West, planned for particular places, and usually particular people, since public spaces represented uncertainty, or even danger. On the other hand people travelled widely to other Soviet republics, which of course now is no longer possible for most people, both in terms of expense and security. Many informants mentioned a sense of isolation and enclosure in connection with the
fall of the Soviet Union, which was often seen as the main negative effect of the fall.

I have attempted to show how the new signs of Western-ness, looking in particular at the new signs for private shops put up along the streets and roads, are framed within a context of the importance of signs as badges of allegiance; i.e. an essentially Soviet context. Politics are incorporated into the *habitus* everywhere, but here the signs are loud and obvious, stating allegiance in order to ward off interference from the outside. The inside, consequently, tends to be more private and more closed off than in the West, and the division between public and private greater. Slavenka Drakulic wrote the following about the division between the private and the public, which applied to the entire eastern bloc: 'To survive, we had to divide the territory, to set a border between private and public. The state wants it all public - it can't see into our apartment, but it can tap our telephone, read our mail. We didn't give up: everything beyond the door was considered 'theirs'. They wanted to turn our apartments into public spaces, but we didn't buy that trick. What is public is of the enemy. So we hid in our pigeonholes, leaned on each other in spite of everything, and licked our wounds. (Drakulic 1992:91-92)'

After having considered the new signs in the urban landscapes, I looked at signs of de-collectivisation, focusing on two enterprises, both of which could be seen to represent an opposition to the particular values incorporated into the larger structures in which they were housed; the culture house and the workshop. Thus the new private bar, Gorbiland, represented an opposition to the notions about high culture which the culture house embodied, as well as representing, by its name, an ironic reference to the former Soviet leader. I argued that alcoholic drinking occupied a particular place in the last stages of the Soviet Union, as an activity which the state attempted to control, and which, consequently, expressed a certain amount of resistance. The bar, with its weekly showing of western videos, therefore represented an entity standing in opposition to the culture house, with its former weekly showings of Russian and European films. The second enterprise, manufacturing pavilions, was analysed in terms of what the idea of pavilions represented - a pre-Soviet conception of leisure which can be contrasted to the ideology of work embodied in the collective farm workshops.

I then went on to consider the relationship to the land, focusing, first, on the links between historical and contemporary representations of landscape, and, second, on informants' relationships to landscape. I found that there were clear relationships between the various representations of landscape and different
informants' notions of what the land meant to them. 4 informants, or pairs of informants, were considered: one whose notions of 'the land' was intricately linked to his idea what it meant to be Estonian, following the 19th Century romantic nationalist movement, one whose conception of the landscape was more assimilated within a northern European framework, a third, whose conception of the land as backwards and isolated, and whose regret of the loss of community which the closure of the collective farm entailed, framed their view of the country-side within a more Soviet conception, and, finally, the last one whose views embodied the functional usefulness of nature, largely destroyed by the Soviet regime.

This section was followed by a brief description of the spatial organisation of landscape, and the ways in which space presented itself as overlapping fields of signs, signifying the 3 main historical eras of this century, i.e. the period of independence, the Soviet era, and the present, post-Soviet, period. The time of the Russian Empire and the feudal system of agriculture was not considered, since there are few signs left of that period. It should always, however, be remembered that the relative liberalism of the early Estonian Republic was preceded by 2 centuries of incorporation into the Russian Empire, whose measures of oppressive control concerning, for example, religious practices, work obligations, army recruitments and censorship, had much in common with the policies of the Soviet Union.

Throughout this chapter there has been a consideration of the division between the public and the private, or the state and the individuals. One sign of the changes in the perception of the division between public and private is the size of windows in the cafes in Tallinn and Haapsalu: the Soviet spaces invariably have tiny windows or no windows at all, presenting a closed front to the street, whereas the new cafes all have large plate glass windows, changing the relationship between the public street and the liminal 'home' of the cafe. In the next chapter, I will go on to consider the transition in terms of the re-appropriation of traditional festivities, and the incorporation of some new ones. I will look at how people on the collective farm celebrated the new holidays, and how they perceived some of the old ones.
List of Illustrations/ Chapter 5.

1. New Signs 'Oru Shop' 'Oru Bar'

2. 'Sport Hotel. Bar Restaurant Sauna Pool Tennis Court Satellite TV'

3. 'Haapsalu Goods. Wholesale Centre'

4. Signs on the Collective Farm: 'Bar. Gorbiland.'

5. 'Cafe and Farm Shop'

6. Local shop window: Swedish food poster from the large chain ICA

7. Seasonal Swedish signs in local shop: 'Happy summer with Skogaholm's bread'

8. 'Happy holiday with Skogaholm's bread'

9. Satellite dishes on one of the blocks of flats on the collective farm. Note the empty flagholder to the right of the door.

10. The back of the workshops. Obsolete machinery.

11. Bundles of wood for the new woodchip burner, replacing the coal burner which provided all the heating and hot water for the blocks of flats on the collective farm.
GLAD SOMMAR
med Singaholms brod

Röd avstånd:
armarinni 9.30-18.00
löstesat 9.30-16.00
påforsenat 11.00-1.00
Svära, rösmott, puhap
12.00-15.00 tagatbrett
Chapter 6. Independence: the Revival of the Old Festivals

'The main difference between Eastern and Western Europe today - between Estonia and Germany, Estonia and France, Estonia and Italy, or even Estonia and Finland - is not a difference in experience, but having had the same experience at different times - experiences that are asynchronous. In Estonia, an in Eastern Europe generally, the experience of fear and violence is still fresh and alive - a part of everyday life, a part of the present day. Elsewhere it is merely a faded memory - a grandmother's photo album, a grandfather's war story. To be one's own grandmother of grandfather is incredible and absurd! Asynchronous experiences divide people of the same generation into people of different eras.'

(Luik 1992: 3)

Introduction

One of the first measures of the post-Soviet government was to set the clock back an hour, going back to the pre-war setting, aligned with Helsinki rather than Moscow. This was an important symbolic statement of independence, which also formed part of the discourse of the return to 'normality'. Looking at the concept of time in a post-Soviet context also, however, has other ramifications. It illuminates the particular relationship between the anthropologist and his or her informants in the post-Soviet state, particularly in the context of the discourse of cultural relativism. In Estonia, many notions which are often regarded as the interiorised possession of the western anthropologist, (more or less) unconsciously imposed on the narrative and analysis of the 'other', such as, for example, the belief in linear time, are actually held more firmly by the informants, forming a part of their own culture as interiorised ideology. As discussed briefly in chapter 4, then, my experience was of being with people whose euro-centricity was more firmly entrenched than tends to be the case in contemporary western societies, constituting both an authentic culture and an ideology. This included a strong belief in the correlation between Europe and 'culture', defined as high culture, and a normative rationalism and materialism, albeit spiced with the Soviet equivalent of New Age mysticism. Importantly, it also included a strong belief in the linear progress of time and social development.
Sandra Wallman, in the introduction to the ASA volume 'Contemporary Futures', points out that many societies don't share the western concept of 'progress' (Wallman 1992:8). In the Soviet Union, by contrast, that concept had been an integral part of the ideology of the state, considerably stronger than in the 'Euro-American' culture she writes about. The notion of progress, involving a dialectic between the mental and material culture, and the ideal of 'building socialism', i.e. of working for a future (and better) society by fulfilling goals and plans, was central in the Soviet Union. The participation, or interiorisation, of this ideology, varied, however. My urban informants, who tended to be better educated, were more likely to conceive of history within the Marxist framework of logical and predictable progress. On the collective farm, there was a stronger sense of local continuity than one would perhaps expect, given the fact that so many of the inhabitants were settled in the area as refugees during the wars, 'history' being seen, for example, in terms of a neighbour who were sent to Siberia, and came back, or did not come back, or in other words history unfolding itself essentially as a story of neighbourhood and kinship. The sense of local continuity, powerfully re-enforced by the seasonality imposed by the climate as well as the economy, and the associated discourses of time and cyclical change, was thus conceived in terms of kinship, friendship and neighbourhood.

This sense of time existed, or persisted, within the social revolution of the communist era, but also within the contemporary, post-communist, state. That, however, does not mean that other notions of time and history did not co-exist alongside of the local notion of time as the unfolding of particular events occurring to particular people. The people on the collective farm also at least partially shared the Marxist view of history, which seemed to survive the end of the Soviet rule, appropriating and transcending the current changes. Fentress and Wickham have pointed to the danger of regarding peasant memories as cyclical and family-orientated by definition (Fentress/ Wickham 1992). Similarly, it is important to recognise that rural informants were no less constituted within Soviet structures than urban ones: if they conceived of history from a local point of view,

103 The movement and ideology of modernism in the Soviet Union, however, was significantly different from western modernism. One important aspect of this question is that the literature on 'modernity' coming out of the west, therefore, which tends to present 'modernity' as a hegemonic and near-universal condition, is only partially relevant to the experience of the Soviet Union (e.g. Berman 1982 and 1992, Jameson 1991, Harvey 1989). Much of the discourse in the literature is in fact predicated on the experience of the free market west, and is hence a function of a particular economic system rather than of time itself.

104 The sense of seasonal change was powerful in Estonia, partly because it's so far north, and the actual changes in light and temperature are dramatic, and partly because food consumption was primarily based on local, and hence seasonal, produce.
that was because they had remained in the place where their families had pre-war roots. Briefly, the social changes in the new state involved the revival of the events of the old calendrical year, as well as new forms of consumption and habitus. It also involved the final relegation of old notions of the future; the visions of Soviet modernism, to the past. As in the time capsules analysed by Durrans, which imply a presentation of the present as simultaneously 'now' and 'then', the semiotic of communism discussed in the previous chapter provided powerful signs of 'then'; time capsules, a it were, from another era (Durrans 1992: 51-62).

This chapter will explore the significance of the Soviet calendar in comparison to the current, western, calendar, looking at a number of festivities from the point of view of the symbolic importance of the changing narratives surrounding them. Festivals are of course the traditional subject of social anthropology, important by virtue of encapsulating and enacting the social logic of the community (Turner 1974, Kapferer 1991). On my fieldsite, however, they functioned not only to articulate, but also to re-construct the social logic, since most of these festivals are not as yet fully interiorised as authentic cultural traditions. In that sense, they are not unlike Soviet rituals and ceremonies, which, as Christopher Binns has argued, both reflected and re-enforced the changing ideology of the Soviet governments, whilst also appropriating elements of older traditions (Binns 1979). In present day Estonia, they constitute an enactment of the new calendar and the new nation, but also a rehearsal of the form, so that there is some leeway and a considerable amount of uncertainty concerning just how to celebrate. In addition, the festivals themselves are framed by the contemporary experience of transition, emphasised on the collective farm by the strong sense of transience as people gradually move away from the area, in search, primarily, of work.

**The Soviet and the Western Calendars**

In so far as the 'future' and the 'past' have fused, or become confused, after the fall of the Soviet Union, when different versions of time and progress and (even) modernity came together, the 'real', or modernist, future was in the days of the kolkhoz, when giant fields were worked with huge combines and teams of tractors. The combination of the ideology of production and the ideology of...
culturation, or quasi-urbanisation, of the country-side, left people with few products, but with an extensive cultural programme, directed by 'cultural workers', or 'cultural specialists'. The transformation of the country-side was planned with the notion of a dialectical dynamic between the material changes and the cultural programme, leading to a fundamental change of mentalité, transforming what was regarded as a pre-dominantly reactionary population into a progressive force. Whether it was successful or not, that particular form of the future has now been by-passed by another, where the new shop sells bananas and oranges at least sometimes, the combines are rusting next to the mostly empty broken-down workshops, and the cultural programme has virtually folded.

Alongside all this of course the older habitus of the peasantry survived, but it survived within the strict material and ideological limits allowed by the kolkhoz - 1 cow, 1 calf and 1 horse, and 0.35 ha. of land, to be managed in people's free time. The peninsula's status as a border protection zone did much to increase its isolation, removing the area from the 'normal', a sign of the cold war, and, for many, of the state of occupation. The collective farm system thus paradoxically both ensured the retention of a 'peasant' life-style, where self-sufficiency and private thrift were necessary (because of the inadequacies of the state economic system), and promoted a Soviet image of the culturally and politically aware collective farmer, forming a re-constituted peasantry, who fed not only themselves but also contributed to their friends' and relatives' supplies in the towns within a system of informal barter. Dragadze, focusing more on the issue of state control, has noted a similar paradox in relation to Georgia, where the Soviet regime, despite its explicit hostility to local social structures, traditions, and economies actually functioned to reinforce local culture through a forced reliance on the family and a sense of Georgian-ness (Dragadze 1988: 27, 39).

The reliance on friend and kinship networks, as well as the reliance on a subsistence mode of agricultural production, were obvious on the collective farm, where staples such as potatoes, cabbage and apples rarely reached the shops, but instead were bartered or bought outside the official system. The closing of the collective farm, and the partial breakdown of the centralised agricultural economy, as well as the end of the prohibition on individual farming, meant that low-tech subsistence agriculture had increased. Milk, straight from the farms in a bucket, appeared irregularly at the shop, and was usually bought, in as far as it was used at all, directly from farmers. The woman on the collective farm who let her flat to me, asked me where I got my potatoes from and said, when she found out I didn't have any, that she would give me some. She had grown 0.25 ha., she
said (the knowledge of the exact measurement is typical), and after sending
supplies to relatives in town she still had some to spare. Significantly, however,
before offering the potatoes she smiled, and said, 'but maybe you don't eat
potatoes': in possession of considerable cultural capital locally, she knew, after
several visits to Sweden, that potatoes are no longer, strictly speaking, a staple
there, unlike in Estonia where boiled potatoes were a normative form; a basic
pattern meal to which small additions were added.

The old little farm-houses, with their vegetable gardens and apple-trees may have
looked traditional, and the people inside may have looked equally old-fashioned,
with layers of dark and dirty clothes almost melting onto the body, dark faces with
lighter hair and eyes, hands ingrained with dirt, but their way of life was formed
by a Soviet, rather than a traditional, ideology. Arguably, also, the 'traditional'
was an elusive concept, since this area has gone through so many transitory
structures of power and ideologies, imposed by competing empires and different
cultures. It is clear that a large part of the first 'national awakening' in the 1860s
and onwards was concerned with finding the authentically traditional, a search
which was taking place in most of Europe, but strengthened here by the fact that
the emerging bourgeois culture tended to be swallowed up by the German, and,
to a lesser extent, the Russian, cultures. The result, as we have seen, was a
projected link between the 'Estonian', the peasantry, and the land, which was
later encouraged by the Soviet state in order to subvert 'bourgeois' nationalism
(see chapter 4 and 5). In response, a sophisticated anti-Soviet culture of irony
which is still a dominating mode emerged, undermining any serious attempt to re-
mystify the relationship between the land and the 'Estonian' in the new republic.

In the Soviet Union, there were 6 national holidays, encompassing the ideology of
the socialist narrative of history. The first one, and the only one to belong to a
wider and older tradition, was the 1st of January, New Years Day. This was
followed by March 8, Women's Day, May 1 and 2, International Labour Days,
May 9, Victory Day, November 7 and 8, the Anniversary of the October
Revolution, and December 5, Constitution Day (Kriisa: 46-47). They were
celebrated with all the formalised gusto of the Soviet State, encoded in countless
narratives and staged public celebrations. The following extract from an English
textbook from 1986, no longer used on the collective farm, where material from
the Peace Corps had taken over, illustrates the normative and essentially directed
nature of these festivities.
'Red October Day:

The Soviet Union is a very big country. The people of the Soviet Union want to live and work in peace. They want to live in peace with all the other peoples of the world.

The birthday of the Soviet Union is on the seventh of November. It is a holiday for everybody. The workers do not go to work and the pupils do not go to school. In the morning everybody wants to go to the demonstration. In the afternoon a lot of people have parties. They dance and sing. Some people want to have a rest at home. They usually watch TV or read books. Some people go for long walks with their friends and families. Everybody has a good time. Everybody is happy and cheerful on that day.

Long Live Peace!
Long Live Soviet Estonia!
Long Live the Soviet Union!
Long Live Red October Day!

(Renel/ Sotter 1986:32)

In Estonia, these holidays are now being replaced by a number of western festivities, a process which constitutes a symbolic enactment of the shift from East to West, and independence. This, then, is a calendar in the making, borrowed from the regional traditions of Sweden, Finland and Germany as well as from historical memories and indigenous traditions.

**Christmas and New Year**

Christmas, previously celebrated in private, behind locked doors and closed curtains, as many informants told me, is now openly celebrated. To a large extent the functions of Christmas in the Soviet Union had been taken over by the New Year festivities, with children eagerly anticipating the exchange of presents and the traditional Christmas tree. To many, however, Christmas still holds a special significance, a time for reflection and a reminder of the broader traditions and customs that once defined their lives.

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106 Ingrid Sotter, English teacher and author of numerous English text books was one of my informants in Tallinn. As stated in chapter 4, she confirmed that the text books were written very much with the censors in mind, but said that if they slipped in some obvious pro-Soviet texts in the beginning of the books, like the extracts above, they could get away with more neutral texts further on. The degree to which the above ideology was interiorised varied, then. On the whole it seems that the people who were actually involved in orchestrating it were also the people who believed in it the least, operating with a ubiquitous form of coded irony.
Year celebration. On a symbolic level the two festivities are, however, related in a clear binary opposition: if Christmas is about cyclicality and commemoration, New Year is about linear progress, compatible with Soviet ideology. Within the tradition of western modernity the two of course co-exist, cyclicality and seasonality taking place within a reasonably stable notion of the steady progression of time. Christmas tends to be more associated with home and family, New Year with parties and friends and public spaces.

In the former Soviet Union, these associations were more distinct. Christmas, not a public holiday, was at least to some extent, which varied with location and political climate, proscribed. In Estonia it was celebrated, but always with discretion. The sense of profanity and sacilege which my older informants experienced in the beginnings of the collective farm in the Stalinist era, had, however, abated. One older informant told me that in one of the first years of forced collectivisation the new director made a group of women clean out a pig sty on Christmas Eve, in that region the holier of the Christmas days. It was of course a deliberate sacrilege, connecting with an older residue of the European tradition where the pig represents both dirt and gluttony, particularly in connection with Christmas. In the latter years of the Soviet Union, however, Christmas had largely disappeared from the public scene, transformed to a specifically Christian, and therefore not only a private but even a secretive, ritual.

One of my students, a 17 year old boy wrote the following about Christmas:

'x-mas.

x-mas in Estonia is a new thing. Because few years ago, when we were in Soviet Union we had no x-mas. Then was another party, which was almost the same, only it was later. But now it is like everywhere, I think. People are at home with their parents etc. Of course we have special Christmas food. One old tradition is that in Christmas night, must be food at the table, because then...I don't know what then will be. But I'm not very interested about it (all Christmas I mean), because I don't believe it all (Jesus Christ etc) But if it's true, then after death I'm going to hell. Sad but true' (sic).

The perceived relationship between Christmas and Christianity is obvious - far more so than, for example, in Sweden. One girl wrote the following, making the same point from a different perspective:
'Christmas is a holy and peaceful time and there happens many unbelievable miracles on Christmas time. I spent Christmas in Võsu with my parents. We sat round the table, ate Christmas food and listened to the Christmas songs. We talked about our problems and tried to solve them.'...We went to bed before midnight and we left all food on the table so that the spirits could eat them too. I think that last year (93') I had the most beautiful Christmas, because the whole Estonia was covered with white snow. I love white Christmas!' (sic).

New Year, on the other hand, was deliberately designed to replace the function of Christmas, including the giving of presents and cards. It still retained its public character, however, with speeches and celebrations in the public realm, in Estonia often around a large Christmas tree in central squares, thus further syncretising the already syncretic significance of the tree. Daniel Miller has argued that modern Christmas generally is about placating materialism, re-incorporating the 'spirit' of Christmas as a kind of cleansing agent, transforming commerciality into sociality. Thus, he writes, 'It is the 'spirit' of Christmas which is expected to transmute the image of fetishized commodities as the death of authentic social life into the very instrument for this crucial vision of pure sociality' (Miller 1993: 31). In his view, the spirit of Christmas, in other words, functions to purify the urge to consume by incorporating it into a scheme of seasonal reciprocity. Miller extends this argument in the specific analysis of Christmas in Trinidad, where the function of Christmas can be seen in terms of re-framing temporally arbitrary materialism in terms of meaningful gifts, shifting the emphasis from consumption to giving and receiving, and hence from the relationship between the consumer and the commercial entity to the relationship between the donor and the recipient. The 'Christmas spirit', then, functions to transform the transience and anonymity of money into symbols for descent and continuity, both on the level of the family and the nation (Miller 1993: 152).

In the context of Northern Europe, however, the charge of materialism itself needs to be recognised as a tradition, part of the narratives of excess accompanying Christmas which were taken over from the mostly defunct rituals of Carnival. The sense of excess, then, transformed into 'materialism' does not originate in 'capitalism' or 'the world of goods' in the modern world. It is as much a remnant of a pre-modern world as Christmas itself, a residue of the oscillations between celebrations and the everyday, or excess and frugality, which characterised that world. Within that particular cultural constellation, then, consumption constitutes celebration in the sense that people consume in order to celebrate, as much as celebrate in order to transform consumption. Similarly, the current poverty of
Estonia means that Christmas consumption, together with Christmas cleaning, forms a part of what makes Christmas at least special, if not holy. In relation to this, my experience was that the widespread worries about the new materialistic society were largely subsumed by the concurrent worries about not having the cash to adequately take part in the new wave of materialism.

The prevailing association between Christmas and Christianity meant that it was still regarded by some informants with ambivalence. Whilst for most people the celebration of Christmas represented a return to 'normality' and the west, and hence implicitly a further step away from the Soviet Union, it also carried with it an air of sentimentality and even hypocrisy which ironically made it unpalatable for a large section of the people who were more or less actively anti-Soviet, i.e. the atheist intellectuals, who were steeped in a culture of irony and restraint. The history teacher at the school, for example, returning to the area after a family Christmas elsewhere, confided to me in an elated, because faintly sacrilegious, aside in the teacher's room that he considered Christmas to be a really nasty time. 'Not everybody', he said, 'was one of those, what are they called, Protestants', hesitating over the terms in a deliberate and somewhat outrageous joke.

The new norm in the community, however, was a family Christmas marked by mostly Swedish but also German Christmas decorations which were on sale in the local town. The wife in my host family prepared by extensively cleaning the normally rather dingy flat, marking out the coming celebration in a traditional manner. She then decorated the flat with a number of objects, including a red illuminated star hung in the kitchen window, a poinsettia in a vase surrounded with cuttings of spruce and pine (both of which in Sweden constitute conventional Christmas decorations) on the kitchen table, and an advent calendar sprinkled with glitter from Sweden which she hung on my door. Also, she covered the little table in my room with a Swedish Christmas table cloth, white with a pattern of red and green candles, poinsettias and pine cones. On the poinsettia vase in the

198

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197 It is important to remember that the norm aspired to, and remembered, has little to do with English Christmas, which is considerably more public and less marked off from the everyday than its Scandinavian and Finnish equivalent. This can be seen partly through the use of language. For example, in Esselte's large Swedish-English dictionary published in 1981 the Swedish concept of the verb to 'julstada' is translated into a short sentence, in this case 'to make the place clean and tidy for Christmas.' Similarly 'julstök' is translated as 'preparations for Christmas', and 'julotta' as 'early service on Christmas Day'. The Swedish words evoke the 'difference' of Christmas in a way that the English translations don't, probably in a reflection of the fact that England despite attempts towards multi-culturalism is still a largely Christian country, where the 'difference' of Christmas is retained within the church. In Sweden, with its more secular society, the 'difference' has been constructed more in terms of tradition, family, and a generalised sense of benign cleanliness and cosy family life, as illustrated in the idealised family Christmas in Bergman's film 'Fanny and Alexander' (cf Lofgren 1993: 219).
kitchen the 12 year old daughter of the family had placed a small hand-written
sticker saying, 'Michael Jackson', decorating the decoration with a sign of global
culture (see plate 1). There was also another sticker on the vase, saying 'Dole
Costa Rica', the small badge you sometimes find on oranges, saveable as still a
novelty in the collective farm context where oranges, when available, were
several times more expensive than local chocolate or vodka. The stickers, then,
were small and subtle signs of another dimension of Christmas, symbolising the
appropriation of the networks of global culture which accompanied

The day of St Lucia

Lucia in Sweden, falling on the 13 December, only became a nationwide festival
in the 1930s, when it formed part of a newspaper campaign to sell more copies.
Early in the morning on the day there are processions consisting of the Lucia, a
leading lady with (usually electric) candles in her hair, a special white robe with a
red ribbon tied around her waste, followed by the 'tärnor', the 'maids', dressed in
similar white robes with glitter tied around their wastes, each holding a burning
candle. The Lucia, by contrast, holds her hands in a gesture of prayer, palms
pressed together, and is silent as the others sing, beginning with the 'Lucia song',
and continuing with a selection of Christmas songs. If the procession consists of
schoolchildren there may also be a number of 'stjärngossar', loosely, 'star-boys',
wearing red costumes and coneshaped hats sprinkled with stars, and holding
cardboard stars on a stick. The ceremony involves the song, which is about light
brought to darkness, in the shape of the Lucia appearing at the threshold of the
house on a dark winter dawn, and, for the audience, the consumption of traditional
saffron buns and ginger biscuits, coffee, and, usually, glögg, hot, usually
fortified, but nowadays often alcohol-free, wine with spices, almonds and raisins.
Lucia is celebrated both privately in the home, and on workplaces and schools
across the country. There is also a televised national procession, usually with a
traditionally blond Lucia.

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108 The version of ethno-centric beliefs my field-work suffered from was my initial expectation of local ignorance about western popular culture. Firmly expecting her not to know, for example, I told the mother of the family that Michael Jackson was currently involved in a sexual abuse scandal. Yes, she said, but Enne (her daughter) thinks that Latoya is crazy. (Latoya Jackson, Michael Jackson's sister, who publicly maintained that she believed that her brother had abused the boy in question.) Much of this kind of knowledge was transmitted through the radio, which was on constantly, tuned into 'Radio Kaks', radio 2, the equivalent of English radio 1, which meant that the children knew far more than I did of the current music scene. Also most evenings the TV would end with an MTV music video, signifying the national commitment to western culture.
There is also, however, another side to Lucia, matching the sedate and orderly processions bringing light and invigorating coffee early in the morning, which is a tradition of drunk revelry the night before amongst young people, who stay up late, get drunk, and sing bawdy versions of the songs. This side of the tradition, balancing the 'good' and the wholesome with the 'bad' and the dissolute is not part of the media objectification of the tradition, but exists, appropriately, in the dark. For most teenagers, however, it is comparable with New Years Eve and Midsummer in terms of the licence and expectation of revelry, and the defined hours of staying up, which in the case of Lucia extends to the entire night. In this sense, the two sides of Lucia could be said to represent a compressed Christmas and New Year, taking the faint evocations of respectability and illicitness, which is indicated in the form of the emphasis on the consumption of food (Christmas) vs the consumption of alcohol (New Year), and the association with family (Christmas) vs the association with friends and the public (New Year), to an extreme, creating, in a sense, an anti-Lucia.

The invention of Lucia was brought to the school on my fieldsite by the two temporary Swedish teachers, one of whom was Finnish and the other who was Swedish. They started preparations early, coaching a group of girls with the songs, requesting ingredients from friends in Sweden for the saffron buns and the ginger bread and the glögg, warning all the teachers that the ceremony would take place before the start of the school day. It was a tradition which was to become part of the school by virtue of its identity as 'Scandinavian orientated'. It was not celebrated outside the school, although of course it may be in future, at least amongst those families where the younger generation are again taking up a 'Swedish' identity. If that happens, they may also pick up on the other side of Lucia, which did not form a part of the form of Lucia prepared by the teachers. Indeed, the point of the anarchic articulation of the other Lucia is that it exists relatively spontaneously, young people drifting through the streets, singing and drinking, going from party to party.

St Valentine's Day

St Valentine's day was similar to Lucia in that it was new and as yet fairly unknown. When I asked my landlady to enumerate the holidays to come in the new year she talked vaguely about a 'day of friendship', on the 14 of March, reminiscent of the Soviet vocabulary of 'international friendship'. In fact, I found
out later, she meant St Valentine's day, and had got the dates mixed up. St Valentine's day is not normally celebrated in Sweden, and is a new phenomenon in Finland. It was, however, briefly celebrated in the school, with the giving of cards and the arrangement of a lottery, the purpose of which was to collect money for the finishing students who wanted to go on a bus trip to Italy in the summer. The teachers donated presents for the lottery. In a typically post-Soviet measure, imposing a Soviet form of elitism on a new tradition, all the cards given to teachers from students were collected, in order to publicly find out who the most popular teacher was. Generally, there was an atmosphere of festivity, with students and teachers dressing up for the day.109

The Estonian Independence Day

Revealing the dominance of the school in the small community, Independence Day was publicly celebrated on the 23 of February rather than the 24, its actual date. The reason for this was that the school was closed on the 24 and the 25, and most of the boarding students wanted to go home. At 11 in the morning of the 23, therefore, people congregated in the big hall of the culture house, students, children and about 35 adults including 10 or so teachers. Most of the other adults were elderly, many of whom lived on the farms surrounding the village, or in other villages on the peninsula. The ceremony was centred around the school orchestra, the children's choir, the women's choir, and the students' traditional dance team. 3 girl students read poems, and the national song was sung. Proceedings were interrupted twice by an elderly 7th Day Adventist, who went up to make a speech about the evils of alcohol and the way of God, eventually interrupted by an elderly man went up to her to try and persuade her to stop talking. She did, but told me afterwards that he was a dangerous man, an alcoholic and a communist. After that, the tallest boy in the school carried the Estonian flag up to the stage, grinning self-consciously to his friends. Then the village mayor made a speech about the hard work of independence, the building of the new Estonia, and the new hopes they all shared. After that there was a speech by the head mistress of the school, during which she thanked the Finnish teacher, the Swedish teacher, and me, in my capacity as English teacher. We each in turn had to go up to receive a plastic little flag, and be applauded. I and the Finnish teacher struggled out of our coats, making a concession to formality (it couldn't have been

109 Whenever there was any festivity, people dressed up in a way that is rare in most western countries today. It was a question of living up to the occasion, and showing a measure of formality as respect.
more than 5 degrees in the big hall, so everybody sat in their coats), whilst the Swedish teacher strolled up in her pink jacket and red mittens, embodying the remnants of Swedish modernism by characteristically refusing to 'dress up', as it were.

That was the end of the public ceremony, but the festivities continued in the teachers' room, with Spumante, coffee, cakes and chocolates. The atmosphere was festive, but it didn't last long. I was told by the head mistress, with a somewhat insincere expression on her face, that I had now seen how they feel about Estonian independence. Afterwards, I was told by the Finnish teacher, who had lived in the community since 1990, that last year's independence festivity was a disgrace and a disaster, that the committee who were organising it had suddenly taken off on a trip to Viljandi, a town in central Estonia, leaving all the arrangements undone. Luckily, she said, one of the older teachers stepped in and made an impromptu speech about Estonia before the war, Soviet Estonia, and Estonia after independence. It is clear that the ceremony is gaining in stature and pathos as it is being interiorised. In the year I was there, it still felt too experimental to be genuinely moving, disturbed by a prevalent sense of awkwardness which was a stock response locally to unfamiliar situations. The insincerity of the headmistress was complex, and connected with the fact that whilst she was in fact somewhat associated with the Soviet regime, she also felt that republican patriotism was a good thing, and that there was a danger that the local community and her school did not succeed in representing it with sufficient dignity. The Soviet notion of the leader as responsible and representative beyond the work itself, constituting, in every respect, a good example, still lingered, and she considered herself responsible for representing the community in the best possible light to me.

Women's Day and Irony

International women's day coincided with the birthday of the Swedish teacher from Finland. The former was encoded in Soviet festive envelopes still for sale, badly printed cheap paper with an image of a blond girl with red cheeks in a folk costume receiving a bunch of flowers from an equally blond boy, also in traditional clothes (see plate 2). Women's day, which is strongly associated with the Soviet Union, is not celebrated any more. I asked one of the male teachers what they used to do, and he answered, 'give flowers to the ladies', smiling ironically. Similarly Svetlana Boyms, writing about the notion of culture in Soviet Russia, states that 'The unwritten Soviet etiquette of kul'turnost
demanded that you bring a bouquet of yellow mimosas to your high-school teacher on International Women's Day and a bottle of 'Red Moscow' perfume to your aunt (Boyms 1994:102). On women's day on my field site, two boy students dressed up as women, including make-up, as a jocular antithesis to Soviet normative customs. After lunch, the normal birthday coffee-and-cakes in the school was inevitably contextualised by the past women's day, so that the headmistress' speech was largely about how they didn't have to celebrate it anymore, followed by a funny speech by the history teacher, who said that of course today was the international women's day, but instead we should celebrate tomorrow, which was the 100th anniversary of the founding of the German Social Democratic Party. Then, as an ironic joke, one of the male teachers and the bus driver handed over a flower in a pot, 'to all the women on behalf of all the men.' People laughed, as it was a parody of Soviet women's day. I was told by the headmistress, again taking it as her responsibility to educate me regarding the new Estonia, that they always had to celebrate this day, and that Mother's Day was forbidden, and that now, therefore, they don't want to celebrate Women's Day anymore. All the demonstrations, then, of Women's day were ironic, framed in a protest against the former Soviet state. The Swedish teacher, however, in opposition to the lapse of the Women's Day, organised a Women's Day party for the teachers in the evening, which was received with a mixed reception: a party was always welcome for good things to eat and drink, as well as a break in the monotony which the teachers frequently complained of, but on the other hand this was also an imposition from a Swedish person who could not be expected to understand the connotations of the day, but whose celebration of those connotations was still seen as somewhat tactless and ignorant.
The Song Festival

The Song Festival has punctuated Estonian history since 1869, when the first song festival was held in the university town of Tartu. It continued during the interwar republic, and was taken up again, after an interval of a few years, by the Soviet regime. During that time, it was used to objectify and frame the incipient Estonian nationalism which was perceived as a threat by the state (see chapter 3 for a more detail consideration of this). Last year was again a song festival year, the first one since independence, and therefore an important event.

The televised transmission began with a number of short interviews set up on the street as people congregated to march out to the large stadium outside Tallinn where the festival takes place. It included a lengthy interview with a representative of Mercedes, who had organised a procession of 11 cars to take part. This interview was significant, because he was probably selected as part of an attempt to move the festival away from the Soviet objectifications of folk culture, and into the realm of international commerce and the west. Next, and clearly forming a part of the same process, two Estonian ex-patriates from Venezuela were interviewed, most un-Estonian in blue caps and black sun glasses. The ex-patriates, the overwhelming majority of whom are of course refugees from the Second World War, play an important part in the restoration of the independent republic. Only a few hundred have actually moved back, but many come back to work for a while, bringing money, know-how, and an assortment of suspicions and prejudices. The Venezuelans told the interviewer in broken Estonian that it's the first time they are here. It's a big thing, important. Then there were more shots of horses and carriages and cars, old and modern. Similarly, at the actual festival there was a strong international element, with songs in English as well as Estonian.

The internationalism and commercialism of the post-Soviet states, which is often portrayed in the West as an almost naive, and probably destructive, embracing of materialism, is usually more knowing than it seems, constituting, still, a demonstration of the anti-Soviet. This, of course, is hardly needed in places like Moscow or St Petersburg anymore, but many people at the time of my fieldwork were genuinely afraid that Russia, in some political re-incarnation, might again take over Estonia. Signs of the west were therefore deliberately objectified in the media as the nature of the new Estonia, in order to distinguish the country from Russia and the Soviet style, still, in many ways, the norm.
Conclusion

From a consideration of time in the context of the new Estonian republic, 4 themes emerge clearly. The first is the significance of the project of re-inventing, or restoring, the interwar republic. The second is the particular way in which 'history' was conceived within socialism. This had two aspects, one being the official, Marxist, conception, of history progressing along the dialectical route towards communism. The other is the popular dissident version, expressed in the now defunct Soviet joke that in the west you predict the future from the past, and in the Soviet Union you predict the past from the present, referring, of course, to the intermittent political editing of historical events. The collective view of progress and social projects, however, remains a powerful factor in the former Soviet Estonia, which in the beginning of independence was often expressed as the current project of 'building capitalism', or 'building the new republic.' Consequently, the usual experience of the fieldworker, of being met with a notion of time which is radically different from the western image of time, is here quite different. Instead, I was met with a view which corresponded to and intensified a slightly dated but still powerful European notion of the linear and the progressive, changing the construction of 'the other' which is implicit in the ethnographic project from the exotic to the dated: in other words, to a form of thinking which is immediately recognizable but not altogether current in the west any longer.

The building of the new republic includes, as we have seen, the setting back of the clock, aligned with Helsinki, midway between Moscow and the continent, and the restoration of the western calendar, culminating with the celebrations of Christmas. It also, as we shall see in the next chapter, includes new forms of consumption and developing habitus. Finally, it involves the final consignment of the futuristic past to the past, revealing the conflation of a style, modernism, with a specific historical era. As some science fiction shows, a post-catastrophe future which is less technologically advanced than the past is at least conceivable. To some extent this is happening on the collective farm, with the movement from high-tech agriculture to organic small holdings. On the other hand, the accompanying discourse involves a thoroughly modern degree of awareness of green issues and organic farming as a way to the future.

The third theme is that the material differences between the west and the former Soviet Union carries intuitive implications for the experience of time, or, in other
words, the difference is frequently expressed as a difference in time rather than in ideology and material culture. This tendency, clearly, is predicated on a notion of more or less steady progress, so that the specific development of the former Soviet Union can instead be regarded as arrested, or frozen in time. One informant in Tallinn, for example, who travels a lot with her work, described a visit to a Danish so-called 'workers' museum', where the interiors of working class houses over the ages were displayed, and the strange feeling of recognising the 'post-war home' as very similar to her grand mother's contemporary home, even down to details like the design of the tea pot. The Soviet Union was frozen in time, she said: after a certain period of time there was no development. This of course is related to the lack of innovation which was a feature of the socialist system, but it also tells us something about the way in which we view time itself. Again, this is an aspect which is shared by westerners and easterners, and it also a discourse which has been repeated in different forms over the last century.110

The fourth point is that the northern seasonality of Estonia should not be overlooked in the consideration of how local informants view time: in the year of my fieldwork, the temperatures ranged between -30 and +33 degrees Celsius, which was both unusually cold and unusually hot. The normal range of temperatures, however, is also much wider than in Britain. The changes in light are even more striking if you are not used to them, moving from virtually no real darkness in the summer, to only a few hours of daylight in the winter. The powerful movement between the season instigates a form of tri-partite dialectic between the climate, the physical earth, and culture. There is a marked difference in the use of public space between summer and winter: as spring arrives, people move from the private to the public. The level of sound as well as of light changes entirely, from the dark silent winter to the light noisy summers, children's voices echoing, loud music blaring out, birdsong, cows, dogs, mosquitoes and flies, all making their particular sounds. It is as if with the blanket of snow there is also a blanket of silence and quasi-ibernation, so that people seem to survive almost surreptitiously, working inside, and meeting almost in secret.

110 See for example the following extract from the Swedish Estonian organisation SOV's publication in 1968, which included a number of articles regarding the exodus of Estonian Swedes to Sweden during the Second World War: 'How would you feel if tomorrow you were suddenly thrown into the year 2000? Without bringing much more than the clothes you were wearing, and without knowing the language spoken around you. That is what happened to thousands of people during the years 1944 and 1945. Amongst those who experienced the transformation particularly strongly were some hundreds of people from the island of Ruhnu. They came to the modern industrial nation of Sweden from an isolated island with an ancient culture, where people lived on hunting, fishing, and what they themselves cultivated' (Osterman 1968: 109)
Finally, the tradition of the ethnographic present, problematised by Comaroff and Comaroff, is perhaps particularly problematic in relation to the former Soviet Union. Their alternative notion, however, of a universal historicity caused by internal, or given, dialectics seems to conflate the terms they were at pains to distinguish, i.e. time, history and process (Comaroff and Comaroff 1992: 95-98). Historicity itself of course has two aspects, one being the cultural construction of time, and the other the fact of actual, mechanical, change. The structuralist Marxist notion, however, of innate internal dialectics is not in my view supportable, since it is overly dependent on a specific cultural tradition and discourse. Rather than regarding Marxism as a viable analytical system, in other words, it should be seen as a particular discourse constructed from a nexus of ideas within a long European tradition. On my field site, although few people would have wanted to see the return of the Soviet Union, judging from a total response of 55 households, a little over half claimed that they were more content with life during the time of the collective farm. 17 stated that they were happier now, and 8 that they didn't know. For most people, interiorised aspects of Marxism co-existed with a degree of ironic and private dissidence. Marxism, however, barely existed on a level of ideology anymore - it had become interiorised to the point that it seemed closer to Bruce Kapferer's 'ontologies': '...those constitutive principles of being that locate and orient human beings within their existential realities' than, strictly, ideology (Kapferer 1988:220, note 5). The ideological framework was easy to recognise and move away from - the ontological residues are of course less so. Nevertheless, the removal of those is part of an everyday discourse, sorting out the entanglement of ideas and ideologies in order to produce new cultural constructions of history, material culture, and everyday life. The belief in linear time and progress is clearly one of the ontologies which remain in the former Soviet Union, forming a part of the new discourse of independence.
List of Illustrations/ Chapter 6.

1. Vase of Christmas Poinsettas decorated with a sticker saying 'Michael Jackson' and a sticker from an orange, 'Dole Costa Rica'.

2. Soviet envelope celebrating the 8 of March, Women's Day. Still for sale in the post-office during the time of my fieldwork.
Chapter 7. Building the New Community: The Local Revival of Swedish-ness

Introduction

This chapter constitutes an attempt to analyse the local processes of change on my field-site in terms of the revival of the Swedish cultural heritage, which, as we have seen, had become more or less dormant during the Soviet era. I will look at the events constituting the revival, and the effects of it on the local community. The chapter is divided into three main sections, dealing with separate aspects of the revival. The sections, in turn, are related to discussions in previous chapters, so that the local ethnography is firmly grounded in a historical and anthropological analysis relating not only to the local, but also to the national, level.

In the first part, I will look at the material part of the heritage, i.e. the farm houses, primarily from the point of view of the Estonian Swedish visitors and the present inhabitants. In relation to this, the land and property claims from the former owners forms an important factor in the establishment of relationships between the local people and the returning Swedes (cf. Abrahams 1994:81). There are important differences in the relationships towards the material culture on the farms between the people who remained, the incoming refugees from the war, and the now returning former refugees. More importantly, these differences form a significant part of the discourse of the return. The material culture of the house, as shown by Annette Rosengren in her ethnographic study of ordinary people in a small town in Sweden, forms a constitutive part of those people's everyday life and culture (Rosengren 1991). The emphasis on the material in the narratives of return by the refugees from the war conform to the same cultural pattern. The pre-war Estonian Swedish society had much in common with this culture, unlike the Estonian refugees from the Russian side of the border who were settled in the area during the war. The local perception was that the incomers, some of whom had grown up in Soviet Russia, lacked respect for the carefully managed material culture on the farms, which led to a certain amount of hostility. From the point of view of the refugees, on the other hand, the local population was not perceived as generous or warm, seemingly caring more about their houses than about people.
I then go on to look at the objectifying process with the help of the concepts of authenticity and sentimentality which seem to frame the experiences of the Swedish visitors, much as it did in the 1920s and 1930s (see chapter 2). Most of the visiting Estonian Swedes were staunchly anti-sentimental. Moreover, they often commented on the sentimental tone of the media productions documenting some of these visits. The anti-sentimentality of the Estonian Swedish visitors was part of an attempt to distance themselves from the process of objectification which the media attention involved, and to retain a sense of individualism and authenticity in connection with the revival of the Estonian Swedish cultural heritage.

The process of objectification by the Swedish media also affected the few remaining local Estonian Swedes, who, during repeated interviews, were momentarily transformed into 'living national treasures', satisfyingly, if involuntarily, mimicking historical authenticity through Soviet-induced poverty. It was a frequent complaint from the interviewees that the balance between giving and receiving was disturbed: that the journalists and bus loads of visitors appropriated large amounts of personal information, whilst not giving any information back. The imbalance was a mirror image of the imbalance described in the next chapter, which looks mainly at the question of gifts and aid coming from Sweden. The abundance of goods given by the Swedes from the twin town community did not seem to make up for the abundance of stories and photo opportunities given by the local Estonian Swedes: both created uncomfortable distances, each multiplying the effects of the other.

It is also, however, relevant in this context that the recipients of the goods tended to be the inhabitants of the collective farm blocks, few of whom had an Estonian Swedish background, whilst the people interviewed and visited were almost invariably the older people on the surrounding farms who were identified as Estonian Swedish, and who had managed to stay on in their old homes. Furthermore, the majority of the aid came from the twin contract with the town of Atvidaberg, rather than from the community of Estonian Swedes in Sweden. There are, then, 4 separate groups of people involved in the flows both of aid and of information, constructing different relationships: the Estonian people in the blocks of flats, the handful of Estonian-Swedish people living, mostly, in farm-houses scattered on the peninsula, their relatives and/or former neighbours who had fled to Sweden during the war and are now coming back to visit and to reclaim their former houses and land, and the Swedish people who visit but who have no family background in the area. This last group can be subdivided into the
people from Ätvidaberg who manage the aid project, a significant number of groups belonging to various clubs and associations, and people from the media, ranging from TV people to freelance journalists.

The third section looks in detail at the question of the management of the revival of the heritage, considering in particular the gap between the experience of the local people and the image which is being presented to the Swedish and Finnish-Swedish visitors to the area. The revival, far from being a popular movement, is basically managed by the three leaders of the community, the elected 'director', the head-mistress of the school, and the history teacher, who is also the elected head of the village council. Clearly, the vertical nature of the implementation of the revival owes much to the structure of Soviet politics (cf. Verdery 1991). The effects of the gap between the presented image of the revival, and the actual experience of it, will be considered, using material both from the extensive survey I conducted with the inhabitants of the blocks of flats, and numerous conversations where the issue of the Swedes and Swedish-ness came up.

This part of the chapter, then, addresses the question of the revival of the Swedish heritage from a post-Soviet point of view, looking specifically at the links between the present management of the revival and Soviet practices of the representation and implementation of political decisions. It is important to remember, however, that from the point of view of Sweden, the revival is, rather, a continuation of the events of the 1920s and 1930s, when the identity of the Swedish minority in Estonia was in the process of being constructed (see chapter 3). For the Estonians, the revival is more immediately linked with the restorationist project of re-constructing the independent Estonian republic. Part of my argument in this thesis has been that the concept of the nation of Estonia as a community of Estonians, or in other words the predominantly ethnic conception of the nation, is connected with the Soviet system of citizenship, nationality, and ethnicity. Similarly, whilst the present construction of the new republic is

111 'Swedish', here, denotes both the Estonian-Swedish people who left for Sweden during the war, and the visitors who have no historical links other than the national bond with the area.

112 The Finnish Swedes, ca. 300,000 people, or 6% of Finland's population, has historically been constituted by two separate groups, a coastal population of fishermen and farmers, similar to the Estonian Swedes, and a class of landowners similar to the Baltic Germans. Finland was moved from Swedish to Russian control at the peace of Fredrikshamn in 1809, and, like Estonia, became independent after the first world war. As a minority, the Finnish Swedes have a relatively powerful position, which includes the fact that Swedish has the status of official language alongside Finnish. There are strong concerns regarding assimilation into the Finnish majority within the Swedish community.

113 This system was also, of course, rooted in the Russian Empire.
both a historically reflexive and essentially restorationist project, based on an ostensibly anti-Soviet discourse, it is also at least partially framed by fragments of the ideology, or world-view, of Soviet socialism. For the local Estonians, the concept of the Swedish minority is a constructed reminder of the inter-war republic, a cultural heritage which, because it more or less disappeared with the war, was untouched by the Soviet objectification of folk-culture. More importantly, it was a cultural heritage which most people living in the area had no kinship connection with. This, in combination with the fact that there was little or no effort made to incorporate ordinary people into the process of reviving the heritage, meant that there was a distinct sense of local alienation about the project.

The Swedish Heritage: Ownership and Restoration

By 1993 350 people from Sweden, former owners, had applied to get their farms back on the peninsula, which meant that approximately half of the farms on the peninsula had been re-claimed. In a legal measure which significantly prioritised the free market ideology, a farm could not be re-claimed if it could be shown that it had been bought by the people living there, whoever they had bought it from, and at whatever price. If the collective farm simply registered that the new inhabitants were the occupiers without any payment having taken place, the former owners could claim to get the farms back, although the present inhabitants had a life-time guarantee of occupancy, whereas if some payment had been made they could not. According to the director of the village one of the problems of the land claims was that it was often quite arbitrary whether or not the new inhabitants had paid some token sum or not, and, consequently, whether or not they were now registered as owners or simply as occupiers of their farms.

On both sides, people were talking about compromise and co-operation, although it gradually became clear that the Estonians were somewhat reticent in front of visitors about just how unhappy they were about the situation. The claims were well-organised, through the Swedish-Estonian organisation SOV, based in Stockholm, whose vice-president told me that they had applied for a UN peace-keeping grant in order to aid the process. The visiting Swedes tended to be

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114 I use the word 'constructed' to indicate that the majority of the local people, with the exception of the few people who had an Estonian-Swedish background, had little knowledge about the Swedish heritage during the Soviet times. There was a considerable amount of official suspicion of Estonian Swedish-ness, mainly because virtually every remaining Estonian Swede had contacts abroad. There was, therefore, a strong process of assimilation into an Estonian ethnic identity.
somewhat defensive, embarrassed by the perception of themselves as already comparatively wealthy individuals claiming back the houses of the impoverished present inhabitants. They also expressed emotions of sadness, anger and contempt regarding the dilapidated state of their old homes. It is important to remember that the satisfaction taken in a well-run house is important in Swedish culture, the house providing an arena for the expression of a particular culture of gender relations, focusing on the 'separate but equally valid' work of men and women (Rosengren 1991, 48-68, 132-148). Similarly, the home was central in the Estonian-Swedish culture, particularly in the 'improving' atmosphere of the 1920s and 1930s.

Generally, the farmhouses inhabited by Estonian Swedes were no less dilapidated than the ones inhabited by Estonians. There was, however, one exception to this, a well-run farm which had been in the same family for generations. This farm still exuded some of the pre-war ideals: a form of affluence generated from a strict sense of order, encapsulating both tidiness and cleanliness. The farm belonged to the woman of the family, who had married a returned Estonian deportee. She was the former secretary of the council office in the village, and was now retired, getting by on a meagre pension, a couple of cows, hens, and some land where she grew potatoes, peas, onions, carrots, cabbage, cucumbers and apples. They also picked and preserved mushrooms and berries from the forest, and did some fishing, which was banned during the Soviet times. The larger part of their consumption came either from their own production, or from barter with neighbours with, for example, meat. The milk from the cows used to be sold to the dairy, but the trade had partially collapsed due to the financial crisis of the dairy during the time of my fieldwork.

The difference between this and other farms was striking. The cows, rather than being covered with dirt were clean and glossy, routinely brushed every day. Milking was an elaborate process involving the use of special milking clothes, including hats and boots (fresh milk has a strong smell), washing the teats and treating them with Vaseline for protection, culminating in the milking itself, done by hand. The towels inside the house were clean and ironed, and although there was no running water in the house, there was a jar of hot water next to a bowl for washing ones hands. Generally, the house gave an impression of care paralleled only by the few farmhouses which had been turned into summer residences by wealthy urban people. The aesthetic of production was, then, neat and careful, centred around order and self-sufficiency, self consciously carrying on pre-war concepts of good farming.
The activity required for this goal was contrasted by my informant to the notion of the lazy and alienated newcomers, who first arrived during the war, refugees from the eastern side of the border re-settled by the German army. The prevalent local attitude to those people was that they didn't know how to take care of either the animals or the houses. They burnt furniture and beams for firewood, a fact which was brought up again and again by the locals who remember that time. The refugees, on the other hand, experienced most of the local people as mean and superior. The alienation of the newcomers later merged with the prevalent notion of the alienation of the Soviet citizen, constituting the precise reversal of the ideal citizen: hard-drinking and lazy instead of hard-working; selfish and individualistic instead of self-sacrificial and communally oriented.

As a model Estonian Swede, my informant was regularly interviewed by journalists, and also took part in a book edited by one of the founding members of the Society for Estonian Swedish Culture about what had happened to the Estonian Swedes during the Soviet years, where this quote is taken from: 'They [the refugees from the Russian side of the border] had already learnt how to live in a collective farm. The locals worked for the collective farm in the same way that they did for themselves, cutting the hay from underneath every bush, binding the last sheaves of seed, and "patting" them to make them neat and tidy, the fields were ploughed at right angles, everything was done as it should. But the strangers just didn't care about anything. The locals were careful with the horses and instruments, but they were somehow happy when the wagon broke again, or the horse died, then they didn't have to work. Such a psychological terror was depressing. I've thought many times that if the original population had stayed here it wouldn't have been so bad, people would have helped each other. But now there were two camps - the ones who saved everything that was left, and the others who destroyed everything' (Sarv 1994:57).

My informant, then, represented the pre-war aesthetic of production, which in some ways accidentally coincided with the Soviet ideal of the dedicated worker.

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She regretted the closing of the collective farm, and, in a wider sense, the end of
socialism, although she was in favour of Estonian independence from the Russian
domination. She also regarded the end of the collective farm, as did most people,
as a rupture which gave the already at least potentially corrupt community
leaders the opportunity to rob the people of the revenue of their accumulated
work. Thus, for example, she told me that the leader of the collective farm sold a
large quantity of meat to Finland, pocketing the revenue, which gave him the
capital to invest in a share company in the nearest town, a garage where he now
works. Her husband helped to build the new house of the former leader and his
wife, the head mistress of the school, and got paid immediately, which, in her
view, was a sign that the story of the meat had to be true. In this context she also
mentioned the fur coat of the head mistress, their trips abroad, their contacts, that
she placed her friends as teachers in the school, and fired the teachers who told
her what they thought. My informant, in contrast, who had worked for 46 years,
mostly as a secretary in the village council office, which was an important and
prestigious position, now had nothing to show for it except for a meagre state
pension.

It should be emphasised here that I have no knowledge as to whether or not these
stories are true: my point, rather, is that these narratives of corruption are framed
by a wider Soviet setting where there was not only two kinds of workers; the ideal
worker hero and the anti-worker, lazy, selfish, and alcoholic, but also two kinds
of leaders, the paternal and ideological leader and the corrupt leader of the
narratives of every day life. Whether or not the leaders were mostly corrupt or
mostly honest, or whether the workers were mostly hard-working or hard-
drinking is not the question then - the point to be made for the purposes of this
thesis is that the particular ideology of the Soviet Union produced a narrative
which constituted the exact structural opposite of the ideology.

Most of the Estonian Swedes who came back were depressed and taken aback by
the state of their old farms, mainly because they were so run down, but also
because they were so unchanged. In Sweden there is little left of the heritage of
poor rural life of the 1930s, which to the modernist ethos which came to dominate
Swedish political life represented not only poverty but also social backwardness.
As we have seen, before the war the Estonian Swedish community was in the
process of transformation and modernisation, situated, like their Swedish
counterparts, in between tradition and modernity, although the modernity offered
was perhaps more modest in its content. Frykman and Löfgren quote the
Swedish writer Elin Wågner who wrote, in 1939, about contemporary people,
situated in between the ancient and the future: 'In her childhood she might have been exposed to the magic cults stemming from the time before the forefathers stories about the old Gods, but that does not prevent her from taking advantage of the most recent instruments for diagnosis and treatments at the county hospital... She may have learnt how to milk a cow with magic formulas as well as with a milking machine. She may have met the oppressive and powerful belief in fate of the elderly, and the belief in the state and state benefits of the young' (Frykman/Löfgren 1985:15). The present situation of the Estonian Swedes who remained in Estonia is of a different in-between-ness where the era of Soviet modernity is hidden from view in terms of what can be seen from the material culture of the old farmhouses, and the contemporary looks more old-fashioned than the recent past.

What was regarded with nostalgia or dismay by the visitors, however, was largely a result of the uneven development of the Soviet Union. The interiors of individual farmhouses, with the exception of electrification, which was universal, were more or less unchanged, not least because people did not have the money, or access to materials, to change them. The exteriors were often mended with whatever materials were available (see plates 1-4). Given the common dislike of the Soviet style, however, the farmhouses were generally regarded as idyllic by the people who lived in the flats, and even more so by the urban people who were further removed from the inconveniences of rural life, and who tended to see the farms as representations of the pre-Soviet Estonia. In the presentations of the area to the Swedish visitors, the Soviet past was not normally mentioned. The Estonian Swedes, then, defined by their material heritage, tended, still, to be described in Sweden as an authentic and old-fashioned people, isolated from the 'modern world', echoing the descriptions from the 1920s and 1930s. They were, then, almost entirely identified with their material culture, rather than with their Soviet history and complex present situation, with the further effect that their identification with the new Estonian republic was usually ignored by the Swedish media representations of their situation.

Apart from the farm-houses, which the returning Swedish-Estonians had individual relationships with, there were two buildings on the peninsula which every visitor had a symbolic relationship with, in that they represented two important aspects of the pre-Soviet society, as well as two concrete projects of restoration, symbolising the wider restorationist project of the republic: the local manor-house which housed the Swedish school, and the church, including, importantly, the grave yard, and (see plates 5-6). Generally, the churches and
chapels are seen as the most important aspects of the restoration of the cultural heritage. Not only do they represent a link with the ancestors who were left behind, but they were also commonly desecrated during the Soviet era. In a report about the society for Estonian-Swedish culture for Kustbon, by Herbert Stahl, a former inhabitant of Stora Râgö of the northern coast of Estonia, he writes about the destruction of the Estonian-Swedish culture: 'It has been razed to the ground, destroyed and plundered. Most of the atrocities you could imagine were perpetrated against our forefathers. Something we couldn't even dream about has now become true. Now we need to help, sacrificing some of what we have in order to renovate and restore what was once our home environment. Churches, chapels and graveyards shall be restored as far as possible' (Kustbon June 1992 2/49:17).

The manor-house of Birkas, along with all other Estonian manor houses was nationalised in connection with the land reforms of 1920 (Lieven 1993:62). As we saw in chapter 3, it had been occupied by troops during the war, both Estonian and Bolshevik, who, apparently, sawed up the banisters for firewood and used the cupboards as lavatories, after which it had been abandoned for some years. After the war, the Swedish organisation 'Riksföreningen för Svenskhetens Bevarande i Utlandet', ('the National Society for the Preservation of Swedishness abroad') offered to finance a school for young Swedish adults, en folkhög-, hushålls- och lantmannaskola (a combined adult education college, a domestic school, and an agricultural college) and the Estonian government offered the manor house of Birkas for this purpose (Nyman 1971:7-8).

The aim of the school was, essentially, to strengthen the identity and improve the circumstances of the Estonian Swedish minority. In 1921, the budget showed an income of approximately 4,000 Swedish crowns, of which approximately 30% came from the Estonian state, 26% from the National Society for the Preservation for Swedishness Abroad, 31% from two private collections, and 11% from the Estonian-Swedish organisation Svenska Odlingens Vänner, Friends of Swedish Culture (SOV). The costs somewhat exceeded the income, adding 400 crowns to the bill (Nyman 1971:53). The school, after running successfully for 23 years, was

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117 This information comes from a description of the first years of the new agricultural school in the manor-house during the 1920s by the first headmaster, Kaleb Andersson. (Andersson 1971:72-3)
eventually closed down in connection with the Soviet invasion. The building was, again, used as lodgings for the army during the Second World War, after which it was empty until the forced collectivisation in 1949, when parts of it were used for the collective farm office, whilst other parts were locked up. When the new office block was completed in the 1960s, the manor-house was abandoned, and left empty until 1988, when the notion of reviving the Swedish school became politically viable.

The restoration of the manor-house was an ongoing project during the time of my fieldwork in 1993-4. The work, undertaken as a communal project, progressed unevenly due to a lack of funds, and stood at a standstill for much of my year in the community. The restoration was proposed by Samfundet för Estlands Svensk Kultur, the Association for Estonian Swedish culture which was founded in Estonia in 1988, and did not involve either the twin town aid project which is described in chapter 8, or SOV. Indeed, from the description of the first visit to the area, published in Kustbon, the journal of SOV, in 1988, there is no mention at all about the manor-house, which did not form part of the official programme. The church, already restored, and a service by a Swedish priest, were described in detail, followed by a visit to the graveyards: 'After having found out what the programme for the day was we went by car to the graveyards in Nuckö, Roslep and Sutlep. It rained heavily during the visit, but the impression was that the graves were generally in a good condition, and the graveyards were properly restored, all done by volunteers during the spring. Nuckö church was also restored, mostly with the help of volunteers' (Kustbon Dec. 1988, 4/45: 12-13).

In September the following year, the manor-house was mentioned for the first time in Kustbon, when a visitor, a former inhabitant of the peninsula, wrote that the head-mistress of the school and the director of the village, 'both young people' (which in this context means that they were less likely to be associated with the previous regime) told the visitors that the manor-house was going to be restored: 'We also heard that the former manor-house, which was the building of the adult education college of Birkas, was going to be restored, and used for the purpose of

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118 'Efter att ha fått reda på programmet för dagen åkte vi i bilar till de olika gravgårdarna i Nuckö, Roslep och Sutlep. Det regnade ordentligt vid dessa besöck, men intryncket blev att gravarna i allmänhet var ordentligt iständsatta och gravgårdarna iordninggjorda, allt detta med frivillig arbetskraft under våren. Också Nuckö kyrka var resaturerad och iständsatt, till största delen med frivillig arbetskraft' (Kustbon Dec. 1988, 4/45: 12-13).
Ain Sarv, one of the founding members of the association for Estonian Swedish culture, in 1991 wrote a leader in their journal, Ronor, where he considers the continuity between the revival of the Estonian Swedish heritage before the war, and the present revival: 'I read about the strict teacher Thorsten Svensson who arrived from Sweden [before the Second World War] and I see before me Manfred Stenberg who voluntarily came to Nuckö to teach there [in 1991]. I read in the memoirs of Sven Boräng how exceptionally polite his pupils seemed to him, which reminds me of what I have heard the present Swedish teacher in Nuckö school, Virve Kuula, tell me. I read about how they organised a student hostel in Haapsalu, and how they lived there, which immediately reminds me of the student hostel in Nuckö.'...'In this way a cord which was torn apart has again been tied together' (Ronor 2-3/ 1991:2). The restoration of the former school and the church, then, represented a communal effort to restore two powerful symbols of the pre-Soviet period of independence, rather than an effort directed from Sweden, although some financial help was eventually collected from Sweden. The director, for example, in a letter to Kustbon published in June 1991, thanks SOV for the gift of electric heating in the church, as well as for a collection for the existing school (Kustbon June 1991 2/48:14).

**Authenticity and Sentimentality**

There were probably about 50 remaining Estonian Swedes on the peninsula, but of those there was only a handful who had become 'representative' Estonian Swedes: the people to whom the council authorities routinely directed journalists and other enquirers. The former secretary to the council, whose farm is described...
above, was one of those people. Unlike many of the other Swedes, she still spoke, or rather had re-learned, fluent Swedish. She talked disparagingly about the journalists and film-crews who would regularly arrive, always asking the same questions, and, worse, sentimentalising the answers. This complaint was common also amongst the Estonian Swedes in Sweden. When asking once what it felt like to leave one's home in the middle of the war, my informant laughed, and replied that that was exactly what the journalists always asked. In fact, he said, it felt almost banal. He stressed that the media picture of the Estonian Swedes, as a small människospillra, a fragment of humanity, scattered on the inhospitable coast of Estonia, resolutely carrying on their Swedish culture, was false. He, like many other people, talked about the human failings of his former neighbours - all of whom now live in Sweden - in his case he stressed that they were mean, and still are, talking about how it was impossible to collect money for a hotel in a particular village, because the people who come from other villages don't see why they should support projects from a village they have no connection with. Swedish journalists, he said, were incapable of doing anything about the Estonian Swedes without becoming overwhelmingly sentimental, even people who were usually factual and objective. His stress therefore, on the 'normality', or ordinari­ness, of the Estonian Swedes represented a common attempt to avoid a form of objectification which he felt that the media attention entailed.

Elisabeth Hedborg, a prominent TV-journalist, who did the first reports about the Estonian Swedes in 1988, was herself interviewed in Kustbon about a media event which she had organised, bringing together an Estonian Swedish father, who had stayed in Estonia, and his son, who had left during the war. She stated that, 'The purpose, then, was to re-unite these two generations with their new families, to built a giant bridge in time and space between two worlds and two generations. It was a fascinating experience. It was really two epochs of Swedish history meeting, a meeting between the Sweden of poverty and the Sweden of welfare. The daughter says, 'Yes, and we have been to the Canaries', and Johan answers a little acidly and with much self-irony, 'And here of course we could always go to Moscow'. The article continues, 'The most important impression for Elisabeth was probably the fact that this was a Sweden from the 1930s, with none of the modern conveniences - no running water, a dry closet in the yard and a sauna'. The TV program was a great success. She tells of the letters she has received, appreciating the fact that this

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\[121\] The saunas on the farms were more like bath-houses than the modern sauna: wood-fired and rarely more than luke-warm they were used in the traditional manner for the purposes of a weekly wash.
'forgotten group' had now been noticed: 'Many also expressed their appreciation of the genuine and folksy elements of the program, of the traditions and culture, the environment and the simplicity. She did try to present all this in the program as something 'old and valuable'. 'They have something left which we have lost. To be able to work with their hands, to have kept their integrity' (Kustbon March 1989, 1/46:28-29). 122

Despite in the earlier part in the interview mentioning the horrors of the Stalin epoch and the forced collectivisation, the implicit message of the documentary, and of the interview, re-enforced by the brief exposure to the material culture, is that there had been virtually no development, so that the present poverty is constructed as merging with the rural poverty in 1930s Sweden. The material culture itself, then, has had a somewhat deceptive impact on the representation of the Estonian Swedes, where the 'modern-ness' of the Soviet system is hidden from view. It must not be supposed, however, that because the Soviet project to transform rural life failed in terms of economic efficiency or social harmony, it had no effect.123 The sense in which the Estonian Swedes of today, therefore, are regarded as representing an authentic and ancient Swedish culture, with the prevalent focus on their dialects and their material culture, is a result of an objectification of that culture in which it is re-created as ethnographically interesting. The present poverty, then, has led to an almost accidental, and certainly deceptive, similarity to 'authentic traditional culture', the representation of which has been an important element of modern Swedish culture, not least as a means of differentiation from that which is represented.


123 This project also, of course, constitutes one of the great crimes against humanity, killing countless peasants, particularly during the 'terror-famine' of 1932-33. At least the Estonian peasants avoided the most brutal wave of collectivisation, although in the deportations preceding collectivisation in 1949 at least 20,700 people were deported, representing some 2,4% of the population. The war had already led to a decrease in the population from 1,136,000 to 854,000. (Conquest 1990: 488, Fjuk 1992:38, 23)
The fact that the Estonian Swedes had been so intensively investigated as ethnographic subjects before the Second World War, combined with the Soviet interest in 'folk cultures', had a considerable effect on the project of carrying out field work amongst them. It was clear that the elderly Estonian Swedes in the area took some pleasure in the ethnographic identity which the revival of the Estonian Swedish cultural heritage entailed. There was a certain cultural self-consciousness in their stories of old customs, requests for questions, demands that this or that dialectic word be written down, and incorporated into the project. In sharp contrast to the people who lived in the blocks of flats, they seemed to feel that their culture, embedded in their particular dialect, was ethnographically important.

At the same time, it was clear that their everyday concerns were similar to those of their Estonian neighbours. They were focused, for example, on kinship, which, because of the intermarriages which were part of the assimilation process during previous decades, was no longer defined as Estonian Swedish, local gossip, or the state of the local and national economy. I was surprised one day when one of my informants, an elderly Estonian Swede who had suffered from polio as a child, and was consequently paralysed, asked me to take her photograph so that she could send in an application for an Estonian passport, in order to replace her old Soviet one. She had no intention, and probably few possibilities, to travel: it was, rather, a symbolic gesture of allegiance to the new republic, denoting an involvement with the nation which was unexpected.

In September 1993, I attended a conference at Tallinn's Pedagogical Institute about the Estonian Swedes. Of the people attending, there were 8 Swedish and Finnish linguists, a group from a Finnish Swedish adult Education College, and a group of students from the school in Noarootsi. The conference began with a paper about the historical origins of the Estonian Swedes. This was followed by a presentation about Swedish-ness during the Soviet times - it was not a good nationality to have, both because of the question of relatives abroad, and because Sweden made a deal with the occupying German army during the war to allow the transport of the Estonian Swedes 'home' to Sweden. The presenter, Ain Sarv, also talked about the new adult education college, Pasklep Lantbruks och Folkhögskola, which was started by the association for Estonian Swedish culture, with the help of the Finnish Swedish adult education college Svenska Österbottens Folkakademi. At that time they had 37 students and a number of voluntary teachers, of whom the history teacher on the collective farm was the driving force. They aimed to strengthen the Estonian Swedish identity, amongst other things by teaching the students the old names of the area. These, as we have seen in chapter 3, were actually prohibited in the 1930s, during a period of Estonianisation when
the Swedish culture, along with other non-Estonian ethnic cultures, was mildly repressed. My experience of this school, which was temporarily housed partly in Haapsalu and partly at the school in Pürksi, was that it was faltering, kept going by the will power of the history teacher who regularly cycled around the peninsula to whip up support amongst the Estonian Swedes, few of whom would then actually turn up for his lectures. In his presentation, however, Ain Sarv was arguing that all the school children in the area should be taught some of the particular old dialects, in order to keep the heritage alive, a measure which was regarded as unrealistic by the Swedish and Finnish linguists present.

As regards to the questions of culture and authenticity, there was a curious consensus between the academics at the conference, the more educated locals and the journalists. The inhabitants in the blocks of flats, some of whom were the assimilated descendants of Estonian Swedes, were on the whole regarded as 'culture-less', and therefore un-interesting. Older identities, such as that of being a 'worker', now had particular connotations to the Soviet Union which people were hesitant to express: freedom of expression without reprisals (which could be subtle) was not at all taken for granted. Some people expressed the notion that the (assumed) alienation of the people in the blocks of flats stemmed from their separation from the land, where, being Estonian, they 'naturally' belonged. The journalists' focus on the Estonian Swedes on the old farms, and the lack of interest in the Estonian Swedes in the blocks of flats, therefore, did not cause any surprise: it fitted too neatly into Soviet and post-Soviet conceptions of what was 'interesting' and what was not, despite the fact that the people on the farms were practically as assimilated as the people in the blocks of flats. Swedish was no longer their first language, and nobody spoke it spontaneously amongst themselves. Indeed, most people spoke it quite badly, which, given their strong dialect, was often not immediately obvious to the Swedes.

For people like the history teacher, who himself had no Swedish roots, the interest in both the history and the contemporary revival of the Estonian Swedish heritage was connected to an opposition to the Soviet Union, and support for the restoration of the Estonian republic. For him, and people like him, the Estonian Swedes represented the culture of the former republic, which had been ruptured by the Soviet invasion. Since the material culture and the customs of the Swedes was virtually identical to their Estonian neighbours, the dialects had become the most important factor in considering the particularity of the contemporary life of the Swedes, much as it was in the 1930s. This was in some contrast to the Swedish media point of view, which, as outlined above, tended to focus on the
material culture of the heritage, communicating a somewhat misleading impression of cultural authenticity through the un-touched nature of the material culture.

The different constructions of the revival of the Swedish cultural heritage, including the view of the village authorities, the official Swedish view, and the view of the Estonian Swedes in exile, could be seen during the 'Days of Memory', 3 days in June 1994 which commemorated the end, and celebrated the revival, of the Swedish culture in Estonia. Several busloads of Estonian Swedes, some, but not all, originally from the area, had arrived to participate in the celebrations. The director of the village, himself partly of Estonian Swedish parentage, made the opening speech, in Swedish, which is quoted here in its entirety 124: 'Dear inhabitants of Noarootsi in Estonia and Sweden, today on the 23 of June in the historical centre for Estonian Swedes in Estonia. 50 years ago they fled from a foreign power, leaving their farms behind, leaving the area in the hopes of returning after a while. After several decades away from home, and many ruined hopes, you still tried to keep the [Estonian Swedish] culture for coming generations. The parents of young Swedes still know the dialects of this particular and exceptional culture. This culture has been oppressed, and we have not been able to do what in our hearts we wished to do. In 1988 the first Memorial Days took place, and then nobody knew that there would be such a great rupture; that we would have our own currency and our own border. It has all happened during such a short period, the restoration of our independent republic, like a dream which at first you fail to understand. And our state is so small, that we are like children in primary school, reading and discovering an up to now unknown world. And I wish from my heart that all the people who live in Noarootsi would support, again, the Estonian Swedish culture, economy, and education, and for all this I wish you good will, wisdom and power. I now declare the Estonian Swedish Memorial Days open'.

The history teacher, who also made a speech, focused in his presentation almost exclusively on the rupture of the invasion. He also quoted two documents, the first one from Svenska Folkförbundet, the political organisation of Estonian Swedes, written in 1919 to the newly formed constitutional assembly of Estonia, stating that the Swedish people support the Estonian people in the republic of Estonia. The second document he quoted was written in 1940, as the Estonian Swedish

124 Note that the translation, which is mine, represents the fact that whilst his Swedish was good, it was not fluent.
people from certain islands were evacuated to make way for Soviet bases. It was a rather long quote taken from the description of an Estonian ethnographer, now living in Sweden, who witnessed the evacuation, which, for him, became symbolic for the tragic end of Estonia, and the beginning of a new, as yet unknown, epoch. The fate of the Estonian Swedes, therefore, in exile in the west, are seen, at least to some extent, by the people involved as symbols for the former republic itself. Unlike the Estonian exiles, who were treated by contempt in Soviet schools, and Estonian folk culture, which was objectified in numerous Soviet presentations, the Swedish heritage was ignored, which makes it all the more accessible for present-day appropriations.

The speeches of the village mayor and the history teacher could be said to represent the official local view of the revival. The Swedish representative, the Swedish cultural attaché, made a rather optimistic speech about the local revival of Swedish-ness, saying that they were assembled here to commemorate the invasion, but also to celebrate a re-assembly of former inhabitants which would have been un-imaginable just 10 years previously. He stated that the happiness and optimism concerning the growth of the Swedish language, and the establishment of the Swedish school in the area, influenced all the work of the embassy, followed by the statement that, 'When we look westwards towards the home country we also look towards the western parts of Estonian, where we have followed the development of the old Swedish parts with great pleasure.' He went on to say that of 25 Swedish ministerial visits since 1991, more than 10 had visited the 'Swedish areas'. The most symbolic visit was that of the King and the Queen, whose visit was based on a trip undertaken by Crown Prince Gustaf Adolf in 1932, when he travelled extensively in the Estonian Swedish areas. The royal trip, therefore, was used as a symbolic re-claiming of, at least, the cultural significance of the area for Sweden in the speech by the cultural attaché.

The chairman of SOV, representing the Estonian Swedes, finally, made a speech commemorating the tragic end (many people died as they attempted to cross over in small boats before the deal with Germany went through, just before the re-invasion of the Soviet army) of the Swedish culture in Estonia. He also, however, stated that he wanted to celebrate the Estonian Swedish culture, whose members lived all over the world, and to make sure that the culture lived on in exile, through, for example the youth section of SOV, SONG. For him, therefore, the culture was lodged with the people rather than in the place, now populated by people who had little or no affinity with the Estonian Swedish cultural heritage. Whilst it was important to come back, therefore, it was more important to transmit
the culture to the younger generation in exile, and to make sure that the culture did not disappear in a process of assimilation.

It was clear that the memorial days were organised for the visitors, rather than for the present inhabitants of the former collective farm, who, unless they were part of the folk-dance team or the choir, kept away. Most of the events took place in the draughty Soviet hall of culture, made even grimmer, somehow, by the presence of 150 or so Swedes in bright clothes, exuding both comfort and affluence. Apart from the speeches mentioned above, there were also several speeches by people who had organised help or collections for the area. For example, there was a man from Leksand, Dalarna, whose town already has another twin town in Estonia, but who had come to Noarootsi on the way back to Sweden, and had been impressed by the attempts to revive the Swedish-ness, and decided to try and do something to help. They decided that one pupil, ('preferably the best one'), should be allowed to come to Leksand for a one year scholarship programme. One of the Estonian Swedish SOV officials thanked him, and gave him a diploma, and made a small speech, stating that 'The gratitude people feel here will live on like a legend - here is a town in Sweden which suddenly stretches out its hand to help.' The extent of the local gratitude is actually doubtful: people's attitude to the help of the Swedes is complex, and, to outsiders, deliberately neutral (see chapter 8). Moreover, the student will in all probability not be local, since the high school part of the school is a boarding school, attracting students from all over Estonia, very few of whom actually have any connection to the Estonian Swedish heritage. Despite the fact that the boarders live in some of the flats in the newest block, there was little contact between them and the local people, a fact which, of course, was not known to the visiting Swede.

There was also an exhibition, consisting mainly of photographs with texts from the pre-war culture, as well as a small section on the Soviet times, which was entirely in Russian, and therefore inaccessible to most of the visitors. After most of the Swedes had left, however, some of the local people came in to look at the Soviet section, leafing through the collective farm records, school records, and school photograph albums on display, looking for friends and relatives, discussing the events of that era which was actually so recent and yet seemed so distant. The small Soviet corner of the exhibition, therefore, constituted a connecting link between the present inhabitants and the pre-war Estonian Swedes, although the latter were prevented from learning much about the Soviet heritage by the exclusive use of Russian. In the same way, the local people were kept apart from
the rest of the exhibition by the exclusive use of Swedish, further marginalising them from the events of the revival of the cultural heritage.

A part of the exhibition focused on the Estonian Swedes' life in Sweden after the flight from Estonia, which began with the following text, glossing over all of the difficulties the Estonian Swedes first encountered in Sweden: 'The Estonian Swedes who arrived in the 1940s all looked Nordic, and had Swedish names. Their Swedish may have sounded a bit strange, but after all that was mostly a question of differences in dialects. Even if much was new and different on arrival, the Estonian Swedish community soon found their place in the new country. The Swedes who were called back have grown into the Swedish society after 50 years in the country. A newly-awakened interest in the Estonian Swedish culture, its origins, and Estonia, is noticeable today, not least amongst the third generation Estonian Swedes.' The effect of this statement is to emphasise the Swedish-ness of the Estonian Swedes, as opposed to, potentially, their Estonian-ness, an effect which curiously contradicts the attempts to resist assimilation. Many of the Estonian Swedish names, for example, sound not Swedish but almost Swedish, with unusual variations on Swedish names, and often Russian and Estonian first names in the older generation.

The text, then, represents an attempt to distinguish between cultural and racial difference, where the former could safely be emphasised within the parameters of essential, or racial, Swedish-ness. In this way, the Estonian Swedes could be categorised as a regional minority amongst many others, rather than as a group of Swedish people with kinship links in a foreign country. The Estonian Swedes, then, uncomfortably situated on the cusp between Swedish-ness and foreign-ness, had the ambivalence of their origins resolved by the emphasis on their racial Swedish-ness, and by the categorisation of their culture as a regional variation. This is not to suggest that individual Estonian Swedish refugees took an active part in this process. Rather, the cultural logic of Sweden prompted these categorisations from the end of the 19th Century onwards. The text quoted from the exhibition represents a contemporary remnant of the need to assume an unproblematic and un-ambiguous Swedish-ness, which simultaneously forms part

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125 'De estlandssvenskar som kom hit på 1940-talet hade all ett nordiskt utseende och de bar svenska namn. Kanske låt deras svenska lite konstig, men det var trots allt mest fråga om dialektala skillnader. Även om mycket var nytt och annorlunda vid själva ankomsten fann sig den Estlandssvenska gruppen efter en tid väl tillrätta i det nya landet. De 'hemkallade svenskar' har vuxit in i det svenska samhället efter 50 år i landet. Ett nyvaknat intresse för den estlands-svenska kulturen, dess ursprung, och Estland märks idag inte minst bland 3:e generationen estlands-svenskar.'

229
of the process of objectification which many Estonian Swedes resent. The 'authenticity' of the Estonian Swedes which the media emphasises is, then, constituted by three separate components: the material culture of the remaining Estonian Swedes, which, due to the nature of the Soviet and post-Soviet economies, is presently similar to the pre-war material culture, the distinct culture and dialects, which persists as an ethnographic object rather than a living culture, and, finally, the racial identification as Swedes.

The accompanying sentimentality of the media objectifications was exemplified during the exhibition by some quotes from newspapers, such as the following, which make a similar point: 'Some weeks ago something exceptional was happening on the small Estonian island of Wormsi. Side by side, a Swedish, a Finnish, and an Estonian flag were flown. This has not happened since the war. And surely there was not a dry eye amongst the onlookers. Among them were Elisabeth Westerberg from Ganhester, a descendant from Wormsi. During a few days in July she was able to take part in officially restoring the Swedish-ness in the village' (Ormsödagarna 28/29.7.1990, Borås Tidning),126 There was, then, a reification of the notion of 'Swedish-ness', which incorporated the few remaining Estonian Swedes, and selected parts of their material culture. There was also the sense that there are particular areas of Estonia which had been 'Swedish', Svenskbygderna, and which could now potentially become 'Swedish' again, by persuading the local inhabitants that their best interests were served by identifying themselves with Sweden.

During the next day, there was a church memorial service. The church was packed, and the service began with a procession of Estonian Swedes, and the Swedish priest, who had come over for the occasion, praying with them: 'Gud som haver barned kär, se till mig som liten är, vart jag mig i världen vänder, står min lycka i Guds händer.'127 'You all know this one', he said cosily. The prayer set the tone of traditional Swedish-ness, added to by the hymns: Din klara sol går åter upp; Vår Gud är oss en väldig borg; Blott en dag, ett ögonblick i sänder; I denna ljusa sommartid; and Tryggare kan ingen vara.. At the end there was a dialect song by Mats Ekman; 'ja minns han fagor tien, ta allt valde sort...'

127 'Roughly translated as, 'God, for whom all children are dear, look out for me who is little, wherever I go in the world, my fate is in God's hands.'
sung in solo. All the songs, sturdily traditional, reflected both the search for the essentially Swedish and a celebration of summer. They were clearly deliberately nostalgic. Swedish television was present, from the news programme *Aktuellt*. The audience, however, were whispering rebelliously as proceedings became prolonged, and the whole occasion suddenly threatened to become boring. The aesthetic of the church was objectified by numerous camcorders, loosing its perceived authenticity in the process of unremitting recording, and people had become somewhat impatient due to the inevitable delays of the previous day.

The revival of the Swedish heritage from the Swedish point of view, then, is complex, encompassing both the wishes of individuals to return to their childhood homes, perhaps not to live but at least to visit, and to reclaim their farms, and the wishes of the Swedish state to construct a particular relationship with Estonia which at least to some extent is conducted through the existence of the Estonian Swedes. In addition, the Estonian Swedes occupy a central position in relation to the perennial tension in Sweden between modernism and tradition: a tension which has dominated much of Swedish culture since the 1930s. The Estonian Swedes, with their folk costumes, and their ‘quaint and ancient customs’, were identified in the 1930s as representatives of the traditional Swedish-ness which was under threat from modern industrialism. Their return to Sweden, and the revival of modernism after the war, when the celebration of local folk cultures had become associated with the Nazi aesthetic, meant that they were themselves uncomfortably associated with the Nazi regime, a fact which hastened their assimilation into mainstream society. The fall of the Soviet Union, however, and the subsequent re-assessment of the Soviet measures in the Baltic states, as well as the new possibilities for travel and contact, meant that the interest of the Estonian Swedes in Estonia, as well as the interest of the Swedish media in the Estonian Swedes, was re-awakened. Undoubtedly, however, the aversion for sentimentality expressed by most Estonian Swedes at least partially stems from the old fear of being associated with the Nazis, and the objectified appropriation of Nordic folk cultures which had caused them to be identified as, racially, Swedish.

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128 It should be pointed out, however, that the main reason for the special relationship with Estonia is the large community of exiled Estonians in Sweden, some of whom, like, for example, Madis Üürike, the former minister of finance in Estonia, became active in their old country.

231
The Management of the Revival

For a poor agricultural area whose village council would have declared bankruptcy if that were a legal possibility, the relationship to Sweden had obvious material advantages, as well as the symbolic importance outlined above. The extent and nature of the aid is outlined in the next chapter. Here, I will focus on how the revival is managed, looking in particular at the gap between the presentation of the village to visitors, and the experience of the people living in the blocks of flats.

There are 9 blocks of flats in the village, 3 older ones on the road coming into the village, and 6 newer ones, forming the centre. The 3 older ones were separated from the others not only by distance (ca. 200 m.), but also by living standard. They lacked central heating, and instead were heated by traditional wood-fired stoves built into the walls. They were also smaller, and the rent, which had always been inexpensive, was now much cheaper than that of the newer flats. There were exceptions, but on the whole it was obvious that the people who lived in those flats were poorer than the people in the newer flats. They also lived closer to the old shop, whereas the new shop was at the other end of the village, which emphasised the association between the old blocks and a Soviet style poverty. Of the remaining 6 blocks, about two thirds of the 2 newest ones were given over to the student hostel, the students sharing flats. Another block contained offices, a library, the old people's flat, the temporary hostel for new-comers, the visitors' flat, and the nurse's reception. The remaining 3 blocks were ordinary flats, for which there had been, and still was, a waiting list.

According to my survey, which covered 55 households129, 41 out of 55 households had relatives, friends, or contacts abroad, and 31 out of 55 had travelled in the west, the majority to Finland, followed by Sweden. In one sense, therefore, it was a highly international community, and whilst the people who were doing well in the new system tended to have friends and contacts abroad, many people who were doing less well also had relatives abroad who sporadically kept in touch, descendants of the many refugees from the war. The international contacts of the community, however, had been more or less latent during the Soviet epoch, particularly since the ruling in the 1970s that any gift received from

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129 The survey covered every household in the blocks of flats with the exception of 3, of which one family was away. The other two were both single alcoholic men. One of them was away, and the other was the only member of the community who refused to take part in the survey. The student boarders were not part of the survey.
abroad was taxable, which made it prohibitively expensive to receive gifts from the west. The collective farm community during this era had been relatively isolated, although there was, like on all the poorer collective farms, a good deal of movement in and out, as people stayed for a few years and then moved on. The peninsula, however, had belonged to the coastal border protection zone, which meant that entering required a special permission - not particularly difficult to get for local people, but impossible for foreigners.

The revival of the Swedish heritage in the area was managed, first by the collective farm director, and then, after the closure of the farm, by the director of the administrative unit which comprised both the peninsula and parts of the mainland, the history teacher, who was also the head of the village council, and the head mistress of the school. They dealt with the contacts, which were handled in the ordinary Soviet manner, with invitations, receptions, tours, and meetings. Contact with ordinary people were not encouraged, although the Swedes did try to create a local friendship organisation for ordinary people, which, due to a lack of response, had petered out. In 1990, in the beginning of the twin town agreement with the Swedish town of Åtvidaberg, a committee, consisting of the most important people in the council, and an interpreter, planned to visit Sweden, after which the work of Nuckökommitten, the Åtvidaberg council committee for Noarootsi, began its extensive development work in the area. The Swedish committee was oriented towards practical results, taking on not only the responsibility for raising the standard of living in the area, but also the more political responsibility concerning the transition from the Soviet to a privatised system, which was appropriated as a goal for the co-operation between the village council and the committee of the Åtvidaberg council (See chapter 8 for a more detailed consideration of the aid from Sweden). The extensive work of the committee involved repeated visits to the community, which, during the time of my fieldwork, were a monthly occurrence. They stayed at the visitors' flats, and were taken care of by the caretaker, and, notably, the family of the new secretary of the council, which was of a mixed Swedish/Estonian background. The relationship between the visitors and the community are dealt with in chapter 8: here I will deal primarily with the response of the community to the interest from Sweden.

In the section of my survey dealing with the future, I asked whether, in the opinion of the respondents, the future of Noarootsi looked hopeful or not, and for what reasons. The responses were interesting, not least because they indicated a gap between the beliefs of the members of the Åtvidaberg committee, who...
tended to think that the hopes for the future for the area lay in the relationship between them and the community, within the parameters of 'help to self-help'. It has to be said that, given the poverty of the community and the extent of the aid, they seemed to have good reason for this belief. Their reliance on a trickle-down effect not only of the aid, but also of their effort and good intentions, is probably partly responsible for this gap. This was not taking place to the extent they might have expected, due both to the traditional isolation of foreigners in the Soviet system, and to the fact that the authorities did not have a clear policy of keeping the population informed about the activities of the Åtvidaberg committee. The notion of aid, existing outside the mandatory system of reciprocity, was also problematic (see chapter 8). None of the respondents, then, specifically mentioned the co-operation with Åtvidaberg, although 5 of the reasons given refer to an unspecified relationship with Sweden, 'abroad, or 'foreigners'. The results of this part of the survey are reproduced below:

'Do you think that the future of the local area is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>hopeful</th>
<th>not hopeful</th>
<th>don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>couples:</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>single parents:</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>singles:</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total:</td>
<td>32 (58%)</td>
<td>18 (33%)</td>
<td>5 (9%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reasons for hope:
tourism (9), school (6), beautiful place (3), 'everything better' (3), new companies will come (2), Swedish contacts (2), contacts abroad (2), rich foreigners (1).

Reasons for lack of hope:
local people are lazy/ passive/ drinking/ transitory/ unorganised (7), no money (3), no work (3), community too small/ too peripheral (3), bad local political leadership (2), blocks of flat too big (1), dirt (1).

Unlike the reasons to hope, which, with the exception of the High School, tended to be situated in the future, the reasons not to be hopeful were primarily factors of the present, indicating the poverty and unemployment of the present situation. The categories of passivity, lack of capacity for organising themselves, and
inefficiency, as well as drink, dirt and transitory-ness, actually belong to one category, the category of the 'bad' worker. This, the imagined reversal of the ideology of the worker hero mentioned above, was a powerful concept in the community.

Of the reasons for hope, tourism was the strongest contender. The Åtvidaberg agenda, to encourage agriculture and small firms, may be evident in the one person who mentioned new enterprises, but agriculture generally was notably absent from the list. After tourism, the High School constituted the strongest reason for hope for the community. During the time of the survey the future of the school was still uncertain: there were fears that the funding would fall to the local council rather than the state, in which case it would have had to be closed down. In the end, however, that turned out not to be the case, and the future of the school was, at least temporarily, secured. Although they received large amounts of books and material from Åtvidaberg (and other places in Sweden), and were involved in student exchanges both with schools in the Finnish Swedish area of Kronoby in Finland and schools in Sweden, the school was no longer a central concern of the Åtvidaberg committee. One of the reasons for this was that it had become clear to the members of the committee that the majority of the students were not local, and that the link, therefore, to the local area, was tenuous. For the locals, on the other hand, the school constituted a link with a more powerful section of Estonia, bringing visits of high-ranking officials, as well as the students and teachers. It also meant that there was a reasonable hope that their own children would get a better chance of an education - highly valued in Estonia - since there was a considerable degree of informal positive discrimination towards local children.

In conversations about the Swedes there tended to be a great deal of irony, initially muted because of my own Swedish-ness. The people who came over regularly were all men, which naturally influenced the relationship with the locals. A few of them (but by no means all) became involved, or wanted to be involved, with Estonian women (there were more women than men in the village, many of them single mothers), which led to some difficulties. After one event when a particular Swedish man had tried to pick up two different women in the bar, without success, I had a conversation with one of them, opening with the rather leading question of whether she never got tired of all these Swedes coming over. 'Yes!', she said, 'They come over here and behave like kings, and yet they are nothing in Sweden. Here, they think that because they have money and because they bring over a lot of cheap things from Sweden they are so wonderful. There are people here who surround them and are nice to them, sycophants, because
they want the things, but other people are angry. The older men who come here to pick up young women, what are they thinking of? They think because they have money they can do anything. And they tell us how we should do things, it's like they think we haven't ever thought about anything before'.

The visiting Estonian Swedes, on the other hand, were barely mentioned by the locals, not forming any part of their day to day existence. Like most phenomena in the area they were seasonal, arriving in spring, summer and early autumn, always in their own cars. They usually brought gifts of coffee, aspirin, vitamins, or other useful items, which they distributed somewhat haphazardly to whoever they happened to meet. During the memorial days described above, I happened to at one time be mistaken by one of the returning Swedes for a local, as we were standing next to each other at the exhibition in the culture house. 'Do you have any more of those aspirins?' she muttered to her daughter, after which she presented me with a foil of Swedish aspirin. 'These are over the counter', she said slowly, in Swedish. Then, smiling, she took my hand, and shook out half a fistful of medicinal chewing gum designed for the care of the teeth. Relating this story to an informant, who had just carefully explained to me that he neither liked nor disliked the Swedes, he burst out laughing, identifying with the event whereby locals are given things by strangers which, although well-meaning, often seem inappropriate in an environment where gift exchange is so meticulously well-ordered.

The extent of the marginalisation of the former kolkhozniks, the collective farm workers, is clear from the omissions of the managed discourse about identity in the area. For instance, I was struck by the fact that there was never any mention of the Afghanistan war. Asking one informant about it, he told me that 2 of his school friends had died in Afghanistan. (He went to school on the mainland, and didn't know how many local people were sent to Afghanistan.) Similarly, the new newspaper EstlandsKuriren, designed for Swedes, mainly businessmen, living in Estonia, conveys an impression of a bland denial of the Soviet history of the country, similar to conversations with many young Estonians who often tend to minimise their knowledge of, and involvement with, the Soviet past. The stagnation of the Soviet economy, for example, is re-defined in terms of an idyllic

130 My translation from Swedish.
Ray Abrahams, similarly, mentions a case of an Estonian woman having a relationship with a Finnish man, who provided both house-hold equipment and vehicles for her mother and step-father Abrahams (1994:150). Judging from one interview with a Swedish man who had a relationship with a (much younger) Estonian woman, he clearly felt a responsibility to provide which was difficult to distinguish from an obligation to pay.
rural traditionalism, with descriptions of celebrating midsummer with the farmers, featuring traditional village swings and songs around the midsummer fire: 'How cosy it is to sit around the fire, looking at the dancing flames, listening to the pure sound of a harmonica, until somebody begins to sing, and everyone around, one by one, takes up the song. Then it makes no difference where you are from, or if you are young or old - the same atmosphere grips hold of everyone' (Estlands Kuriren Juni/juli 1994 nr 3:3). Whilst Soviet rural poverty is consistently represented as traditionalism, ignoring the recent past, the affinity between Tallinn and Finnish and Scandinavian cities is always emphasised. Thus, for example, the same issue of the newspaper states that, 'What significantly distinguishes Tallinn from the shopping in other Fenno-Scandinavian towns is the level of prices. (Estlands Kuriren Juni/juli 1994 nr 3:5)'

Many people in the community, particularly the people who had some public role to fulfil, for example the post mistress, were interested in learning Swedish. They attended classes run by the Swedish teacher, sent out by the Swedish council for a year in the community. All the teachers spoke some Swedish, having attended Swedish courses in Finnish Swedish Kronoby, and the leaders of the community spoke it very well. Swedish, then, had replaced Russian as the language with which to deal with the outside world, and it seemed like the community was slowly moving towards a new bi-lingualism. There were also some people in the flats who were, somewhat cautiously, talking about their Estonian Swedish background, although most of the people of that background were completely assimilated, and would have thought it pretentious to dwell on it. Their children, however, who had gone through the Swedish oriented school, and who often spoke Swedish quite well, particularly if they had been on a study tour in Sweden, were more interested in the concept of being Swedish. Whilst the ambivalent possibilities of distinction were exactly what prevented their parents from claiming the heritage, the young people, sensitive to the fact that assimilation also meant assimilation to the Soviet state, and encouraged by the school, often wished to reclaim it.

131 'Vad det är mysigt att sitta vid elden, titta på dansande lâgor, lyssna på munspels rena ljud tills någon tar upp en sång och alla runtomkring, en efter en börjar sjunga. Då finns det ingen skillnad varifrån du kommer, är du ung eller gammal - samma stämning griper alla' (Estlands Kuriren Juni/juli 1994 nr 3:3).

132 'Det som avsevårt skiljer Tallinn från shoppingrundorna i andra Fennoskandiska städer är prisnivån. (Estlands Kuriren Juni/juli 1994 nr 3:5) 'Fenno-Scandinavian' is an unusual term, which is clearly intended to incorporates Finland and Estonia into the entity of Scandinavia.
In my English class for the 2 year students of the High School, I set as an essay topic 'Minorities in Estonia', primarily wishing to find out more about the students' attitude to the Russians, which, indeed, most of them wrote about. One of my students, however, wrote a memorable essay about herself, as Swedish:

'Swedens.
I believe that minorities in Estonia is many. But I tell to you of this nationality what threatens die out and where I actually belong. And so! I talk coastswedens. My grandmother is coastswede and she's talk and my own the study ground try I do this work.

Of this places peoples are coming in the main from the Finnish frontier and from Småland (there is born Astrid Lindgren). Swedes is living in here Nuckö and in Hiumaa. They is living also somewhere else, but in Nuckö and in Hiiumaa was Swedes most of all.

Coastswedens have our language. They have our customs. They's language resemble the Swedish language. Here village where I live was before 27 homestead with 250 peoples. Now is here only 6 homestead with 17 peoples from there only one coastsweden - my grandmother. Swedes was living very well. Swedes have here a pot of schools. In this village school was from village 3 km. School building was grand estate. That is now remain. In the school was only six classes. When Swedes are want forward learn have to they command the Estonian language. Estonian and Swedes get through well. Swedes is fighting a long time our from freedom before. That was so 1920/30.

Then came war. many Swede flee in Swerige. Few peoples come back. The Soviet system not tolerate aliens. Coastswedes sustain a loss. Now strive I, that I get in passport Swede (sic).'</p>

Another one told me that though her parents were assimilated, she herself felt 'Swedish', and thought of herself as Swedish. She thought that the school had been important in this respect, and said that the students from the school had developed a particular slang they used between themselves, which was partly constituted by Swedish slang words. In that way, she said, they had become different from other Estonian young people. A third one, who had gone on to university to study Swedish, told me a similar story of how his parents had become assimilated, and how his own sense of his heritage had been revived through the school. It is clear,
then, that the school's management of the revival was in many ways quite successful.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter I have tried to describe and analyse some of the events and attitudes in the process of the revival of the Swedish cultural heritage, ending with a few examples of how the enacted facade of Swedish-ness originally constructed by the village leaders has led not only to a rise in the level of Swedish-speakers, but also to a genuine appropriation of an Estonian Swedish identity by some of the younger members of the community. It is clear that this process constitutes an example of how genuinely malleable cultural identity can be. Arguably this is particularly the case for people who have grown up with a Marxist conception of culture, a conception which is not very well captured by the predominantly organic metaphors used in the west: culture, roots, growth, death. Rather, the Marxist conception - that the consciousness of the people was a manifestation of their economic system - involves the possibility of rapid, indeed revolutionary, changes of mentalité. The present acquisition of Swedish-ness, therefore, in a remote area of Estonia, should not be seen so much in the light of an 'invention of tradition' (Hobsbawm/ Ranger 1983) but rather as a part of the wider and more radical process by which the present is, or was, being rapidly re-formed, both on a national and a local level.

The revival, however, is also a process of remembering. Pahl and Thompson, in their article on the social construction of life stories in Russia, have shown how their Russian informants had deliberately suppressed the transmission of family memories from the past, knowledge of which may have been dangerous to their children (Pahl/ Thompson 1994). Similarly, many of my older informants were engaged in a process of re-remembering: of excavating their memories from a time they were habituated never to refer to. For my Estonian Swedish informants, the reasoning behind the suppression of memories was not primarily that of belonging to the wrong class. Rather, the connection to Swedish-ness was suspect, both because of the probability of having close relatives abroad, and because of the circumstances of the evacuation of the Swedes from Estonia during the war, with the permission, although a tardy one, of the occupying German forces. Assimilation, which is a process of the suppression of particular memories, and a focus on the future and the present rather than the past, was therefore a strategy by which the remaining members of the Estonian Swedish community, who were
generally poor and not well educated, could get by in the new state. Paul Connerton has argued that 'habitual performances' are central to the way in which we remember (Connerton 1989:104). In the case of the former Soviet Union, these were also deliberately turned upside down, in the effort to create a socialist state. There were, therefore, three aspects of the amnesia of the Estonian Swedes (and other Soviet minorities who were regarded as suspect, including, to a somewhat lesser extent, the Estonians themselves), consisting both of the intentional lack of transmission of memories between the generations, and the suppression of many of the ceremonies and practices to which social memories, according to Connerton, are intricately linked (Connerton 1989). Finally, the 'organized oblivion' of the state; i.e. the imposition of an official, and often fallacious, version of history re-enforced the process of amnesia and assimilation (Koonz 1994:258).

Assimilation and social amnesia, then, affected the entire community. Whilst the Estonian Swedes became, largely, Estonian, the Estonians became largely Soviet, retaining only fragments of the pre-war urban and intellectual culture, and receiving instead a large dose of objectified folk-culture in which to articulate their Estonian identity. The present revival of Swedish-ness in the village, aided by the various forces from Sweden, does not address the wider process of transforming identity which is currently taking place. The top-down management of the revival has the effect of further alienating the former collective farm workers from the process.

Parallel to the local process of the revival of Swedish-ness a wider process of contemporary assimilation, or cultural suppression, is taking place: the assimilation, and forgetting, of the Soviet past. Whilst there is a certain amount of new open-ness about the past, the common feeling, caused by any combination of complicity and suffering, is one of preferring to forget, although, as the following quote shows, there are, of course, exceptions:

'So, is Estonia east or west? I think that some years ago we were east, because we belonged to Russia and we were a very important part of it. And we were satisfied. We thought that we can't live without Russia, because it was so big and powerful. We had a beautiful red flag with sickle and hammer and we were proud of it. I remember when I became a pioneer, I was so happy and when I went home, I got many flowers and then we (I mean my mother and I) went to restaurant 'Moscow'. And the pioneer necktie was so beautiful...and we were so sad when Leonid Breznev died. Then we couldn't even imagine, that Estonia
could be an independent state. But it happened and I think that we did the right thing. At least we are not east anymore, though our life is not very easy. Look, what happens in Russia? There are all kind of problems: a rouble is not money anymore, they have terrible diseases and political crisis etc. I read that Russia is a prison for nations.
List of Illustrations.

1. Interior from farmhouse

2. Traditional farmhouse repaired during Soviet era

3. Farmhouse extended with typical white bricks, Soviet era

4. Electrified farmhouse

5. The manorhouse of Birkas in the process of being renovated

6. The interior of the church

7. Soviet structure, midway between completion and abandonment
Chapter 8. The Economy of Dependence: Gift Exchange, Consumption and Aid

Introduction

The current transformation of the former Soviet Union is to a large extent defined by changes in material culture, or in other words by changes in the culturally constituted relationships to objects. The desire for consumption tends to be taken for granted in the west, albeit often with the added assumption that the increased availability of goods constitutes a kind of banalisation, or vulgarisation, of culture. This chapter, focusing on the local and specific context, constitutes an investigation of the appropriation of western objects on my fieldsite. I will argue that the present transformations of the notions of exchange, material success, and national identity are to an important extent articulated in terms of the relationships to western objects, within the wider context of the move towards independence and a market economy.

Whilst local discourses about the changes were essentially ambivalent during the time of my fieldwork, since they were associated with an increase in poverty and unemployment as well as with national independence, the change in material culture was primarily characterised by a move towards a western, and particularly a Scandinavian and Finnish, style. These changes were experienced differently by me and my informants. What to me looked increasingly familiar, powerfully speeding up my own sense of getting used to living in the community, to them was fairly recent, representing a foreign and deliberate style, accessible primarily through aid from Sweden. Virtually everybody in the community, for example, wore Swedish clothes, donated by charitable organisations. To me, these clothes looked so ordinary - jeans and T-shirts, with the non-committal patina of everyday life - that it took some time to understand their local context. Photographs of just a few years ago, however, revealed a style which was radically different: boys in caps and blue uniforms, girls in white shirts and pinafores; men in flared gabardine trousers, women in tight skirts. For the people in the community, then, the Swedish clothes were still situated on the cusp.
between the foreign and the normal, whereas for me their 'ordinariness' acted as a somewhat deceptive sign situating the people and the culture in the western/northern European rather than the Soviet sphere.

Given, however, the nominal 'western-ness' of Estonians within the Soviet context, the appropriation of the new style is complex. It represents the 'normal' as a normative referent defined in terms of north west Europe. To extend the example of the clothes, although a pair of jeans has acquired the status of 'normal' very recently, the knowledge that such clothes are 'normal' in the west, combined with their present easy availability through aid shipments, means that they are genuinely not regarded as special any more. 'Normality' as a term, however, still does not tend to represent the 'normal' as in the every day, but rather a state of what should have been had Estonia not been incorporated into the Soviet Union, and what must now be worked for. Appropriately, then, the dissolution of the Soviet Union means that the national discourse of future goals has shifted from a Utopian social state, to a western-identified 'normality'. The confines of being defined as western within the Soviet context, however, means that the changes in material culture are greeted with less of the surprise, enthusiasm, or confusion, than might be expected: the 'normal' ideal reaction to the new things is a silent appropriation, re-defining the objets as already taken for granted.

Western objects in Estonia, then, are contextualised within a series of historical trajectories and ideologies. Following Nicholas Thomas, the assumption throughout this chapter is that objects have no essential meaning, but rather are understood through various appropriations and re-contextualisations (Thomas 1991). Global economies, as Thomas argues, do not control the meaning of commodities: they provide entanglements (Thomas 1991:123). Similarly, the appropriation of western objects in Estonia cannot be understood simply as part of a wider process of globalisation: local meanings, and particularly the notion of 'normality', frame and modify the appropriations of the global. In the context of doing fieldwork in an area undergoing drastic change, the theoretical preference of context over essence seems particularly appropriate.

In this chapter, then, I will look at the local contextualisations of a number of different western objects, ranging from locally available consumer goods, products like corn flakes or washing powder, to objects donated from Sweden, which themselves range widely from agricultural machinery to clothes and various household objects. I will consider the contexts and appropriation of these objects in relation to the transitional and ambivalent position of Estonia, which
historically and geographically is located between east and west, as well as at local constructions of wealth and success. Both the concepts of national identity and success were highly objectified in the Soviet Union. Nationality, as we have seen, was predominately seen as an ethnic identification, usually associated with particular republics or areas of land, encompassed by the concept of citizenship in the USSR (Lieven 1993:xxiii, Smith 1990, Haida/Beissinger 1990, Bremmer/Taras 1993, Karklins 1986, Khazanov 1995). Material success in the Soviet context was generally perceived as entangled in a nexus of underhand dealings and speculation, where to some extent it still lingers (cf Humphrey 1995:61). The association between commerce and criminality is also of course emphasised by the spectacular post-Soviet expansion of Mafia type organisations. The particular Estonian objectification of success also includes a process of differentiation from the Russians, as well as other Soviet peoples referred to by the term 'Caucasians', including the Georgians and the Armenians, who are commonly regarded as both more 'mercenary' and less 'civilised' than the Estonians. This process of distinction acts to further underline the negative aspects of material success.

This chapter consists of 3 related parts. It begins with a section on local concepts of gift exchange and trade, which includes a consideration of the ambivalence surrounding material aspirations and success. Following on from this, I will look at the local consumption of western objects, focusing on the question of how the concept of being in some sense 'already western' frames the appropriation of the new objects. The last, and longest, section is concerned with the aid coming from Sweden, looking in particular at the effects of the twin town agreement made with Atvidaberg, which was touched upon in the last chapter. In this section the focus will be on how the giving and the receiving of the aid is framed by two separate cultures, both of which have certain claims to kinship with each other, which are at least partially differently defined, with equally tenuous roots and expectations. The aid project, then, forms the focus of this part of the chapter, which also builds on the data of the previous two parts. The focus remains on the material culture, exploring the complex relationship between the Estonians and the Swedes through an analysis of the various relationships to the aid objects. It would be wrong, however, to regard these objects simply as mediums of exchange. Like all the objects considered in this chapter, they embody particular

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134 I deliberately use the word 'expansion' since criminal organisations existed within the Soviet system too. One of the reasons for Yeltsin's initial popularity on becoming first secretary of the Moscow city committee in 1985, for example, was his efforts to deal with the Moscow mafia as well as with the widespread level of corruption. (Yeltsin 1990:95-97)
memories, aspirations and ideologies, which means that there is nothing accidental about what is given: in this sense, the objects given incorporate, as well as constitute, the project of aid.

**Gift Exchange**

Western objects in Estonia are contextualised within a number of historical trajectories and ideologies encompassing a particular cultural system of gift exchange. Local conceptions of gift exchange are deeply entangled in notions of egalitarianism and balance, embedded both in Soviet socialism, and in notions of 'the north', and Scandinavian egalitarianism. The emphasis on equality and balance, as well as the fact that the Soviet economic system was dependent on an extensive system of barter, means that the requirement of reciprocity is important (cf. Humphrey 1991:11). Ideally, as in all systems of gift exchange, there should always be a balance between giving and receiving (Mauss 1992). An imbalance in gift exchange, including the gift of inappropriate objects, marking hierarchy by giving too much or escaping obligations by giving too little, is perceived as embarrassing both to the giver and to the receiver. It should be emphasised that, on my field site, the obligation to reciprocate was a powerful social rule. Invitations to coffee, for example, which constituted the most common form of formal social events, were reciprocated with small presents, for example of packets of biscuits or, in spring and summer, flowers. Bringing gifts to informants on the farm, for example of imported fruit bought in Tallinn, or biscuits from the shop, was always a delicate matter, since they usually felt compelled to give me something of equal worth back. Since the fruit was expensive I was sometimes overwhelmed with boxes of Estonian sweets or chocolate, or even crocheted table mats or decorations, objects which, to a western way of reckoning, were far more valuable than a few oranges or kiwi fruit. This was a complex gift exchange, formed by the evolving dictates of two different economies, so that the value of the reciprocation was always approximate and uncertain.

Partly the emphasis on reciprocation was due to the detrimental effects of the Soviet system on the economy. In many ways the gift exchanges I observed had more in common with systems of barter, primarily because there was no in-built inflation of the system: my informants expected returns of equivalent rather than of higher value (Mauss 1990:28, 42). In this context, the categories of barter and gift exchange were merged, linking culturally constituted relationships with
economic rationality, supporting recent arguments concerning the nature of barter as a social form merging the economic with the cultural (Humphrey/Hugh-Jones 1992). One of the most striking differences between the Soviet and the western economic systems concerns the role of friendship and kinship networks. The importance of economic reciprocity and balance within those networks was linked to economic necessity, and constitutes one of the many unforeseen side effects of the economic system. Du Plessix Gray in her book on Soviet women quotes from an interview with a writer, who states that, 'Friendship is a most important and dangerous thing in our country. Of course it's far more valuable in our culture than in yours - Russians have little else, even if we have money there is nothing to buy with it, only friends can help you locate decent food, clothes, basic comforts, friendship is a central aid to survival' (Du Plessix Gray 1991:177). The Soviet economic system, then, of the so-called 'second world', was industrialised but not as monetary as western economies, in the sense that barter, bribes, and gift exchange played more important, and less separable, roles.

In Estonia, after the relative prosperity from the late 1960s to the middle of the 1970s, a period of economic stagnation followed which meant real shortages, long queues, commonplace bribes to shop assistants, and, consequently, an increasing reliance on family and friends (Taagepera 1993: 98-101). The pre-war economy, which was primarily based on agriculture mixed with light industry, meant that most urban native Estonians still had relatives with private plots on the collective farms. The produce, typically apples, potatoes and cabbage, supplemented with onions and perhaps berries and mushrooms from the forests, was brought to the towns within those family networks, usually in return for shop products or other favours. A substantial part of the economy, then, operated on informal barter and gift exchange systems within kinship and friendship networks, as well as an illegal but normalised system of bribes outside of these networks (cf Dragadze 1988).

Some of my informants complained that whereas 'before' if you asked somebody for a favour, say a lift to the next village, they would do it in the expectation of a deferred return favour, whereas now people wanted immediate payment in the form of money. Parts of the barter/ gift exchange, then, which was an important form of exchange in the Soviet system, are now becoming monetarised. The at least potential acceleration in the speed of transactions which comes with monetarisation was generally perceived as involving a loss of

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[135]The concepts of 'before' and 'now' were pivotal in the discourses about the changes.
communal affection: in the previous system reciprocity was delayed enough to at least sometimes be viewed as disinterested kindness. In a parallel process, the long periods of waiting in various queues which were an intrinsic part of the Soviet system: housing queues, hour long lines for the shops, year long waiting lists for the purchase of furniture, or cars, where also disappearing. During the time of my fieldwork the housing waiting list was the only queue which was, at least partially, still in force. The abolition of waiting as a daily form of social activity mirrors, then, the decrease in the delayed form of reciprocity in favour of a cash-based, more immediate, form, which was generally viewed as less positive.

One of the consequences of the economic changes was a visible process of wealth polarisation. The most noticeable aspect of this was not that certain people were ascending - the people who were going up were always people who had done well during the collective farm as well, and who were generally considered capable - but that other people were descending. In particular, there was a category of people who were regarded as eccentrics, usually alcoholic men who were seen as interesting characters, whose implicit and anarchic evasion of the power of the state in the Soviet context gave them a certain, if ambivalent, status. This status was now rapidly diminishing. The fall of the Soviet Union had ended what association there was between alcoholism and resistance, and the end of the subsidies of the collective farm meant that they had to be supported by direct taxation on their neighbours rather than by a state which most people were at least to some extent resisting.\textsuperscript{136}

If the question of the previous system was inherently controversial, the notion of the cultural proximity to Sweden and Finland represented the opposite: a unifying discourse of national identity. It was frequently mentioned as a factor which differentiated the Estonians not only from the Russians, but also from other Soviet peoples such as the Georgians or the Azerbaidzhanis. The notions of balance, tranquillity and egalitarianism were central to the concepts of Scandinavia and 'the North'. The balance indicates equality and harmony, important features both in the Estonian, and also to a large extent the Soviet mentalities. People must be in harmony with themselves, both in terms of body and mind. In Estonia, the conception of what the national characteristics of the

\textsuperscript{136}C.f. Eva Hoffman, who in her book Exit into History (1994) quotes from an interview with a Polish film-maker: 'Oh, I'm more pessimistic all the time,' he briskly informs me. 'Things are falling apart.' But are they falling apart more than before?' 'It doesn't matter whether they're falling apart more. Before it gave me pleasure when they fell apart; they were falling apart for Them.' (3).
Estonians are, to a large extent defined by what the Russians supposedly are not. Whilst the Russians, then, are regarded as overly dramatic, given to flattery and falsehood, the Estonians tend to see themselves as quite, honest, and hardworking. Essentially romantic notions of 'the North', contemplation of nature, and a mistrust of commerciability are also prevalent. The care with which everything is fairly calculated, and the ambivalence regarding entrepreneurship, is also indicative of the centrality of balance. Estonians are both wary of being ripped off (by non-Estonians, probably), and careful not to charge too much, and to do a proper job for the money.

Despite the government's commitment to the free market, the people who have made good, the tôusik, are often seen as somehow less 'Estonian' in peoples' imagination; very smart and with dangerous connections. Even the people who are generally positive towards them tend to see them as a special type with certain inherited characteristics; the 'have a nose for it', the 'Fingerspitzengefühl'. They seem to already belong to another imaginary entity which is only partially contained by the entity of Estonia, and peopled, otherwise, by Russians and the so-called Caucasians. For example, during the time of my fieldwork, there was a new Estonian series following the adventures of a newly rich family, followed largely because of its provocative nature. It displayed people who were clearly modelled on TV series such as 'Dallas', being at the same time rich, glamorous, and bad. Whilst these categories are not perhaps entirely fused in the American context, in Estonia the wealth firmly implies both badness and glamour, in that order. Arguably the family represented the anti-thesis of what was generally seen as 'good': rich and flamboyant, with frequent dealings with the criminal world, they represented the ambivalent nature of success expressed in the identity of the tôusik, or the newly rich.

**Consumption**

Before the currency reform in 1992, when the Kroon was introduced as the only legal tender in Estonia, the economy was divided into an eastern and a western zone. The hard currency stores, which during the Soviet times had been limited to a few, had multiplied, and still carried almost only western goods, whereas the old shops tended to sell only east bloc produce. Even though this strict division doesn't exist any more, the price differential between formerly Soviet and western

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137 Clearly, also, this is a discourse which is related to the European discourse of anti-semitism.
goods was still considerable during the time of my fieldwork, and of course the packaging acted a sign of origins. In September -93, for instance, the average monthly wage was 800 Croons (about £40), a local purchase of 2 kilos potatoes, 1 loaf of bread, 1 cabbage and 1/2 l. of milk cost 9 Kroons, or 45 pence. In comparison, a bottle of bad French wine from the supermarket in the nearest town cost 65-90 Kroons, and a tin of cheap instant coffee cost at least 30 kroon, Nestle about 50. Despite the considerable price difference, however, some of my informants were willing to consume, for example, Corn Flakes, the cost of which represented about 6 hours of average work, whilst at the same time expressing concern about their shortage of money. In that context, western products effectively represented markers for the return to (national) 'normality', where individual consumption also represented collective change.

The term 'normality' connoted a powerful means of situating Estonia in the west (see chapter 8). It tended to be used by people who were relatively successful in the new state, usually had contacts abroad, and who strongly identified with the new nation. 'Not normal' for those people was the usual definition of life in the Soviet Union, the statement of collective, or national, abnormality often juxtaposed with a statement about the meaninglessness of Soviet work, immersed in symbolism rather than 'normal' rationality. Without wishing to minimise the difficulties and frustrations of the Soviet system, this was also a way for people to situate themselves on the west within western-ness; a way of acknowledging that although Estonia was by nature western there were also degrees of western-ness within Estonia itself. It was part of a system of distinction where the notion of western-ness was associated with success, which in itself was entangled in a nexus of difficulties and ambivalence.

The world of goods in this region, as in any other, was bound up with questions of identity, and particularly, perhaps, with questions of national and class identity. Given that, one would expect a considerable difference between the Russian and the Estonian experience of the new goods, and that indeed seems to be the case. Caroline Humphrey describes how in 1993 western goods in Moscow, although initially desirable, were also inherently suspect, less clean, organic and trustworthy than Russian goods. In a consumer mirage of the contingent ideology of the land and nationalism, she describes how her middle class Moscow host family preferred 'our fatherland butter' over an American brand, how western salami was assumed to be spiced with unhealthy chemicals, and how, generally, western products at the time tended to be seen as unassimilable and contaminated (Humphrey 1995:54,58).
These perceptions were noticeably different in Estonia, where Western goods tended to be categorised as 'normal', whilst products made in countries of the former Soviet Union were often suspected of being polluted by chemicals or Chernobyl radiation. Although the display of 'western-ness' was problematic, as will be discussed below, it also signified important contacts abroad. Hence western objects, which had been given by relatives or visitors, were common features of the home. They tended to be utilitarian in nature, such as books, bottles of vitamins, or tooth-paste, and to be re-contextualised as essentially decorative items. Foreign books, for example, often occupied prime positions in the ubiquitous wall units, and collections of empty bottles of western shampoo decorated the bathroom shelves (see plates 1-2). As with the western clothes, the objects occupied a shifting and ambivalent position somewhere in the middle between the low-grade Soviet and the special and hand-made Estonian, which, importantly, was still regarded with a high degree of national pride.

Informants sometimes stated that there was no difference between western and Estonian products - any more, they sometimes added, acknowledging the Soviet past. What this meant was that the few recent Estonian products which could successfully pass as 'normal' were enlisted as representative for the newly independent republic. On the whole, however, the difference between western and Estonian goods was actually striking, particularly in terms of the packaging. Like the gifts from abroad, western consumer goods were references to another world, but whilst the status of gifts could remove an object from a primarily functional to a decorative context, western objects bought locally tended to remain functional, emphasising their nominal 'normality'. The relatively high degree of knowledge about the west meant that people were aware of the original contextualisation, and how people 'normally' used the products. Within the complex and ambivalent system of distinction which was currently operating, in order to fully, genuinely, come across as 'western', people therefore had to treat mass-produced western objects bought locally with the same degree of nonchalance with which they would be treated in the west, despite the fact that the relative cost of the products was fantastical. The private shop in the village, for example, started stocking Ariel washing-powder, at a cost of about 35 Kroons; 6 times as much as the local powder, which itself had increased so much in price that it represented nearly an hours average work. Inflation, then, operated on two levels: indigenous products were rapidly becoming more expensive as subsidies were removed, at the same time as foreign products took some part of the market share at far higher prices. The high cost did not, however, mean that
Ariel was treated like an exclusive designer product. People knew that it was 'normal' to use such powders, and it tended, therefore, to be appropriated in the Estonian context as equally 'normal', its superiority defined in strictly functional terms.

There was also a category of products which had been bought on journeys to Sweden or, more likely, Finland, at a time when the availability of the goods in question was doubtful in Estonia. Consequently, people who had been abroad regularly (according to my survey, 53% of the population of the village had been abroad at least once), tended to keep obsolete stockpiles at home of flour, pasta, rice or soap, all things which were now available at a lower price in Estonia than in Finland. These stockpiles represented the Soviet economic rule that (outside the black market) objects were usually worth more than the money you paid for them. In 1993-94, the monetary policies in Estonia meant that on the whole the opposite tended to be true; there was a shortage of money, and an abundance of goods. The fact that each shop could now set its own prices meant that people moved from shop to shop following much the same pattern as they did when there was a shortage of goods: instead of trying to locate the goods themselves, people were now trying to locate the cheapest goods. This tended to be true for all the countries of the former Soviet bloc. Eva Hoffman, for example, reported a Polish friend stating, 'And the shopping takes longer because I have to go from place to place to compare prices. It used to be, you bought an egg, you paid for an egg. Now they all think they can charge whatever they want!' (Hoffman 1993:7).

Aid: the Relationship to Sweden

The local relationship to Sweden is built on two historical trajectories, the first being Sweden's territorial conquests in the Baltics which culminated in the 17th Century, and ended, outside of Finland, with the peace of Narva in 1721. The second trajectory, as we have seen, started towards the end of the 19th Century, and intensified during the 1920s and 30s, when the celebration of modernism led to a related concern that what was essentially Swedish was being submerged under a wave of industrial modernity. The Swedish minority in Estonia, who

138 Despite the strict monetary policies implemented by the then minister of finance Madis Üürike, the level of inflation was about 50%. In an interview with the minister, I was told that the level of inflation was caused by heavy foreign investments in Estonia, which brought significant amounts of capital into the country. This form of inflation, combined as it was with strict curbs on all forms of social welfare, had a particularly adverse effect on the poorer sections of the population.
mostly inhabited the poor coastal areas in the north west, were then identified, in Sweden and to some extent in Estonia as well, as what would later be called 'culture carriers', embodying a traditional national culture which was disappearing in Sweden itself (cf Frykman/Löfgren 1979 and 1985). Also, charitable organisations were set up in Sweden in order to help to alleviate the poverty of the Estonian Swedes, who were regarded, within the discourse of aid, as part of the so-called förskingringen, the dissemination of Swedes abroad.

Since the majority of the Swedish Estonians (ca. 7,000 of a total of 8,000, in an Estonian population of about 1 million) left for Sweden during the Second World War there are few Swedish speaking people left in the area. Indeed, on the peninsula of Noarootsi, which before the war had a population which was about 50% Swedish speaking, many of the people were descendants of Estonians resettled by the German army from the front on the farms and cottages left by the Swedes. However, in the post-Soviet context, the notion of a Swedish heritage is being revived through various means, not least through the world of material culture, and more specifically the aid, which predominately takes the form of shipments of various donated objects, received through the twin town agreement with the Swedish town of Åtvidaberg. In the last chapter, I described the revival, which is encouraged and promoted through a number of organisations in Sweden, notably SOV, the organisation for the Estonian Swedes. The prospect of aid and the desire to leave the Soviet identity behind means that it is also promoted locally. Thus, for example, all of the people who are in positions of power in the village have learnt Swedish. There is a Swedish teacher in the village, sent out by the Swedish Council, who runs well attended adult classes as well as the classes for the school children. Nevertheless, the promotion of Swedish-ness also to some extent conforms to Soviet notions of representations, constructing a Potemkin façade behind which there is a different reality.

According to my survey, 73% of the people in the village had relatives abroad, usually in Sweden, Canada, England, or Australia, in that order. These relatives were almost all refugees from the second world war, and many kept in touch during the Soviet years, sending food and clothes. 80% of the people with contacts in the west also received gifts from their contacts. Needless to say, perhaps, having relatives abroad, and particularly relatives who kept in touch, tended to be treated with some suspicion in the Soviet Union. Despite the multiplicity of real connections with the west, the local discourse on western-ness still tended to be reserved, or even left unarticulated. For people who aspired to it, it was felt to be a body of knowledge which they should already know by virtue of

260
the 'western-ness' of Soviet Estonia. For these people there was often a sense of familiarity being enacted and displayed; a recognised strategy with uncertain limits, easily straying into what was seen by others as a form of pretentiousness. Ironically, of course, the fall of the Soviet bloc had the effect of transforming the elegant if nominal western-ness of Estonia in the context of the Soviet Union into the poor and under-nourished eastern-ness of a former Soviet state in the context of the west. 139

There was also certain amount of pride in having no connections with the west, which was true also for the people who had relatives abroad but who had no contact with them. The pride was situated within the increasingly apparent polarisation within the village, dividing those who were going up from those who were going down. Going down might be a source for despair but at least for the older generation it was also still infused with an ideological pride in poverty, in having 'workers' hands', in having been a worker all one's life. For these people there was still a sense that connections with the west may threaten a person's integrity, tempting them to stoop to ingratiation or corruption. They would answer the questions in the section of the survey which had to do with contacts abroad with visible pride if they had no contacts, and with evasion and reserve if they did have contacts, particularly in regards to the question about whether they had received gifts, including money and medicine, from their contacts. For this group Hann's contention that people's perception of the failure of socialism was caused not so much by the failure of socialist ideology itself, so much as by the failure of the leaders to adhere to the ideology, rings very true (Hann 1993:xi).

The gifts from the west, for this group, tended to be received within a context of humiliation, of being a poor relation, unable to keep up the injunctions regarding the balance of gift exchange. The threat to integrity was particularly important in relation to officials from the twin town, since it was obvious that the material gain

139 Emil Tode's novel Piiririik, translated to Swedish as Gränsland, 'bordercountry', about a young Estonian man living in Paris, documents the process of coming from a land on the edges of Europe, which, like Carlo Levi's Lucania, is only partially incorporated by western civilisation, to Paris, the symbolic centre not only of civilisation, but also of everything which is stylish and hedonistic, represented as the opposite of Estonia. He describes seeing a group of Estonians by a shop window: 'I recognised them from afar, before I heard them speak, standing in front of the window display of Samaritaine, reviewing what was displayed, but actually desiring it, desiring all these products and all the wealth which their poor eyes saw for the first time. To tell the truth it was myself standing there. You see, if once you have stood in front of those windows you might assume a superior expression, but you will still remain standing there forever. Oh, it's too miserable, too pathetic to write about! One can only write about tolerably literary, tolerably noble sufferings, not about eastern Europeans stopping in front of the glittering shop-windows of this city, dressed in tracksuits and trainers' (Tode 1995:115. My translation from Swedish. Levi 1982:12)
which might result from those connections went far beyond what individual western relatives might give you, into the realm of refrigerators and washing machines, or even a new bathroom. There was one family in particular which had worked itself into the position of special hosts for the various visiting officials who would come over practically every month. Like many people in the area they were part Swedish, but assimilated as Estonians during the Soviet times. In a process which mirrored the process of the community as a whole, they harnessed their nominal Swedish-ness in the project of becoming hosts. This took various forms, from learning Swedish, (the mother and the daughter) to enacting a kind of learnt 'Swedish-ness' with the Swedes, an informal heartiness, hugging relative (Swedish) strangers, which was very far removed from the formality and irony of 'respectable' Estonians. Indeed, the fact that this family was not seen as particularly respectable - the father was a heavy drinker - was what made it a viable strategy for them to take on Swedish-ness as an identity.

In contrast, the two most respectable people in the village, the history teacher, who was also the head of the village council, and the village mayor, had next to no social contacts with the visiting officials in spite of the fact that they were more or less constantly in touch regarding the aid programme for the village. The Swedish visitors, despite being initially somewhat taken aback, tended to see this in terms of the long hours they worked, and the necessity for that important Scandinavian concept of 'peace and quiet' (Gullestad 1990). In fact, however, socialising with the powerful representatives from Sweden was on the whole only done by people who were outside the mandated balance of gift exchange, since the Swedes could never realistically be paid back. That meant that socialising tended only to happen with people whose social status was low enough to in any case preclude them from reciprocity and the world of the respectable.

The head of the local school, who had also been on the collective farm board, had a lot to do with visiting Swedish groups. They always came to the school, which was transformed under her direction to a 'Swedish school'. The visiting Swedes were usually informally dressed, not least since the visit for them tended to be conceived in terms of a field-trip to a remote and primitive area where practical clothing was seen as the appropriate style. Informal dress in Sweden, however, has many other meanings, encompassing the sense of 'ordinary Swedish-ness' which to some extent is still perceived in terms of a representation of the

140 This particular form of informality is of course relatively recent in Sweden itself.
The head-mistress, sensing the ideological implications of the Swedish dress-code, tended to mimic the informality, often wearing clothes during these meetings which she would never wear in a normal school day: jeans and warm sweaters, flat shoes, little or no make-up, Soviet bleached hair which was normally elaborately puffed up flattened and naturalised, all to the effect of enacting, or at least enhancing, kinship through style.

On my field site the main relationship to the west was mediated by the twin town agreement with Åtvidaberg in Sweden. Inevitably the contract was more of an adoption than a genuinely reciprocal relationship, although the actual contract, signed in March 1990, was worded in terms of careful reciprocity; aiming to further the common interests of the two localities, to create connections within culture, sports, and on the economic plane, to develop co-operation on the technical and agricultural level, and to arrange exchanges and mutual family holidays. In practice, cultural exchanges were limited to the question of the revival of the Swedish cultural heritage, and sports exchanges were non-existent. The main part of the work had developed into an extensive aid and training programme for the village. On a comparative note, there was also a genuine twin agreement originating in the Soviet times, when all the Estonian collective farms named after Lenin organised revolving sport tournaments, taking it in turn to act as hosts and putting on big parties to celebrate the event. This was one of the few on-going traditions from that time. Unlike the Swedish events, it was barely advertised, and took place in an atmosphere which was both more festive and more relaxed.

The impulse behind the twin town agreement was the widely felt notion in Sweden that, 'one should do something for Estonia'. One of the members of the town council, who was born in Estonia, was asked, therefore, to find a suitable town. Since his father had been the Swedish head of the agricultural college which was housed in the manor house of Birkas before the second world war, and had been an instrumental figure in forging a sense of Swedish-ness amongst the Estonian Swedes, he went back to the same village. During the 1930s, the college had come under increasing pressure as the liberal minorities policies of the 1920s were gradually revoked in favour of widespread Estonianisation (see chapter 3). It is important to remember that the program of aid which seems today to be at least partly enacted within a spirit of gaining some influence for Sweden in the area is

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141 I.e. since the decline of the Social-Democratic project of 'Folkhemmet', the nation as the home of the people, where the 'ordinary' and the utilitarian were promoted as national virtues.
also entangled in the history of the (mild) repression of the Swedish minority by
the Estonian authorities. When, for example, the representatives from Åtvidaberg
use the Swedish rather than the Estonian names for villages in the area, they do
so in the knowledge that these names were officially banned in the 1930s. The
twin town agreement therefore encompasses a rather poignant historical
continuity, coincidentally illustrating the restorationist spirit of the post-Soviet
republic.

There is, however, an important sense in the projects of both aid and trade of
taking Estonia from the Russian to the Swedish sphere of influence, and of re­
claiming a neighbour, which, like Finland and Norway, also constitutes former
Swedish territories. The dominating discourse in Sweden tends to see Estonia as
both poor and backwards, enmeshed in and damaged by Soviet irrationality, but,
at least partially, 'one of us'. The concept of irrational, symbolic, and low-
productive working practices tends to dominate any Swedish discussion about
specific post-Soviet Estonian features, although people also speak in terms of an
unexpected level of suspicion, dishonesty, and reserve. The discourse of aid
consequently encompasses a notion that what should be given is not only objects
but also rationality, including efficiency and good working practices. For
example, in an early report from the Åtvidaberg committee, it is stated that, The
very varied and somewhat unpractical clothing of the workers gave birth to the
thought that we should present how a Swedish employer keeps his employees
with work clothes: three standard overalls, where the clean one is worn on
Monday, the second one goes to the laundry, and the third one is an extra hanging
in the cupboard. From the Estonian side there was a great deal of interest in the
thought of acquiring some fabric and information about how to make overalls, and
then building a local enterprise. Help to self-help, in other words!' (Report Dec.
1990).142

These concepts, as Orvar Löfgren has argued, have been incorporated as part of
the modernist project into the national identity of Sweden to the extent that, to
Swedes, 'Swedish-ness' is largely constituted by the notion of rationality (Löfgren
1991: 104).143 Swedish business people who are investing in Estonia invariably

142 'Arbetarernas mycket omväxlande och föga praktiska klädsel födde tanken att vi skulle
presentera hur en svensk arbetsgivare håller sina anställda med arbetskläder: tre overaller, där en
ren tas på på måndagen, en går till tvått och en hänger som reserv i skåpet. Från estnisk sida visade
man stort intresse för tanken att få blåttg och information om tillverkningssätt och därpå bygga
143 Within the logic of structuralism, the binary opposite to (modernist) rationality might be
defined as the essentially romantic feeling for nature, equally powerful in making up the Swedish
national identity.

264
comment on the impossibility of working with anybody over a certain age, usually somewhere between 20 and 35: they are seen as hopelessly indoctrinated by Soviet ideas, and, literally, beyond hope of ever productively participating in the new economy. For example in a commercial report on Estonia written (in English) for business people thinking of investing in the country, the following is stated regarding the labour situation:

'Blue collar labour is fairly well trained and likely to do well provided led by exiled Estonians or other westerners. The hourly wages are one tenth of the German or Swedish ones. As the Estonians today (i.e. without western leadership) take double the time the net present advantage is one fifth - still considerable. Some Swedish companies are quite pleased with the hire work performed by Estonian factories. White collar labour, accommodated to years of plan and commando economy (sic), show little or no creativity, and have to be instructed in detail by westerners. Financial management is unknown. There is a lot of unnecessary in-house production (excessive vertical integration). Strong western leadership, advice and education is required. The implication of the market economy is vaguely understood - to most people it means 'high living standards'. The mental reorientation required is colossal. Many, sorry to say, have to be considered lost cases. One Swedish businessman went as far as to say that 'don't waste your time on anyone older than 20 years - they are beyond correction' (Wachtmeister 1992:4).

Whilst the majority view in Sweden is that helping Estonia is an act of solidarity with a neighbour, there is also a minority view, which associates Estonia, and the other Baltic states, with war crimes and Nazi Germany. The view of Estonia as inherently suspect merges into a view of it as also, simultaneously, inherently boring, and the Estonian Swedes as the epitome of the quaint traditional folk culture which combines dull-ness with the Heimat aesthetic redolent of the Nazis (cf Motyl 1994)\textsuperscript{144}. The view of Estonians as essentially unfortunate, however, is far more widespread, particularly amongst members of various voluntary organisations such as choirs, church groups, and social clubs.

\textsuperscript{144} The suspect nature of the non-Russians is of course re-enforced by the fact that all the war trials of recent years have been of non-Germans, since the Germans were largely de-Nazified by the Allied Forces after the war. The non-Germans, on the other hand, often escaped to the west through the D.P. camps and false papers. I am indebted to Ken Roth of Human Rights Watch for this comment.
The question of kinship and neighbourhood is of central importance in the aid movement. The idea of same-ness rather than the (partially constructed) otherness which is the basis for the large-scale state development aid encourages people to give objects from their own homes. The idea is that the objects would be appropriately re-contextualised within an Estonian home, which tends to be thought of as a Swedish home with fewer objects and a lower standard. The sense of kinship, then, is a central concept in the aid movement. For example, in a letter to the village mayor from the head of the Åtvidaberg committee for Noarootsi (Swedish Nuckö), he writes about the visit of a group of students from the local school to Åtvidaberg: 'Your five students and two leaders have made excellent propaganda for Nuckö and our twin town relationship. Probably the most important event occurred on Walpurgis night, when they presented themselves one by one in front of 4000-5000 people. The reaction was interesting when people discovered that they spoke Swedish, and good Swedish at that—suddenly these children were seen not as strangers but as young people who really belonged to us and our northern community' (Letter from Olle Söderbäck, 6.5.91).

The Åtvidaberg twin town agreement is by no means unique: many of the small towns and village councils in Estonia now have an agreement like the Noarootsi one. Few, however, are as active, and are so tied in with the question of the revival of the Swedish heritage. There are also frequent ad hoc collections, such as the collection by a group of shift workers at a factory in the north of Sweden for a hospital in Tallinn, inspired by the high national figure for the 1991 Christmas shopping (TPPM Forshaga 1993). The group collected about £5,000, which they used for food and medicine. They were then able to collect about one and a half tons of clothes and toys from the small town where the factory is based, as well as a number of second-hand wheelchairs and other equipment from several hospitals. The high response, which surprised the organisers, is, as stated above, symptomatic for the movement of aid to Estonia.

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145 'Era fem elever och två ledare har gjort en utmärkt propaganda för Nuckö och våra vänortsrelationer. Den viktigaste händelsen inträffade nog på valborgsmässoaftonen då de framträdde och presenterade sig en och en inför 4000-5000 personer. Reaktion var intressant när människorna upptäckte att de talade svenska och dessutom bra svenska - plötsligt upplevdes dess barn inte längre som främlingar utan som ungdomar som verkligen tillhörde oss och vår nordiska gemenskap (sic)' (Letter from Olle Söderbäck, 6.5.91). Walpurgis night, Valborgsmässoafton, is an important event in the Swedish calendar, when large bonfires are lit at night, which popularly are supposed to constitute a celebration of spring and the return of light. The festivities explain the size of the audience.
One of the meanings inherent in the high level of response is the satisfaction taken in the imagined re-contextualisation of the objects. The journey of the objects from affluence to need symbolically enhances their value, reflecting and increasing the imagined wealth of the donor. Again, the sense of kinship, and the imagined appropriateness of the re-contextualisations from the Swedish to the Estonian home must be emphasised: this is a form of kinship which is closely related to the nation and the concept of northern-ness, which partially and with some ambivalence incorporates Estonia. Any object from a Swedish home is regarded as intrinsically appropriate for an Estonian home, in a way that it would not be for, say, a Russian or an Armenian home. In real terms the similarity is largely imaginary. Estonian homes, particularly in the blocks of flats, are predominantly steeped in a normative Soviet style, which is rather different from Swedish home interiors. Following Janet Carsten and Stephen Hugh-Jones, who have argued that houses are intimately linked to concepts of the body and self, the kinship between the Estonians and the Swedes is assumed, in Sweden, to extend to a form of kinship between Estonian and Swedish homes (Carsten/ Hugh-Jones eds. 1995). The Swedish donors, consequently, imagine their donated objects being re-contextualised appropriately, clinching the deal of the symbolically offered kinship.

As the donor is paradoxically enriched, so the recipients are symbolically impoverished. The contrast is magnified by the difference in perception of the aid: the Swedes involved in ad hoc aid efforts often complained about the lack of gratitude or even co-operation from the Estonian side. For the Estonians, having to deal with the aid reflects a paradoxical transformation from being relatively well-off 'westerners' within the Soviet Union, to being impoverished 'easterners' in the context of the west. Receiving charity, disturbing the cultural injunction of balance, was essentially perceived as humiliating. There was a widespread feeling that, if anything, the Estonians should be sending charity to other countries, like Armenia or Georgia. The drive to collect clothes and blankets for the victims of the earthquake catastrophe in Armenia some years ago was often mentioned to me, sometimes with the addition that Estonia sent more blankets per capita than any other Soviet nation. Being on the receiving end of a similar effort was difficult. The older students in the school where I taught, for example, were scathing about a shipment of second-hand clothes which had arrived from Sweden which they thought was of inferior quality, and therefore reflexive of the view of the Estonians in Sweden. 'They must think that we run around naked here', one of them said. There was, then, a perceived insult in the gift of something so bad, things the Swedes obviously didn't want themselves, but thought were good
enough for the Estonians. By contrast, during the sale of a shipment of clothes and furniture in June, a local woman showed me the baby coat she had been able to buy cheaply, and asked me whether I thought it would be appropriate for her to write and thank the person who had donated the coat - the baby's name and address was inside the jacket. This was clearly an impulse of gratitude, but it was also, I would argue, an attempt to re-dress the balance and give something back, and hence to shift the context of the object from charity, which by definition is impossible to reciprocate since it paradoxically functions to institutionalise inequality, to a gift.

The program of aid is comprehensive, including not only a large amount of agricultural and utilitarian objects, but also training programs in Sweden for selected trainees, and a whole new central heating system which runs on wood chips, and includes a wood chipping machine (see plates 3-4). The thinking behind the heating system self-consciously reflects the idea of Swedish social thinking, taking into account a multiplicity of factors, including the availability of badly managed woods, the environmental advantages of wood chips as compared to coal, the jobs created in the process of felling and transporting the trees, and the training of two local people in Sweden in how to actually build heating centres of this kind, the idea being both that it would become a model for other collective farms in Estonia, and that a local industry constructing them might be created.

Also, two unemployed people from Ätvidaberg were sent over on a job creation scheme to clean up after the installation, partly because the Estonians were not trusted with proper and thorough cleaning and painting. More importantly, job creation schemes were part of the social thinking behind the aid project. They were not a success, however, doing a cursory job, and spending most of the evenings in the bar complaining of boredom and isolation. It was clear that they fell in between two categories; not powerful enough to be interesting to the people who were cultivating contacts with the Swedes, and not eccentric enough to be interesting to the intellectual elite. The complaints of isolation, therefore, were not exaggerated.

In another large scale effort a communal freezer house was built, with 64 compartments rented out to individuals in the blocks of flats. The administration of the freezer was assigned to a group of locals, who set the rent at running cost, to the dismay of the Swedes who would have set it higher to cover the cost of

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146 The money raised from these sales went to a local fund aiming to help the people in the area. Although the woman had bought the coat, therefore, she was well aware of the fact that it had been given as charity.
future repairs: it was another much talked about piece of evidence of the hopelessly Soviet lack of common sense and rationality of the community. The freezer house stands at a right angle to two of the apartment blocks, and faces a third one, in effect creating a square. It is, deliberately, painted a traditional Swedish red, which is a reference and a claim, just as it was in the 1920s and 1930s when the Estonian Swedish farmers were encouraged to paint their traditionally grey houses red. In an article about the twin town work for *Hembygsbladet*, a Swedish rural news journal, the head of the Åtvidaberg committee mentions the red-ness of the freezer house: 'Both agriculture and individual households should benefit from the freezer house, constituting 64 compartments, which was installed in a cooling building constructed by 10 unemployed young people from Åtvidaberg - it is the only building painted red with white corners on the whole of Nuckö!' (Olle Söderback 11.11.93). Unfortunately, the Swedes left before it was quite finished, leaving the door unpainted and the steps uncovered. Instead of completing the job the state of unfinished was allowed to continue, secretly regarded by the Swedes as another Soviet sign, showing the same characteristic lack of care and responsibility.

There are only two exclamation marks in the article quoted above, and both function as signs of Swedish-ness for the Swedish audience. In terms of material culture, Swedish red with white corners constitutes a symbol for Swedish-ness, with connotations of rural peace and quiet (cf Gaunt/ Lofgren 1985:9,41; Frykmans/ Lofgren 1979:68). The other exclamation mark is equally significant in terms of the Swedish view of themselves, and of the post-Soviet Estonians: 'On the agricultural side we have had a number of trainees over in Sweden, who were able to follow the farm work on some local farms in Åtvidaberg for 4-5 weeks, and thereby gain some experience of how an efficient agriculture can, and perhaps should, be run. Regarding the question of efficiency there is as you know much to be desired in Estonia!' (Olle Söderback 11.11.93). The gift of efficiency and rationality, then, is therefore seen as the other side of the aid programme, the invisible inculcation of what is regarded as real work practices, in contrast to Soviet symbolic work. Thus for example the head of the committee tried to

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147 'Både lantbruket och de enskilda hushållen torde ha glädje av den andelsfrys, omfattande 64 fryfack, som installerades i ett av tio arbetslösa åtvidabergsungdomar uppfört kylhus - den enda byggnaden med fäv rodfärg och vita knutar som finns i Nuckö!' (Olle Söderback 11.11.93).

148 'På jordbruksidan har vi även haft över ett antal praktikanter, som under 4-5 veckor fått följa arbetet vid några gårdar här i Åtvidaberg och därvid skaffat sig erfarenheter av hur ett effektivt jordbruksarbeta kan och kanske bör bedrivas. Ifråga om effektiviteten finns ju som bekant mycket att önska i Estland!' (Olle Söderback 11.11.93).

149 The notion of the symbolic nature of Soviet work was of course widely shared by Soviet people too, encapsulated in the joke that, 'they pretend to pay us and we pretend to work.'
enlist support from other organisations, notably from SIDA, the Swedish International Development Agency. The grant from SIDA would cover a 3-4 day course for agricultural workers on training with local Swedish farmers, where the trainees would be taught the fundamentals of Swedish democracy, constitution, local authority organisation, and tax laws. The training, then, would cover not only Swedish farming methods but also the 'Swedish model', including both a model of government and a wider concept of co-operative and concensual efficiency (Letter from Olle Söderbäck 20.10.91). This model is not incidental, nor is it exclusively a reaction to what is perceived as a lack of rationality: rather, it is intrinsic to Sweden's approach both to government and to aid. Löfgren, similarly, has argued in his article 'Att nationalisera modernitet' ('Nationalising Modernity') that even the government's project of encouraging cultural diversity, and giving grants to immigrant groups for various cultural activities, involves a powerful 'Swedification apparatus', operating through the requirements of successful grant applications: a democratically elected board, proper accountancy, childcare, and gender-awareness training (Löfgren 1991:114).

In addition to the business people and the aid officials, the third group in the context of the revival of Swedish-ness in Estonia is of course the Estonian Swedes. The majority of Swedish-speaking Estonians fled to Sweden during the war, and many are now coming back to visit relatives left behind, or to see their old homes. As former owners, they are legally entitled to re-claim their confiscated property, and nearly all of them, encouraged by their representative organisation SOV, are doing that. Initially this law led to a deep sense of unease amongst the new inhabitants, often descendants of Russian Estonian refugees from the front during the Second World War, who feared that their houses might be taken away from them. The inhabitants of one small island, Runö (Estonian Ruhnu), which was 100% Swedish speaking before the war, were even debating whether they should collectively defect to Latvia, in order to by-pass the whole problem. The present occupiers, however, were finally given a life-time assured occupancy right which has improved the relationship.

The Estonian Swedes in a sense inhabit a symbolic bridge between Estonia and Sweden: having real kinship ties in Estonia, they are also entirely assimilated in Sweden, indistinguishable as a group from other Swedes. In spring and summer many of them come over regularly, sometimes staying with the people who are now living in their old homes. They bring practical presents; aspirin, coffee, vitamins, paint for the dilapidated old farm-houses. Like the aid, the objects are
utilitarian rather than frivolous, representing, again, the core concept of rationality in relation to Swedish-ness. In their cases, however, cycles of gift-exchange do develop, and what they are given back tends be representations of the nation or the region: craft objects, berries, smoked flat-fish, mushrooms. Hence the relationship to Sweden is also framed by objects moving from Estonia to Sweden: objects which the older people remember from their child-hoods and which are un-available in Sweden. These are not only gifts. One man who comes back regularly told me that the first time he came back, in 1989, he brought with him a barrel of drinking water from Stockholm because he was afraid of Soviet pollution. Now, he said, every time he goes back to Stockholm he brings with him a barrel of water from his old well in Estonia: the Stockholm water, he says, isn't anything like as good.

**Conclusion**

The process whereby Estonia is moving from the Soviet Union to the west is, then, articulated in terms of the appropriation of western objects. The objects constitute powerful signs of three separate but overlapping categories, 'western-ness', 'Swedish-ness' and 'normality'. There is, as we have seen, a marked sense of ambivalence surrounding the objects, stemming from a number of different historical trajectories and cultural imperatives. I have tried to analyse some of these, focusing on the centrality of balance and the ambivalence of material success, connected both to Soviet egalitarianism and to the Estonian self-identity, which is constructed largely in opposition to the projected extravagance and imbalance of the Russian character.

As we have seen, the importance of balance has particular implications for the cultural system of gift-exchange, emphasising the obligation to reciprocate. The lack of balance and the economically un-equal relationship between Sweden and Estonia which the aid highlights has the effect of making the reception and appropriation of the objects at least to some extent problematic. Furthermore, it has a marked influence on the manner of socialising between the (almost exclusively male) aid officials from the twin town of Åtvidaberg and the local population. The meeting between the two groups is complex, and, from the Estonian side, related to questions of gift exchange and balance, and respectability or lack of respectability. The inability to reciprocate on equal terms means that the more respectable members of the community avoid social contact with the Swedes, leaving the less respectable people to develop sociable
relationships with them. That particular constellation is further emphasised by the way in which the Swedes, as outsiders with a certain amount of power, are slotted into the role of authority, echoing the authority of the Soviet rulers. This, in the world turned upside down, still carries a taint of disrespect. The fact that they associate exclusively with people who are not regarded as educated, sophisticated, or particularly respectable, clinches, so to speak, the social identity of the Swedes.

It is also clear that the community leaders have a real interest in presenting the village and area as 'Swedish'. The actual lack of Swedish roots for the majority of the population, was not initially known to the Swedish aid officials, just as they didn't know that the majority of the students in the high school, some of whom got invited to Sweden for extended periods of study, are neither local nor with any Swedish ancestry. In an unconscious illustration of the importance of kinship, I was told by an aid official that they had discovered that one girl who had been invited to Sweden was not local, and, therefore, not in any sense Swedish. She had also, unfortunately, stolen a number of things from her host family. Significantly, the two stories intermingled to the point where the theft was seemingly rationalised in terms of the girl not being Swedish; her suddenly discovered status as 'foreigner' was unconsciously connected to her identity as a thief. The revival of Swedish-ness, then, represents the assumption of yet another identity for the area: an identity which has some relevance for the place, but much less so for most of the people. In terms of the Russian and Soviet past, it's another Potemkin façade, the public presentation of a false reality named after the interior minister of Catherine the Great, who ordered attractive façades of prosperous villages to be erected along the banks of the Volga, in order to hide the destitution of the real villages from the imperial gaze.

The consumption of western goods available in the shops indicates both success in the post-Soviet state, and a process of differentiation from the Soviet system, which also includes a distinction from the people who are not successful in the new system, and who are more likely to regret the loss of the Soviet society. Material success, as we have seen, is viewed with some ambivalence, both because it is seen as essentially unbalanced, and because it is associated with various degrees of corruption. The history teacher, for example, who represented the epitome of intellectualism locally, avoided the new shop, and western products. There is a powerful incentive, therefore, to normalise material success, incorporating the new objects into a discourse of normality which is measured by the standards of the west rather than of the former Soviet Union. The notion that western-ness represents normality, moreover, is strongly backed up by the
essentially western self-identity of the Estonians during the Soviet era, in contrast
to other Soviet peoples. Using the teacher as an example, again, his dislike of the
new shop was never articulated in terms which would have distinguished western
and indigenous products: the idea that there was a distinction was avoided even by
people like him.

It is important to remember, also, that this is essentially a society in
transformation, where the appropriation of western goods is going through a
particular and fleeting phase. This has ramifications also for the older objects,
which are increasingly contextualised as 'old' and 'Soviet'. Amitav Ghosh
describes the relationship of the fellahaens' of Egypt to the concept of
'development' as follows: 'I had an inkling then of the real and desperate
seriousness of their engagement with modernism, because I realized that the
fellahen saw the material circumstances of their lives in exactly the same way
that a university economist would: as a situation that was shamefully
anachronistic, a warp upon time; I understood that their relationships with the
objects of their everyday lives was never innocent of the knowledge that there
were other places, other countries which did not have mud-walled houses and
cattle-drawn ploughs, so that those objects, those houses and ploughs, were
insubstantial things, ghosts displaced in time, waiting to be exorcized and laid to
rest' (Ghosh 1992: 201). Similarly, the inhabitants of the former collective farm
knew that not only was the farm itself rendered obsolete by the 'changes', but so
was the greater part of their material culture; the dusty and dilapidated 'culture
house', the agricultural machinery slowly rusting in a back yard, the Russian
kettles and the polyester clothes.

This chapter, then, has attempted to demonstrate the significance of material
culture in the current process of transformation in Estonia. The consumption of
western objects constitutes an appropriation of western-ness which defines the
transformation to the west, at the same time as it reveals and emphasises the
Soviet rather than the western aspects of Estonia itself. Focusing on setting of
the collective farm, it has explored the ways in which the relationships to the new
objects articulate particular social and historical trajectories, entangling the
Soviet past and the relationship to Russia with the relationship to Sweden and
the restoration of the Swedish cultural heritage on the peninsula.
List of Illustrations/ Chapter 8.

1. Empty and half empty western bottles of shampoo decorating a bathroom shelf.

2. A bathroom shelf with empty Finnish and Swedish bottles of shampoo, an empty cover for Swedish toothpaste, and, above, western soap.

3. The central heating system from outside.

4. Entrance to heating system, with piles of coal outside.
Chapter 9. Epilogue: Normal Life

Observation and Representation

About halfway through my fieldwork, at a coffee party given by one of my informants, I was told two jokes. The first one was about a man visiting a prostitute, who, when he was about to leave and the prostitute mentioned payment, drew himself up and announced that he was a politician, and could not accept any money. The second joke was about a man telling his doctor he thought he was a lesbian. When the doctor asked why, he answered that there were all these attractive men around and yet he found himself being drawn to the women. Both of those jokes, I would argue, have a meaning pertaining to the present conception of the nation: changing identities in the world turned upside down.

The changes were a dominating topic of conversation to most of my informants, particularly when talking to me. At times my informants self-consciously set out to inform me, the ethnographer, of what they thought I was interested in, i.e. the state of Estonia as a nation. Choosing the state rather than themselves as a subject was a statement about their own identity: unlike the Estonian Swedes on the old farms, contemporary people in the blocks of flats on the collective farm did not see themselves as ethnographically interesting. In settings such as a coffee party, which demanded a certain formality, my informants tended to fall into a recognisable pattern, regarding themselves as representatives of Estonia, and myself as the representative of a university and also, ultimately, of two nations, England and Sweden. To interpret the jokes, therefore, as jokes about the state of Estonia is not a deviation from the kind of interpretation which my informants would themselves express - following Sperber, there would be little loss of faithfulness to the original material (Sperber 1994:168). The jokes, then, were about reversals and structural opposites; the transformation of a (male) politician into a (female) prostitute, and the transformation of a heterosexual man into a lesbian, reflecting the common perception on the collective farm that 'the changes' had involved a move from order to disorder, and certainty to uncertainty.150

150 It is, however, important to recognise that the local perception of the changes involves a number of factors, the most important ones being the liberation of Estonia from the Soviet empire, the end of the socialist system, and the end of the collective farm. Whilst independence was predominantly welcomed, the end of socialism, and particularly the end of the collective farm, was viewed with a great deal of ambivalence.
The process of cultural change was largely framed by the contemporary notions of what it meant to be 'Estonian', constructed, mainly, as the non-Soviet northern European. In terms of my fieldwork, the fact that I was a representative of the northern European culture which was represented as both 'normal' and normative turned the relationship between me and my informants from the general relationship between ethnographer as a representative of the 'global' and informants as representatives of the 'local' into a process which was both more urgent and more specific. For the Estonians, the northern European identity signified not the 'other' into which, for better or for worse, they were merging, but rather was seen as a representation of their own inner core, which had been denied its natural and 'normal' expression and development during the Soviet rule.

Identity, however, is an essentially relative concept. The identity of the Estonians, geographically situated in between east and west, is presently shifting: as the country moves from the edges of the east to the edges of the west, the identity of the people seems to move from that of being westerners in the east to being easterners in the west. Whilst Russian observers noticed superior roads and harder working people, western observers see pot-holed streets and inefficient work practices (e.g. Sakharov 1992, Wachtmeister 1992). One much-travelled informant in Tallinn told me about the satisfaction of being mistaken for a Westerner in Soviet Russia: of being better dressed and speaking a seemingly 'foreign' language, of strategically avoiding speaking Russian and hence momentarily escaping the Soviet identity by small acts of distinction. In a fitting illustration of the present changes, she later described her current attempts of trying to pass for Russian in Russia: the coveted foreign-ness which the new Estonian passports entails means that access to museums and other services are several times more expensive. As I have noted throughout this thesis, then, in a process parallel to the appropriation of western-ness, particularly in the realm of material culture, the symbolic 'western-ness' of the Estonians during the Soviet era is now turning into 'eastern-ness' in relation to the new domination of the entity of the West.

Access to the cultural knowledge which was needed to cement that identity, was, as we have seen, fraught with ambivalence. The dangers of pretentiousness and individualism, in conjunction with the Soviet policy of merging the concepts of ethnicity and nationality, meant that the affinity with the West tended to be described in terms of collective and ethnic, rather than individual, kinship. This particular fragment of cultural knowledge, therefore, came to be defined as
'normal', and was widely seen as the logical extension of a core, or an essence, of Estonian-ness, which itself belonged more to nature than to culture. Actual knowledge, therefore, generally had to be gathered discreetly, although there were important generation distinctions on the collective farm between older people, who generally cared less, and identified more with the Soviet system, and young people, whose interiorised Western-ness in terms of a global youth culture, was already quite secure. The people in between, however, tended to vacillate between the two, uncertain of how to acquire the culture which their teen-age sons and daughters seemed to absorb out of thin air.

One strategy was to interview me, orchestrating a reversal between the roles of observer and informant, whereby I was turned into an informant of the culture of desired 'normality'. This was done only by the people who knew me well enough to be able to disregard the potential humiliation of the admission of ignorance of a culture to which they claimed, by historical and geographical rights, to belong. I was questioned, for example, about the new products appearing in the market, such as the array of different kinds of teabags. Was Earl Grey's better than English Breakfast, and, if so, why? Was Lipton a good name? Were there any other, better, names? The informants in question had systematically tried 15 different kinds of tea from the Westernised supermarket in the nearest town, where one of the many signs that you were still in the east was that you could buy Western tea by the teabag, and they now wanted me to tell them which was the 'best' tea. The significance of this story is not simply the illustration of the search for new tastes, but also the still dominating normativity of 'good taste', and the belief in a hierarchy of quality of which Westerners have implicit, or interiorised, knowledge. The project of constructing 'normality', therefore, also involved the notion of objective taste, and a process whereby people would, eventually, be able to construct a legible map of products and brand-names from the chaotic profusion in the new shops.

Constantly observing, I often also found myself in social situations being observed, I and my informants both trying to discover the authentic, or taken-for-granted, cultural knowledge of the other. If I put milk in my coffee this was noted with interest by my landlady, who invariably, like everybody else, took her coffee black, unless she was at a coffee party, when cream was sometimes added. They were interested in what they saw as my unusual consumption of water, as I was interested in the fact that they drank virtually no liquid except for tea, coffee, and alcohol. The contemporary western women's magazines frequent reminders to their readers to drink up to 8 liters of pure water a day would have astonished
them: this was a culture of bodily restraint where excessive consumption was virtually unheard of outside of the narrow realm of alcoholic drinking. Their interest, moreover, in the subtle differences between east and west was not primarily motivated by curiosity, but rather by the desire for knowledge of a coherent Western habitus to which they had a particular, collective, or national, relationship of affinity, but which was also tantalisingly subtle and difficult to grasp for the individual.

My informants, then, were not moving from the local to the global, or from modernity to post-modernity (Appadurai 1990, Harvey 1989:111). As a nation, they knew exactly what they would have been like if the situation had been 'normal', and thus what they wanted to become. 'Western-ness' as represented by American-ness was, on the whole, regarded as culture-less; the structural opposite, but also in some ways the twin, of the Soviet Union. The Estonians, rather, were in a particular movement away from the Soviet (and Russian) and towards a particularly Finnish, Swedish and German cultural sphere. In that sense their process of change differed from the Russian contemporary process, in that they were moving not only from one system to another, but also from one geographical realm of belonging to another. One of the effects of this difference is shown, as we have seen, in the marked difference between Humphrey's description of the temporary reluctance to accept foreign goods in Moscow in 1993, and the desire to incorporate, and 'normalise', Western products in the household on my fieldsite (Humphrey 1995).

I have tried to show in the second part of this thesis how the habitus on the collective farm, defined as Bourdieu's 'structured and structuring structure', or in other words the concept which combines the generative principle of cultural perception and judgement with the systematic categorisation of cultural practices, is changing in the Estonian post-Soviet context (Bourdieu 1986: 170-171). The construction of the 'normal' to encompass the imagined habitus of the West, is, I have argued, a form of appropriation of that habitus; an appropriation which also pre-dated independence from the Soviet Union, and functioned as a means of distinction not only from the Russians but also from the Soviet Union itself. Ironically, it was the interiorisation of the Soviet reification of culture, the view of culture as a malleable state of the collective mind, which is now helping in the rapid transition towards a Western form of habitus. Similarly, Bruce Grant, in his study of the Nivkhi of the Soviet Sakhalin island near Japan, wrote that, 'What emerged, which perhaps was most important, was the Nivkh sense of culture as an object. This came through often when Nivkhi talked of having 'traded in' their
culture for a pan-Soviet one. Like an automobile, culture appeared as a thing that could be repaired, upgraded, and, if necessary, exchanged. (Grant 1995:16)

Similarly, the Estonians, however poor and underprivileged they felt in relation to the West, seemed to have no doubts that they could change, and leave the Soviet culture and way of life comfortably behind in order to assume their natural place in the West.
Appendix: The Survey.

The aim of the survey was an investigation into the collective farm kinship networks, work and housing situations, extent of contacts in the west, and the current attitudes towards de-collectivisation, the future, and the Soviet past. The setting was the blocks of flats in the central village, reaching a total of 55 households, which represented every flat in the blocks, with the exception of the foreign teachers and the student boarders, none of whom were local. In addition, 3 of the local households were un-available, 2 because the families were away, and one, a single man who was the only person who refused to take part in the survey.

The secondary aim of the survey was to visit every flat in order to gain a representative impression of the material culture of the home, and in order to develop at least a cursory dialogue with as many people as possible in the village. It was also important to give people a sense that my representation of the village would be serious and representative, and not based on overly subjective experiences. Some people had expressed concern that my stay with my local host family had given me a warped idea of what the community was really like, firstly because they had only lived in the community for a few years, and secondly because the husband was an alcoholic, and the family were therefore not considered to be representative.

The concept of ethnography was somewhat familiar, although associated more with investigations of 'traditional life' than with research into the life of contemporary lifestyles (cf. Dragadze 1987:155-157, Grant 1995:16). The people in the flats were generally regarded as less representative of the culturally authentic way of life it was initially assumed must be the focus of my study than the people out on the farms in the other villages. There was a general consensus that the blocks of flats, and, by extension, the Soviet rule, constituted a rupture from the land, and, therefore, a rupture from the rural culture which was their culture of origin. Within the blocks of flats, however, some people were seen as more representative than others: the few people who did have Swedish ancestry, for example, were regarded as having deeper, and therefore more interesting, roots than other families. Transitoriness was automatically seen as suspect, and was generally taken to indicate a failure to get on in the place of origin. Exceptions, however, were made for the teachers, who had moved to the community to take particular jobs, and whose educational status precluded them from being categorised as drifters.
Carrying out the survey, therefore, had, besides its utilitarian function, a symbolic importance: it implied a scientific grounding of the ethnographic project which was pleasing to my informants. There were, however, also other important connotations of the project. It was associated with political authority, and, specifically, with the office of the elected mayor. Whilst for some people the format of the survey therefore gave them an opportunity to protest against what they saw as political inefficiency or worse, the majority of the people, accustomed to not speaking their mind, answered all the questions which required an opinion with a studied form of neutrality. Unlike Hann, who emphasises that many East Europeans, especially in the countryside, were generally more empowered under socialism than presently, not least because the level of material prosperity has declined, I perceived a degree of local disempowerment which was ultimately created by the system of Soviet socialism (Hann, C/ Dunn, E. 1996:8). Whilst many older people were obviously traumatised by the events of the war and the Stalinist era, younger people, also, were habitually careful of expressing their opinions. Dragadze, in her case study of rural families in Georgia, shows how important it was to teach the children the skills of secretiveness and persuasiveness in order to ensure their survival as Soviet citizens (Dragadze 1988:137-138). Similarly, I would argue that the degree of secretiveness amongst my informants was more connected to their Soviet training than their present economic disempowerment (cf. Skalnik 1993:225).

That is not to say, however, that the present system was not un-problematic. The new democracy involved a process of de-centralisation of power, which meant that the local council had a greater degree of freedom to implement their own policies. Access to flats and many of the available jobs were in the hands of the elected representatives, who were very familiar both with the lifestyles and the opinions of most of their constituents, and might be expected, since both were scarce, to discriminate in favour of their own supporters. There didn't seem to be any evidence that they actually did: the discourse of political corruption could be expected to continue for a while after the end of the Soviet power, which was widely regarded as corrupt. There were also stories of people asking how to vote as they stood in the queues to the ballot boxes, and being told by officials which way to cast their vote. As regards the survey, one person changed her answers to some of the questions in the survey once she found out that I was not, in fact, connected with the mayor's office, and I tried to make sure that all subsequent respondents were aware that there was no such connection.
The fact that the survey was carried out in spring and early summer probably also had an impact on the answers to the questions in the latter part, which attempt to gauge the mood of the community, comprising hopes for the future and attitudes towards the time of the collective farm compared to the present. The central heating for the village was initially severely rationed due to the lack of formerly subsidised Russian coal. Subsequently, a fault developed in the system which meant that from a situation where there was hot water about once a week, and at least some heating, there was no hot water or heating at all. At the same time, the weather conditions became extremely severe, reaching lows of -33 degrees centigrade. People were forced to try and get hold of electrical radiators, adding considerably to their already expensive electricity bills, and heated water on their cookers for washing. The school, in particular, was very cold, with teachers and pupils working in layers of clothes and overcoats. The fault was fixed in spring, and eventually the whole burner was replaced with a wood chip burner, organised and financed by the Åtvidaberg program of aid. Had the survey taken place during the winter, then, a considerably more negative view of the present would probably have emerged.

Below is a reproduction of the questions asked in the survey, in Estonian and English.

Küsimusleht Questionnaire


1. Tubade arv korteris? Number of Rooms in the Flat?

2. Inimeste arv korteris? Number of People in the Flat?

3. Kes nad on? a/ arv b/ vanus c/ rahvus d/ kui kaau te elate siin
Who are they? a/ No. b/ Ages c/ ethnicity d/ how long you have lived here

Mees Husband

286
Naine  Wife
Tütar  Daughter
Poeg  Son
Vanaisa  Grandfather
Vanaema  Grandmother

Teine sugulane  Other relatives
Sõber  Friend
Üürnik  Tenant

4. Mis töökoht on praegu ja mis töökoht oli kolhoosiajal?  What job do you have now, and what job did you have at the time of the collective farm?

Mees  (see above)

Naine
Tütar
Poeg
Vanaisa
Vanaema
Teine sugulane
Sõber
Üürnik

5. Kui kaua olete elanud P.s?  How long have you (i.e. the respondent) lived in P.?

287
6. Kui kaua teised inimesed korteris elasid P.s? How long have the other people in the flat lived in P.?

7. Kui paljudes teistes korterites ja majades P.s olete elanud? How many other flats or houses have you lived in in P.?

8. Elukohavahetuse põhjused? Reasons for move?

9. Sünnikoht? Place of Birth?

10. Peamine põhjus P.sse tulekul? Main reason to come to P.?

11. Mitut inimest teadsid Noarootsis enne saabumist? Number of people known in the area before arrival?

12. Kas tuttavad kutsusid teid Noarootsi? Did a contact invite you to come to the area?

13. Kas teie olete kutsunud või julgustanud kedagi siia tulema, jah siis kas sugulasi, sõpru või tuttavaid ning kui palju? Have you invited or encouraged anybody to come here, and if so were they relatives, friends or contacts, and how many?

14. Sugulaste arv Noarootsis? Number of relatives on the peninsula?

15. Täpsed sugulussidemed? Nature of kinship?

16. Kas enamus teie sugulastest elavad Noarootsis? Do most of your relatives live in the area?

17. Kas enamus teie sõpru elab Noarootsis? Do most of your friends live in the area?


1. Kas te planeerite lahkuda, ja kui siis millal? Are you planning to move, and if so, when?
2. Mis on peamine põhjus lahkumiseks? What would be the main reason to move?

3. Kas teil on kontakte teiste maadega ja kui on, siis kas need on suhted sugulastega, organisatsioonidega, või sõpradega? Do you have connections in any other country, and if so, are they with relatives, organisations, or friends?

4. Kas te olete vahetanud kingitusi oma tuttavatega välismaalt? Kui jah, siis mida olete andnud ja mida saanud (s.h. ravimid ja raha)? Do you exchange gifts with your contacts abroad? If so, what have you given and what have you received (incl. medicine and money)?

5. Kas te olete olnud välismaal viimasel 10 aastal? Kus ja millal? Have you been abroad in the last 10 years? Where and when?


1. Milline oli teie meelest kolhoosi kõige edukas aasta? Which, in your opinion, were the best years of the collective farm?

2. Kas teie meelest on Noarootsi tulevik lootusrikas või mitte? In your opinion, is the future of the area hopeful or not?


4. Kas te olete rohkem rahul eluga kolhoosiajal või praegu? Were you more satisfied with life during the time of the collective farm, or now?


6. Kas te soovite sellel teemal teemal midagi lisada? Would you like to add anything to any of the above questions?

Suur tänul! Thank you very much!
Analysis of Responses

Not all the questions have been analysed below, since some of them were, on reflection, not of much importance to the text in the thesis. Hence, for example, question 7 and 8, asking how many previous houses or flats the respondent had occupied in the village, and what the main reason for the move within the village was, have not been included in the analysis, since the number of moves within the village were invariably few, and always had to do with the search for more space, or more rooms within the same amount of square meters. Question 9, asking the respondent for their place of birth was not included either, since the important question of whether or not the respondent was local, and who, in a couple, had moved to the village, had already been answered in questions 5 and 6. The responses to question 10 revealed that there were basically 3 reasons given to come to the village: flats, work, or marriage, and analysing which was the main reason did not seem particularly worthwhile. It is clear, however, from the analysis of questions 5 and 6, that for the majority of couples (16 of 30), the men were local whilst the women were not. In comparison, there were only 2 cases where the woman was local and the man was not, 1 case where both were local, and 11 cases where both partners had moved into the community. Similarly, questions 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17 were not analysed, since they turned out to be peripheral to the main aims of the survey. The following analysis, therefore, will not strictly follow the sequence of the questions of the survey. The respondents are divided into 3 main groups, separated according to family status. There were 30 couples, 13 single parents, and 11 single people. In addition, there was one case of 4 people living together, which meant that since the survey was aimed at households rather than individuals, there was a total of 55. In most cases, the anomalous 4 person household has been classified with the couples. Of the single parents, 11 were women, and of the single people, 10 were women: there were, therefore about 21 single women compared to 3 single men in the village. All figures have been rounded off, where necessary, to one decimal point, and whole percentage points.
1. a average number of rooms in the flats: 2.8
2. average number of people per flat: 3.2

3a/ number of couples\textsuperscript{151}: 30
b/ number of couples living with children: 27
c/ average number of children per couple: 2.2

4a/ number of single mothers: 11
b/ average number of children: 1.7

5a/ number of single fathers: 2
b/ average number of children: 2

6. number of 3 generation families: 1
   (consisting of mother, grandmother, and 2 children)

7a/ number of single men: 1
b/ number of single women: 10

8. number of alternative living arrangements: 1
   (consisting of 2 couples sharing a flat)

9. number of people living with other relatives, friends, or tenants: 0

The birth-rate is relatively low, the number of inter-generational families is extremely low, and there is a majority of single women over single men. The numbers of single women is high, and there seemed to be no stigma attached to the status of single mothers. Some of them had married and had children young, and had subsequently divorced, whereas others had had children outside of marriage.

\textsuperscript{151} Excluding the household of 4 people.
10a/ number of non Estonians couples: 4

(consisting of 1 couple where the man was Estonian and the woman Russian, 1 couple where the woman was Estonian and the man Ukrainian, 1 Russian couple, and 1 couple where the man was from Uzbekistan, and the woman was of Tatar background.)

b/ non-Estonian single people: 0
c/ non-Estonian single parents: 1

(one Russian woman)

A few Russian families had already left the community, aided by re-patriation payments designed to encourage the Russians in Estonia to return to Russia. The people who were left spoke little or no Estonian, but were otherwise fairly assimilated. Most local people spoke at least some Russian, and many claimed to be fluent. There did not seem to be any local hostility towards them, and their children were all fluent in Estonian.

11. number of people in the same job since de-collectivisation:
a/ couples: men: 6 women: 13
b/ single people: men: 1 women: 2
c/ single parents: men: 0 women: 2
  total: men: 7 women: 17

12. number of people in a different job since de-collectivisation:
a/ couples: men: 15 women: 8
b/ single people: men: 0 women: 2
c/ single parents: men: 1 women: 5
  total: men: 16 women: 15

13. number of people un-employed since de-collectivisation:
a/ couples: men: 7 women: 2
b/ single people: men: 0 women: 0
c/ single parents: men: 0 women: 2
  total: men: 7 women: 4
14. total number of respondents: 66
   total number in same job: 24 (36%: 23% for men, 47% for women)
   total number in different job: 31 (47%: 53% for men, 42% for women)
   total number unemployed: 11 (17%: 23% for men, 11% for women) 152

Note that in the unemployment figures, women's unemployment is more hidden than men's, since a number of them now describe themselves as 'house wives', or are having children. For couples, 6 women thus avoided the term unemployed, 2 of whom were having children. By including the remaining 4, women's unemployment rate would increase to 22%, and the total unemployment rate would go up from 17% to 22.5%. The people who have moved to the village since the collective farm period ended are not included in these figures, which removes 5 of the single women from the sample. Note that none of the remaining single people were currently unemployed, however. More women than men have stayed in the same job since the end of the farm, due to the school and the kindergarten, which employed mainly women, and which have not been closed down. It should be noted, also, that although a majority of men are now in a different job, those jobs are often precarious, depending on the success of small local share companies, many of which were closing down during my stay in the community. The shortage of work was a major concern in the community.

15. number of women with relatives in the local area/ without relatives:

   amongst couples: 13 16
   amongst single mothers: 6 5
   amongst single women: 1 9
   total: 20 (40%) 30 (60%)

152 Note that 1/2 percentages are rounded off to the nearest even number, 0.1-0.4 to the number below, and 0.6-0.9 to the number above.
16. number of men with relatives in the local area: without relatives:

amongst couples: 20 10
amongst single fathers: 2 0
amongst single men: 0 1
total: 22 (67%) 11 (33%)

17. couples/ place of origin:
men local, women not: 16 (53%)
women local, men not: 2 (7%)
both local: 1 (3%)
neither local: 11 (37%)
total: 30

Men, as this figures show, were considerably more rooted in the local community: 67% of them had relatives in the area, compared to 40% of women. There were only 2 marriages where the woman was from the area and the man was not, compared to 16 cases where women from elsewhere had married local men. This may partly have been due to the greater number of women than men, since figures 14 above show that 9 out of 10 single women had no relatives in the area, which indicates that they had moved there from a different place of origin. There was, therefore, a pool of non-local unmarried women in the community. The fact that there was only 1 couple, out of 30, where both the partners were local is a sign that people were relatively well connected outside the small community, which was on the whole less isolated than it appeared. The fact that 37% of the couples consisted of people who were not local confirms the fact that there was a good deal of movement into the community, much of it originating in the early 1980's, after the collective farm had published a brochure about the collective farm, the purpose of which was to attract people to the area. Apart from precise figures of how many kilos of milk per cow the 'best milker' of the farm got in 1983 (4071), and how many kilos of cattle beef were sold to the state in the same year (408), it also mentioned that a new school was planned for 1985, as well as new flats and an old peoples' home.
18. number of people planning to leave the community:
  couples:  4
  single parents:  1
  singles:  4

19. reasons to move:
  couples:  search for work (4), wish to live in town (1), don't like the village (1), nothing to do here (1).
  single parents:  search for work
  singles:  no flats available here (1), pensioner wants to live with cousin on farm (1), wish to go back to home town (1), wish to join friends and relatives in town (1).

Note that for couples and single parents the search for work is the most important reason to move from the community. Single people, who are all employed, have other reasons to leave.

20. contacts abroad (with the west):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>relatives</th>
<th>friends</th>
<th>organisations</th>
<th>no contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>couples:</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>single parents:</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>singles:</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total:</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

People had relatives in Sweden, Finland, Canada, Australia and America, in that order, with Sweden and Finland predominating. 73% of couples, 54% of single parents, and 55% of single people had relatives abroad: figures which primarily represent the high level of Estonian refugees from the war and the Soviet and German occupations. Friends and contacts with organisations were almost invariably Swedish or Finnish. The non-Estonians had no contacts in the west.
21. number of people in gift exchange with western contacts:
   couples:  18 (60%)
   single parents:  7 (54%)
   singles:  4 (36%)

Gifts received: medicine, food, coffee, money, clothes, tampons, cigarettes, souvenirs, chocolates, chain saw (1), 'presents', 'help', books, consumer objects.

Gifts given: handicrafts, souvenirs, books, Estonian pictures.

It was clear that these informal forms of gift exchange were a considerable source of income to the community. It should be noted, however, that what was given back in terms of handicrafts was also often of considerable value, particularly in western terms where the cost of labour means that handmade objects are expensive. There was a strong cultural mandate to maintain a balance in gift exchange, and to avoid, as far as possible, a sense of obligation to the giver (see chapter 8). The fact that fewer objects are mentioned as given indicates the normativity of the category of gifts to foreign people, which invariably tends towards representations of the nation or the locality. The gifts given, in contrast, tend to be utilitarian, aiming to alleviate the perceived poverty of the recipients.

22. numbers who have been abroad:
   couples:  18  (comprising 30 trips to Finland, 20 to Sweden, 2 to Denmark, 2 to Canada.)
   single parents:  9  (18 trips to Finland, 8 to Sweden, 2 to Denmark, 1 to France/Italy/Monaco, 1 to India/Nepal.)
   singles:  4  (8 trips to Finland, 12 to Sweden, 1 to Norway)
   total:  31  (56%)

The amount of contact with the west, and particularly with Finland and Sweden, is high, showing, again, that the impression of local isolation is not correct. The geographical and cultural affinity with Finland, in particular, is striking: the languages are mutually intelligible, and they share much of the same history, with the exception, of course, of the Soviet era.
23. Do you think that the future of the local area is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>hopeful</th>
<th>not hopeful</th>
<th>don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>couples:</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>single parents:</td>
<td>8</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>total:</td>
<td>32 (58%)</td>
<td>18 (33%)</td>
<td>5 (9%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

24. Reasons for hope:
tourism (9), school (6), beautiful place (3), 'everything better' (3), new companies will come (2), Swedish contacts (2), contacts abroad (2), rich foreigners (1).

Reasons for lack of hope:
local people are lazy/ passive/ drinking/ transitory/ unorganised (7), no money (3), no work (3), community too small/ too peripheral (3), bad local political leadership (2), blocks of flat too big (1), dirt (1).

25. Reasons for hope, as given by respondents:

old fashioned tourism, spa, tourism, sea, beautiful woods, berries, Swedish contacts, school, beautiful place, tourism, tourism, life gets better, tourists will come, school, companies will come, bringing more work, everything new, better, restorations, own apartment, tourism, school, contacts abroad, rich foreigners may come, Swedes, beautiful flats, school, peaceful area, contacts abroad, school, tourism, school, tourism, new companies will come, all is better.
26. Reasons for lack of hope, as given by respondents:

no money, bad agriculture, lazy people, too peripheral and small, little money, no work, no work, only school, unemployment, no money, expensive apartments, no organisation, no work, no work, no work, bankrupt share companies, apathy, dirt, drinkers, transitory people, no good people, blocks of flats too big, clumsy inefficient political leadership, few enterprising people, people don't want to do anything, no work, no work, passive people, people are poor, won't or can't organise, village council no good, people are passive and not organised.

Note that the largest category of reasons for lack of hope is focused on the qualities of the people, who are said to be apathetic, transitory, drinkers, and, more importantly, passive and not organised, accusations very much based on a Soviet mentalité. Otherwise, lack of work and money dominate the reasons for lack of hope, as might be expected.

Of reasons for hope, tourism, which hadn't as yet taken off, dominated, echoing the hopes of the local Estonian Swedes in the 1920s and 1930s. The school was another important factor, employing a number of people, and bringing students from all over Estonia. 2 people mentioned contacts abroad, and 2 specifically mentioned contacts with Swedes, which may have referred either to the Åtvidaberg program of aid, or to the contacts with returning Estonian Swedes and Estonian Swedish organisations. It is noteworthy that the Åtvidaberg program was not specifically mentioned by anyone, given the extent of the program, and the frequency of the visits of Åtvidaberg officials. Two respondents mentioned that new companies will come, which, as with the tourism, indicates a level of faith in the future which current events had not, perhaps, supported. Clearly, just as the people who lacked hope for the future phrased their reasons within what was in some ways a Soviet framework, the people who felt hopeful did so within a framework of support for the new government.

298
27. respondents more satisfied with life during the time of the collective farm, or more satisfied now:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>more satisfied then</th>
<th>more satisfied now</th>
<th>don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>couples:</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>single parents:</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>singles:</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total:</td>
<td>27 (49%)</td>
<td>20 (36%)</td>
<td>8 (15%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

28. reasons for greater satisfaction during the time of the collective farm compared to the present:

more work (19), more money, and everything cheaper (12), life was easier (3), no heating or hot water now (2), small pensions (1).

total number of reasons for greater satisfaction during the time of the collective farm: 37

29. reasons for greater satisfaction now compared to the time of the collective farm:

greater individual freedom (6), new shop and obtainable products (5), better pay (2), no collectivism (1), fewer Russians (1), Russian times difficult (1), people more polite (1), 'everything is better' (1).

total number of reasons for greater satisfaction now than during the time of the collective farm: 18
30. reasons for greater satisfaction during the time of the collective farm compared to the present as given by informants:

more work and more money, money, work, now difficult, work, work and bread, everything too expensive, no work now, work, work, life was easier, no work now, rooms are cold, cheaper, work, work, more money, little work, money, work, everything expensive and difficult, work, cheap, now small pension, work, cold flats no hot water, expensive, then there was money and not things, now there are things but no money, expensive, work, work, cheap, cheaper, work, work, work.

31. reasons for greater satisfaction now compared to the time of the collective farm as given by informants:

everything obtainable but too expensive, shop, freedom, pay better, better work, shop, Russian times difficult, more possibilities, freedom, individual must think for themselves, freedom, then there was money and nothing to buy, now the opposite, greater freedom, freedom, no collectivism, no difficulties in buying food, shop, money, fewer Russians, people more polite, everything better, no boss, own company.

The lack of work and money, then, dominate the reasons why people felt happier before the changes, whereas greater individual freedom and the improved obtainability of food and consumer goods where the main reasons why people were more satisfied at the present time. It should be noted, however, that the majority of the people stated that they were more satisfied then, a figure which would probably have been considerably higher had the survey not been carried out in spring and early summer, when the lack of heating and hot water, which had been extremely difficult during the severe winter, mattered less.
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