

University of Tartu
Department of History

Master's Thesis by Glenn Eric Kranking

AGITATING THE MINORITY

*Propaganda aimed at the Ethnic Swedes in
Soviet-Occupied Estonia, 1940-1941*

Adviser: Eero Medijainen
University of Tartu
Department of History

TARTU 2004

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	iii
Introduction	1
First Soviet Occupation.....	3
Dissent Among Estonian-Swedes	7
Overview.....	9
Chapter 1: The Intended Audience – Ethnic Swedes in Interwar Estonia	13
Cultural Autonomy Laws.....	15
Estonian-Swedish Press	19
Education and Religion.....	25
The Start of the War.....	27
Chapter 2: Estonian-Swedish National Identity, Soviet Style	31
Soviet Nationalism and National Minorities.....	33
Estonian-Swedish National Identity	37
Linguistic Support.....	40
Cultural Encouragement	43
Regional Identity.....	47
Chapter 3: For the Greatness of the Party – Articulating Socialist Ideology	52
“What is socialism”	53
Elections and the Soviet Political Structure.....	57
Images of Lenin, Stalin, and the Red Army.....	61
Role of the Soviet Citizen: Holidays and Celebrations	65
Historical Comparisons.....	68
Chapter 4: The Sovietization of Society	73
The Changing Landscape	76
Plowing the Soviet Fields	79
Progressive Sovietization of the Fisheries	82
Education and Youth.....	86
Diminishing the Dogma of Religion.....	92

Chapter 5: Foreign Horrors and Domestic Bliss	96
Soviet News Agencies	98
Promises of the Soviet Union	99
News from Abroad.....	103
View of Sweden in <i>Sovjet-Estland</i>	109
The Beginning of the End: The War Against Germany	113
Chapter 6: Truth and Consequences	118
Dissatisfaction and Emigration Thoughts.....	120
Support and Criticism	122
“Why I Don’t Leave For Sweden”.....	127
Deportations and Terror.....	130
Departure of the Estonian-Swedes.....	132
Conclusion	137
Appendix A: Place Names in Estonian and Swedish	142
Appendix B: <i>Sovjet-Estland</i> Publication Dates	143
Bibliography	144
Summary in Estonian – Kokkuvõte	149

Acknowledgements

There are a number of people who assisted me along the way in the research and writing of this thesis that I would like to acknowledge:

Loone Ots, whose work and enthusiasm on the topic of Estonian culture during the Stalinist period in the Baltic Studies program at the University of Tartu, in part, spurred my interest in this topic.

Olaf Mertelsmann, whose early comments and suggestions proved invaluable, steering me towards important documents and resources in the archives, and for organizing a conference of the Sovietization of the Baltic States (held in Haapsalu, Estonia in spring 2003) at which I presented many of the themes found in this research.

Eero Medijainen, my adviser in the Department of History at the University of Tartu.

The staff at the Eesti Riigiarhiivi Filaal (Estonian National Archives Filaal) in Tallinn for assisting me in locating and copying archive material.

Elin Ahldén, Melissa Gjellsted, and Minna Mero, who acted as sounding boards for my various ideas in the early stages of this work and provided valuable support and friendship throughout.

Martin Karner, who helped me with translating documents from Russian, checked my Estonian translations, and translated the summary found at the end of the thesis.

Johanna Söderholm, who assisted me with Swedish translations and provided friendship and valuable feedback on the thesis.

Olli Hannuksela, who checked my Swedish translations, provided comments and suggestions on drafts of the thesis throughout its development, and provided invaluable friendship.

And finally, to my parents, Larry and Lily-Ann Kranking, who supported my research aspirations and continually provide invaluable assistance and feedback in my scholarly endeavors.

Introduction

“Sovjet-Estland” wants be the leader and show the path to the true socialistic-communistic fundamental ideals. Under the high ideals of Lenin-Stalin we begin our work, we attempt to be worthy workers for socialism’s development. All of those who would work for our land’s prosperity must gather themselves around “Sovjet-Estland” and help with the collaboration and distribution of it in their neighborhoods. We are ready for our great task. – The Editor¹

During the first year of Soviet occupation, the Soviet Union attempted an extensive process of Sovietization aimed at all aspects of Estonian society. An integral aspect of this year in Estonia was the propaganda aimed at converting the population to communism. This included the small ethnic Swedish population, comprising of approximately 0.7 percent of Estonia’s population, which had arguably been taken for granted by the Tsarist Russian and independent Estonian governments. This propaganda campaign actively encouraged the development of an Estonian-Swedish national identity through the guise of socialism, with the ethnic Swedes as a group holding an almost privileged position. The central organ of this propaganda campaign was the Soviet-produced Swedish-language newspaper, *Sovjet-Estland*. The campaign attempted to focus the Soviet efforts largely around national identity and Soviet ideology. These efforts were largely a failure, though, with a majority of Estonian-Swedes openly declaring their desire to emigrate to Sweden.

Newspapers can often be used as a representation of the times in which they were published. While they do not show a complete picture of any given time or event, newspapers can demonstrate the opinions and impressions of those at the time – or at least the opinions and impressions of those who control the media. Newspapers are used to inform the readership, but also to shape opinions; it can be used as a call to action. Under the right circumstances and leadership, newspapers can be an effective tool for propaganda and agitation.

¹ Redaktionen, “‘Sovjet-Estland’ – ny tidning för arbetande svensktalande folket,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 17 October 1940, p. 2. Translated from Swedish: “Sovjet-Estland” vill vara ledare och vägvisare till de rätta socialistiska-kommunistiska grundtankar. Under den av Lenin-Stalin uppsatta grundtanken börja vi vårt arbete, försöker vi vara värdiga arbetare vid socialismens uppbyggande. Alla de som vilja arbeta för vårt lands välgång måtte samla sig omkring “SovjetEstland” och hjälpa till med medarbete och utspridandet av den i sin omgivning. Vi äro färdiga för vår stora uppgift.– Redaktionen.

Newspapers can also be instrumental in creating and fostering nationalistic sentiments among the readership. Benedict Anderson defines ‘nation’ as, “an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign.”² In his concepts of nationalism found in *Imagined Communities*, Anderson places a high importance on newspapers, stating that print capitalism leads to the development of an imagined community; people and communities begin to think of themselves as part of a larger whole, connecting with people further away. Newspapers can be used to unite and foster a sense of common identity among people. Anderson states, “Above all, the very idea of ‘nation’ is now nestled firmly in virtually all print-languages; and nation-ness is virtually inseparable from political consciousness.”³ The strong link between printed media and national identity can be seen in numerous examples around the world.

It can be argued that the pre-Second World War Swedish-language publication in Estonia, *Kustbon* (1920-1940), acted as one of several unifying forces within the ethnic Swedish minority community in Estonia following the pattern Anderson laid out. While each town had a distinct dialect, the use of “rikssvenska” (continental Swedish) was able to unite the ethnic minority, providing news and opportunities to connect with ethnic Swedish communities further away. *Kustbon* enabled the population to gather around other areas of the emerging identity, such as the church, education, and politics. While first published by a group with a political affiliation, it was later published by the Estonian-Swedish cultural organization.

Realizing the effectiveness of the print-media and with their arrival in Estonia in 1940, the Soviet’s attempted to take over this role, resulting in a Soviet version of the Estonian-Swedish identity being found in the public culture by producing a Swedish-language publication – *Sovjet-Estland* – in an attempt to shape the community towards the ideals of communism. The Soviets also realized the important role of nationalism; Arnold J. Toynbee states, “nationalism is the strongest ideology in the world and no other ideology can hold its own against nationalism if and when there is a conflict of interests.”⁴ The Bolsheviks arguably attempted to reshape the Estonian-Swedish nationalism with Soviet ideology. If they were to be successful in creating this Soviet

² Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (New York: Verso Books, 1991), 6.

³ Anderson, 135.

⁴ Arnold J. Toynbee, “Looking Back Fifty Years” in *The Impact of the Russian Revolution*, ed. Arnold J. Toynbee, 17 (London: Oxford University Press, 1967).

imagined community for the Estonian-Swedes, they would have been successful at converting the minority population to the communist ideology.

The nature of this campaign, as well as the ideology leading them to undertake this effort, is the topic of this thesis. This thesis explores the *Sovjet-Estland* newspaper published in the first year of occupation during the Second World War – a newspaper produced for an ethnic group of arguably minor political, international, or domestic importance numbering less than one percent of the population. Yet, the occupying forces saw an apparent benefit for courting this arguably inconsequential segment of society, made up of mostly poor farmers, fishermen, and sailors. Can *Sovjet-Estland* be said to continue the imagined community that was started by *Kustbon*? Whereas *Kustbon* had been the result of a naturally developing nationalism, *Sovjet-Estland* was arguably a consciously crafted work with the idea of agitating the Soviet politics towards the Estonian-Swedes.

First Soviet Occupation

The Soviet Union occupied Estonia for the first time from 18 June 1940 until the arrival of the Germans in the summer of 1941, annexing the territory into the USSR on 6 August 1940.⁵ The occupation was made possible, in part, because of the 23 August 1939 Molotov-Ribbentrop Non-aggression Pact between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union and the Secret Protocols which divided up eastern Europe.⁶ This was followed by increasing ultimatums made against the Estonian government by the USSR and ending with a full occupation and the creation of the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic (ESSR).⁷ While few countries recognized the Soviet annexation,⁸ the roughly one year of Soviet occupation early in the Second World War marked a period of rapid change in all aspects of Estonian society towards complete incorporation into the Soviet system. The change

⁵ The first Soviet occupation followed months of growing Soviet pressure and began on 17 June 1940 when 80,000 Red Army soldiers crossed into Estonia. The occupation lasted until the summer of 1941 when the German army moved into the area – the last Soviet holdout on Hiiumaa lasting until 21 October. The Soviets returned in the summer of 1944, completing the reoccupation of Estonia by 24 November. This second Soviet occupation lasted until 20 August 1991. See Mati Laur et. al., *History of Estonia*, (Tallinn: Avita, 2002), 259-276 and 307-315.

⁶ The Avalon Project, *The Avalon Project : Nazi-Soviet Relations 1939-1941: Secret Additional Protocol*, <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/nazsov/addsepro.htm>

⁷ Similar ultimatums were issues to Latvia, Lithuania, and Finland. Finland was the only country to reject the ultimatums, which led to the start of Winter War.

⁸ Germany and Sweden both recognized the annexation. The majority of Western European countries and the United States never recognized the annexation of the Baltic States.

included the closure of all organizations and the shutting-down of all publications not officially sanctioned, and the opening of new, or replacement, organizations and publications under the central control of the Bolshevik party. The intense process of Sovietization touched all of the people in Estonia, regardless of ethnicity, location, occupation, or previous political affiliation. In essence, it was a process to bring the Bolshevik system that had been developing and adapting in Russia since the October Revolution to Estonia as quickly as possible. For the Bolsheviks to be successful, the change in systems would not only involve changes within the administrative, political, and cultural life of Estonia, but also change within the people. This was to be accomplished through an intense propaganda and agitation campaign aimed at the people living in Estonia.

Among those living in Estonia was an ethnic minority population of approximately 8,000 ethnic Swedes. The Estonian-Swedes inhabited primarily the northwestern islands and coastal regions. The heaviest congregation of Estonian-Swedes was in the Läänemaa province, although they were also larger settlements in the Harjumaa and Saaremaa provinces.⁹ The propaganda campaign also targeted the Estonian-Swedes and included replacing *Kustbon*, which stopped publication in July 1940, with *Sovjet-Estland*, which began publishing 17 October of the same year as an official organ of the Estonian Communist (Bolshevik) Party in the Läänemaa province. The Swedish-language publication went from being a newspaper created *by* Estonian-Swedes to being a newspaper created *for* Estonian-Swedes, with an ethnic Estonian, Anton Vaarandi, acting as the editor of the newly created newspaper.¹⁰ The weekly publication (*Kustbon* was published at times weekly, but not consistently throughout its pressrun) continued until 13 August 1941 when it was discontinued by the German advance into Estonia after 43 issues – missing only a single week, in mid-July 1941.

⁹ For the purposes of this thesis, place names are used following the Estonian standard. In almost all cases, a separate Swedish name was used by the ethnic Swedish population. Articles in *Sovjet-Estland* use primarily Swedish place names, but not exclusively, with several notable exceptions discussed in Chapter 2. In instances where the Swedish name published in *Sovjet-Estland* is relevant, both names will be provided, along with an explanation. See Marianne Blomqvist, *Svenska ortnamn i Estland med estniska motsvarigheter* (Ekenäs: Svenska folkskolans vänner, 2000). For a complete listing of the place names used in this thesis in both Estonian and Swedish, refer to Appendix A.

¹⁰ Vaarandi was also the editor of several Estonian-language newspapers including: *Sirp ja Vasar*, *Rahva Hääl*, and *Noorte Hääl*. Vaarandi oversaw the publication of two Swedish-language textbooks in 1941 compiled by Tomas Gärdström (see Chapter 4).

Officially, *Sovjet-Estland* was the organ of the Estonian Communist Party for the Läänemaa region, however coverage included areas outside this region. It is probably more correct to state that the newspaper was intended for the Estonian-Swedes, regardless of which province they lived in. Arguably, the local party had little to no influence on the newspaper's content. The newspaper was edited in Tallinn at the offices of the ESSR National Publication Center's Newspaper Publishing House (*ENSV Riikliku Kirjastuskeskuse Ajalehtede Kirjastus*) located at Pikk 58 and published at the Red Star (*Punane Täht*) printing house, also located in Tallinn.¹¹ *Sovjet-Estland* was the sole publication representing Läänemaa until the arrival of *Töötav Läänlane* in December 1940, also identified as an official publication of the Läänemaa Communists.¹² The newspaper was typically four pages, although special coverage of the Party Congress increased it to six pages, and on one instance – shortly after the German declaration of war – a two-page newspaper was published.

Coverage in *Sovjet-Estland* can not be seen as a complete coverage of events in Estonia nor within the ethnic Swedish communities. According to Martin Ebon, "Lenin advocated that information is agitation by means of interpreted facts."¹³ This mentality continued across the Soviet Union. The interpretation offered in *Sovjet-Estland*, as well as the interpretation in other Soviet-controlled publications, offered the Soviet interpretation with the intention for use as propaganda and agitation. Articles were written to show the Soviets in a positive light, and often did not present a complete picture. Absent from the newspapers was news about deportations, any hardships faced by the citizens, discontentment within the population, forced mobilizations, reports of Estonian-Swedes departing for Sweden, and opposition to the Soviet regime. Instead, the newspaper focused on ideology, administrative changes in Estonian government, and the positive future for Estonia and for Estonian-Swedes under the Soviet power. Articles included ideology and promises of the Soviet system, particularly promoting the role of the workers and the industrial benefits. This was contrasted with the economic difficulties covered in international news, with an emphasis in coverage of Sweden.

¹¹ ENSV Riikliku Kirjastuskeskuse Ajalehtede Kirjastus oversaw the publication of newspapers in the ESSR. The majority of newspapers – both national and regional – were published in Estonian, with the exceptions of *Sovjet-Estland* in Swedish and two Russian-language newspapers: *Sovetskaja Derevnja* and *Sovetskaja Estonia*.

¹² However, unlike *Sovjet-Estland*, *Töötav Läänlane* had editorial offices within the province.

¹³ Martin Ebon, *The Soviet Propaganda Machine* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1987), 171.

The publication of *Sovjet-Estland* can be seen as a continuation of the Soviet newspaper tradition that had emerged since the October Revolution. Within the Soviet system, the central government held a complete monopoly of the media, enabling it to control and lead the official public culture, shaping the images and messages. Opposing viewpoints did not have an outlet for expression within Soviet society. The strict control required a censorship of all published materials.¹⁴ This censorship provided the Bolsheviks to maintain a strict control of the message and better control of the propaganda. For the celebration of the Bolshevik Press Day (5 May), *Sovjet-Estland* stated, “In the hands of the working class, the press is the most powerful weapon, an indispensable means for enlightenment, for propaganda, for agitation, and for the far and wide organization of the masses.”¹⁵ The Bolshevik Press Day article in *Sovjet-Estland*, in speaking about the press in Soviet Estonia stated, “Following in the Bolshevik press tradition of instructing in the Bolshevik model, and of Lenin’s and Stalin’s written works, the Soviet Estonian press serves the purpose worthy of its duty under the Bolshevik party’s guidance.”¹⁶ The Bolshevik model involved a heavily centralized focus on the media. David L. Hoffmann calls the Soviet system “a hyper-centralized system, with ultimate decision-making authority for all matters – including cultural issues – in the hands of the Politburo.”¹⁷ In keeping with the Soviet tradition, the media in Estonia was highly centralized and coordinated, under tight censorship to ensure an approved Bolshevik message.

Language was clearly important in *Sovjet-Estland*. Publishing a Swedish-language newspaper can perhaps be seen as a clear attempt to gain favor with the minority population. Articles almost always used Swedish names for towns, which had been prohibited by the Estonian government in the 1930s. While the majority of articles were translated into Swedish from either Russian or Estonian, there was original content

¹⁴ For an extensive overview of the development of the Soviet media, see Jeffrey Brooks, *Thank You, Comrade Stalin!: Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

¹⁵ “Den bolsjevistiska pressens dag,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 8 May 1941, p. 1. Translated from Swedish: I arbetarklassens hand är pressen det mäktigaste vapnet, ett oundgängligt medel för upplysning, för propaganda, för agitation och för de vida massornas organisering.

¹⁶ “Den bolsjevistiska pressens dag,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 8 May 1941, p. 1. Translated from Swedish: Följande den bolsjevistiska pressens traditioner, lärade av bolsjevistiska förebilder, av Lenin och Stalins skrivna verk fyller Sovjet-Estlands press under det bolsjevistiska partiets ledning värdigt sin plikt.

¹⁷ David L. Hoffmann, *Stalinist Values: The Cultural Norms of Soviet Modernity, 1917-1941* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 4.

created and directed at the Estonian-Swedes. However, the editorship was under a non-native Swedish speaker, and as a result, there were initially frequent spelling and grammatical mistakes.¹⁸

Dissent among Estonian-Swedes

Support for the Soviets was far from unanimous. Even from the early stages of the Soviet threat, indications were made that the ethnic Swedes were concerned. Initially, these concerns were over the displacement of Estonian-Swedes caused by the 28 September 1939 pact of mutual assistance. The pact led to the establishment of Soviet military bases on Estonian soil, including the ethnic Swedish populated regions of the Pakrite islands, Osmussaar, and Naissaar. The Estonian-Swedes from the Pakrite islands requested permission to emigrate to Sweden. Having been given legal permission, 110 Estonian-Swedes arrived in Stockholm aboard the “Estonia” on 17 October 1940 – ironically arriving on the same day as the first issue of *Sovjet-Estland* was published. It was approximately a third of the island’s inhabitants, and apparently the first to indicate a desire to emigrate. During the first Soviet occupation of Estonia, this was the only group of people legally permitted to emigrate to Sweden. A committee in Sweden assisted the newly arrived Estonian-Swedes to settle in Sweden, collecting and distributing funds, and assisting with citizenship problems. This group also acted as advocates for the emigration of the majority of ethnic Swedes from Estonia in the years to follow. The first groups left on their own illegally in November and December 1940, mostly from Naissaar.¹⁹

Their departures can be seen as the start of the difficulties the Soviets would face with the ethnic Swedish minority, with large numbers of the Estonian-Swedes publicly stating their desire to emigrate and signing their names on lists throughout the Soviet occupation. The Swedish-language Soviet propaganda that followed in the roughly year-long occupation can arguably be viewed through an attempt to convince the Estonian-Swedes to remain in the ESSR. However, when the Soviets returned in 1944 following the German occupation, the majority of the ethnic Swedes had already left Estonia for Sweden. *Sovjet-Estland* did not resume publication.

¹⁸ This thesis has not focused on *Sovjet-Estland* from a linguistic perspective, although this would prove to be an interesting topic for future researchers.

¹⁹ Viktor Aman, “Andra världskriget och överflyttningen till Sverige” in *En bok om Estlands svenskar* (Stockholm: Kulturföreningen Svenska Odlingens Vänner, 1961), 194.

Was the campaign a failure? This thesis explores the campaign to provide an aspect on the eventual emigration. While this research cannot be used to completely explain the emigration, can it be argued that the Soviets failed in their attempts to convince the Estonian-Swedes? If so, then a closer look at how the campaign was attempted can perhaps raise some conclusions as to why it failed.

The base assumption for this research is that *Sovjet-Estland*, as a centrally controlled and produced newspaper, was a form of Soviet propaganda and agitation with the ethnic Swedes in Estonia as the primary recipient (given the use of the Swedish language and use of Swedish place names). The thesis follows Jacques Ellul's definition of propaganda. He states:

The aim of modern propaganda is no longer to modify ideas, but to provoke action. It is no longer the change adherence to a doctrine, but to make the individual cling irrationally to a process of action. It is no longer to lead to a choice, but to loosen the reflexes. It is no longer to transform an opinion, but to arouse an active and mythical belief.²⁰

The propaganda campaign aimed at the Estonian-Swedes was intended to provoke them towards the socialist system, to accept the new ideology, and ultimately to mobilize in support of the Soviet Union. The goal of *Sovjet-Estland* was to convert the Estonian-Swedes to communism, by introducing them to the various aspects of communism. The newspaper also attempted to depict the community-wide response to the Soviets as favorable, with the full support of the working people of Estonia.

The readers of the newspaper were taken into consideration, but only in a limited and controlled manner. Soviet media scholar Jeffrey Brooks states "Each newspaper was officially a party publication, a fact that determined the staff's first loyalty."²¹ While the audience was taken into account in producing the newspaper, the product and content was not driven by the community's needs and desires, and arguably did not even require the audience's participation. The content was, in large part selected for the ethnic Swedes, however the sentiments of the population as a whole were not reflected in the newspaper. The newspaper was not an economic enterprise, but rather an ideological means for propaganda. Ellul states, "The individual is of no interest to the propagandist; as an

²⁰ Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes* (New York: Vintage Books, 1965), 25.

²¹ Brooks, 19.

isolated unit he presents much too much resistance to external action.”²² The target of the campaign was the ethnic group as a whole, and not an individual reader.

The main focus of this thesis is to look at *Sovjet-Estland* for why the Estonian-Swedes as a group were targeted by this campaign, how the propaganda message was passed along, what the intended message was, and how receptive this message was. According to Ellul, “Propaganda cannot be satisfied with partial successes, for it does not tolerate discussion... As long as a noticeable or expressed tension or a conflict of action remains, propaganda cannot be said to have accomplished its aim.”²³

Also central to the thesis is the Soviet control in Estonia and the rapid process of Sovietization to convert Estonia into the Soviet system. At this point in Soviet history, Stalin’s strong hold was dominant. Hoffmann defines Stalinism as the following:

Stalinism can be defined as a set of tenets, policies, and practices instituted by the Soviet government during the years in which Stalin was in power, 1928-53. It was characterized by extreme coercion employed for the purpose of economic and social transformation. Among the particular features of Stalinism were the abolition of private property and free trade; the collectivization of agriculture; a planned, state-run economy and rapid industrialization; the wholesale liquidation of so-called exploiting classes, involving massive deportations and incarcerations; large-scale political terror against alleged enemies, including those within the Communist Party itself; a cult of personality deifying Stalin; and Stalin’s virtually unlimited dictatorship over the country.²⁴

These tenets, policies, and practices are evident in all aspects of the newspaper; the rapid process to Sovietize Estonia was articulated and explained throughout *Sovjet-Estland* in order to gain support in its implementation. In this fast-paced environment, *Sovjet-Estland* needed to not only inform the population of the changes in all aspects of life, but to convert them to the Soviet ideology in order to gain the people’s acceptance.

Overview

This thesis will evaluate the newspaper propaganda and agitation campaign of *Sovjet-Estland* for the almost one-year of publication. The following chapters are devoted to certain aspects of the newspaper and the campaign. In evaluating the propaganda in

²² Ellul, 6.

²³ Ellul, 11.

²⁴ David L. Hoffmann, “Introduction: Interpretations of Stalinism” in *Stalinism*, ed. David Hoffmann, 2 (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003).

Sovjet-Estland, several questions should be raised: What did the newspaper propaganda campaign consist of? What were the goals of the campaign? What was the benefit of the campaign, both intended and unintended? Why were the Estonian-Swedes an important audience for the new Soviet power? How was the newspaper propaganda campaign realized? How was the campaign received? How did the campaign evolve?

Chapter One focuses on the audience of the Soviet-led propaganda campaign – the ethnic Swedish minority population of Estonia. Presented are the economic and educational circumstances of the Interwar period for the Estonian-Swedes, in an Estonian political environment increasingly becoming nationalistic and the role of the Swedish-language publication *Kustbon* in developing an Estonian-Swedish identity. As will be demonstrated in later chapters, the Soviets attempted in *Sovjet-Estland* to exploit many of the Estonian nationalistic tendencies and the harsh economic situation from the Interwar period.

Chapter Two looks at the background of Soviet minority politics from the Revolution until the Second World War, followed by the role of the Estonian-Swedes in Soviet-occupied Estonia, as portrayed in *Sovjet-Estland*. By arguing for a Soviet-produced Estonian-Swedish national identity, it is hoped that the reasons for the propaganda and agitation campaign can be understood, as well as how this campaign was realized. It places the propaganda campaign aimed at the Estonian-Swedes with the notion of national identity throughout the Soviet Union.

Chapter Three examines the messages of Soviet ideology, the introduction of the myths of Lenin and Stalin, and the public celebrations of the Soviet Union. How was this ideology explained, and how were the symbols presented? In attempting to convert the Estonian-Swedes, *Sovjet-Estland* attempted to draw historical comparisons to illuminate a better alternative for the ethnic group.

Chapter Four explores the changing society in Soviet-Estonia and the representations of these various aspects in *Sovjet-Estland* – specifically in agriculture, fishing, education, the youth, and religion. How were these changes explained to the people? Can the Estonian-Swedes be seen as a privileged group within Soviet-Estonia?

Chapter Five looks at the differences in reporting between foreign and Soviet-wide domestic news, with an emphasis on foreign coverage of Sweden. The coverage can be viewed as a fundamental shift in focus (or rather, an attempted shift) from Stockholm to Moscow. This chapter explores the roll of the Soviet news agencies, and the use of foreign newspaper sources to gain credibility. Coverage in *Sovjet-Estland* changed

dramatically following Germany's attack on the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941. The tone of the newspaper shifted to an increasing number of generic articles not relating to the ethnic Swedish minority, but rather focused on the Soviet Union's fight against fascism, promising defeat of Germany and proclaiming that everyone would rise up to protect the fatherland. This is a sharp contrast to the previous tone of the Soviet Union as a nation of peace. To what extent was the image of a peaceful nation changed, and how did *Sovjet-Estland* cover the sudden approach of war? How did the Estonian-Swedes fit into this focus?

Chapter Six focuses on the overall reporting in *Sovjet-Estland*. The reception of the newspaper by the ethnic Swedes is considered, with specific efforts noted and attempted by the Bolsheviks to convince the Estonian-Swedes. A main goal in the campaign was to move the Estonian-Swedes away from thoughts of emigration. The question is raised as to the success or failures of the propaganda campaign in this regards and how the Bolsheviks attempted to gain favor with the Estonian-Swedes. The chapter concludes with the German arrival and the mass emigration of a majority of the ethnic Swedes to Sweden.

There are several pitfalls in studying Soviet propaganda and the Estonian-Swedes. *Kustbon* and *Sovjet-Estland* both come from dramatically different press traditions, although the audience would be the same group. *Sovjet-Estland* was an official publication; only views and articles favorable to the Soviet system and ideology made it into publication. There was no official outlet for opposing viewpoints. As such, one should view the articles with skepticism; the articles in *Sovjet-Estland* might not be accurate or complete. Articles might be based on fact, but may include some fiction. *Sovjet-Estland* was a tool of propaganda and agitation – this needs to be taken into account in examining the newspaper.

Focusing on the Estonian-Swedes can also be problematic. The ethnic group numbered only around 8,000 people – less than one percent of Estonia's pre-war population. The group also had close ties to Sweden, ties which were essentially severed by the Soviets.²⁵ More research is needed to explain the high percentage of discontent noted in the Soviet-occupation²⁶ and why almost all of the Estonian-Swedes emigrated in

²⁵ This shift in focus from Stockholm to Moscow will be an area of investigation in Chapter 5.

²⁶ As opposed to other groups, the Estonian-Swedes were quite open about their discontent, as shall be shown in this thesis.

1944. It would be too early to assume that they emigrated because of the Soviet threat and failed efforts by the Soviets to convince them of the benefits of communist ideology. Other factors – such as the role of Sweden, the poor land quality in the areas they inhabited, and treatment by all the previous governments – may have had a strong role in their decision to emigrate.

However, there are several reasons why studying Soviet propaganda and the Estonian-Swedes can be enlightening. Hoffmann states, “Stalinism represents one of the darkest and most complex pages of human history.”²⁷ These pages of human history dramatically effected Estonia beginning in the summer of 1940. Stalinism affected all aspects of society, including the Estonian-Swedes in their final years in Estonia. *Sovjet-Estland* can be used to gain insights into how the Soviets positioned themselves in Estonia and the attempts at propaganda. In looking at a sliver of the population, additional insights into the larger picture can be evident – particularly considering that during the Second World War, three minority groups disappeared from Estonia: the Estonian-Swedes, the Baltic Germans, and the Jews. Focusing on the Estonian-Swedes can cast a new light not only on occupied Estonia, but also on the Stalinist view of nationalism put in practice in newly acquired territory; while the ethnic Swedes comprised less than one percent of the population, the Soviets arguably made a substantial propaganda effort. The Estonian-Swedes are particularly useful in this regard because they closely fit Stalin’s view of a national ethnic group²⁸ as well as the existence of Soviet propaganda in Swedish and government reports on the ethnic Swedes. In some areas, it appears that the Estonian-Swedes (as a group) held a privileged status in the ESSR, or what Soviet nationality policy scholar Terry Martin would call “affirmative action.”²⁹ To what extent this was the case, and what the reasons for it were, is a worthy topic to be explored.

²⁷ Hoffmann, “Introduction: Interpretations of Stalinism,” 7.

²⁸ This topic will be investigated in Chapter 2.

²⁹ Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001).

Chapter 1: The Intended Audience – Ethnic Swedes in Interwar Estonia

The Estonian-Swede's fate has been tightly tied to the fate of Estonian's other inhabitants. As a result of their geographic position with the fallow sea coast and on the barren islands, the Estonian-Swedes have often suffered even larger economic difficulties than their neighbors on the mainland. ... – Neeme Ruus¹

In producing a newspaper for the Estonian-Swedes in 1940, the editors of *Sovjet-Estland* were attempting to pander to an audience previous on the fringes of the population. The ethnic Swedes were small in numbers, and had little direct political influence, although they were connected to their ethnic brethren in both Finland and Sweden. *Sovjet-Estland* attempted to draw on the history to draw sharp comparisons between what they viewed as the bourgeois attempts to keep them at the fringes of society through cultural and economic oppression. The Bolsheviks drew primarily on the Interwar Estonian history – a period when the ethnic Swedish identity in Estonia was developing.

During the initial period of independence – 1918 until 1940 – the Estonian state moved from a democratic government to an authoritarian regime with increasingly nationalistic policies. While arguably not the target of the nationalistic policies that were enacted over this roughly twenty-year period, these laws impacted the ethnic Swedish minority living in Estonia – laws that effected not only the political spectrum, but also their education, religion, and Swedish-language publications. These policies possibly had the effect of moving the Estonian-Swedes to strengthen and develop closer ties with Sweden, particularly in areas of education and religion. This is not to say that the relationship between the ethnic Swedes and the ethnic Estonians was antagonistic or even hostile; on the contrary, the relationship between the majority and minority was, on the whole, fairly good. In areas of conflict, the ethnic Swedes sought out amiable solutions. However, as shall be demonstrated in later chapters, many of the nationalistic policies enacted by the Estonian government during the period of independence (particularly during the 1930s) were later highlighted and manipulated by the Bolsheviks. This was an attempt to gain favor with the Estonian-Swedes by asserting and repeatedly articulating a

¹ Neeme Ruus, "Estlandsvenskarna gå en ny och lyckligare framtid tillmötes," *Sovjet-Estland*, 17 October 1940, p. 1. Translated from Swedish: Estland-svenskarnas öde har varit tät förbunden med de andra

policy of inclusion towards minorities. Under such a comparison, the Soviet period and the Bolshevik policy can be seen as much more sympathetic to minorities than Interwar Estonia.

Independent Estonia initially sought to guarantee certain protections for its cultural minority population. However, in practice, the cost of Swedish-language education and some teachers, some healthcare professionals, religious leaders and hymnals mostly came from Sweden. With the arrival of the 1930s, increased efforts were made to Estonianize the population. While these efforts might have been taken with the Baltic Germans in mind, the Estonian-Swedes suffered from many of the policies that were adopted.

The ethnic Swedish minority population primarily lived along the northwestern coast and island regions of Estonia with large concentrations on Vormsi, Osmussaar, the Pakri islands, Noarootsi, Riguldi, and Ruhnu. Their arrival to the Estonian coastline dates back to at least 1294.² August Tammekann writes, “The Estonian-Swedes’ settlement area is characterized completely by its nearness to the sea. Remarkable was also the considerable distance between the settlements, which in some places caused a certain isolation with disastrous consequences for Swedishness.”³ These regions were typically poor in land quality. Tammekann estimates the cultivated land in the Estonian-Swedish inhabited regions in 1934 as follows: Ruhnu 19.3 percent, Vormsi 17.7 percent, Noarootsi 13.2 percent, Sutlepa 17.6 percent, Riguldi (including Osmussaar) 9.4 percent, and Vihterpalu 9 percent.⁴ While less than one percent of Estonia’s population, the 1922 and 1934 censuses demonstrate that in many areas where there were ethnic Swedes, they were in the majority; across Läänemaa, the ethnic Swedes comprised of 7 percent of the population. The ethnic Swedes were often farmers, fishermen, and sailors.

In exploring the Estonian-Swedish national identity, the role of Sweden becomes important. There were strong ties between Sweden and the coastal population in Estonia. The origins of the national awakening is often linked to the arrival of two missionaries in

Estlandbornas öde. Genom sitt geografiska läge vid den karga havskusten och på ofruktbara öar har estlandsvenskarna ofta fått genomleva ännu större ekonomiska svårigheter än deras grannar på fastlandet.

² Evald Blumfeldt, “Estlandssvenskarnas historia” in *En bok om Estlands svenskar* (Stockholm: Kulturföreningen Svenska Odlingens Vänner, 1961), 68.

³ August Tammekann, “Estlandssvenskarnas bosättningsområde” in *En bok om Estlands svenskar*, p. 11. Translated from Swedish: Estlandssvenskarnas bosättningsområde präglades helt av närheten till havet. Påfallande var också de långa avstånden mellan bygderna, som på sina håll orsakade en viss isolering med ödesdigra följder för svenskheten.

1873, T.E. Thorén and L.J. Österblom, from the Evangelical Native Land Foundation (*Evangeliska Fosterlandsstiftelse*) in Stockholm. One of their goals was “to preserve and deepen Swedishness.”⁵ While the missionaries’ arrival strengthened religious ties between the ethnic Swedes and Sweden, it also began the education of the ethnic Swedes in Estonia, an important step in their nationalistic awakening. The Swedish Enlightenment Society in Russia (*Den svenska upplysningsföreningen i Ryssland*) was established in 1907, to be replaced in 1909 by the Swedish Cultivation Friends (*Svenska Odlingens Vänner* – or SOV). SOV became the main cultural organization for the ethnic Swedes, largely shaping the ethnic Swedish identity in Estonia.⁶ To what extent the ethnic Swedes saw themselves as citizens of Estonia as opposed to Swedes living abroad is often indirectly mentioned in *Kustbon*, the pre-Second World War Swedish-language publication. Sharing a common language, although it was a distinct dialect, increased the opportunities available for Estonian-Swedes and for connections between the minority and those in Sweden. Increasingly, as Swedish language education improved, the youth were exploring additional opportunities for work, which included moving to Sweden. The role of Swedish-language education and Swedish-language church figures were central in their identity, and both were initially funded by and came from Sweden. Continental Swedish (*rikssvenska*) was taught in the schools, used in the church, and used in the written materials, as opposed to the regional dialects. The Estonian-Swedes were heavily reliant on Sweden for financial support; however, it would be incorrect to suggest that the Estonian-Swedish identity was entirely reliant on Sweden.

Cultural Autonomy

After the First World War, the role of ethnic minorities was in a precarious position in the newly independent Estonian state. According to the 1922 census report in Estonia, the state was comprised of a 12.3 percent minority population. The minorities in Estonia included: Russians (8.2 percent), Germans (1.7 percent), Swedes (0.7 percent), Jews (0.4 percent), and others (1.3 percent). In many instances, the ethnic minorities represented previous periods of “foreign” domination and rule – whether German, Russian, or Swedish. The Baltic Germans were placed in an even more precarious

⁴ Tammekann, 52.

⁵ Blumfeldt, 146.

⁶ Blumfeldt, 146-151.

position than the other minorities because of their historic rule over ethnic Estonians. Although a minority, they had held political and cultural majorities in the society for centuries. The Estonian state was able to emerge because of a rising nationalistic movement among the ethnic Estonians, not to mention the timing with the First World War and the Russian Revolution.⁷ The goal was to establish independence and resist any attempts of foreign rule. In a region such as the Baltic States where the majority ethnicity was in the political minority for centuries, it would be expected that the population might have a negative view of the ethnic minorities who had oppressed them (or represented such oppression) for so long. It is quite a surprise, therefore, that the new state established such protections for the ethnic minorities.

There were several waves of nationalistic movements during this roughly 20-year period that can be seen in the treatment of the ethnic minorities. While the state is often praised for its cultural autonomy legislation for ethnic minorities during this period, the minorities were still placed in lower positions without adequate recourse to maintain an equal standing in the new states. The political leaders of the country placed the status of ethnic minorities at a lower level than the ethnic majority. Through this ebbing and flowing disparity of equality in theory and equality in practice, the waves of nationalistic sentiments can be followed. Many policies were directed at the Baltic Germans, however the decisions also had impacts and repercussions for the Estonian-Swedes.

Estonia was not unified ethnically as it emerged as an independent state. Prior to independence, there were political, social, and economic disparities that can be drawn on ethnic lines – the Baltic Germans represented the upper class while the ethnic Swedes were among the poor peasantry. Class does not restrict nationalism from forming, however, as nationalism scholar Benedict Anderson points out. He states that within the community, “regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship.”⁸ Nationalism was essential in unifying the Estonians to fight for their independence from foreign rulers. Following independence, the national community was based on the largest ethnic group – ethnic Estonians. Anderson also states, however, that racism has its origins in class – not

⁷ The Estonian-Swedish national identity occurred after the start of the Estonian national awakening, often following it as a model.

⁸ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (New York: Verso Books, 1991), 7.

affecting foreign policy, but existing within the national boundaries,⁹ and this can be seen in Estonia, where the Baltic Germans were viewed as oppressors. Despite these nationalistic sentiments and rhetoric, however Estonia initially sought to give protections to the minorities, perhaps because they could sympathize being in a minority position with no, or limited, rights. Estonian historian Toivo Raun states, “Having finally achieved cultural autonomy for itself, Estonia took steps to guarantee the same for its ethnic minorities.”¹⁰ On the whole, minorities in Estonia received unprecedented protections from the state during the first period of independence. Some of these protections did not prevent discrimination based on ethnicity, which sometimes the state participated in.

The Estonian state developed under international observation, perhaps more so than other emerging states.¹¹ The international community was interested in safeguarding the minority rights within the new nations after the First World War, so that they would not be forgotten or oppressed by the majority. Nationalist ideologies tend to favor one ethnic group unified by language, and in Estonia, it was the ethnic majority – the Estonians– which dominated the national culture.

In the Estonian constitution of 1920, the rights of minorities were mentioned in Paragraphs 20 and 21. The rights included the right of any citizen to determine their nationality at their own discretion. Additionally, paragraph 21 reads: “The members of national minorities within the boundaries of Estonia are granted the right, for furtherance of their own cultural and welfare interests, to create autonomous institutions, provided it will not conflict with the interests of the state.”¹² Conflicts with the interests of the state, however, were at the core of the nationalistic debates during the independence period between the ethnic Estonian majority seeking to protect and develop their national identity and the ethnic minorities attempting to maintain and continue to develop their national identities.

In addition to the protections provided in the constitution, the Estonian National Council passed a law for Cultural Autonomy on 12 February 1925. The Cultural Autonomy law provided minority groups of at least 3,000 the right to establish state-

⁹ Anderson, 149-150.

¹⁰ Toivo Raun, *Estonia and the Estonians* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1995), 133.

¹¹ Toomas Sillaste, “Protection of Minorities in the Baltic States” (PhD diss., University of Notre Dame, 1995), 12-27.

¹² Quoted in Karl Aun, “The Cultural Autonomy of National Minorities in Estonia” in *Yearbook of the Estonian Learned Society in America*, Vol. I (1951-1953), 29.

supported governing councils for cultural affairs. Only the Baltic German and Jewish populations, however, established these councils, because their populations were spread out, as opposed to the Swedish and Russians, who were centrally located as a group and could wield local control, making the establishment of such governing councils unnecessary.¹³ The fact that the cultural autonomy laws existed is an important point. However, that the existence of these laws did not prevent the rights of the ethnic minorities to be restricted or violated is also important and needs to be considered when evaluating the topic of minorities in the interwar period of Estonia.

The Cultural Autonomy Laws established in Estonia have been heralded as prime examples of protecting the rights of minorities. These laws were far-reaching in some regards, and were praised internationally. The international obligation to protect minorities was guaranteed by the League of Nations, to the irk of particularly the Estonians, who complained that they should be treated like an equal member of the League, and not have to be additionally burdened with such requirements which other states did not have.¹⁴ In objecting to the League's requirements, Estonia was not opposing minority protections, in fact having gone further in protecting minorities than were the League's requirements, but rather that it was an issue that the League required of Estonia.

The Cultural Autonomy Laws did not protect minorities in all areas, however, and failed to provide long-lasting guarantees against discrimination based on ethnicity. Tensions grew in Estonia in the 1930s, which resulted in increasing conflicts between the ethnic minorities and the Estonians. The tensions were also occurring when an increasing global economic crisis was having large effects on the young states and rising waves of nationalistic sentiments were appearing.

A new wave of nationalism emerged with the government coups by Konstantin Päts on 12 March 1934, which led to an authoritarian regime. Previous protections afforded to the ethnic minorities were altered to become more limiting, or revoked entirely, including the Cultural Autonomy Laws. Despite the Cultural Autonomy Laws, Päts violated several of the provisions. According to historian Toivo Raun, "In spite of the emphasis on nationalism in the Päts years of the 1930s, there was only a minor retreat from this liberal minority policy."¹⁵ Indeed, Päts reaffirmed the rights of minorities in the

¹³ Sillaste, 57-60.

¹⁴ Sillaste, 19-20.

¹⁵ Raun, 133.

constitution adopted in 1937,¹⁶ which perhaps indicates a position of maintaining the democratic nation mentality of still attempting to work with and include the minorities. However, the double standing can be seen in language laws, education, and even religion, which were not as protected in the 1937 Constitution.¹⁷

As a group, the Baltic Germans were extremely well organized politically, more so than any other ethnic minority. The Baltic Germans, as a result, had a higher percentage of political representation than other ethnic minorities. This, however, can also be said to reflect the fact that in other ethnic groups, members of the ethnic minorities were voting in terms of party platform and not in terms of ethnicity. Ethnic Swedes organized a political party, the Swedish People's Alliance (*Svenska Folkförbundet*), although they did not receive enough votes in elections to allow for a parliamentarian. Only after joining with the Baltic Germans were they given a seat in the Estonian Parliament.

Despite not being the largest ethnic minority in Estonia, the Baltic Germans maintained an influence on the population in various forms. Being extremely politically focused and organized assured them of having a larger role among minorities in the government. However, perhaps it was in part this visible position that led to further tensions between ethnic Estonians and the Baltic Germans. However, the Baltic Germans and Swedish minorities periodically collaborated, and the two groups maintained contacts with each other.

Estonian-Swedish Press

The arrival of a Swedish-language newspaper for the ethnic Swedes came in 1918. In the years that followed, *Kustbon* attempted to act as a catalyst to promote a Swedish identity and to create a sense of community among Estonia's Swedish minority. They were encouraged to be supportive and active citizens of Estonia, but to also strengthen and preserve their distinct culture. *Kustbon* was an independent newspaper created by leaders within the ethnic Swedish community, but was reliant on the economic and

¹⁶ Sillaste, 51.

¹⁷ Sillaste, 53.

political landscape – narrowly surviving pressures from both until its eventual closure with the arrival of the Soviets.¹⁸

The arrival of Swedish-language publications coincided with the growth of the national development of the ethnic Swedes. What began with the publication of an almanac in 1903 eventually developed into the arrival of a newspaper. *Kustbon* first appeared in 1918, published by the political organization Swedish People's Alliance. While the voice provided by *Kustbon* united the people, their nationality was also largely shaped by their connections with religion and education – both of which used the Swedish mainland dialect (*rikssvenska*) as opposed to any of the regional dialects more commonly spoken among Estonia's Swedish minority. *Kustbon* had a small-town feel more closely resembling a newsletter, with emphases in culture, education, language, religion, and politics, as well as the use of advertisements to support the publication economically and to announce deaths, births, weddings, and events.

First and foremost, however, was national identity. National identity based on ethnicity took a dominant position throughout *Kustbon*. Elmar Nyman writes:

It is above all Joel Nyman who takes to discuss the nationality question. He points out the new situation with *Estonian* [E. Nyman's emphasis] as the land's main language makes the position particularly grave for the Swedish language. The risk that Swedish change to the Estonian camp is now much greater than when the Russians and Germans were the dominant languages and Estonian was a minority language.¹⁹

The threats from the Estonian language were to be difficult, ultimately affecting the Swedish-language publications repeatedly during the Interwar period.

A May 1930 *Kustbon* article recognized the important role of a newspaper within their community, writing:

Our newspaper, *Kustbon*, was founded with the thought of being the Estonian-Swedes' special newspaper, a paper that would show them the world's workings and convey their cause... No cultural work is possible

¹⁸ For a look at the Estonian-Swedes in the 1930s, see: Alar Schönberg, "Några inblickar i den estlandssvenska identiteten i slutet av 1930-talet" (Master's thesis, University of Tartu, 2001). The Estonian-Swedish identity is also looked at in relation to a greater pan-Swedish identity in (particularly chapter 8): Bengt Kummel, *Svenskar i all världen förenen eder!: Vilhelm Lundström och den allsvenska rörelsen*, (Åbo, Finland: Åbo Akademi University Press, 1993).

¹⁹ Elmar Nyman, "En högre skola för Estlands svenskar" in *Birkas: Svensk folkhögskola i Estland*, ed. Edvin Lagman (Stockholm: Svenska Odlingens Vänner, 1971) 28. Translated from Swedish: De är framförallt Joel Nyman som tar till orda i nationalitetsfrågan. Han påvisar hur den nya situationen med *estniskan* som landets huvudspråk gör läget särskilt allvarligt för svenska språket. Risken för svensk övergång till det estniska läget är nu mycket större än när ryskan och tyskan var de dominerande språken och estniskan ett minoritetsspråk.

without a modern newspaper. The work for the Estonian-Swedish culture suffers enormously by not having an effective newspaper at its disposal. The editors are the first to understand how insufficient *Kustbon* is in its present condition.²⁰

The 2 May issue was particularly unique in changing the format from a newsletter to a broadsheet, which the editors openly stated was as example of what the newspaper could and should be, except for the lack of economic backing to make such a venture possible. The cost, estimated by the editors to be an additional 5-6,000 crowns a year, was impeding their success. The article continues:

The deficiencies could not all be remedied through this sum, but the newspaper could, however, be a news circulator, a true societal bond between Estonia's Swedish element. Even such an insignificant instrument, demonstrated in this issue, could set us capable in a satisfactory position to show us the development of "the new age," show us the path we must go, in order that the time would not rush away from us.²¹

The passage demonstrates the desires for the editor to expand the newspaper, and the role it held in the furthering of the ethnic Swedish identity. It states the belief that there is potential for greatness within the community, but that because of a lack of funds and the deficiencies within the community, that potential was being wasted.

Interestingly, in articles concerning a national identity, there was more mention of "Swedishness" in the ethnic Swedish villages of Estonia, while mentions of "Estonian-Swedishness" were not as common. In 1924, Hans Pöhl wrote an article with a call to arms for unity among the ethnic Swedes:

Unity gives strength! Unity among us out here brings us ideally with the dear tribal kinsmen in the ancient homeland on the other side of the Baltic Sea. And the mother tongue is a bond that holds, even when there are political shortcomings. In order to better be able to safeguard and further a genuine and healthy enlightenment of the national foundations, we need to join together. Above all, we must love and further that which is our own.

²⁰ Redaktionen, "Den nya tiden," *Kustbon*, 2 May 1930, p. 1. Translated from Swedish: Vår tidning "Kustbon" grundades med tanke på att bli estlandssvenskaras särskilda tidning, det blad, som skulle visa dem världens gång och förra deras talan... Intet kulturarbete är möjligt utan en modern tidning. Arbetet för den estlandssvenska kulturen lider oerhört av att ej ha en effektiv tidning till sitt förfogande. Redaktionen är den första att inse hur otillräcklig "Kustbon" är i sitt nuvarande skick.

²¹ Redaktionen, "Den nya tiden," *Kustbon*, 2 May 1930, p. 1. Translated from Swedish: Bristerna kunna ej alla avhjälpas genom denna summa, men tidningen kunde dock bli en nyhetsspridare, ett verkligt föreningsband mellan Estlands svenska element. Även ett så obetydligt organ, som visas med detta nummer, kunde sätta oss i stånd att på betryggande sätt visa oss utvecklingen av "den nya tiden," visa oss den väg vi måste gå, för att ej tiden skall skena ifrån oss.

And the language that we have inherited, it is the most beloved that we own, and therefore we must call out in our districts, “Be Swedish” [written in the local dialect].²²

Pöhl places a strong connection to the links between Sweden, without any distinction between Swedish and Estonian-Swedish.

The authors of the articles, and the participants of *Kustbon*, viewed themselves as a branch on the Swedish tree (using exactly that analogy in a 17 April 1935 article in *Nya Kustbon*²³), essentially having a Swedish culture, with strong interactions and connections with Sweden. The development of the ethnic Swedish identity received support from those abroad, too, connecting the Estonian-Swedes into the larger movement of the Pan-Swedish identity.²⁴

By the end of 1932, continued economic difficulties led to a decision by the publishers to end the newspaper. They still saw the value of having the newspaper and regretted its loss. They wrote: “The step is desperate and constitutes at the same time a deathblow for the work of ‘Swedishness’ with us, because a people that lack a newspaper is like an animal whose eyes have been gouged out – it thrashes around helpless, however intense its physical strength may be.”²⁵ However, the community gathered around the publication, and minimal funds were found – although the budget was still tight – to allow the newspaper to continue publishing the following year. The near-end of *Kustbon* allowed the ethnic Swedish community to realize the important role the newspaper held for their national identity, and encouraged greater participation.

The newspaper was threatened with closure a second time shortly afterwards. While economic difficulties almost ended the paper in 1932, political conditions almost brought the end to the Swedish-language press in Estonia in 1935. In March 1935 a law was passed in Estonia outlawing political parties. Perhaps as an oversight, the publication

²² Hans Pöhl, “Svenska Odlingens Vänners 15:de årsberättelse,” *Kustbon*, 20 February 1924, p. 27. Translated from Swedish: Enighet ger styrka! Enighet bland oss härute förenar oss ideellt med de kära stamfränderna i det urgamla hemlandet på andra sidan Östersjön. Och modersmålet är ett band som håller, även när de politiska brista. För att bättre kunna värna och befrämja en sann och sund upplysning på nationell grund, behöva vi sluta oss samman. Vi måste framför allt älska och befrämja det som är vårt eget. Och språket som vi fått i arv, är det käraste vi äga, och därför må vi ropa i våra bydger “Varer svenske.”

²³ Carl Mothander, “Karaktärsuppfostran,” *Nya Kustbon*, 17 April 1935, p.1-2.

²⁴ See Bengt Kummel, *Svenskar i all världen förenen eder!* (Åbo, Finland: Åbo Akademi University Press, 1994).

²⁵ Redaktionen, “Till Kustbons Läsekrets,” *Kustbon*, 16 December 1932, p. 95. Translated from Swedish: Steget är förtvivlat och utgör på samma gång ett dråpslag för svenskhetsarbetet hos oss, ty ett folk, som

of *Kustbon* had remained affiliated with the Swedish People's Alliance political party, meaning *Kustbon* could no longer be published. Instead, an interim publication was quickly organized, coming out under the name *Nya Kustbon*, overseen and edited independently by Nicholas Blee, who had been the chairman of SOV from 1930-1934.

A law was also passed on 29 October 1934 requiring the use of Estonian place names, even in the Swedish-language publication.²⁶ The names of towns and villages that the ethnic Swedes had lived in for generations were suddenly to be known only by their Estonian equivalent. To solve this difficulty, the newspaper would often print the Swedish place name in parentheses. The Swedish names, however, were still used in referring to a person, such as stating "Rågöboarna" instead of "Pakriboarna" for a person from the Pakri islands – "Rågö" in Swedish. This indicates that while the letter of the law was being followed in the publication, the spirit of the law was not; the vernacular in the Swedish regions still employed the Swedish place names. Attempts at Estonianizing the ethnic Swedish population, therefore, affected only the surface.

The following January (1936), *Kustbon* reappeared, this time under the authority of SOV. The cultural organization used their extensive contacts in each ethnic Swedish area to streamline local connections, subscription, and submitters. It was hoped that because of the connection with the SOV to the communities, the content and the subscription rate would both be increased, providing a great dialog among the Estonian-Swedes. However, the connection with SOV can also be seen as having a more negative impact on the publication, in some instances moving it more towards a cultural publication (frequently commenting on SOV) and less of a news publication covering politics. The new version of *Kustbon*, however, found a greater support base among the organization members. The shift in operation led to increased local participation, with the newspaper increasingly becoming a forum for discussion.

Regardless, the Estonian-Swedish national identity was strained, and was marked by a strong connection to Sweden. Carl Mothander wrote in *Nya Kustbon* in 1935, "Shall 'Swedishness' not stand for other than the Swedish language, the Swedish book – yes, in the presence of such a superficial conception of 'Swedishness,' one essentially has difficulty to understand the necessity that a Swedish strain in Estonia lives further." The

saknar sitt eget tidningsorgan är likt en djur, vars ögon blivit utstungna, det famlar hjälplöst, hur våldsamt dess kroppsstyrka än må vara.

²⁶ Sillaste, 54.

Estonian-Swedish identity was more than based on the language and emerged regardless of restrictions.

The strong cultural references to Sweden were repeated in the publications. Carl Mothander wrote in *Nya Kustbon* in 1935:

Our national cultural work in Swedish-Estonia goes in a Swedish manner. We have Swedish elementary schools, Swedish churches, Swedish upper-secondary schools, and much more. We have organizations that each in their towns shall work for Swedish preservation and development. However, we always see the concept of ‘Swedishness’ in a fairly narrow point of view. We completely forget that Swedishness doesn’t merely consist of Swedish language and Swedish schools, but also in disposition, character, and action.²⁷

This is not to say, however, that the Estonian-Swedes thought of themselves more as Swedes and not as citizens of Estonia. In one article, the editors urged the Estonian-Swedes to not only think of themselves as Swedes, but as citizens of Estonia. The underlining assumption was that the Estonian-Swedes felt – and were treated in some terms – as outsiders from the greater Estonian society. While *Kustbon* had stressed the connections with Sweden, articles also repeatedly refer to Estonia as their homeland. The ethnic Swedes were citizens of Estonia.

The national identity presented in *Kustbon* was not defined by criticism of the Estonian government. It emerged in the news reports about schools, in the anniversary celebrations and congratulatory notices, the wedding and death notices, the articles and columns that show “this is what is happening where I live,” and in the sermon-like columns by the pastors. While the Estonian government placed restrictions on the ethnic Swedes, they found ways to express themselves, to create an “imagined community.”

Kustbon presented an image of a distinct national identity for the ethnic Swedes living in Estonia. In *Kustbon*, the role of Sweden was emphasized numerous in the lives of the Estonian-Swedes – in education, healthcare, and religion. Also emphasized, were the regional connections in each of the ethnic Swedish communities.

²⁷ Carl Mothander, “Karaktärsuppfostran,” *Nya Kustbon*, 17 April 1935, p.1-2. Translated from Swedish: Vårt folkbildningsarbete i Svenskestland går i svenskhetens tecken. Vi har svenska folkskolor, svensk kyrka, svenskt gymnasium och mycket annat. Vi ha föreningar som var i sin stad skola arbeta för svenskhetens bevarande och utveckling. Men vi begreppet ”svenskhet” se vi alltför gärna under en ganska trång synvinkel. Vi glömma bort att svenskheten icke blott består i svenskt språk och svenska skolor utan också i sinnelag, karaktär och handlingsätt.

A large concern for the editors of *Kustbon* was emigration to Sweden. *Kustbon* approached this topic directly. *Kustbon* was concerned about the youth that left the ethnic Swedish areas (including, to a lesser degree, heading to Tallinn) and the subsequent loss in talent and population. Articles frequently mentioned that those youth that wanted to go out to explore and earn a better living should remember their homes and return after a time. One method of reaching out to those who emigrated was to include them in updates, and examples of Estonian-Swedes living abroad giving back to their communities.

Participation by the greater Estonian-Swedish community was increasingly common in the later years of *Kustbon*, perhaps not surprising, since the publication was produced entirely by the ethnic Swedes and the expanded role of SOV. *Kustbon* had served as a community discussion forum, with letters, columns, and updates about local community activities published regularly.

Throughout this period, the Estonian-Swedish identity was growing. In addition to the newspaper and annual almanacs, two Swedish language books were written by an Estonian-Swede, Mats Ekman.²⁸ The primary literary avenue, though, was *Kustbon*, which regularly published literary content in addition to the news content.

Education and Religion

Frequent topics in *Kustbon* were education and religion, topics with strong ties to Sweden; teachers and preachers were frequent contributors. Both areas were also areas to which the Estonian-Swedes were reliant on the Estonian government for policy, and on Sweden for funding. While certainly the Estonian-Swedish community was small in numbers, there was constant overlapping between the publication and SOV – even before the organization took over the newspaper. And in addition to the national enlightenment of the ethnic Swedes, SOV had connections to religion and education. However, the organization's leadership were largely the educators and priests from the communities.²⁹

The ability to offer education to ethnic Swedes in Swedish was, in theory, protected by the government, but in areas where there were ethnic Swedes and ethnic Estonians living next to each other, education in Swedish became more difficult. The ethnic Swedes saw their schools as a source of pride, particularly the folk high school,

²⁸ Mats Ekman, *En bygdeskald bland den gamla svenska folkstammen i Estland* (1924). Mats Ekman, *Ekon frå n österled / Så nger frå n Bkas* (1927).

²⁹ Kummel, 198-199.

Birkas, which opened 6 November 1920. The opening of the school was largely organized by SOV, with financial assistance from Sweden.

SOV was also instrumental in the opening of an upper-secondary school in Haapsalu; the first class of Estonian-Swedes graduated from this school on 13 June 1936. The graduation offered the editors of *Kustbon* the opportunity to look towards the future with greater hopes.

May it be said that this advantage is binding. The Estonian-Swedes consider it their right to expect something from these young men and women... A group of Estonian-Swedes have received a push forward in life. May it also mean a push forward for the Estonian-Swedes as a whole.³⁰

The editors devoted almost four pages to the graduation and its larger meaning for the Estonian-Swedish identity and future.

Education was highly valued among the ethnic Swedes and the Swedish-language schools were a source of pride for the community. Teachers were regular contributors to *Kustbon* and the school children's well-being was a source of constant discussion. Articles reported that at graduation ceremonies in mixed ethnic areas, speeches were given in both Estonian and Swedish, with music also sung in both languages.

Religion had a strong placement throughout *Kustbon*. On several occasions, lengthy articles were included that can best be described as sermons.³¹ With the clergy having played important roles in the early development of the ethnic Swedish identity, religion was a central aspect of their culture. Clergy were not only religious leaders, but cultural and educational leaders as well.

Government politics also affected religion within the ethnic Swedish parishes. *Kustbon* reported in 1936 a government decision that all pastors had to be Estonian citizens. In order to remain, the pastors would have to apply for Estonian citizenship, but to do this would mean the loss of their privileges with the Swedish Church. This was a concern for the ethnic Swedes, as a number of the pastors in Swedish parishes were Swedish citizens, none of whom were willing to become Estonian citizens. With the salaries for the clergy coming from the Swedish Church, there was also an economic

³⁰ "Till de första estlandssvenska studenterna," *Kustbon*, 11 June 1936, p. 1. Translated from Swedish: Må det vara sagt, att dessa förmåner förplikta. Estlandssvenskarna anse sig ha rätt att vänta någonting av dessa unga män och kvinnor... En skara estlandssvenskar ha fått en stöt framåt i livet. Måtte det också betyda en stöt framåt för estlandssvenskarna som helhet.

³¹ See, for example: *Kustbon*, 9 April 1936, pp. 1-2.

consequence for the policy, as the communities were unable to afford their own pastors. The ethnic Swedes also had no viable candidates to replace the lost clergy, as the first few were still a few years away from completing their theological studies in Tartu.³² An appeal for them to remain in Estonia was rejected, although a compromise was ultimately allowed, which would enable them to remain until several Estonian-Swedes had finished their theological studies.³³

Interestingly, in areas where the Estonian culture was being forced onto the Estonian-Swedes and in areas where the ethnic Swedish culture was restricted, *Kustbon* rarely cried foul. The newspaper would casually mention the new laws and policies without criticizing them; the effects of the changes would be mentioned, but no indignation was expressed. For example, an article regarding Estonians in Russian-dominated areas and the outrage at limited Estonian classes was translated from Estonian and published without offering the comparative argument over Estonian-Swedish outrage. It was up to the individual reader to make the connection and express frustration. Perhaps, the people had become used to governmental restrictions and realized that the best way to maintain their cultural freedom was to not publicly criticize, to not rock the boat. Or, perhaps this was the result of the shift from political to cultural oversight.

The Start of the War

In 1939, Estonia held fast to the idea of neutrality, and as the outlook of war approached, Estonia reiterated her neutrality stance, relying on the League of Nations to guarantee the international security. The lack of the ability of the League of Nations to do so was becoming increasingly apparent. Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union signed a non-aggression pact on 23 August 1939. In the so-called Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact there were additional secret protocols which divided up eastern Europe into spheres of influence. The Baltic States were included in the Soviet Union's sphere of influence, which was soon to have a direct impact on the Estonian-Swedish communities.

It was not long before Estonia began to feel the effects of the Nazi-Soviet agreement. By 28 September, Estonia was forced to sign a Pact of Defense and Mutual Assistance with the Soviet Union. Latvia and Lithuania soon followed. Estonia, like the

³² "Rikssvenska präster nekas arbetstillstånd i Estland," *Kustbon*, 16 May 1936, p. 1.

³³ "Ljusning i prästfrågan?" *Kustbon*, 28 May 1936, p. 2.

other two Baltic States, was required to defend their borders against a third-party attack, which could thereby threaten the Soviet Union.

In October 1939, Hitler recalled the Baltic Germans to Germany, and the majority left Estonia. This led to frequent secret meetings of concern throughout the Swedish areas,³⁴ and many began to contemplate emigrating to Sweden. The Baltic Germans departure was seen as a sign of the impending war coming to Estonia. Sweden never issued a similar recall of the Estonian-Swedes.³⁵

The next stage of pressure against Estonia by the Soviet Union was a concern over Estonia's inability to defend her borders. Similar concerns were expressed to Latvia and Lithuania, although in each case, the country was approached independently and forced to approve ultimatums with little deliberation time. In an attempt to accommodate the Soviet demands and to avoid involvement in the war, the government agreed. The Estonian government was forced to permit Soviet bases within its territory, with 25,000 troops, although the agreement was immediately violated with more Red Army troops arriving than had been agreed upon.

The locations of the bases had consequences for the ethnic Swedish population. These bases were located on Saaremaa, Hiiumaa, near Haapsalu, and Paldiski. The recently renovated Birka folk high school was turned into barracks for the Soviet troops, subsequently resulting in extraordinary damage. The school's headmaster, Pelle Byström, headed for Sweden and Fridolf Isberg took over.³⁶

With the international community preoccupied with the German invasion of France in the spring of 1940, the Soviet Union made her move on the Baltic States. On 16 June 1940, Estonia was given an ultimatum. Two days later, Estonia was completely occupied by Soviet forces. Additional military areas were chosen, again having a strong impact on the Swedish regions. Beginning in June and ending in July 1940, the Swedish-populated islands of Osmussaar, the Pakrite islands, and Naissaar were evacuated to be used by the Soviet military. A puppet government was established on 21 June, the same

³⁴ Viktor Aman, "Estlandssvenskarna Under Andra Världskriget, Överflyttningen Till Sverige" in *En bok om Estlands svenskar*, 182.

³⁵ Mats Nyman, "Om 110 Rågöbors Återflyttning Till Sverige" in *Estlands Svenskar 25 År I Sverige: Jubileumsskrift, Kustbon 1944-1968* (Stockholm: Svenska Odlingens Vänner, 1968), 39.

³⁶ See: Fridolf Isberg, "Birkas folkhög- och lantmannaskola under tiden 1939-1943," in *Birkas: Svensk folkhögskola i Estland* (Stockholm, Svenska Odlingens Vänner, 1971).

day Osmussaar was evacuated.³⁷ Osmussaar, together with the Hanko peninsula in Finland were to act as a protection for the Bay of Finland. Elections were held in Estonia on 14 July, although only Soviet-approved candidates could run. The newly “elected” government applied for Estonia to join the Soviet Union. The “annexation” was accepted by the Supreme Soviet Council on 6 August.

Approximately 600 Estonian-Swedes (7.5 percent of the ethnic Swedish population) lost their homes and had to be relocated following the establishment of military bases, making them the largest group to be directly affected by the treaty. This was a bit problematic, as other ethnic Swedish areas were already crowded, and there were also a number of ethnic Estonians that had to be relocated. Many of the displaced ethnic Estonians indicated an interest in continuing on to Sweden.³⁸ Some Naissaar fishermen used their own boats and took their families to Sweden prior to the Soviet occupation.³⁹

Prior to the closing of the Swedish embassy in Tallinn, a group from the Pakrite islands made an inquiry into immigration to Sweden. Acting on their behalf, the embassy then proceeded to work with the Soviets, eventually securing permission for the emigration of 110 ethnic Swedes, although their departure was delayed until October 1940. They were the only group to receive official permission to emigrate from the ESSR. The Soviet occupation hampered further efforts for others to emigrate, legally or illegally, to Sweden.

The Interwar period in Estonia can be marked by an increasing tendency towards Estonianization – an antagonism of the ethnic minorities populating the region in favor of a strengthening Estonian nationalism among the political elite. Although it can be argued that these policies were largely intended to erode the elite status the Baltic Germans had held for centuries, the policies equally affected the ethnic Swedes. Despite cultural protections written into the constitution and cultural autonomy laws, minority groups remained discriminated against by the ethnic majority. For a minority population in the

³⁷ Days prior to the evacuation, two couples – Sigfrid Erkas and Elvine Brus, Fredrik Brus and Meta Marks – became the final two couples to marry in the church on Osmussaar.

³⁸ “Kommittén för estlandssvenskarna: Redogörelse över dess verksamhet 1940-1950,” *Kustbon*, February 1951, pp. 6-7.

³⁹ “Kommittén för estlandssvenskarna: Redogörelse över dess verksamhet 1940-1950,” *Kustbon*, February 1951, p. 7.

early stages of its national development, these policies can be seen a blow to their identity, just as they were learning to embrace it. During the first year of Soviet occupation, many of these policies would be highlighted and manipulated by the Bolshevik propaganda machine.

Chapter 2: Estonian-Swedish National Identity, Soviet Style

*According to the principles of equality and brotherhood, all minorities in the great and powerful Soviet Union are equal with all other citizens in this land, whatever nationality or race one may be... Since the power in the new Soviet republic has now passed into the people's hands and a true people's government takes care of governing, the Estonian-Swedes no longer need to feel like a kind of second class citizen...*¹

One of the central tenets of the propaganda campaign was to appeal to the Estonian-Swedes' national identity. An often-repeated phrase throughout *Sovjet-Estland* was that under the Soviet system, all nationalities were equal. This was demonstrated over and over by drawing on the history of oppression – economically, culturally, and linguistically – by the Estonian majority. It was an attempt on behalf of the Bolsheviks to link the oppression to the bourgeois Estonian rule in order to create the impression of the Estonian-Swedes being saved by the Soviets, and by attempting to portray the Soviet policies as being overly friendly towards the Estonian-Swedes. However, this appeal to nationalism was not unique to the Estonian-Swedes. It follows a trend within the Soviet scholarship of the position and treatment of nationalities in the Soviet Union.

Already from the first issue of *Sovjet-Estland*, the unique position of the Estonian-Swedes was brought to the forefront of the Swedish-language Soviet propaganda in Estonia. In his opening remarks on the first page of the first issue, EC(b)P Central Committee Secretary Neeme Ruus described the history of the Estonian-Swedes in terms of the oppression. “The cultural development of the Estonian-Swedes was prevented, on the one hand by difficult economic situations and on the other hand by the bourgeois Estonian chauvinistic cultural politics. One wanted to hold the Estonian-Swedes in spiritual darkness.”² Ruus, a periodic visitor to the Swedish-speaking regions, spoke Swedish himself – a fact promoted by the Soviets as a sign of their openness of and

¹ “Estlandssvenskarnas kulturella rättigheter förr och nu,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 24 January 1941, p. 1. Translated from Swedish: Enligt jämlikhetens och broderskapets princip äro alla minoriteter i det stora och mäktiga Sovjetunionen likställda med alla övriga medborgare i detta land av vilken nationalitet eller ras man än må vara. ... Sedan nu makten i den nya Sovietrepubliken övergått till folkets händer och en verklig folkregering sköter om statsrodet, behöva estlandssvenskarna icke längre känna sig som ett slags andra kategoriens medborgare.

² Neeme Ruus, “Estlandssvenskarna gå en ny och lyckligare framtid tillmötes,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 17 October 1940, p. 1. Translated from Swedish: Den kulturella utvecklingen av estlandssvenskarna förhindrades å ena sidan av det svåra ekonomiska läget, men å andra sidan även av det borgefiga Estlands chauvanistiska kulturpolitik. Man ville hålla estlandssvenskarna i andlig mörker.

support to Swedish concerns. He stated that the Soviet government wanted to change the Estonian-Swedes' position, both the economically and culturally, away from oppression.

The Soviet government shall take decisive steps towards the improvement of the sanitary conditions among the Estonian-Swedes. In the cultural-work field, the Estonian-Swedes must begin in earnest their own action as soon as possible. In view of that, the publication of the newspaper *Sovjet-Estland* should create favorable conditions.³

Only through socialism could the Estonian-Swedes develop economically and culturally, and the Soviets made clear their intentions to encourage the development of the Estonian-Swedish national identity. According to Ruus, the Soviets wanted the Estonian-Swedes to develop their nationalism, with a socialistic culture. He stated that the Soviet government would take an active role in improving the lives of the Estonian-Swedes, and an environment would exist to allow the Estonian-Swedish national identity (socialistic in content) to grow. Ruus' comments in the first issue conveyed a remarkable understanding of the treatment of the Estonian-Swedes during the bourgeois Estonian government, their economic situation, and their national identity.

The following week, Läänemaa EC(b)P Secretary Oskar Cher echoed Ruus' comments, placing the Estonian-Swedes as a group on an equal standing with other ethnicities. "In the socialistic society, all nations are equal, at which in particular attention is directed at the development of exactly the minorities cultural and at the improvement of their economic circumstances."⁴ Again, Cher mentioned the previous oppression, committing the Bolsheviks to change and improve their economic and cultural standing. This would continue to be an important theme in *Sovjet-Estland*. Cher wanted them to be included within the Bolshevik party and gather around *Sovjet-Estland*. Whereas Ruus had signaled the ESSR intentions, Cher signaled the local Läänemaa commitment to protect and encourage the Estonian-Swedes.

In viewing the role of Swedish-language propaganda in Soviet-occupied Estonia, the Stalinist view of nationalism and a Soviet-created national identity is readily apparent.

³ Neeme Ruus, "Estlandsvenskarna gå en ny och lyckligare framtid tillmötes," *Sovjet-Estland*, 17 October 1940, p. 1. Translated from Swedish: Sovjet-regeringen skall taga avgörande steg till förbättring av de sanitära förhållanden bland estlandsvenskarna. På kulturarbetets området måste estlandsvenskarna snarast börja en ivrig självverksamhet. Utkommandet av tidning "Sovjet-Estland" bör skapa gynnsamma villkoren därtill.

⁴ Oskar Cher, "Estlandsvenskarna äro nu likställda med andra minoriteter," *Sovjet-Estland*, 24 October 1940, p. 1. Translated from Swedish: I det socialistiska samhället äro alla nationer likställda, varvid särskild

The Bolsheviks attempted to merge the Estonian-Swedish national identity with the ideals of socialism. Nationalism and cultural development were consistent themes throughout *Sovjet-Estland*. It is the best example of articles written specifically for the Estonian-Swedes; whereas other types of articles were in some cases translated from either Estonian or Russian, articles on nationalism and cultural development were written with the Estonian-Swedes as the primary audience. Whereas propaganda aimed at ethnic Estonians would emphasize oppression of nationalism of workers by the bourgeois, the ethnic Swedes were repeatedly reminded of the oppression of their ethnic group (as a whole) by the Estonian bourgeois. Certainly the workers were mentioned or implied in this nationalism, but it was an entirely different emphasis, made easier by the poor economic situation of the Estonian-Swedes (making them all workers or potential workers). Nationalism in *Sovjet-Estland* can be found in the language, historical comparisons, cultural encouragement, and regional identity. However, while the content was completely original, the structure and the motivation for the articles was based in Soviet theory of nationalism and national development – theories dating to the Russian Revolution and coming directly from Lenin and Stalin.

Soviet Nationalism and National Minorities

The Soviet nationalities policy evolved from the years prior to the Russian Revolution, with the two main driving forces being Lenin and Stalin. Having seen the effect of nationalism in other areas, Lenin realized the tremendous power that it could have. Rather than have the force of nationalism run counter to the revolution being led by the Bolsheviks, Lenin sought to incorporate the debate into the Bolshevik ideology, attempting to tap into nationalistic sentiments for support.

Irina Filatova, in stating Lenin's contribution to the nationalism debate, writes that Lenin advanced the topic in two areas. Firstly, by promoting the right for national self-determination (which was later abandoned after the Bolshevik Revolution) and secondly, by placing class and class interests above those of the nation. She explains:

Both before and after 1917 the Bolsheviks saw the nationalities question as subordinate to the task of building socialism. The nationalities problem

uppmärksamhet riktas på utvecklingen av just minoriteternas kultur och på bättrandet av deras ekonomiska förhållanden.

itself was attributed to capitalist order and imperialist policy and it seemed logical to think that once socialism is achieved it will cease to exist.⁵

The Soviet national minority policy had developed from the early days of the revolution, when Lenin saw the encouragement of national minorities as an effective means to counter capitalism and gain support for Bolshevism. Francine Hirsch writes, “The Soviet regime defined itself as the sum of its parts and saw its own interests as linked to its population’s rapid national-cultural development.”⁶ The encouragement of nationalism was fortified, although it was restricted to being socialistic in content, giving the Bolsheviks the ability to shape and control the growing nationalism.

However, it was Stalin’s writings and determinations that dominated the Soviet nationalities question, even before Lenin’s death. Stalin was appointed to the position of People’s Commissioner of Nationality Relations, and was the Bolshevik expert on nationalism. In his 1913 essay, *Marxism and the National Question*, Stalin defined a nation as a historically constituted community of people with a common language, a community of territory, a community of economic life, and a common community of culture.⁷ Written at the request of Lenin, Stalin’s essay was to counter the claims of the Jewish Bund and the Austrian socialists, and based largely on the writings of two Austrian socialists, Otto Bauer and Karl Renner.⁸ However, the fourth point, Hugh Seton-Watson points out, is so vague as to be useless. “It presumably covers all the complex historical factors, including religion, which help to form a nation. The first three points are admittedly important, but they are not sufficient in themselves, while the fourth amounts to no more than a verbal formula.”⁹ The culture of minorities was to be encouraged by developing cultural institutions and language resources, all of which fell under the control of the Soviet state and were subject to periodic purges.

Terry Martin, in his book *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939*, suggests that the Soviet nationalities policy

⁵ Irina Filatova, “Interpretations of the Dogma: Soviet Concepts of Nation and Ethnicity,” *Theoria* (December 1997): 96.

⁶ Francine Hirsch, “Toward an Empire of Nations: Border-Making and the Formation of Soviet National Identities,” *The Russian Review* 59 (2000): 204.

⁷ Joseph Stalin, “Marxism and the National Question (1913)” in *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question*, by Joseph Stalin; *A Collection of Articles and Speeches*, Works of Marxism Leninism Vol. 38 (New York: International Publishers, 1935), 5-8.

⁸ Hugh Seton-Watson, “Nationalism and Imperialism” in *The Impact of the Russian Revolution, 1917-1967*, Arnold J. Toynbee et. al. (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 142-143.

⁹ Seton-Watson, 143.

was based on three premises. The first, a Marxist premise, viewed nationalism as a “uniquely dangerous mobilizing ideology.”¹⁰ The Bolsheviks, by promoting and shaping their version of nationalism, could mask their ideology while diminishing the potential for mobilizing above class levels in pursuit of national goals. The second, the Modernization Premise, saw the development of nationalism as an inevitable development of the capitalistic world, but also as a sign of modernization. The hope was that by encouraging nationalism, the historical stage could be by-passed quickly, creating a more secure place for socialism to continue.¹¹ The third, the Colonial Premise, recognizes the value in promoting the culture of oppressed people, while suppressing the culture of the oppressors, or in the Soviet case, the ethnic Russians.¹²

Martin also suggests what he calls “the Piedmont Principle” which provides a link between the domestic nationalities policy and foreign policy; by treating ethnic groups in the Soviet Union generously, it was hoped that the corresponding groups in other countries would respond favorably to the Soviet system. While Martin states that the Piedmont Principle was never the guiding force of the Soviet nationalities policy,¹³ “the Piedmont Principle asserted that ethnic ties transcended political borders and therefore could be exploited by the Soviet Union to project Soviet influence abroad.”¹⁴ He specifically points to the cases of Poland, Finland, and Romania, although it can be argued that the Estonian-Swedes had the potential to be used to the same effect. Martin writes:

It should be emphasized, however, that this foreign policy goal was never the primary motivation of the Soviet nationalities policy. It was seen as an exploitable benefit of a domestically driven policy that affected the intensity of implementation in sensitive regions, but not the content of the policy itself.¹⁵

The implementation of the Soviet nationalities policy was implemented in different manners by different regions, although border regions were of special concern. Martin writes that according to a 16 July Politburo decree concerning western border regions, the

¹⁰ Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 4.

¹¹ Martin, 5-6.

¹² Martin, 6-8.

¹³ Martin, 9.

¹⁴ Martin, 313.

¹⁵ Martin, 9.

policy towards national minorities in the border regions was to be “especially generous.”

He continues:

There should be more national schools, more national territories, an expanded native-language press, aggressive recruitment and promotion of national cadres, and strict punishment of all Russian chauvinism. Far from attempting to further ethnic homogeneity, the Soviet government consciously aimed to emphasize and promote the ethnic diversity of their border regions.¹⁶

The strong encouragement of national minorities continued up to the time of the Second World War. It can be argued that these policies still had an effect in the newly acquired territory of the ESSR during the first year of Soviet occupation.

David Brandenberger views the pre-war period in the Soviet Union through an effort to mobilize the population in his book, *National Bolshevism: Stalinist Mass Culture and the Formation of Modern Russian National Identity, 1931-1956*. His study examines the popular reception of propaganda, relying heavily on the Russian national identity and not on the minorities. He notices an increased reliance on popular Russian images, historical figures, and icons into the propaganda. According to his theory, the Soviets moved away from the previous tendency to de-emphasize the Russian culture and towards a populist superiority of the Russians. In Brandenberger’s theory, the shift in policy was an attempt to unify the population in order to mobilized the people.¹⁷

David L. Hoffmann goes a step further than Brandenberger, more clearly explaining the policies by connecting the changes in focus of the Soviet propaganda to the need for a unified set of values across the Soviet Union. Having achieved socialism and with the abolition of the class system, the leadership beginning in the 1930s needed to be able to mobilize the people together, particularly as the international situation grew more tense. This was seen to be most effective through the establishment of a common tradition and a common set of values that could be embraced across the Soviet Union by every nationality. This took the form of selectively embracing previous Russian historical and literary figures, although this had the potential of alienating the national minorities by seeming to promote the Russian culture. Hoffmann views this development not as a retreat from the socialist ideology of the 1920s, but as a continuation of the ideology,

¹⁶ Martin, 315.

¹⁷ David Brandenberger, *National Bolshevism: Stalinist Mass Culture and the Formation of Modern Russian National Identity, 1931-1956* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002).

adapting to the change in society with the transformation from socialisms early attempts of being established to having been achieved and finally to the maintenance and expansion of socialism.¹⁸

In relation to the Estonian-Swedes, the propaganda in *Sovjet-Estland* was certainly in its early stages. Mobilization was a clear concern, particularly following the German declaration of war. Russian images, historical figures, and icons, however, were rarely employed. The emphasis was on the Soviet symbols and mobilizing the minority through other means. This can perhaps illustrate two possibilities. The propaganda aimed at the Estonian-Swedes was not following the developing patterns demonstrated by Brandenberger and Hoffmann in engaging the use of Russian historical and literary figures, but instead focused on the uniqueness of the Estonian-Swedes and the oppression suffered under the Estonian regime. In such a highly centralized and controlled effort, the propaganda did not intended to antagonize the minority through the employment of Russian symbols. Brandenberger's and Hoffmann's finding, therefore, can be used to emphasize the differences between the propaganda aimed at the Russians and the propaganda aimed at minorities, particularly in areas recently acquired. Specifically in relationship to Hoffmann's work, the situation was certainly not the same, with socialism being only in the early stages in the ESSR, and therefore the use of Russian images could not yet be employed effectively; the ESSR was not in the position in 1940-1941 of sharing the same cultural norms as across the Soviet Union. Both efforts, however, had the same goal – the mobilization of the people. For the Estonian-Swedes, this meant a rapid acceptance of the new ideology and the changes in society.

Estonian-Swedish National Identity

The ethnic Swedish minority living primarily in the islands and coastal regions of Estonia were an ideal ethnicity within the Soviet system of nations. Stalin's elements of what constitutes a nation perfectly meshed with the Estonian-Swedes as a minority living in communities primarily of the same ethnicity sharing a common language and economic standing, and with a common history and culture. In addition, their status as relatively poor farmers and fishermen could possibly have translated to support for the Soviet

¹⁸ David L. Hoffmann, *Stalinist Values: The Cultural Norms of Soviet Modernity, 1917-1941* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003).

economic policies. None of the other ethnic minorities living in Estonia fit this description as well as the Estonian-Swedes. This made the ethnic Swedes ideally suited to being receptive of communist ideology (in theory) and for extensive efforts of Sovietization, placing them in a unique position within the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic.

If Martin's Piedmont Principle is taken into consideration, perhaps the long-term goal was also the encouragement of Soviet policy in Sweden. This possibility can be supported by the distribution, even on a small scale, of *Sovjet-Estland* to Sweden and the reproduction of news articles in communist newspapers in Sweden. Per Weiselgren, the Swedish professor at the University of Tartu at the time, mentions two examples of such reception in Sweden of the propaganda in his memoir, *Från Hammaren till Hakkorset, Estland 1939-1941* (From the Hammer to the Swastika, Estonia 1939-1941).¹⁹ In the first instance, he mentions a letter the newspaper received from 40 workers in Gothenburg who expressed a desire to live in "prosperous Soviet-Estonia" and berated the ungrateful Pakrite island ethnic Swedes who had legally immigrated to Sweden. The second instance caused him greater concern. "Even among the Estonia-interested cultural elite in Sweden, one didn't always understand how the newspaper should be judged. I received a letter from a professor who expressed grave concern over the Estonian-Swedes' conversion to communism."²⁰

The Bolsheviks attempted to draw conclusions from the historical poor treatment of the minority, particularly in terms of linguistic and cultural matters. This was meant to gain additional support from the minority for the Soviet policies. A 4 January 1941 article states:

The new regime has given us back our linguistic and cultural rights, and we no longer need to go and feel that we are some sort of second-class citizens, like we did under Eerpalu's regime, rather we know with feelings of pride equality with our fellow workers of other nationalities within the Soviet-republic's wide borders.²¹

¹⁹ This book has been translated into Estonian: *Vasarast haakristini : Eesti 1939-1941* (Tallinn: Kunst, 2002).

²⁰ Per Weiselgren, *Från Hammaren till Hakkorset, Estland 1939-1941* (Stockholm: Idé och Form Förlag, 1942), 155. Translated from Swedish: Även inom den estlandsintressade kultureliten i Sverige förstod man inte alltid, hur tidningen borde bedömas. Jag fick ett brev från en professor, som uttryckte allvarlig oro över estlandssvenskarnas omvändelse till kommunismen.

²¹ "Vad den socialistiska regeringen gett Estlands svenskar," *Sovjet-Estland*, 4 January 1941, p. 1. Translated from Swedish: Den nya regimen har gett oss tillbaka våra språkliga och kulturella rättigheter och

Throughout *Sovjet-Estland*, the status of the Estonian-Swedes as second-class citizens in Interwar Estonia (and tsarist Russia, although this was not emphasized as often) was frequently referred to, as a contrasting point to the pro-nationalities policies of the Soviet Union.

The theme of Soviet nationalism, along with the recurring theme of how the situation had improved for minorities under the Soviet system (as opposed to under the Estonian government) became increasingly significant following the 22 June 1941 declaration of war by Germany against the Soviet Union. The groundwork that had been attempted in fostering the Estonian-Swedish identity in the pre-22 June issues was required in order to successfully mobilize the population in the war effort. As Brandenberger had noticed in the Russian national identity, mobilization of the population was a key factor.

An example of this groundwork can be seen in a 10 April 1941 article discussing the role of Soviet patriotism and nationality. The article states, “Soviet patriotism is an unbounded love for the homeland and its interests along with the desire to sacrifice your own interests for the native land. But along with that is even an irreconcilable hatred for enemies of the Soviet people.”²² The article, a clear example of content translated into Swedish for publication in the newspaper, does not attempt to make a clear connection between the ideas of the article and the application of those ideas within the Estonian-Swedish community. Although it does state that each nationality has the “right and freedom to live their own national life, at the same time that it is a member of the Soviet state’s family of brethren.”²³ Although generic in its writing, this article attempted to establish a Soviet patriotism sentiment, linking the proletariat to the Soviet state as its homeland.

vi behöva inte längre gå och känna oss som ett slags andraklass medborgare, som vi fingo göra under Eenpalus regim, utan vi kunna med stolthet känna oss likställda med våra arbetskamrater av annan nationalitet inom Sovjet-republikens vida gränser.

²² “Sovjetpatriotismen och nationaliteten,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 10 April 1941 p. 3. Translated from Swedish: Sovjetpatriotsmen är en obegränsad kärlek till hemlandet och dess intressen samt viljan att offra sina egna intressen för fostlandets. Men därvid är den även ett oförsonligt hat till sovjetfolkens fiender.

²³ “Sovjetpatriotismen och nationaliteten,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 10 April 1941, p. 3. Translated from Swedish: ...har rätt och frihet att leva sitt eget nationella liv, samtidigt som det hör till sovjetstatens brodersfamilj.

Linguistic Support

The Swedish language was an important aspect of the Estonian-Swedish identity. The publication of a Swedish-language newspaper can, itself, be seen as an important step in the Sovietization of the Estonian-Swedish identity. It was intended not only as an organ of propaganda, but also as an act of goodwill towards the Swedish minority. The editor, in his opening letter to the readers wrote: “Our working people’s government and our leaders in the Estonian Communist Party have shown their goodwill towards the working Swedish-speaking people’s ambition and wishes, and intend further to provide for the Swedish-speaking coastal people’s well being.”²⁴

This goodwill towards the Estonian-Swedes was a regular topic throughout *Sovjet-Estland*, and is also reflected not only in the publication of a Swedish-language newspaper, but also in the usage of Swedish place-names over Estonian names. During the 1930s, the Estonian government required the use of Estonian place names, even in Swedish-language publications.²⁵ *Sovjet-Estland* used almost exclusively the Swedish names, with the main exceptions being the usage of “Tallinn” over “Reval” and “Läänemaa” over “Vik.”²⁶ Whereas the Estonian government had not permitted the usage of Swedish place names, the Soviets were encouraging their usage.

Place names were of significant importance for the Estonian-Swedes. An article concerning the town names was published on 20 March 1941. The author, “Astolf,” states that one of the injustices of the Eepalu government was the Estonianization of the Swedish place names, which had existed for as long as the ethnic Swedes had lived along Estonia’s coast. He writes, “These names grew with time within the inhabitants’ soul and became dear, and it should never have occurred to our forefathers to change them.”²⁷ The

²⁴ Redaktionen, “‘Sovjet-Estland’ – ny tidning för arbetande svensktalande folket,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 17 October 1940, p. 2. Translated from Swedish: Vår arbetande folkets regering och vår ledare Estniska Kommunistiska Partiet har visat sin välvilja mot den arbetande svensktalande befolkningens strävanden och önskningsar, och ämnar vidare sörja för det svensktalande kustfolkets välbehållan.

²⁵ Following a 1935 law, *Kustbon* was required to use the Estonian names, which periodically required the Swedish name in parentheses. See Alar Schönberg, *Nå gra Inblickar i den Estlandssvenska Identiteten i slutet av 1930-talet* (Masters’ Thesis, University of Tartu, 2001), 51.

²⁶ There are occasions where *Sovjet-Estland* is inconsistent, varying, for example, between using the Swedish “Hapsal” (see, for example, *Sovjet-Estland*, 28 November 1940) and the Estonian “Haapsalu” (see, for example, *Sovjet-Estland*, 4 January 1941). Also, a large error was made translating Noarootsi (in Swedish “Nuckö”) as “Nargö” (in Estonian “Naissaar”) in the 17 October 1940 issue, Nargö having already been evacuated to allow for a Soviet military base.

²⁷ Astolf, “Våra ortnamn,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 20 March 1941, p. 2. Translated from Swedish: Dessa namn växte med tiden in i befolkningens själ och blevo kära, och det skulle aldrig ha fallit våra förfäder in att ändra dem.

article continues by expressing outrage at the Estonianization efforts that were also undertaken to change farm names, and the people's last names to make them more Estonian. "This can only be explained by the hostility of the then-government towards the Swedes."²⁸ Astolf concludes by praising the Soviet Union's policy of equality, and expressing the Estonian-Swedes' gladness and approval for the new government.

Perhaps one of the more surprising exceptions, though, was the use of "Vormsö" over "Ormsö" for the island of Vormsi ("ö" is Swedish for island). Marianne Blomqvist, in her book *Svenska ortnamn i Estland med estniska motsvarigheter* (Swedish town names in Estonia with Estonian equivalents), states that a "W" was typically used in the German name for the island, and was subsequently developed into the Estonia "Vormsi."²⁹ While "Vormsö" had occasionally been used by the Swedes, it is not clear why the editors chose to primarily use that name over "Ormsö." On more than one occasion, "Ormsö"³⁰ was used, with one issue using *both* names in the headline: "Ormsö notices: Small notices from Vormsö."³¹ Whether this was a conscious decision, and if so, the reason, cannot be determined. *Sovjet-Estland* mentions the discrepancy between the two in a profile of Vormsi, printed on 17 April 1941. The article states:

The beautiful island's name has produced many heated disputes, because sometimes is it written Ormsö, sometimes Vormsö. The legend tells that the island got its name from a lost Viking chief Orm, who after many hardships settled here, and the island probably has been named Ormsö [Orm's island] after him. The island inhabitants have been, however, with help of foreign "connoisseurs" pressured, that it sounds somewhat ugly with "orm" [Swedish for snake] and following after the German-born landowners' taste placed an elegant "v" before orm, and so it became Vormsö. The inhabitants of Ormsö, however, call their beloved home island quite simply "Ormse" and themselves "ormsebo" [residents of Ormse].³²

²⁸ Astolf, "Våra ortnamn," *Sovjet-Estland*, 20 March 1941, p. 2. Translated from Swedish: Detta kan endast förklaras med den dåvarande regeringens svenskfientlighet.

²⁹ Marianne Blomqvist, *Svenska ortnamn i Estland med estniska motsvarigheter* (Ekenäs: Svenska Folkskolans Vänner, 2000), 15.

³⁰ See for example *Sovjet-Estland*, 29 April 1941, p. 2, and 8 May 1941, p. 2.

³¹ "Ormsö notiser: 'Smånotiser från Vormsö,'" *Sovjet-Estland*, 15 May 1941, p. 2.

³² "Ormsö – Svenskbygdens hjärta," *Sovjet-Estland*, 17 April 1941, p. 2. Translated from Swedish, keeping the original names in Swedish (and not translated to the Estonian names as is being used throughout the rest of the thesis): Den vackra öns namn har vållat många hetadispyter, ty än skrives det Ormsö än Vormsö. Säggen förtäljer, att ön fått sitt namn av en vilseglad vikingahövding Orm, som efter många strapatser grundstött här och efter honom lär ön ha uppkallats till Ormsö. Öborna ha emellertid med hjälp av främmande "finsmakare" tyckt, att det låter något fult med "orm" och passat på att efter de tyskfödda godsägarnas smak sätta ett find "v" framför orm och så blev det Vormsö. Ormsöborna kalla dock sin kära hemö rätt och slätt "Ormse" och sig själv "ormsebo."

However, while the author of the profile clearly tended to prefer the use of Ormsö, the newspaper more commonly used Vormsö – including two articles appearing on the same page as the profile.

The use of the Swedish language was not limited to the newspaper. Swedish was also used in information for specific agitation uses, radio programs, and voting information. Election material was also prepared in Swedish, the first time such efforts had been undertaken for the Estonian-Swedes, and further evidence of the equality of all nationalities under the Soviet system.³³ Neeme Ruus notably used Swedish when speaking to the Estonian-Swedes, which was frequently highlighted in articles about his visits to ethnic Swedish areas. On one such speaking tour on 4-5 January that included Noarootsi, Riguldi, and Vormsi, the author of the article writes:

While one sat there and listened to comrade Ruus' speech, one could not avoid but do a comparison between the old and the new regime... Now our leaders come here from Tallinn and hold talks in fluent Swedish, and through that demonstrate that all nations in the Soviet Union have equally great rights.³⁴

All of these efforts were meant to reinforce the Soviet ideology that all nationalities are equal in the Soviet Union, and were used as a sharp contrast to the Estonianization efforts of the independent Estonian period.

Weisलगren was highly critical of *Sovjet-Estland* in his memoir, most notably for linguistic reasons. “The first issue of this publication was, however, drawn up in hair-raising Swedish, because the editor, an Estonian communist who indeed understood Norwegian, Comrade Vaarandi, stuffed the newspaper with absolute literal translations from Russian and Estonian.”³⁵ As the Swedish professor at the University of Tartu, Weisलगren was keenly aware of the linguistic mistakes being made in the newspaper, particularly in the first few issues. His memoir berates the grammatical mistakes, particularly the use of improper articles. With the newspapers being used in the

³³ “Nuckö och Rikull förbereda sig för valen,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 19 December 1940, p. 2.

³⁴ “Kamrat Neeme Ruus bland estlandssvenskarna,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 9 January 1941, pp. 1-2. Translated from Swedish: Medan man satt där och hörde på kamrat Ruus' tal, kunde man inte undgå att göra jämförelser mellan de gamla och den nya regimen... Nu komma våra ledande män hit från Tallinn och hålla föredrag på flytande svenska och bevisa genom detta att alla nationer i Sovjetunionen ha lika stora rättigheter.

³⁵ Weisलगren, 154. Translated from Swedish: De första numren av denna publikation voro emellertid avfattade på en härresande svenska, ty chefredaktören, en estnisk kommunist, som visserligen förstod norska, kmr. Vaarandi, lät fylla tidningen med fullständigt ordagranna översättningar från ryskan och estniskan.

classrooms (Weisलगren states that bourgeois and Christian books were no longer permitted) he took action to remedy the language, sending Vaarandi a former student as a translator,³⁶ without success, writing: “Comrade Vaarandi’s suspicions against every free translation made an actual language improvement difficult to carry out. One had to be content with the good language in the original articles, which the Estonian-Swedes’ own scribes wrote.”³⁷

The Bolsheviks were apparently aware of the weaknesses of Swedish within the ESSR. In May 1941, the Central Committee discussed the work done among the Swedes.³⁸ The report states that work has been “unsatisfactory.” In some of the recommendations of the report, the need for more agitators speaking Swedish was expressed, particularly targeting the youth, increasing the subscription and expanding the content of *Sovjet-Estland*, improving the Swedish-language radio programs, and to prepare more translations of literature and movies into Swedish. The short-comings of the Swedish-language offerings needed to be solved, largely because of concerns among the Central Committee over the predominance of emigration thoughts among the Estonian-Swedes.

The lack of approved Swedish-language textbooks was also a problem. As Weisलगren mentioned, *Sovjet-Estland* was used in the schools for educational purposes, in large part because of this absence. Textbooks from Sweden, reflecting the capitalistic and religious society, were no longer acceptable. Preparing new textbooks, however, took time. Two new textbooks were finally completed, compiled by Tomas Gårdström, in June but distribution was indefinitely delayed because of the sudden arrival of the war.³⁹

Cultural Encouragement

An important function of the newspaper was to explain the role the group would hold and the support they would receive in the furthering of their language and culture, although within the confines of the Soviet ideology and socialistic culture. As the central organ for the Estonian-Swedes, *Sovjet-Estland* was also an important cultural function.

³⁶ Weisलगren does not name this former female student.

³⁷ Weisलगren, 155. Translated from Swedish: Men kamrat Vaarandis misstänksamhet mot varje friare tolkning gjorde en verklig språkförbättring svår att genomföra. Man fick nöja sig med gott språk i en del originalartiklar, som estlandssvenskarnas egna skribenter författat.

³⁸ ERAF [Eesti Riigiarhiivi Filiaal] 1-4-71, *Öå iððäëüéÊîìèðà ò ÊĬ (á) Ýñòítèè Ìñtáúé Ñãñòìð*, 36-39. Minutes no. 8 of the Seating of the Central Committee, dated 15, 21, and 22 May 1941.

However, the cultural role went largely ignored within the newspaper for the first half of the year. Instead, cultural articles focused on the legal rights and the ideological rights for the protection and encouragement of all nationalities. While cultural activities such as visiting theater troops and musicians were included in articles, there was little mention of Estonian-Swedish participation in these types of activities. It was not until spring 1941 that Estonian-Swedish participation was also mentioned in the newspaper.

Perhaps one reason for the lack of cultural reporting was the loss of the main cultural organization for the ethnic Swedes. Throughout the independent Estonian period, the Cultural Union of Swedish Cultivation Friends (Kulturföreningen Svenska Odlingens Vänner), or SOV, enriched and coordinated the Estonian-Swedish culture. However, SOV was closed by the Bolsheviks, with no single organization being opened to replace it. SOV was mentioned only twice in the year-long run of *Sovjet-Estland* – in the 31 October 1940⁴⁰ and the 4 January 1941⁴¹ issues. In both occasions, it was in reference to the history of Swedish-language education in Estonia, particularly as the founding organization for both the Birkas (in Estonian, Pürksi) school in Noarootsi and the Swedish school in Tallinn. And in both cases, the references were positive. There was no negative interpretation of SOV offered in *Sovjet-Estland* and no explanation provided as to the reason for its closing (such as it being representative of the capitalistic, bourgeois independent period).

Without SOV or a replacement organization to oversee the cultural development of the Estonian-Swedes, it was left to the local initiative for all cultural activities. Whereas *Sovjet-Estland* routinely sought to educate the readers in areas of politics and history, culture was only discussed in abstract methods. There was no intelligentsia from which the Bolsheviks could draw in order to lead and form the cultural aspect of the Estonian-Swedes, as this had been a limited group of people before the occupation began. In order to be effective, a central organization would have been needed to lead the cultural development of the Estonian-Swedes.

The May Central Committee report mentions the cultural shortcomings that were to be addressed by the Bolsheviks in Estonian-Swedish cultural encouragement. Specifically, cultural events were to be organized for the Estonian-Swedes. These were to

³⁹ These textbooks will be discussed further in Chapter 4.

⁴⁰ “Birkas lantmannaskola börja sin verksamhet som statens skola,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 31 October 1940, p. 2.

⁴¹ “Om den Svenska Folkskolan i Tallinn,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 4 January 1941, p. 2.

include the establishment of choirs, orchestras, dramatic groups, dancing, ensuring that equipment and repertoire was available. The Central Committee also wanted the Estonian-Swedes to participate in the Estonian art Olympiad to encourage amateur art groups (and ensuring that this art was formally national and socialistic in content).⁴² On some levels, the report's decisions were implemented. For several issues, the cultural reporting increased in *Sovjet-Estland*. The lead article in the 22 May issue, for example, focused on the Estonian-Swedes' culture independence.

Ethnic Swedish participation in an art festival in Tallinn, and later in Moscow, also was meant to encourage the Estonian-Swedish cultural identity. The 22 May issue reported the translation of the songs for the upcoming art festival into Swedish by Hjalmar Pöhl,⁴³ a luminary in the Estonian-Swedish culture. A committee was also established to oversee the ethnic Swedish participation in the festival. The committee included representatives from the various Estonian-Swedish regions to be overseen by L. Malmre, Fridolf Isberg, and Hjalmar Pöhl. Representing Vormsi were Alexander Hammerman, Tomas Gärdström, and Viktor Aman. Representing Noarootsi were Viktor Pöhl and Alexander Samberg. Representing Riguldi were Anton Vesterberg, Arvid Nyman, and Besterman. In regards to their 18 May meeting, *Sovjet-Estland* reported: "All agreed that the Estonian-Swedes were for the first time now properly able to demonstrate what they were capable of producing in the areas of singing, music, and folk dancing."⁴⁴

Sovjet-Estland reported in the 18 June issue on an upcoming joint meeting of the "Estonian-Swedes' circles for cultural activities" (*Estlandssvenska själverksammas cirklarna*). The meeting was to be held at the Birkas school on 22 June, with the program to include choral singing, and folk dancing, and would be a preparation for the cultural exposition in Moscow. An additional ferry would be run from Vormsi to increase participation in the event. The article states, "The festivities are the first of its type in the

⁴² ERAF 1-4-71, *Õa iõðàèüéÊîèðà ò Ê Ì (á) Ýñðîíèè Ìñîáüé Ñâñðîðð*, 36-39. Minutes no. 8 of the Seating of the Central Committee, dated 15, 21, and 22 May 1941.

⁴³ "Sånger för dekaden på svenska," *Sovjet-Estland*, 22 May 1941, p. 1.

⁴⁴ "Svenskbygden rustar sig för konstdekaden," *Sovjet-Estland*, 22 May 1941, p. 2. Translated from Swedish: Man kom överens om att estlandssvenskarna först nu riktigt kunde visa vad de mäktade åstadkomma på sångens, musikens och folkdansens område.

Swedish region, and so it is hoped that the Estonian-Swedes numerously participate in them.”⁴⁵

Attempts were made to increase the cultural growth of the Estonian-Swedes, particularly in the later stages of the occupation. While it was intended that this cultural growth would be socialistic in content, it is notable that a number of those on the committee had been largely involved in the Estonian-Swedish culture in the bourgeois Estonian period. Finding new cultural leaders who were accepting of the Bolsheviks would certainly have taken more time, and would have been at the expense of furthering the Estonian-Swedish culture. The extent that the resulting cultural expression changed and adapted to the socialistic constraints cannot be determined from *Sovjet-Estland*, except in its mentioning that such activities were taking place and that their representation was sought after in both Tallinn and Moscow in the cultural exhibitions.

The coverage in *Sovjet-Estland*, as well as the minutes of the Central Committee found in the May report can be used to show an almost privileged status for the Estonian-Swedes within the ESSR. This is what Martin refers to as “affirmative action.” The ethnic Swedes were being encouraged to develop their identity in ways they had never been encouraged before, including the publication of a Swedish-language newspaper, development in the arts, and articulating the equal status of the ethnic group repeatedly. However, the May report points to certain areas where the Estonian-Swedes should, in theory, receive extra protections or attention that was not available for the ethnic Estonians. For example, the report suggested adequate compensation for those ethnic Swedes that had been displaced for the military regions on the islands, lowering the harvest norms due to the poor quality of the soil, and delaying any mobilization efforts among the ethnic Swedes for a year. In practice, however, these areas were not put into action; perhaps the lack of action can be attributed to the sudden development of war and the need to shift their attention elsewhere. In theory, though, the Estonian-Swedes were to have been treated differently than their ethnic neighbors if the Sovietization process had not been interrupted by the war.

⁴⁵ “Sammanträde av estlandssvenska självverksamma cirklarna,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 18 June 1941, p. 1. Translated from Swedish: Festligheterna äro de första i sitt slag i svenskbygden, varför det är att hoppas, att estlandssvenskarna talrikt delta i dem.

Regional Identity

In addition to the promotion of the Estonian-Swedish national identity, regional distinctions and identities continued to play a role. This can be seen as a continuation of regional coverage and regional identities found in *Kustbon*. These articles can be divided into two categories. The first category focuses on news from specific regions (towns or islands), which were explicitly linked with the Soviet ideology, while the second category (more infrequent) completely lacked any ideological focus. This second category, arguably, could have just as easily have been found in *Kustbon*.

Fostering a regional identity, there were regular articles for particular regions, most notably for Vormsi, Riguldi, and Noarootsi. These articles covered a wide range of topics, typically involving how national policies were being applied in the local arena, and in an attempt to demonstrate the growing support in these largely ethnic-Swedish areas. Articles from Ruhnu were less frequent, largely due to the isolation the island faces during the winter months.

Starting in March, a series of articles demonstrated a shift in content away from ideology, if ever so slight. The articles featured short profiles of towns, highlighting the communities of Ruhnu, Põõsaspea, Rooslepa, Noarootsi, and Vormsi. What is striking about the profiles is the complete absence of Soviet ideology, or even a mention of the Soviet Union. To further offset these articles, literally, from the rest of the pages, the type was italicized, with the exception of the Vormsi article which was significantly longer in length than the other four profiles. Each of the five articles ran without mentioning the author or authors (which was not at all uncommon for *Sovjet-Estland*). The language used clearly suggests a native-Swedish speaker with a superb knowledge of the Swedish language, not employing regional dialects or common mistakes found in translated articles.

The profiles described the nature surrounding the region, daily life for the residents, and its unique position within the Estonian-Swedish community, with an almost poetic quality to the writing. They provide a glimpse into the different regions, and the areas of pride the inhabitants held for their homes. The complete Ruhnu profile, for example, ran as follows under the headline “Spring winds over Ruhnu”:

Far down in the Bay of Riga lies Ruhnu, “the Bay of Riga’s pearl.” Its unparalleled forest and sandy beach have awoken nothing but admiration with tourists. The forest is thick and in many places impenetrable. It creates a half-circle protection towards the north and east, behind which the small idyllic village lies protected against the coldest of winds.

There live a people, which one would not easily forget when one has lived among them. They are people full of vitality, who take life as it comes. Being accustomed to everything, feeling uncomfortable nowhere, they are content with their lot, whatever it may be.

The people of Ruhnu do not live, like one would believe, in a far-removed world, an isolated life, but on the contrary – they follow the happenings out in the far world just as good as everyone else, thanks to the radio. Around ten apparatuses are on the island. In the evenings, most of the people gather at the farms with a radio to listen to the daily news. After the so-called “radio time” the current questions are discussed.

When everyone has gone to rest at night, the peace is absolute over the island. Only the lighthouse beacon’s light sweeps over the sleeping forest. The silence is broken only by the ice flows’ crashing against the beach, and far-off one can hear the ships’ machines thumping.⁴⁶

The other towns were equally poetic, switching between the nature descriptions and the mentality of the people. The people of Põõsaspea have “the wave’s restlessness in the blood. They belong on the sea. It is only the love for the native district that binds them, which forces them to sooner or later return to the barren land at home.”⁴⁷ In Rooslepa, “every young man has spent some years on the world’s seas. They are a little romantic, full of vitality and enterprising people, who neither shrink from breaking the stone-bound turf nor flinch from an autumn storm on the sea.”⁴⁸

The profile of Noarootsi attempted to bring out not only the unique qualities of the people of the region, but added the importance to the Estonian-Swedish culture and

⁴⁶ “Vårvindar över Runö,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 20 March 1941, p. 2. Translated from Swedish: Långt nere i Rigaviken ligger Runö, “Rigavikens pärla.” Dess enastående skog och sandstrand ha väckt idel beundran hos turister. Skogen är tät och på flera ställen ogenomtränglig. Den bildar en halvcirkelformig försöksning mot norr och öster, bakom vilken den lilla idylliska byn ligger försvarad mot de kallaste vindarna.

Där bot ett folk, som man inte lätt glömmer bort, då man en gång levat bland det. Det är levnadsglada människor, som taga livet som det kommer. Vana med allting vantrivas de ingenstans och äro nöjda med sin lott, hurudan den är vore.

Runöborna leva icke, som man kunde tro, ett från yttervärlden isolerat liv, utan tvärtom – de följa med hänelserna ute i vida världen lika bra som alla andra, tack vare radio. Ett tiotal apparater finnas på ön. På kvällarna samlas mestadels männen på de gårdar, där radio finns, för att lyssna på dagnyheter. Efter den s.k. “radiotiden” diskuteras aktuella frågor.

Då alla gått till vila på kvällen, är friden över ön fullständig. Blott fyrens sken sveper över den sovande skogen. Tystnaden brytes bara av isflakens brak mot stranden, och i fjärran kan man höra fartygsmaskiner dunka.

⁴⁷ “Spithamn – stormarnas udde,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 27 March 1941, p. 2. Translated from Swedish: ...vågornas oro i blodet. De höra hemma på havet. Det är endast kärleken till fosterbygden som binder dem, som tvingar dem att förr eller senare återvända till den karga jorden därhemma.

⁴⁸ “Roslep – flera sjömäns hemmahamn,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 3 April 1941, p. 2. Translated from Swedish: Varje ung man har tillbringat några år på världshaven. De äro litet romantiska, levnadsglada och

identity, placing themselves as the guardians and continuers of that national spirit. For the people of Noarootsi, their greatness lies not within the natural surroundings, but within themselves:

Gray and poor are the villages that lie scattered about over the Noarootsi plain. The stranger would get an impression of poverty and backwardness. But in reality, the resident of Noarootsi moves ahead, awake, tending to firmly seize new ideas and struggling⁴⁹ to get the most out of the scant possibilities that the hometown offers.

Whereas the other region profiles sought to define itself through the nature, Noarootsi described the setting in harsh terms, while also drawing distinctions from a number of the other Estonian-Swedish regions.

While Noarootsi was referred to as the cradle of the Estonian-Swedish culture, Vormsi was referred to as the heart of the ethnic Swedish district, with 2300 of the islands 2500 inhabitants ethnic Swedish. The article states that many of the older Estonian-Swedish traditions and folksongs have been preserved on Vormsi (including those that had been prohibited by pastors in other ethnic Swedish areas), instilling a sense of pride and unflinching love for their island.

With its many sides – farmers, fishermen, sailors, carpenters – it succeeds in winning the people over, despite the difficult working conditions, and often live better than their neighbors on the mainland. As far as the home culture is concerned, one can certainly say that not in many places in Estonia can present such beautifully painted farms, embedded in thickly wooded gardens.⁵⁰

The residents of Vormsi viewed their island, despite difficulties, as a haven to be cherished, and no matter where in the world its residents would find themselves, they would fondly recall their homes.

While the profiles were consistently placed in the upper-left corner of each issue's second page, each issue also carried a front-page photograph showing a local scene from

företagsamma människor, som varken sky att bryta den stenbundna torvan eller rygga tillbaka för en höststorm på havet.

⁴⁹ "Nuckö – aibokulturens vagga," *Sovjet-Estland*, 10 April 1941, p. 2. Translated from Swedish: Grå och fattiga äro byarna, som ligga utströdda över Nucköslätten. Främligen får ett intryck av armod och efterblivenhet. Men i verkligheten är nucköbon framåtsträvande, vaken, benägen att gripa fast vid nya idéer och strävar att få ut det mesta möjliga av de torftiga möjligheter, som hembygden bjuder på

⁵⁰ "Ormsö – Svenskbygdens hjärta," *Sovjet-Estland*, 17 April 1941, p. 2. Translated from Swedish: Med sin mångsidighet – jordbrukare, fiskare, sjömän, snickare – lyckas den sega befolkningen trots svårigheterna slita sig fram och ofta leva bättre än grannerna på fastlandet. Vad som beträffar hemkulturen, kan man med säkerhet påstå, att det ej på många ställen i Estland kan uppvisas så vackert färgade gårdar, inbäddade i lummiga trädgårdar.

the community. The Ruhnu photo was of a women in a local folk costume standing on the beach in front of a boat and the ice flows. Põõsaspea gave a nighttime view of Dirhami harbor. The breakers of Rooslepa were photographed. The “strange” landscape with farm animals was used for Noarootsi. For Vormsi, a young woman standing next to a well, with a windmill in the background.⁵¹ None of the pictures can be positioned in a Soviet context.

The content is strikingly similar to the type of articles that could have appeared in the pre-Soviet publication, *Kustbon*. Perhaps this was an attempt to attract more readers for *Sovjet-Estland* within the communities by providing some content without an ideological background, or to attract attention to the regions for the readers abroad in Sweden. However, it also meant to encourage a pride in their nationality and their hometowns – pride in the natural surroundings of their homes. These five articles could possibly have been an attempt to instill the national identity within the Estonian-Swedes as being fixed on their location; their national identity came from themselves and from their home regions, not from their connections to Sweden. These profiles can be viewed as an attempt to prevent further emigration thoughts among the ethnic Swedes.⁵² Regardless of intent, the shift away from ideology was short-lived.

A sixth article can very loosely be placed in this category; an article highlighting Nõmmküla appeared in the 8 May issue. However, this article was quite different than the previous profiles. There was no front page photo, although this can perhaps be attributed to the 1 May celebration coverage. The profile begins in a similar fashion to the other regional profiles, highlighting the surrounding nature and the hard working nature of the inhabitants. If one were to leave the region, the article states, certainly he would to feel homesick for his region – a much more direct appeal against emigration than any of the previous articles had done. However, the larger difference is found in the final two paragraphs, where there is a strong Soviet ideological presence.

The Soviet structure has already done much for their benefit. Among other things, the government provided the farmers with animal feed, corn seed, fertilizer, and more. The people of Nõmmküla anticipate much from the

⁵¹ The following week, 24 April, a second photograph was printed from Vormsi – a woman working a plow with a horse. There was no article to accompany this photograph. Likewise, a photograph in the 11 June issue pictured a woman from Ruhnu dressed in a folk costume. Again, there was no accompanying article.

⁵² This will be discussed further in Chapter 6.

Soviet order and are ready to help in all possible ways so that our homeland goes towards a bright and happy future.⁵³

Whereas none of the previous profiles had even the slightest hint of Soviet ideology, the profile of Nõmmküla overtly expressed its support for the new Soviet presence. The profile echoes many of the themes previously raised in ideological articles, attributing them to the sentiments of the inhabitants.

The regional profiles attempted to foster a stronger sense of identity with their land and their communities. This certainly had the added intention of displacing emigration thoughts without an overt appearance of ideology. The final profile, if one places the Nõmmküla profile in the same category, moved the line of debate, though, illuminating this ulterior motive in the articles.

The Soviet version of the Estonian-Swedish national identity sought to combine the elements of the developing identity and shape it for its own purposes. In many cases, this government intervention in fostering their identity could have held out certain benefits for the ethnic group. Arguably, the fostering of the Soviet Estonian-Swedish national identity was one of the central focuses of *Sovjet-Estland*, influencing the coverage of a wide range of topics throughout the newspaper's almost year-long run. However, the strong presence of Soviet ideology served to highlight the differences between an identity which had been naturally developing from within the community itself and the Soviet-influenced identity that was being imposed upon them by others.

⁵³ "Klottop – gammal svenskby," *Sovjet-Estland*, 8 May 1941, p. 2. Translated from Swedish: Sovjetordningen har redan gjort mycket till deras bästa. Bl. a. har regeringen försett bönderna med strüfoder, utsäde, mineralgödsel m. m. Klottorpsborna vänta mycket av sovjetordningen och äro redo att hjälpa till på alla mjöliga sätt så att vårt hemland går emot en ljus och lyckligare framtid.

Chapter 3: For the Greatness of the Party – Articulating Socialist Ideology

*Every worker's highest obligation is to prize socialism's triumphs and enhance its numbers. Let us gather our forces and under the leadership of Lenin-Stalin's great party, go towards new triumphs – communism.*¹

When the Soviet Union annexed Estonia, the people found themselves in a political and economic system that was foreign to them. As such, the Soviet communist ideology needed to be conveyed to the newly annexed territory in order to incorporate Estonian society into the greater Soviet system. As an instrument of propaganda, articles in *Sovjet-Estland* almost always displayed the Soviet ideology. The articles were written from the Soviet perspective with no alternate viewpoints. In the recently acquired territory with rapidly changing political, social, and economic spheres, the new ideology had to be presented to the new population. It was hoped that once understanding the background ideology of Communism, the population could then embrace the changes and be an actively supportive segment of Soviet society. However, as shall be demonstrated, a failure to convince the ethnic Swedish population in the ideology did not deter the propaganda effort.

With a failure to convince the Estonian-Swedes through the propaganda, and with the increased threat to Soviet rule following the German declaration of war, the Soviet Union moved from a propaganda campaign to a campaign increasingly based on fear. As Jeffrey Brooks states, where ideology failed, terror was employed.² But, as shall be demonstrated more in-depth in Chapter 5, the approaching war and the German threat as perceived by the Soviets was not as equally perceived by the Estonian-Swedes. The failure of the ideological component of the propaganda was realized under this German threat with little effort on the part of *Sovjet-Estland* to adequately address the ideological reasons to gather support against the Nazi German advance.

The nationalities argument was consistently below the surface throughout *Sovjet-Estland*, including articles on ideology. One of the central focuses of the propaganda in

¹ "Medel av stor betydelse som använts inom vårt politiska och ekonomiska liv," *Sovjet-Estland*, 28 November 1940, p. 1. Translated from Swedish: Varje arbetarens högsta plikt är att skatta socialismens segrar och öka deras antal. Låt oss samla våra krafter och under ledning av Lenin-Stalins stora parti gå mot nya segrar, kommunismen.

² Jeffery Brooks, "The Press and Its Message: Images of America in the 1920s and 1930s" in *Russia in the Era of NEP: Explorations in Soviet Society and Culture*, ed. Shiela Fitzpatrick et. al. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 248.

regards to ideology was drawing distinctions between the Estonianization effects on the Estonian-Swedes and the Soviet's favorable treatment of minorities. However, while this was a significantly large portion of the Soviet ideology represented in the propaganda, other ideological propaganda efforts were undertaken in *Sovjet-Estland*. This chapter explores how Soviet ideology was used and articulated in *Sovjet-Estland*. Specific attention is given to series of articles exploring basic Soviet ideology, the political structure, the Stalin Constitution, and Soviet elections; the explanation of Soviet symbols, holidays, and people – most notably Stalin, Lenin, Johannes Vares, and Neeme Ruus; and emigration. The ideology employed in articulating the changing economic (such as fishing and agriculture) and educational arenas, as well as the Second World War, will be covered in later chapters.

Despite the intense focus on the Estonian-Swedes by the Soviets, in the first year of Soviet occupation, the only books published in Swedish were two textbooks, which were never distributed.³ As a result, the primary printed material in which to educate the Estonian-Swedes was the newspaper. In contrast, materials printed in Estonian included Soviet histories and ideological books.⁴ To overcome this shortcoming in the Swedish language, *Sovjet-Estland* assumed the role of historical and political educator. Not only reflecting the Soviet ideology, *Sovjet-Estland* was used to educate the ethnic Swedes on the ideological background of the Soviet system. Particularly in the first half-year of publication, series of articles were published around different themes – the basics of socialism, the role of elections, the political structure of the Soviet Union, the Stalin Constitution, and the Party Congress. Implicit in these articles were the rights and obligations of the Soviet citizen and educating the Estonian-Swedes not only in the ideology of socialism, but also in the role they as citizens were expected to play, within the new society.

“What is socialism”

Sovjet-Estland attempted to educate the Estonian-Swedes in Soviet ideology from the first issue. While Soviet ideology can be found, in varying levels, in most of the

³ The two books, both edited by Tomas Gärdström, were printed shortly before the German occupation, which hindered their distribution. These books will be covered in the next chapter.

⁴ See for example *Üleliidulise Kommunistliku (Enamlaste) Partei Ajalugu* (Tallinn: RK Poliitiline Kirjandus, 1940).

articles, it was done quite overtly in a four-part series entitled, “What is socialism” which ran in issues one, three, four, and five. The series outlined some of the base historical and ideological tenements of socialism. These articles were intended to be the first introduction to the socialist ideology, providing the groundwork for further ideological propaganda.

The first in the series began under the heading “From fantasy to science” and sought to explain the background ideology of socialism, beginning with Thomas Moore’s ideas of Utopia: “The utopians criticized the bourgeois society’s lifestyle, depicting the proletariat suffering, speaking of the necessity of helping the proletariat. But they did not come further than the good-willing wishes.”⁵ The article then moved on to Marx and Engel and their teachings to the proletariat and the necessary struggle against the forces of capitalism. The first article in the series concludes with the move from a “utopian dream” towards the proletariat’s struggle, applying the lessons of Marx and Engels and the leadership of Lenin and Stalin in leading the workers in the 1917 Revolution. There is a call-to-arms in the Soviet struggle: “The Soviet people must make an incredible effort, abstaining from much in the selfless struggle to transform the forsaken country to a powerful and technically exemplary state.”⁶

The second article was divided under two headings, “No capitalists, no oppressors” and “Socialism and work are inseparable concepts.” The article begins by extolling the Soviet Union’s strengths in industry, technology, and growth, stating that the Soviet Union has far surpassed the capitalistic countries. In the Soviet Union, the workers were free and the exploitation that exists under the capitalistic system has been abolished, something previously unknown in human history, according to the article. The changes in Soviet society has effected all levels of people, from farmers and workers to the intelligentsia. “Workers, farmers, the intelligentsia – everyone carries out the new class-free society’s development like a large, friendly family.”⁷ In socialism, resources such as the earth, factories, mines, and forests belong to all of the people, making exploitation

⁵ “Vad är socialism,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 17 October 1940, p. 3. Translated from Swedish: Utopisterna kritiserade det borgerliga samhällets livsformer, skildrade proletariats lidanden, talade om nödvändigheten att hjälpa proletariatet. Men längre än till godvilliga önskningar kommo de ej.

⁶ “Vad är socialism,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 17 October 1940, p. 3. Translated from Swedish: Sovjetfolket måste göra otroliga kraftansträngningar, avstå från mycket i den självlösa strävan att förvandla det övergivna landet till ett mäktigt och tekniskt förebildigt rike.

⁷ “Vad är socialism,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 31 October 1940, p. 3. Translated from Swedish: Arbetare, bönder, intelligensen – alla verkställa det nya klasslösa samhällets uppbyggande som en stor, vänlig familj.

impossible. “People no longer work for the masters and capitalists, but rather for themselves, for their country, for their people.”⁸ According to the article, work is the most important task of the Soviet people, giving the people great joy, creating a great and prosperous society.

The third installment of the series dealt with the topics “How communists understand equality” and “Personal freedom in the Soviet Union.” The article begins with the mantra: “he that doesn’t work, gets nothing to eat” and “for everyone according to his ability, according to his work.”⁹ According to the Soviet system, the salary was equally based on the quantity and quality of work, with differences between qualified and unqualified workers reflected in the different salaries.

In regards to equality, Marxism-Leninism does not mean the equalizing of private life, but rather the abolishing of classes, liberation of all the workers from exploitation, from the capitalists and the masters’ domination; the abolition of private property in the question of production materials, everyone’s equal duty to work and rights to wages corresponding to the quality and quantity. Such an order prevails in the socialist society.¹⁰

All work within the Soviet Union was honorable, regardless of the salary. The differences were intended to motivate the workers to improve themselves. “The working wages’ socialist principle spurs people to raise their work production, their cultural level, their knowledge. Certainly the more people are able to and know, that the better and more she works, the better the salary she will get.”¹¹ But while the production materials belonged to all of society, the article makes it clear the right of private ownership of personal objects as long as it does not go towards the exploitation of others. One of the greatest personal freedoms within the Soviet Union was the right to work, which under the Soviet system was immune to unemployment and economic crises, and that personal freedom is only

⁸ “Vad är socialism,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 31 October 1940, p. 3. Translated from Swedish: Människor arbeta icke längre för patroner och kapitalister utan för sig själv, för sitt rike, för sitt folk.

⁹ “Vad är socialism,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 6 November 1940, p. 3. Translated from Swedish: “den som icke arbetar, han får ingenting att äta,” “till envar efter hans förmåga, efter hans arbete.”

¹⁰ “Vad är socialism,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 6 November 1940, p. 3. Translated from Swedish: Med likställning menar marxismen-leninismen icke utjämning av privatlivet utan avskaffandet av klasser, alla arbetandes befrielse från exploaterande, från kapitalisternas och patronernas herravälde; avskaffandet av privategendom i fråga om productionsmaterjal, allas lika plikt till arbete och rättighet till lön motsvarande arbetets kvalitet och kvantitet. En sådan ordning råder i det socialistiska samhället.

¹¹ “Vad är socialism,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 6 November 1940, p. 3. Translated from Swedish: Arbetslörens socialistiska princip eggjar människor till att höja sin arbetsproduktion, sin kulturnivå, sina kunskaper. Ju mera människan kan och vet, dess bättre och mera arbetar hon, dess bättre lön får hon.

possible in a society where exploitation does not exist. In contrast, in the capitalistic society, only the richest have personal freedoms.

The fourth and final article in the “What is socialism” series focused on the topic “The Soviet citizen’s great privilege and obligation.” The article states that while the Soviet society provides its citizens with great privileges (such as the right to work, to rest, to be educated), it also comes with obligations for everyone.

But socialism does not only give great rights: it also places sacred demand on the members of society. The Soviet Union’s socialism is not built up on a utopia, isolated from the rest of the world on an island, but on the contrary on a sixth of the earth’s surface surrounded by capitalistic countries. Therefore our citizens’ foremost and most sacred obligation becomes evident: to protect their socialistic native country, strengthen the Red Army, the navy and the air force, strengthen the country’s military and economic power.¹²

The benefits of all society were to be found within the ability of the people themselves to come together for the common good of all of society. “Our ideal is a perfect communist society, where all classes and class differences are definitively obliterated, where one does not have differences between work of the mind and work of the body, between town and country.”¹³

The four-part series provided an adequate introduction to some of the basic ideas of Soviet ideology and the historical origins. While the theory and origins were articulated, the articles did not attempt to state how the system worked; this would be accomplished in other articles throughout the newspaper. However, the series was clearly translated into Swedish, and not prepared specifically with the Estonian-Swedes in mind. There was no attempt in this series to connect the Estonian-Swedes into this new ideology, or to take into consideration their background. As such, it is doubtful that the article would be effective as propaganda. Rather, it would be beneficial only to those who already were accepting of the Soviet ideology to gain additional knowledge.

¹² “Vad är socialism,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 14 November 1940, p. 3. Translated from Swedish: Men socialismen giver icke endast stora rättigheter: den ställer också heliga krav till samhällsmedlemmarna. Sovjetunionens socialism är icke uppbyggd på en utopisk, från hela övriga världen isolerad ö, utan på en sjättedel av jordytan omgiven av kapitalistiska länder. Därav framgår våra medborgares främsta och heligast plikt: att skydda sitt socialistiska fosterland, förstärka rödarmeen, flottan och luftvärnet, förstärka landets militära och ekonomiska makt.

¹³ “Var är socialism,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 14 November 1940, p. 3. Translated from Swedish: Vårt ideal är ett fullkomligt kommunistiskt samhälle, där alla klasser och klasskillnader äro definitivt utplånade, där man icke gör någon skillnad mellan själs- och kroppsarbetarna, mellan stad och land.

Printed propaganda materials available in the Swedish language was largely limited to what was contained the *Sovjet-Estland*. There was a lack of books available, and as such the newspaper needed to provide such background information as was found in the “What is socialism” series. Anticipating an expansion of propaganda efforts towards the Estonian-Swedes, Neeme Ruus from the Central Committee placed an order for a number of books. Ruus requested that Moscow have the Swedish Communist Party prepare the 17 titles, featuring works by Lenin, Stalin, Marx, and Molotov. His request was for 50 copies of each for distribution in the schools, culture houses, and libraries and for an additional 200 copies to be made available to be sold.¹⁴ Ruus’ 1 February 1941 request was not fulfilled by the end of the first Soviet occupation, though. As such, *Sovjet-Estland* remained throughout its year-long pressrun the most widespread source for the ideological education of the Estonian-Swedes.

Elections and the Soviet Political Structure

Having established the base principles of socialism, *Sovjet-Estland* shifted focus to the upcoming elections to be held 12 January and the education of the people in the socialistic political system. The election provided the opportunity to put the base principles previously established in earlier issues and combine it with the education of the Soviet Union’s political structure. “The election campaign is a good political and practical school,”¹⁵ stated one of the articles in late November. The Soviets were looking for high support among the Estonian-Swedes in preparing for the election, although many of the agitation areas established for the educating of the Soviet political structure and election campaigning remained in place after 12 January to continue the agitation process.¹⁶

Central to the ideology was that in the Soviet Union, power lies in the hands of the workers, with those representing the people being chosen from among them. Elections were viewed as a right, but the people were obliged to maintain a political knowledge. This provided a good opportunity to educate the population. A November article stated it this way:

¹⁴ ERAF 1-1-256, *ÜK(b)P KK jt.-ga parteiõhariduse finatseerimise, poliitilise kirjanduse väljaandmise, usuvastase propaganda jt. küsimustes*, 12-13.

¹⁵ “Hela det arbetande folket med i valkampanjen!” *Sovjet-Estland*, 21 November 1940, p. 1. Translated from Swedish: Valkampanjen är en god politisk och praktisk skola.

The bearer of power in a socialistic land are the country-side's and towns' working people's deputies. These representatives are chosen by the working people from their own circles. Accordingly, the highest power is the people's own. But in order to be able to utilize this right, one must create a sufficiently high political consciousness.¹⁷

Sovjet-Estland chronicles an intense effort of agitation in preparation for the election. Among the various methods for agitation in the Läänemaa region included the use of schools and school children,¹⁸ a navy automobile decorated with slogans and pictures of Stalin traveling from town to town,¹⁹ and 115 athletes skiing around visiting the various locations across the region.²⁰ In all, 115 agitation points had been established by late December.²¹ A wide variety of groups were to come together for agitation purposes in advance of the election.

The approaching election also brought warnings against interference. In a moment of candor indicating that there were those who did not approve of the Soviet rule, *Sovjet-Estland* promised harsh action against the class enemies. "The election is a matter of the working people's definitive triumph. Therefore, one cannot overlook all of the hostile elements working against them by all means. One must strengthen vigilance against class enemies. All sabotage attempts must be stopped in its track."²² In taking such stark tones, however, the propaganda indicated that not all members of society were accepting of the new Soviet order.

Combined with the election campaign was the education of the population of the government structure of the Soviet Union and the role of the Stalin Constitution. The Soviet ideology was enshrined within the so-called Stalin Constitution, which had been approved in 1935. Commemorating the anniversary of the Stalin Constitution, *Sovjet-Estland* described it the following way in a 6 December article:

¹⁶ "Agitpunkterna likvideras icke," *Sovjet-Estland*, 24 January 1941, p. 1.

¹⁷ "Hela det arbetande folket med i valkampanjen!" *Sovjet-Estland*, 21 November 1940, p. 1. Translated from Swedish: Bäraren av makten i ett socialistisk land äro landets och stadens arbetande folkets deputerade. Dessa äro representanter valda av det arbetande folket ur dessas egna kretsar. Alltså är den högsta makten folkets egen. Men för att kunna utnyttja denna rätt, måste man skapa ett tillräckligt hög politiskt medvetande.

¹⁸ "Valkampanjen untidgar sid i Läänemaa," *Sovjet-Estland*, 12 December 1940, p. 2.

¹⁹ "Rörlig agitationpunkt i Läänemaa," *Sovjet-Estland*, 19 December 1940, p. 2.

²⁰ "Läänemaa idrottsmän i valagitionen, 1000-kilometers agitationstur," *Sovjet-Estland*, 9 January 1941, p. 2.

²¹ "I Läänemaa 115 agitationpunkter," *Sovjet-Estland*, 28 December 1940, p. 2.

²² "Hela det arbetande folket med i valkampanjen!" *Sovjet-Estland*, 21 November 1940, p. 1. Translated from Swedish: Valen gälla det arbetande folkets slutgiltiga seger. Därför får man ej förbise alla de fientliga element, som med alla medel motarbeta dem. Man måste förstärka vaksamheten mot klassfienderna. Alla sabotageförsök måste dödas i sin linda.

The new constitution defines the results of socialism's historic triumphs... The USSR's constitution rests upon the principles of socialism. It fortifies all property that belongs to the society; it liquidates exploited classes, work shortages, and misery... The Stalin Constitution demonstrates no divergence, but rather gives all the same political rights, the same democratic freedom independent of gender, nation, education, or age.²³

The new political order was enshrined in the constitution and was essential for the new voters to learn. According to the propaganda, the new Soviet citizens were vital to the progress of the Soviet Union.

Along with the generics of the Soviet political structure, the individual candidates being put up for election by the Bolsheviks were listed in the newspaper, although promotion and agitation of the election was present before any candidates were named. An article appeared under the banner headline "All Estonian-Swedes to the election!" describing the process of the upcoming election and the type of people that could be candidates:

These candidates are members of the working people, they are nominated at official meetings by the people themselves. Here there are all sorts of workers and intelligentsia, farmers and party members. With one word: representatives for all who with fervor and rapture participate in the new society's development.²⁴

The following week, 19 December, the candidates for the Soviet High Council were named in *Sovjet-Estland*, introduced with short biographies. The 28 December issue's front page was devoted almost entirely to presenting the candidate Johannes Vares. The election also brought Neeme Ruus (who spoke in Swedish)²⁵ and August Jakobson²⁶ to the ethnic Swedish areas. However, despite the Bolsheviks' propaganda of being representative of the people and their commitment towards the Estonian-Swedes, there were no ethnic Swedes nominated for election.

²³ "Den 5 december – Konstitutionens årsdag," *Sovjet-Estland*, 6 December 1940, p. 1. Translated from Swedish: Den nya konstitutionen fixerar resultaten av socialismens historiska segrar... SSSRs konstitution vilar på socialismens principer. Den befäster all egendom som tillhörande samhället, den likviderar exploaterande klasser, arbetsbrist och elände... Den stalinska konstitutionen visar inga avvikelser, utan ger alla samma politiska rättigheter, samma demokratiska frihet oberoende av kön, nation, bildning och ålder.

²⁴ "Kandidater till Översta Rådet uppställdes," *Sovjet-Estland*, 12 December 1940, p. 1. Translated from Swedish: Dessa kandidater äro medlemmar av det arbetande folket, de äro uppställda på offentliga sammanträden av folket självt. Här finns det slagarbetare och intelligens, jordbrukare och partimedlemmar. Med ett ord: representanter för alla som med iver och hänförelse delta i det nya samhällets uppbyggande.

²⁵ "Kamrat Neeme Ruus bland estlandssvenskarna," *Sovjet-Estland*, 9 January 1941, pp. 1-2.

²⁶ "Med kandidaten kamrat A. Jakobson på Vormsö," *Sovjet-Estland*, 16 January 1941, p. 2.

The results of the election were published in the 16 January issue, with a translation of the 14 January lead article from *Pravda*. The election was depicted as a huge victory for the friendship of Stalin and as support from the people for the new Soviet order. It is hardly surprising that the Bolsheviks received almost 100 percent of the vote – those who received other votes were never named. Articles were published with specific regards to the Estonian-Swedes, marking the large voter turnout – 98 percent for Noarootsi, 99.3 percent for Riguldi, and 99 percent for Vormsi – although never mentioning the actual election results.²⁷ On Vormsi, it was noted that the elderly were transported to the election locations, and election officials visited those too sick to travel, “so that all would have the possibility to exercise their right to vote.”²⁸ The election results also enabled the editors to attempt to instill an appearance of community-wide support among the Estonian-Swedes, in an attempt to isolate those with dissenting opinions. The newspaper wrote:

The above indicated election results are the highest possible that one can think of, and they show that the candidate put up, comrade Vares and comrade Jakobson, have the Estonian-Swedes’ complete confidence. The Swedes knew that through this election they elected men to the governing council, men who are free from all chauvinistic oppressive ideas, men who come to treat the Estonian-Swedes’ with justice and give them the same rights as all the other nations in Soviet Estonia.²⁹

The Bolsheviks were linked to the freedom of the Estonian-Swedes from oppression of previous regimes.

Sovjet-Estland’s role in the political education culminated in the Party Congress, with extensive coverage running for four issues, beginning 6 February and ending 27 February. This coverage included expanding the newspaper from the typical four pages to six pages for the 20 and 27 February issues in order to print a translation of comrade Säre’s statement and the various resolutions.

²⁷ “Estlandssvenskarna röstade enhälligt,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 16 January 1941, p. 1.

²⁸ “Valen på Vormsö,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 16 January 1941, p. 2. Translated from Swedish: så att alla skulle ha möjlighet att använda sin rösträtt.

²⁹ “Estlandssvenskarna röstade enhälligt,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 16 January 1941, p. 1. Translated from Swedish: Här ovan angivna valresultat äro de högsta möjliga, som man kan tänka sig och de visa att de uppställda kandidaterna, kamrat Vares och kamrat Jakobson, fullständigt äga estlandssvenskarnas förtroende. Svenskarna visste att genom detta val valde de in män vid riksstyret, män som äro fria från alla schauvinistiska förtryckningsidéer, män som komma att behandla estlandssvenskarna rättvist och ge dem lika stora rättigheter, som alla andra nationer ha i Sovjet-Estland.

As previously stated, one of the longer lasting results of the propaganda and agitation campaign leading up to the election was the establishment of agitation points throughout the region, which were then kept in place following the election. Another of the other lasting results was the establishment and continuation of study groups. In order to continue the political education of the people – besides the regular ideological content which continue throughout *Sovjet-Estland* – study groups were formed. Various study groups were organized in which to learn the new ideology. Teachers regularly met at Birkas to better prepare themselves for instructing in the classroom.

Interestingly, a 4 January article admits to weaknesses of the political enlightenment of the Estonian-Swedes in Noarrootsi, stating the it was moving “sluggish” in its first six months. The article blamed the slow pace on the lack of suitable leaders within the community. Ironically, the article continues by describing a meeting held at the Birkas school which seemed to suggest that the only languages used were Russian and Estonian.³⁰ However, even by May, “suitable” leaders had still not been established within the Estonian-Swedish community. A Central Committee meeting found the political work among the people to be unsatisfactory and unbearable. The committee’s report stated that individuals friendly to the Soviet Union from within the Swedish-speaking community needed to be identified and coordinated.³¹

Such accounts indicates a failure of the propaganda campaign – and the main purpose of *Sovjet-Estland* – among the Estonian-Swedes. A failure to convince the population on an ideological level would domino into a rejection of all aspects of the Soviet society. In the Estonian-Swedish case, this translated to increasing thoughts of emigration, as shall be demonstrated in later chapters.

Images of Lenin, Stalin, and the Red Army

Scholars have noted the importance of images in Soviet propaganda, the cult of Lenin, the deification of Stalin, and the significance of the image of the Red Army. This imagery began during the Russian Revolution, continuing and evolving in the time since. Martin Ebon writes that this imagery served an important function following Lenin’s death. He writes, “Lenin’s personality succeeded in mobilizing a wide range of human

³⁰ “Det politiska upplysningsarbetet på Nuckö,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 4 January 1941, p. 2.

³¹ ERAF [Eesti Riigiarhiivi Filiaal] 1-4-71, *Õa idäaäüéÊi idää ä ÊĪ (á) Yñdiièè Īñiáüé Nãñdiiä*, 36-39. Minutes no. 8 of the Seating of the Central Committee, dated 15, 21, and 22 May 1941.

hopes, frustrations, fears, drives, loves, and hates – funneling all this into a movement which, ultimately, had only one goal: to extend Soviet power in all directions.”³² The Lenin cult that developed following his death had numerous similarities to a religion; Nina Tumarkin links the imagery of Lenin after his death towards that of a religion and the creation of a human-god, citing the training of a number high members of the Communist party in religion and seminary.

The cult of Lenin came into full view following his death on 21 January 1924. However, as Nina Tumarkin states in her book *Lenin Lives! The Lenin Cult in Soviet Russia*, the cult was altered in the coming years away from Lenin and towards Leninism and the interpretation of Leninist ideals by those attempting to shape the Soviet Union towards their own ideals.³³ Most marked in this shaping of Leninism was Stalin, who increasingly became linked to Lenin. The strong presence of Lenin, as well as Stalin, was in a large sense to promote a sense stability in the Soviet Union. According to Martin Ebon:

Much as a monarch represents ceremonial continuity, the Lenin cult provides an image of stability. And while ritual references to Lenin, and quotations from his writings, have become less frequent in speeches and public documents, the term ‘Leninist’ provides a reassuring stamp of legitimacy.”³⁴

The Lenin legitimacy was a claim that even *Sovjet-Estland* would employ, as symbolizing the strengths of the Soviet system. While some may link this image of stability to a continuity of the Russian tsars, David L. Hoffmann states that in the case with Stalin, an increasing image of Stalin as a fatherfigure for the Soviet Union beginning in the 1930s differentiates the Soviet case from the tsars.³⁵

Jeffrey Brooks, in his book *Thank You, Comrade Stalin!: Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War*, chronicles the progression of the Soviet media in relation to the almost-deification of Stalin. Through a tight control of the media, the image of Stalin was able to be shaped in order to strengthen his power and control, to claim successes as

³² Martin Ebon, *The Soviet Propaganda Machine* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1987), 22-23.

³³ Nina Tumarkin, *Lenin Lives! The Lenin Cult in Soviet Russia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983). See also Nina Tumarkin, “Religion, Bolshevism, and the Origins of the Lenin Cult,” *Russian Review* 40 (January 1981): 35-46.

³⁴ Ebon, 27.

³⁵ David L. Hoffmann, *Stalinist Values: The Cultural Norms of Soviet Modernity, 1917-1941* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 155-159.

his own and failures as the work of enemies. The growing image of Stalin was the result of a tightly controlled propaganda campaign centered on the media.³⁶

In researching *Sovjet-Estland*, one notices a difference from the scholarly interpretation of other Soviet propaganda. Most notably is the absence of a strong Lenin and Stalin image; this is only done minimally. While there were frequent mentions of Stalin, similar to what Brooks describes as thanking for the gifts, the Swedish-language propaganda rarely pictured the founders of the party. Stalin's picture was published three times – in honor of the 23rd Anniversary of the October Revolution, the 1941 elections, and the outbreak of war (accompanying a translation of his 3 July speech).³⁷ Lenin's picture was published only once – in honor of the 17th anniversary of his death.³⁸ This can be seen as a dramatic difference with the Soviet media tradition Brooks describes where the cult of Lenin and the father-image of Stalin were readily apparent in Soviet media.

However, while the images of Stalin and Lenin were minimal, there were periodic mentions of the leaders, occasionally referring to Stalin as “The Great Stalin”³⁹ The cult was not definitively abandoned. While the myth of Lenin and the deification of Stalin were minimal, there are minor examples of these themes being present – perhaps indicating that these themes would be developed and expanded at a later date, once the ideology was more accepted. In promoting the myth of Lenin on the anniversary of his death, the role of Stalin carrying on the work of Lenin is readily apparent. A large portion of the memorial to Lenin has the appearance of being about Stalin. Stalin was described as Lenin's “loyal friend and co-fighter” towards the struggle for communism.⁴⁰ Lenin laid out that path, and Stalin was following that path towards the Soviet's greatness. Although the Soviet structure is clearly linked to Lenin, the article makes it clear that success is only available under the rule of Stalin.

As the newspaper's run continued, the role of Stalin began to slightly increase. It was Stalin's policies, which guided Estonia away from the capitalistic war. It was Stalin's policies, which kept the peace. It was Stalin's constitution, which gave the Estonian-Swedes with equality. His name was increasingly being invoked to represent the benefits

³⁶ Jeffrey Brooks, *Thank You Comrade Stalin!: Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

³⁷ *Sovjet-Estland*, 6 November 1940, p. 1; 4 January 1941, p. 1; 9 July 1941, p. 1.

³⁸ *Sovjet-Estland*, 16 January 1941, p. 1.

³⁹ “De kapitalistiska länderna år 1941,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 9 January 1941, p. 4.

and promises in the ESSR, precisely as Brooks mentions was the case in the Soviet press elsewhere, referring to it as a thanking for the gift.

Other Soviet symbols were presented in *Sovjet-Estland*, most notably the new symbol of the ESSR, which was revealed in the 31 October 1940 issue's front page. The prominent placement of the symbol and the interpretation of its various components were somewhat counter-productive, though. The accompanying article was clearly a translation from Estonian with not a single reference to the Estonian-Swedish minority. Whereas throughout the newspaper the message of inclusion and the Soviet non-discrimination policy was brought to the forefront, the explanation of the new seal of the ESSR stated it symbolized the working Estonian. The article went to great lengths to explain each of the components within the symbol – the hammer and sickle, the red star, the rising sun, encircled by pine and spruce branches on one side and wheat stalks on the other, and completed with a ribbon expressing “Proletariat in all lands unite!” in both Estonian and Russian.⁴¹ However, the role of the Estonian-Swedes was not included in the new symbol of the ESSR, or even referenced in connection with the individual components. How the ethnic Swedes could be represented in the new symbol of the Estonian proletariat was left unsaid.

Images of the Red Army were minimal. Like the images of Lenin and Stalin, photographs of the Red Army were limited, although they became a regular feature of the newspaper following the German declaration of war. In the case of the Estonian-Swedes, this could have been intentional; a large portion of the population had been adversely effected by the forced relocations to make way for Soviet military bases, and there was a frequent rumor that all of Vormsi would be evacuated by the military in the near future. Printing photographs of the military could have been seen as reinforcing those rumors and increasing resentment towards the Bolsheviks. However, there were regular mentions of the military and officers were mentioned periodically as participating at various local occasions, particularly on the island of Vormsi, where a number of Red Army soldiers were stationed.

⁴⁰ “Till Lenins minne,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 16 January 1941, p. 1. Translated from Swedish: trogne vän och medkämpe.

⁴¹ “Sovjet-Estlands Socialistiska Republikens vapen,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 31 October 1940, p. 1.

Role of the Soviet Citizen: Holidays and Celebrations

An active role in celebrating the Soviet Union was expected of the new citizens. As Soviet holidays approached, the newspaper provided a background explanation of its significance and historical basis. The next stage was to explain how the people of Estonia would celebrate these new holidays, with articles appearing afterwards explaining how the Estonians, and in some cases the Estonian-Swedes, celebrated these holidays. While on some occasions the celebrations consisted of little more than the schools marking the day, these holidays and celebrations added to the role of the Soviet citizen in understanding the context of the new society.

All of the celebrations had the same intent. They were meant to strengthen the image of the Soviet power, and provide a setting for mass participation in the ritual of the holidays.

They [the Estonian Communist Party's Central Committee and the Estonian Unions' Central Organization] demand the working people to work according to socialist principles, to fulfill their work programs with honor, to raise work productivity, develop out socialist industry, raise our socialist culture, in order to at a quick tempo catch up to the Soviet Union's other free people and develop the socialist society.⁴²

These ideals held by the Bolsheviks were celebrated and expressed through the celebrations and anniversary commemorations, but were to be continually expressed throughout the year.

The first big celebration marked in *Sovjet-Estland* was the 23rd anniversary of the October Revolution. Preparations for the celebration to be held on 7 November began already in the first issue. As the first occasion where Estonia would join the Soviet Union in the celebration, this was a momentous holiday. The relevance of this Soviet holiday for those in Estonia had to be articulated to the new Soviet citizens; the October Revolution 23 years ago enabled Estonia to be freed more recently.

The October Revolution's remembrance festivities are the working people's festival days for the reason of the victory over capitalism, therefore the working people participate in the festivities. All the working

⁴² K. Säre and H. Arbon, "Estlands kommunistiska (bolschevistiska) Partiets Centralkommitteens och Estniska Fackföreningarnas Centralorganisationens uppdrag," *Sovjet-Estland*, 17 October 1940, p. 1. Translated from Swedish: De uppfordra det arbetande folk att arbeta socialistiskt, att fylla med ära sina arbetsprogram, höja arbetsproduktiviteten, utveckla vår socialistiska industri, höja vår socialistiska kultur, för att i raskt tempo hinna fatt den stora Sovjet-Unionens andra fria folk och uppbygga det socialistiska samhället.

people's groups, workers, farmers, and the intelligentsia participate in it without exception and with great delight.⁴³

Not only did the article provide the background to the celebrations, but stated that participation was mandatory across all sectors of society. The specifics provided in the article, however, give evidence to the article being a translation from Estonian. The article states that committees preparing celebrations must turn in their reports by 12 October at the latest – five days prior to the newspaper's arrival.

The fourth issue's arrival coincided with the anniversary, carrying the banner "Long Live the October Revolution's 23rd Anniversary!" Attempting to tie the October Revolution in the history of the Soviet Union to the arrival of the Soviets in Estonia, the headline proclaimed "October's triumph is our triumph" besides a picture of Comrade Stalin – the first picture of Stalin to appear in the newspaper. The article sought to link the workers' of Estonia's freedom from capitalism much as the October Revolution had freed the people of Russia. It proclaimed that Estonian workers had been prepared in 1917 along with the Russian workers to join in the revolution, but their efforts were hampered by the German occupation followed by the tyrannical Estonian bourgeois government:

The greater is our delight now after 23 years, to be able to stride together with the Soviet people's happy family, since October's triumph guaranteed even our triumph over capitalism's power on 21 June. It was the Soviet Union's peace politics and the triumphant Red Army that already a year ago saved us from the encounter of the tumult of war, securing us peace.⁴⁴

The Soviet Union was the saviors of all of Estonia, and the path towards socialism was depicted as inevitable – not as an act of aggression, but rather as an act of peace by preventing Estonia from being drawn into the war. The event was followed up afterwards, such as the translated publication of Karl Säre's 5 November speech.⁴⁵

While the promotion of the new Soviet holidays are significant, so too is the lack of previous holidays once celebrated by the Estonian-Swedes. In *Kustbon*, the occasion of

⁴³ "Den Stora Oktoberrevolutionens festliga 23-årsdag," *Sovjet-Estland*, 17 October 1940, p. 2. Translated from Swedish: Oktoberrevolutionens minnesfestligheterna äro det arbetande folkets festdagar med anledning av segern över kapitalismen, därför begår det arbetande folket dem med stor festlighet. Alla arbetande folkslager, arbetare, bönder och intelligensen deltaga i den undantagslöst och med stor glädje.

⁴⁴ "Oktobers seger är vår seger," *Sovjet-Estland*, 6 November 1940, p. 1. Translated from Swedish: Dess större är vår glädje nu efter 23 år, att få skrida tillsammans med Sovjetfolkens lyckliga familj, eftersom Oktobers seger garanterade även vår seger över kapitalismens våld den 21 juni. Det var SovjetUnions fredspolitik och den segerrika Röda Armén som redan för ett år sedan räddade oss från att råka i krigstumultet, tillförsäkrade oss fred.

⁴⁵ Karl Säre, "ESSR på väg till socialismens uppbyggande," *Sovjet-Estland*, 14 November 1940, pp. 1-2.

Christmas and New Years offered the editors to reflect on the past year and to express their hopes for the year to come. Religion had been tightly intertwined in these reflections, periodically written by clergy in the community. In *Sovjet-Estland*, the absence of religion was replaced by ideology.⁴⁶ There was no marking of Christmas in the Soviet-produced newspaper, although an editor's note in the first issue of the new year expressed: "The editors wish all *Sovjet-Estland* readers a good and successful new year in our wide socialistic work-field."⁴⁷ The notice also announced the change in format of the newspaper to a larger sized page.⁴⁸

The new year also provided the editors of *Sovjet-Estland* to reflect on the year to come. In contrast to the difficulties all around, the Soviet Union was presented as a land of opportunity and peace, with economic development and a bright future in the year to come.⁴⁹ The following week, reflections on the year to come were given for the capitalistic countries. The picture was bleak for the capitalistic lands as a result of the war.⁵⁰

It wasn't until the end of January that an article appeared about the grim previous year that Sweden had faced. This article also marks one of the only references made to Christmas (written in quotation marks). The article, written by "H.L." began:

Ordinarily the Swedish pastors already a few months before "Christmas" do an appeal to everyone to carefully prepare themselves for the reception of the new year. A rosy optimism, which always appears before Christmas, flows all through the columns in the newspapers and publishing houses tempt buyers with all sorts of news – from trifling brochures about Queen Kristina's love adventures to pamphlets on the rest of the old Swedes. This year, one had little reason for Christmas optimism. But who dares ignore traditions!⁵¹

⁴⁶ Religion in *Sovjet-Estland* will be covered more extensively in the next chapter.

⁴⁷ *Sovjet-Estland*, 4 January 1941, p. 3. Translated from Swedish: Redaktionen tillönskar alla "Sovjet-Estlands" läsare ett gott och lyckosamt nytt år på vårt vida socialitiska arbetsfält.

⁴⁸ The larger format from a tabloid-sized page to a broadsheet-sized page can be seen as completing a goal the editors of *Kustbon* had hoped to achieve, as articulated in the 2 May 1930 issue, which printed such an enlarged edition for a single issue. Whether this enlarged broadsheet-sized format was a response to this previous desire or merely a coincidence cannot be determined. Unlike *Kustbon*, the economic viability of *Sovjet-Estland* was secondary to the propaganda value of the newspaper, enabling the editors to maintain the larger broadsheet format.

⁴⁹ "SSSR och de kapitalistiska staterna på tröskeln till år 1941," *Sovjet-Estland*, 4 January 1941, p. 3.

⁵⁰ "De kapitalistiska länderna år 1941," *Sovjet-Estland*, 9 January 1941, p. 4.

⁵¹ H.L. "Sverige på tröskeln till det nya året," *Sovjet-Estland*, 30 January 1941, p. 4. Translated from Swedish: Vanligen göra de svenska pastorerna redan ett par månader före "jul" upprop till alla att väl bereda sig för mottagandet av det nya året. En rosig optimism, som alltid inställer sig före jul, flyter längs alla spalter i tidningarna och bokförlagen locka köparna med alla broschyrer om drottning Kristinas

The article continues as a sharp criticism of the past year in Sweden, as the economy worsened (likely due to the effects of the war all around them, although the war was never mentioned in the article). The year in review was certainly not presented with optimism for the year to come in the capitalistic Sweden.

Other celebrations marked throughout the year included the 22nd anniversary of the Communist International on 2 March,⁵² International Women's Day on 8 March,⁵³ the International Proletariats' Day on 1 May,⁵⁴ and Bolshevik Press Day on 5 May.⁵⁵ The final big celebration marked in *Sovjet-Estland* was to be the one-year anniversary of the arrival of the Bolsheviks to power in Estonia, 21 June. The difference in the reporting around the 21 June celebrations, however, was the unexpected declaration of war by Germany on 22 June. Whereas previous celebrations typically included a follow-up article, the arrival of the war pushed of any review of the 21 June celebrations in the issues that followed.

Historical Comparisons

One of the most common methods in mentioning the future role of the Estonian-Swedes within the Soviet system was to draw on their history of poor treatment during the Tsarist-Russian and independent Estonian periods. It can be argued that this was an effective comparison – Estonian-Swedish historian Viktor Aman writes that the ethnic Swedish minority in Estonia (as a group) had never been treated so well as during the Soviet occupation.⁵⁶

In targeting the Estonian-Swedes, the ideological argument was often one of being saved by the Soviets. As the argument went, without the Soviet's arrival, the Estonian-Swedes would still be poor and oppressed under the capitalistic Estonian government's nationalistic policies. In contrast, *Sovjet-Estland* brought to the fore specific events and

kärleksäventyr till traktater om resterna från gammalsvenskan. Dett år hade man föga orsak till juloptimism. Men vem törs förbigå traditionerna!

⁵² "Kommunistiska Internationalens XXII årsdag," *Sovjet-Estland*, 6 March 1941, p. 3.

⁵³ "Förberedelser för firandet av den Internationella Kvinnodagen," *Sovjet-Estland*, 6 March 1941, p. 1. "Kvinnodagen firades på Vormsö," *Sovjet-Estland*, 13 March 1941, p. 1. "Den Internationella Kommunistiska Kvinnodagen," *Sovjet-Estland*, 13 March 1941, p. 3.

⁵⁴ "Första maj som det internationella proletariats dag," *Sovjet-Estland*, 17 April 1941, p. 3. See also "1:a maj – det internationella proletariats solidaritetsdag," *Sovjet-Estland*, 29 April 1941, pp. 1, 3.

⁵⁵ "Den bolsjevistiska pressens dag," *Sovjet-Estland*, 8 May 1941, p. 1.

⁵⁶ Viktor Aman, "Estlandssvenskarna Under Andra Världskriget och Överflyttningen Till Sverige," in *En Bok om Estlands svenskar* (Stockholm: Föreningen Svenska Odlingens Vänner, 1961), 196.

historical moments to highlight the differences in ideology. A late November article proclaimed, “Soviet order was Estonian’s salvation. With it opened wide views for the future for Estonia’s economical and cultural development.”⁵⁷ However, *Sovjet-Estland* would later distinguish between a salvation of Estonia and the more directed salvation of the Estonian-Swedes, drawing an ethnic argument in addition to the ideological argument.

Historical comparisons were invoked in the coverage of the election. In addition to being the first government to offer Swedish-language voting materials and extensive propaganda campaigns, *Sovjet-Estland* attempted to portray the election as a unity of the people against past oppression. A January article stated: “By us Swedes voting with comrade Vares and comrade Jakobson, we demonstrate our solidarity with the new regime, which has already given us culturally more under this short period than the old regime did in twenty years.”⁵⁸ The solidarity the Bolsheviks were seeking in this argument was not a completely ideological solidarity, but largely based on ethnic grounds, uniting against the previous oppression and stating their approval of the Soviet policies towards minorities.

The majority of cases drawing on historical standpoints concerned minority rights. Articles could heavily focus on the oppression of minorities by the Estonian regime. Less invoked was the argument of oppression from tsarist Russia, although on a few occasions, this too was used. A 24 January front-page article focused on the cultural rights of the Estonian-Swedes, largely centered on a historical comparison. The article basically argues that the ethnic group went from Russification under the tsarist Russian rule to Estonianization under the bourgeois independent Estonian rule. The article asked if the bourgeois Estonians had handled the minority problem in a humanitarian and successful manner:

We must at once answer that Estonia, so long as the capitalistic domination was prevalent, not much in that respect differentiated itself from the old Tsarist Russia. We principally desire here to only examine the Swedish minority’s cultural rights in the so-called “free Estonia.” The henchmen for the old system wanted to make it known, that the Swedes in

⁵⁷ “Medel av stor betydelse som använts inom vårt politiska och ekonomiska liv,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 28 November 1940, p. 1. Translated from Swedish: Sovjet-ordning blev Estlands räddning. Med den öppnades vida vyer för framtiden för Estlands ekonomiska och kulturella utveckling.

⁵⁸ “Vad den socialistiska regeringen gett Estlands svenskar,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 4 January 1941, p. 1. Translated from Swedish: Genom att vi svenskar rösta med kamrat Vares och kamrat Jakobson, visa vi oss solidariska med den nya regimen, som redan gett oss kulturellt mer under denna korts tid än den gamla regimen under tjugo år..

Estonia were a popular minority, and therefore pretended that the minority in question was heavily privileged.⁵⁹

But the promotion of minority rights in bourgeois Estonia were mostly a façade, according to the propaganda. Minority rights were heavily drawn upon in the article. As described in Chapter 1, there were numerous examples of Estonianization of the ethnic Swedes, particularly in the 1930s. The Soviets were attempting to foster and shape this disregard by the Estonian government into resentment of the old system in order to portray themselves and their policies on a better, more supportive light. The article continues:

There was surely also a certain truth in the assertion that the Swedes were perhaps more popular than any other minority, but notwithstanding that, even the Estonian-Swedes were manipulated in many respects like second class citizens. One could not avoid feeling like that.⁶⁰

The article takes an interesting position, by claiming that while the group was arguably the most favourable of the minorities in Estonia, they were still treated poorly. In describing the ethnic Swedes as having been treated as second-class citizens, the Soviet policy of equality could be described as the salvation of the ethnic group.

It was, as it has been made evident, there was not much consideration by the capitalist government about the Swedish minority's cultural rights. The Swedish cultural friends looked with anxiety towards the future. But then, in the right time, can salvation through the events on 21 June 1940.⁶¹

The arrival of the Soviets was portrayed as the saving grace for the Estonian-Swedes. Only under the Soviet umbrella could the Estonian-Swedish identity be fostered. While they had been previously oppressed, Soviet ideology of equality wanted to raise the group

⁵⁹ "Estlandssvenskarnas kulturella rättigheter förr och nu," *Sovjet-Estland*, 24 January 1941, p. 1. Translated from Swedish: Vi måste genast svara att Estland, så länge det kapitalistiska väldet här var det förhärskande, icke mycket i detta avseende skilde sig från det gamla Tsarrysland. Vi vilja här huvudsakligen endast granska den svenska folkminoritetens kulturella rättigheter i det s.k. "fria Estland." Hantlangarna för det gamla systemet ville göra gällande, att svenskarna i Estland voro en omtyckt minoritet och därför lät man påskina, att minoriteten i fråga var mycket gynnad.

⁶⁰ "Estlandssvenskarnas kulturella rättigheter förr och nu," *Sovjet-Estland*, 24 January 1941, p. 1. Translated from Swedish: Det låg ju också en viss sanning i påståendet, att svenskarna kanske voro mer omtyckta än någon annan minoritet, men det oaktat, behandlades även estlandssvenskarna i flera avseenden såsom andra klassens medborgare. Man kunde icke undgå att känna det så.

⁶¹ "Estlandssvenskarnas kulturella rättigheter förr och nu," *Sovjet-Estland*, 24 January 1941, p. 1. Translated from Swedish: Det var, som av det sagde framgår, icke mycket bevänt med kapitalistregimens omtanke om den svenska minoritetens kulturella rättigheter. De svenska kulturvännerna sågo med oro framtiden an. Men så kom i rätta tiden räddningen genom händelserna den 21 juni 1940.

up; the Estonian-Swedes were to be considered equals to all other ethnic groups across the Soviet Union.

To a large extent, this was a valid argument. As a group, the Estonian-Swedes were treated far better by the Soviets than by previous governments, which even Aman – an Estonian-Swede who later emigrated to Sweden – admits to. In this instance, the Soviets were drawing from history to shape the reaction, as opposed to rewriting the history. There was sufficient examples and existing bitterness for the Soviets to draw from. The editors of *Sovjet-Estland* were effective in their historical understanding and manipulation in this case.

However, this was not always the case. In a later article, the Soviets attempted to link the ethnic Estonians and the ethnic Swedes in a common struggle against the Baltic Germans. This understanding, however, failed to take the Independent Estonian period into account and the common problems the ethnic Swedes and the Baltic Germans shared in facing Estonianization.⁶² Certainly, the Baltic Germans could have been labeled as class enemies – on the opposite economic spectrum from the ethnic Swedes. However, the interwar period was marked by increased cooperation between the Baltic Germans and the ethnic Swedes, eventually leading to political cooperation – a sign that previous oppression had been forgiven (or at least disregarded) in the face of more current issues, namely the threats to their culture by the ethnic Estonians.

The linking of the ethnic Estonians and the Estonian-Swedes against the Baltic Germans was a clear indication of the shifting ideology against Germany. *Sovjet-Estland* attempted to link oppression by the Baltic Germans to thoughts of future oppression under Nazi Germany. By linking the Estonians and the ethnic Swedes, it was hoped that they would join together in rising up against their common enemy – the Germans. In both cases, though, the common theme was a history of oppression based on ethnicity and class identification.

There were numerous methods to introduce the Soviet ideology to the Estonian-Swedish minority. *Sovjet-Estland* went to great lengths to make the ideology and basic Soviet history available to the ethnic Swedes through series of articles (such as “What is

⁶² See, for example, Mikko Ketola, *The Nationality Question in the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church, 1918-1939* (Helsinki: Finnish Society of Church History, 2000).

socialism”) to providing an overview of the Soviet political structure. The editors clearly attempted to draw the group into the society, to make them feel like they were active members, providing them the references and opportunities to join in celebrations. And to add additional justification, the newspaper drew in a historical comparison – largely justified in its picture – of previous oppression. Such attention had never been previously provided to the ethnic Swedes. Through the actions of the newspaper, the population was hoped to be drawn into the new political life, an important step in the full conversion of society to socialism.

Chapter 4: The Sovietization of Society

*Organizing and applying itself of experiences from all the older Soviet republics, likewise with energy of our young Soviet republic Bolsheviks, the Founding of council institutions in Estonia is taking place after 21 June, securing the socialistic regime and grandiose development work, all with one goal – to catch up to the older federate republics in the shortest possible time.*¹

The first year of Soviet occupation brought about a significant amount of rapid change to Estonia. Effected were all areas of life, with dramatic changes not only in the political landscape, but in the economic, educational, and social landscapes as well. The changes were made with the long-term intention that the socialistic communism would remain a fixture in Estonia, bringing the land closer within the Soviet fold. The former bourgeois system needed to be completely replaced, following the Soviet model of tight, centralized control.

These changes involved a rapid change throughout society. The Soviet policies were implemented at an unprecedented speed, while attempting to keep the appearance that the progress was a natural evolution of the working people's desires. Having been freed from the bourgeois capitalists, the propaganda went, the workers were finally able to succeed and prosper, and the Soviet experience showed the best path to proceed along. This was frequently accomplished by drawing sharp historical connections of oppression and abuse. Across all aspects of life in the ESSR – agriculture, fishing, education, and religion, to name a few – changes were directly felt.²

Arnold J. Toynbee argues that the Russian Revolution and the communist regime can be placed within a larger context of Russian history, connecting the Russian Revolution to Peter the Great. He argues that the Revolution “can be interpreted as Russia's device for catching up, technologically, with Germany and with Russia's other

¹ Neeme Ruus, “Låt oss bli medvetna uppbyggare av socialismen under det nya året,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 4 January 1941, p. 2. Translated from Swedish: Organiserade och användade sig av erfarenheter från alla äldre Sovjets republiker, likaså med energi av vår unga Sovjetrepubliks bolsjevikers försiggår efter den 21 juni grundandet av rådsinstitutioner i Estland, tryggandet av den socialistiska regimen och ett mäktigt uppbyggningsarbete, allt med ett mål – att hinna efter de äldre förbundsrepublikerna på kortaste möjliga tid.

² Industrialization was not a major topic covered in *Sovjet-Estland*, and therefore is not covered in depth in this thesis. Coverage focused more intensively on agriculture and fishing, as these areas were the main economic factors for the Estonian-Swedes.

western neighbours,”³ making industrialization and modernization key components of Sovietization.⁴ This exemplifies the rapid modernization of Russia first undertaken by Peter the Great, and continued by the Bolsheviks. “On this interpretation of Russian history, Lenin’s mission has been a continuation of Peter’s mission, and the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 was a resumption of the revolution that had been started by Peter at the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.”⁵ This same interpretation can be applied in the acquired territories during the Second World War, with bringing the new regions to the same level as in Soviet Russia economically and ideologically. The propaganda in *Sovjet-Estland* regularly made reference to the improved economy, creation of new jobs, and improved technology, which according to the propaganda was only available under the communist system.

Many of these areas of change – agriculture, fishing, education, and religion – were the most negatively received by the Estonian-Swedes. Arguably, these areas had the closest links to their national identity. The Estonian-Swedes were largely farmers and fishermen, and as a result were largely impacted by the changes implemented by the Soviets in these two areas specifically. Drastic alterations could possibly be raised as factors to explain the dramatic opposition to the Bolsheviks. While *Sovjet-Estland* attempted to propose a new Estonian-Swedish identity based on Soviet ideology (as described in Chapter 2), this new identity had little to do with areas that they had previously centered their identity. News of changes in these areas, were included as changes in policy and regular news items, as opposed to a change in their identity.

In some cases, the changes were passed along through official notices in the newspaper, as opposed to articles focusing on the changes. Government notifications were regularly translated and printed, sometimes reflecting local Estonian changes, while other times reflecting changes from higher up in the USSR structure. In some cases, articles complimented government notifications, as was the case with the change in monetary currency in the 28 November 1940 issue.⁶ The notice provided information of

³ Arnold J. Toynbee, “Looking Back Fifty Years,” in *The Impact of the Russian Revolution*, Arnold J. Toynbee et.al. (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 7.

⁴ For an overview of the term ‘Sovietization,’ see Olaf Mertelsmann, “Introduction” in *The Sovietization of the Baltic States 1940-1956*, ed. Olaf Mertelsmann (Tartu: Kleio, 2003), 9-15.

⁵ Toynbee, 7.

⁶ The change in currency can also be reflected in the price of *Sovjet-Estland*. From the start of publication until 21 November 1940, the price was listed as 5 cents. With the change in monetary currency (at a rate of 1 crown equaling 1 rubel 2 kopek) the newspaper published the price as both 8 kopeks and an increase to 6

the change in a straight-forward manner. The accompanying article stated that the Soviet Union's currency was the most stable. "This currency gives us the possibility to create an invincible state, it is a fixed guarantee for the working people's future prosperity."⁷ The notice and the article served to compliment and reinforce each other, although in other cases, notices stood on their own without complimentary articles. While these notifications were usually minimal in quantity, the 24 April 1941 issue contained almost two and a half pages of notifications. The notifications in that issue all pertained to agriculture and the obligatory selling of grain, wool, potatoes, meat, milk, and butter to the state.⁸

The role of the workers was central in the Soviet Union. The Soviet structure was designed to emphasize the working people's liberation. Workers had a set position in the Soviet society, and as a result of their performance in that position, were entitled to the benefits of the Soviet system. It was a *quid pro quo* society. On several occasions, the role of the worker in the ESSR was described in *Sovjet-Estland*. Along with the promises of work and news of various competitions between workers in similar industries, access to vacations and rest were mentioned in *Sovjet-Estland*. The Soviet system brought access to sanitariums and rest homes.⁹ Hard work was to be rewarded; it was the backbone of Soviet society. According to a 12 December article, "The new socialist society did not become a paradise for the lazy. Everyone who eats must work."¹⁰ In order to benefit from the new Soviet society, the people must be participating workers. This was explained as the elimination of slave labor and the end of the exploitation of the working people. The laziness that had been pervasive under the capitalist system would not be tolerated under the communist system, and those that did not work their land would have it taken away.

cents. Both prices were printed until the end of the year, when only the price in kopeks was listed. (The 16 January 1941 issue price was 30 kopeks because it included a calendar.) There was another price increase beginning on 3 April 1941 when the price was raised to 10 kopeks.

⁷ "Medel av stor betydelse som använts inom vårt politiska och ekonomiska liv," *Sovjet-Estland*, 28 November 1940, p. 1. Translated from Swedish: Denna valuta ger oss möjlighet att skapa ett oöverbanneligt rike, den är en fast garanti för det arbetande folkets framtida välgång.

⁸ *Sovjet-Estland*, 24 April 1941, pp. 1-3.

⁹ See for example, "5 millioner rubel till permission för gruvarbetare," *Sovjet-Estland*, 6 February 1941, p. 3.

¹⁰ "Förändrad uppfattning," *Sovjet-Estland*, 12 December 1940, p. 2. Translated from Swedish: Det nya socialistiska samhället blev inget paradiset för latmaskar. Alla som äta, måste arbeta.

The Changing Landscape

Perhaps one of the biggest effects on the population – ethnic Estonian and ethnic Swedish alike – was the land reforms. Under the Soviet system, all land over 30 hectares was nationalized. Land was given to those without, although at a maximum of 12 hectares. All bank accounts over 800 Estonian crowns became state property. Large industries were also nationalized and boats over 20 tons. Houses larger than 170 square meters were nationalized in November. Priests and business-owners were heavily taxed and had to pay triple the amount for rent.¹¹

The land reform was explained beginning with the first issue of *Sovjet-Estland*. In an article detailing the progress of the land reform for Noarootsi (the newspaper incorrectly translated Noarootsi as “Nargö” – the name for Naissaar; this was corrected in a later issue) the pace of the changes was depicted as rapid, with strong dedication of the committee members who were meeting at the parish house, overseeing the local reform. “In Läänemaa, the land reform is carried out in a quick tempo. The work is so pressing and intensive that the committee does not even begrudge themselves a break on the days of rest, but rather the work goes on from morning until late at night.”¹² The committee was charged with dividing up land amongst those seeking land – and taking away from those with larger farms, or those deemed to be bourgeois landowners. The article highlighted the effects of the land reform by citing examples of those that had little or no land previously, and were glad to have received land of their own, thanks to the Bolsheviks. (The article also notes a great interest among the people gathered at the parish house for the arrival of *Sovjet-Estland*.)

The following week, the ideological background of the socialistic land reform was articulated by drawing comparisons to the 1919 land reform. According to the article, the Estonian land reform had given the best land to previous estate holders, generals that had fought for the enslavement of the working people, and to politicians. The working farmers were thus left with either poor quality land or no land at all. This injustice to the working farmers was sought to be overturned by the socialists.

¹¹ Viktor Aman, “Estlandssvenskarna Under Andra Världskriget och Överflyttningen Till Sverige” in *En Bok om Estlands svenskar* (Stockholm: Föreningen Svenska Odlingens Vänner, 1961), 189.

¹² “Hur försiggår jordutdelning i Nargö,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 17 October 1940, p. 2. Translated from Swedish: I Läänemaa försiggår genomförandet av agrarreformen i raskt tempo. Arbetet är så brådskande och intensivt

Our goal is clear – to wipe out man’s exploitation of other men, to obliterate the possibility that one can be directed to do another’s work. This guarantees a huge success in all areas. The new land reform is one of the more important steps towards the working people’s liberation from the remnants of the capitalistic slavery.¹³

A second article focused on the land reform was printed on the same page, accompanied by photographs of the Noarootsi committee at work and a group of people gathered outside the parish house. *Sovjet-Estland* depicted the committee’s work as being praised by the local farmers:

The quick realization of the land reform delights those requesting land in Läänemaa. One is very pleased with the new farms. Farmers without land and with little land, that up to now dragged themselves through life working for large landowners, now begin to create a new and happier life on their new farms.¹⁴

The article does not mention any of those who lost land, or any additional reasons why one would lose all or part of their land. It was mentioned that on the islands, land was tight, although the committees were able to satisfy almost all requests.

Coverage of the land reform continued in the third issue, when the progress was noted for Noarootsi, Vormsi, and Ruhnu. In Noarootsi, 43 small farms received extra land and 66 new farms were created. The committee sought to allocated cultivatable land for the 30 hectares plots.¹⁵ On Vormsi, where the land was noted as “barren” (*karg*), 363 hectares were calculated for the state land reserve. In the distribution, 86 households added 218 hectares and 46 hectares was given for new farms (the number of new farms was not indicated).¹⁶ On Ruhnu, labeled the most backward portion of all bourgeois Estonia, three new farms were created with land taken from the church – the largest landholder on the island.¹⁷

att kommittén icke ens på vilodagarna får unnan sig en paus, utan arbetet försiggår från morgon till sena kvällen.

¹³ “Den socialistiska agrarreformen – början till ett nytt liv,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 24 October 1940, p. 2. Translated from Swedish: Vårt mål är klart– att utrota människans explotación genom människa, att utplåna möjligheten att några få kan rikta sig på andras arbete. Detta garanterar en jättelik framgång på alla områden. Den nya agrarreformen är en av de viktigaste steg till det arbetande folkets befrielse från det kapitalistiska slaveriets kvarlevor.

¹⁴ “Agrarreformens genomförande i Läänemaa,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 24 October 1940, p. 2. Translated from Swedish: Det snabba genomförandet av agrarreformen glädjer Läänemaa’s jordönskare. Man är mycket nöjd med de nya gårdarna. Lantmän utan jord och med föga jord, som hittills släpade fram sitt liv utsugna av storbönderna, börja nu att skapa ett nytt och gladare liv på de nya gårdarna.

¹⁵ “Agrarreformens genomförande: I Nuckö,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 31 October 1940, p. 2.

¹⁶ A.T., “Agrarreformens genomförande: I Vormsö,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 31 October 1940, p. 2.

¹⁷ “Agrarreformens genomförande: I Runö,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 31 October 1940, p. 2.

A 28 November review of the Vormsi land reform in *Sovjet-Estland* provides slightly different figures. The article indicates that they received 247 requests for additional land and 97 requests for new farms. The large number of requests for new farms can perhaps be attributed to the number of families relocated to Vormsi from the evacuated islands of Pakrite and Osmussaare. Land was taken away from 41 farms (between 5 and 15 hectares were taken from each farm), with 85 farms being given additional land and 9 new farms created. The committee encouraged those whose requests could not be fulfilled to move to the mainland, where land was plentiful. The committee also encouraged farmers to consider forming a kolhos, and according to the article, many were interested in learning more about a kolhos.¹⁸

The land reform undertaken during the Soviet occupation needed to be differentiated from the land reform undertaken by the Estonian government during the Interwar period. The concerted effort needed to distinguish between the land reform of 1919 and the land reform of 1940. The Estonian land reform, the Soviet propaganda asserted, did not help the individual farmers and workers, but rather rewarded those who had fought in the capitalistic war and strengthened the power of the land holders. A 27 February article described the Estonian attempt as the following:

When the capitalistic government, shortly after the first imperialistic world war, came to power in Estonia, a land reform was carried out in the country. The intention of this land reform was to take from the Baltic landowners, who for centuries took the life and marrow out of the working people in the country, and gave the land to the country's own inhabitants. When this land was given out, it became quickly evident that those in power took less regard of the poor farmers' land needs and gave the new farms to those from the class war's domestic officers and the like, who did not even need, or even consider to begin to cultivate the obtained land. The poor, former farmers of the manors, who really had a need for farms once losing their work on the large estates, were later able to buy the land at a high expense from the new estate owners. Such was the capitalistic system's land reform!¹⁹

¹⁸ "Från agrarreformens slutförande på Vormsö," *Sovjet-Estland*, 28 November 1940, p. 2.

¹⁹ "Jordreformen," *Sovjet-Estland*, 27 February 1941, p. 1. Translated from Swedish: Då den kapitalistiska regeringen kort efter det första imperialistiska världskrigets slut kom till makten i Estland, genomfördes en jordreform här i landet. Avsikten med denna jordreform var att ta från de baltiska godsägarna, som under århundraden sugit must och mærg ur den arbetande befolkningen i landet och get sedan jorden åt landets egen befolkning. När sedan jorden utdelades framgick det ganska snart, att de makthavande togo mindre hänsyn till de fattiga lantarbetarnas jordbehov och gävo de nya gårdarna åt från klasskriget hemvändande officrare och till sådana, som inte alls behövde, eller ens tänkte börja bebruka den erhållna jorden. De fattiga f. d. lantarbetarna på godsen, som verkligen voro i behov av gårdar, sedan de mist sina arbetsplatser

The land reform, therefore, not only had a class-based discrimination which kept poor ethnic Estonians in a submissive position in society, but also held an ethnic benefit for the Estonians, keeping the ethnic Swedes in a more submissive economic environment. In contrast, the Soviet land reform was articulated as an equal redistribution to the workers and away from oppressors:

The reform [under the Soviets] was realized in accordance to the principle that the farmers do not need larger farms than what he himself can work with. One would thereby move away from the exploitation of farmers that the largest landowners customarily pursued on a larger or smaller scale.²⁰

It was determined that the size of a farm in which a farmer could cultivate by himself was between 12 and 30 hectares. Under the Soviet system, all land should be cultivated rationally, and included set norms for the number of farm animals (two horses and five cows, as articulated in the article).

Plowing the Soviet Fields

Having established the land reform and its ideological background, coverage in *Sovjet-Estland* shifted to the agricultural industry. There were occasional mentions of collectivization, although in *Sovjet-Estland's* agricultural coverage, this was minimal. Hints at collectivization can be seen in articles about new technology available in other regions and articles on the collective farms of other regions. There were no suggestions that this needed to be or would be done in the ethnic Swedish-populated regions, however, with promises of the protection of private property articulated in the Soviet ideology. The main focus for *Sovjet-Estland* was, therefore, the abolition of the bourgeois system.

The first article devoted to agriculture in Estonia (there were two articles in the 24 October issue focusing on agriculture across the Soviet Union²¹) was in the third issue. Under the headline “The Fall Plowing Cannot Be Put Aside Any Longer!” the article described the socialistic work ethic that was affecting all of Soviet Estonia, but not on the

på storgodsen, fingo senare för dyra pengar köpa jorden av dessa nyblivna gårdsägare. Sådan var det kapitalistiska systemets jordreform!

²⁰ “Jordreformen,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 27 February 1941, p. 1. Translated from Swedish: Denna reform genomfördes enligt den principen, att jordbrukaren inte behöver större gård än vad han själv kan arbeta med. Man ville därmed komma ifrån den exploatering av lantarbetarna, som största jordägarna vanligtvis bedrivit i större eller mindre skala.

²¹ “Socialistiska jordbruket visar sin överlägsenhet,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 24 October 1940, p. 3. “Såning av vintersäd och höstplöjning,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 24 October 1940, p. 3.

farms. The field harvesting and fall plowing was still not complete – sure signs that many of the farmers were still in the bourgeois mentality of slaving for others.

Such a negligence must now disappear. Even the country people must work socialistically, avail all of one's strength and the favorable weather conditions. In Soviet Estonia's farms work must not be put aside for another day... The lazy and idlers have no right to the people's land. Those that do not cultivate their given land properly is not worthy of this land. All autumn fieldwork must be done properly and on time. Only through honorable, energetic, and hard work earns the people their wealth.²²

The bourgeois mentality, the newspaper warned, must disappear. The Soviet Union was depicted as the world's largest and most advanced country in regards to agriculture; their policies and timeline was, therefore, the most effective. Their recommendations were to be followed in order to produce the best results. And if they were not "done properly" the people risked losing their land.

The benefits of Soviet agriculture for those in the ESSR were already demonstrated a couple weeks later when it was reported that the potato market had dramatically been opened – namely across "our homeland – the Soviet Union"²³ (stating it as if the reader needed to be reminded what the "homeland" now referred to). Not only were there increased options for markets, but a higher price was also promised. In a later article, it was expressed that the Soviet system was a guarantee for a successful farm.²⁴

There were certainly attempts in *Sovjet-Estland* in fostering thoughts of collectivization. Collectivization was depicted as a more successful option, with access to state financial support and increased harvests.²⁵ The collective farms also had better farming equipment available to them, such as the use of tractor and horse stations.²⁶

A number of the articles sought to clarify the obligations of the farmers. Similar to the notice that the fall harvesting and plowing were to be completed, a 6 December article

²² "Höstplöjningen får icke uppskjutas längre!" *Sovjet-Estland*, 31 October 1940, p. 2. Translated from Swedish: Ett dylikt slarv måste numera försvinna. Även lantbefolkningen måste arbeta socialistiskt, begagna alla krafter och de gynnsamma väderleksförhållanden. I Sovjet-Estlands jordbruk får intet arbete uppskjutas till morgondagen... Latmasker och dagdrivare hava ingen rättighet till folkets jord. Den som inte odlar den erhållna jorden ordentligt, är icke värdig denna jord. Alla höstliga fältarbeten måste enomföras ordentligt och i rätt tid. Endast genom ärligt, energiskt och duktigt arbete ernår folket sin välstånd

²³ "Större ersättning för potatisen," *Sovjet-Estland*, 21 November 1940, p. 2. Translated from Swedish: ...vårt hemlands– Sovjetunionens...

²⁴ "Sovjetordningen är en garanti för ett framgångsrikt jordbruk," *Sovjet-Estland*, 13 February 1941, p. 2.

²⁵ See, for example, "Såning av vintersäd och höstplöjning," *Sovjet-Estland*, 24 October 1940, p. 3. See also "Lantbefolkningen uppskattar kooperativa rörelsens omdaning," *Sovjet-Estland*, 13 March 1941, p. 1.

²⁶ See, for example, "Många nya traktorsstationer," *Sovjet-Estland*, 6 February 1941, p. 2. See also "Till traktorstationerna även häststationer," *Sovjet-Estland*, 13 March 1941, p. 1.

reminded the farmers of the need to store their equipment inside and to ensure that they were properly maintained and repaired during the winter months. Only this work, the article instructs, will enable the equipment to last longer and be ready for the springtime work.²⁷ For farmers, the end of the fall harvest did not mean the end of work. In a socialistic society, it was expected that the farmer would spend the winter months preparing his farm equipment and making necessary repairs. It was also expected that the farmer would continue to educate himself when not out in the fields.

On 30 January, a workshop was held for area farmers at Birkas, the Swedish-language school located in Noarootsi. Fridolf Isberg, the school's headmaster, extended the invitation to farmers as an opportunity to ask questions concerning agriculture and the transition from the capitalistic to the socialistic system. An article appeared in *Sovjet-Estland* following the seminar, and states that the Noarootsi council clarified for the farmers, what duties they had within the new socialistic society and what work should still be done prior to the spring. In attendance were approximately 50 farmers.²⁸

In continuing the farmers' learning a regular column was published, written by Isberg.²⁹ The column began in January and continued through the majority of the rest of the newspaper's run. The columns sought to educate the farmers on new techniques. Later columns were a question and answer forum. The names of those asking questions were not printed, although one would suppose that the questions were sent in by readers, or possibly were generated by Isberg from conversations with farmers.

When the spring arrived, notices began to appear in the newspaper regarding the obligatory sale by the farmers of agricultural products to the state. The 24 April issue announced the obligatory sale of grain, meat, milk, wool, and potatoes. This sale was regarded in *Sovjet-Estland* as the obligation of farmers in Estonia to help support the greater Soviet system and those people in other regions who were less fortunate in their harvests. The government was depicted as helping the poor households for the bettering of all society.

The obligatory sale takes effect in the state's interest, in the whole of the working people's interest, in the interest of the socialistic development in our country, in the interest of the defense of our country. There is no doubt

²⁷ "Ställ lantbruksredskapen undan i vinterkvarter!" *Sovjet-Estland*, 6 December 1940, p. 2.

²⁸ "Birkas lantmannaskola anordnar jordbruksafton för traktens bönder," 6 February 1941, p. 2.

²⁹ It was not unprecedented for the headmaster to have such a column. There were periodic submissions of a similar purpose published in *Kustbon* by the headmaster.

that all the poor and average farmers, together with all of the working people in the towns and in the countryside receive these regulations with recognition and support them.³⁰

The sale was for the benefit of all, as was all aspects of Soviet society. The following week, *Sovjet-Estland* stated that the sale would raise the living standard for the farmers. They were encouraged to look at the larger picture and see their position in the Soviet society as a whole.³¹

One of the failures in regards to the Läänemaa region, which largely impacted the Estonian-Swedes, was the failure to consider land quality in implementing the land reform. This was recognized by the Central Committee in a May report. The report, which was addressing the high dissatisfaction among the Estonian-Swedes, specifically mentioned the poor land quality on the islands of Saaremaa, Vormsi, Ruhnu, Kihnu, Prangli, and Hiiumaa and the communities of Noarootsi, Riguldi, and Nõva. Lowering the agricultural production norms in these areas was recommended. The Central Committee also wanted to explore the possibilities of reducing or eliminating the debts of all farmers owning more than 5 hectares of land.³² These regions were seen as not being adequately sufficient for the high level of the norms, and the problems as needing immediate attention.

Progressive Sovietization of the Fisheries

The Sovietization process was not an overnight procedure. Rather, it was a gradual change, particularly in the economic and social spheres. It was an ongoing process, although necessarily sped-up in newly acquired territory. Perhaps this change, and the propaganda campaign surrounding it, can best be illustrated in focusing on *Sovjet-Estland's* coverage of the fishing industry. Particularly in regards to the fishing industry (and much more-so than in agriculture), the Sovietization process was gradual, with the propaganda campaign geared to making the development seem to follow the will of the people. The ethnic Swedes were particularly hard-hit with the changes in Soviet policy, as

³⁰ "De obligatoriska försäljningarna till staten är lantbefolknings viktigaste uppgift," *Sovjet-Estland*, 24 April 1941, p. 1. Translated from Swedish: De obligatoriska försäljningarna träda i kraft i statens intressen, i hela det arbetande folkets intressen, i det socialistiska uppbyggandets intressen i vårt land, i försvarsmaktens intressen i vårt land. Det råder inget tvivel om, att alla fattig och medelbönder samt alla arbetande folket i staden och på landet mottaga dessa destämmelser med erkännande samt understöda dem.

³¹ "De obligatoriska försäljningarna höja böndernas levnadsstandard," *Sovjet-Estland*, 29 April 1941, p. 1.

their fishing areas were largely restricted due to military concerns. These policies also had a more practical purpose; by limiting access to boats, the potential for illegal emigration would decrease. This can be seen from the illegal emigrations in November by fishermen from Naissaar.

The 21 November issue announced the creation of a Fisheries Center (in Swedish *Fiskericentralen*; in Estonian *Kalakeskus*) in order to assist the ESSR government in creating a socialistic fishing industry. The Center would also assist in the organization of the fishermen. According to the article, 40 cooperatives had already been formed across Estonia, including 14 around Lake Peipsi, 3 on Saaremaa and Hiiumaa, 3 in Viru, and 1 in Neve. There was also said to be great interest in the formation of cooperatives among others, although the article made no mention of the ethnic Swedish regions (a strong indication that the article was simply translated into Swedish and not prepared specifically for the Estonian-Swedes).³³

The progressive nature of collectivization in the fisheries continued. The following week, it was declared that the government had taken it upon themselves to better the well-being of the fishermen.³⁴ An accompanying article set the early tone to the progression of collectivization coverage in *Sovjet-Estland*.³⁵ A December article presented fishing brigades (*arteller*) as the most suitable form of organization for fishermen.³⁶

The idea of collectivization was furthered in January by describing a visit of several ESSR representatives to “The Red Fishermen” fishing kolhos outside of Leningrad. They not only visited with fishermen, but also went to the villages and visited with families. All of their questions were answered “politely and clearly” (*hövligt och redigt*). Comrade Kurg, one of the representatives, noticed a dramatic improvement in the economy and cultural development within the kolhos, himself having visited fishing camps in Tsarist Russia 23 years prior. “I know very well how the Russian fishers were:

³² ERAF [Eesti Riigiarhiivi Filiaal] 1-4-71, *Õa iõðäëûéÊîîèðà ò ÊÏ (á) Ýñðîíèèè Ìñîáúé Ñâñðîð*. 36-39. Minutes no. 8 of the Seating of the Central Committee, dated 15, 21, and 22 May 1941.

³³ “Fiskeriets Huvudstyrelse har bildats,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 21 November 1940, p. 3.

³⁴ “Fiskindustriens Huvudförvaltning ägnar sig åt förbättring för ESSR-s fiske och fiskare,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 28 November 1940, p. 3.

³⁵ “Kolhoser för fiskare,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 28 November 1940, p. 3.

³⁶ “Artellerna – den mest passande samlingsformen för fiskare,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 19 December 1940, p. 3.

oppressed, ragged, filthy.”³⁷ The change he observed was the mature, energetic people. “They have all that man needs,” he exclaimed.³⁸ The government even provided them with advice and with boats.

The visit provided the newspaper with the opportunity to present the benefits and advantages of forming a kolhos (highlighted by the accompanying photograph of a fisherman with three very large fish and the caption reading: “Is this a good catch?”³⁹). As the article states, “Overall, the visit to ‘The Red Fishermen’ made a magnificent impression. In ten years they have achieved results that are the best proof in this system’s good direction.”⁴⁰ While not directly advocating the creation of fishing kolhoses across the ESSR, the article expands the foundations of the idea and its benefits. The progress was still portrayed as a slowly evolving concept, growing in enthusiasm among the population.

The concept of collectivization was advanced a little more a couple weeks later. A late January article reviewed the study tour for a second time, concluding by stating:

In connection with the reorganization of our fishing sector towards a self-sufficient committee, we conveyed to the Soviet National Fisheries Commissariat an oral petition to supply our fishing industry with needed arrangements and necessary materials (since our plans for the 1941 fishing year do not entail any protracted changes), which are necessary, according to the observations we acquired during our stay in the Soviet fishing civil service department and enterprise.⁴¹

Naturally, the petition received an affirmative response, stating that the fishing industry in Soviet Estonia would receive extraordinary assistance. The article clearly stated that no major changes were planned, although one would guess that “voluntary” formation of such collectives would readily be assisted and promoted.

³⁷ “Besök i en förebildlig fiskarekolhos,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 9 January 1941, p. 2. Translated from Swedish: ... vet jag mycket väl, hurudan den ryske fiskaren var: förtryckt, trasig, smutsig.

³⁸ “Besök i en förebildlig fiskarekolhos,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 9 January 1941, p. 2. Translated from Swedish: De ha allt som människa behöver.

³⁹ “Besök i en förebildlig fiskarekolhos,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 9 January 1941, p. 2. Translated from Swedish: Är det här en god fångst?

⁴⁰ “Besök i en förebildlig fiskarekolhos,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 9 January 1941, p. 2. Translated from Swedish: Överhuvudtaget gjorde besöket i “Den Röde fiskaren” ett storartat intryck. De under tio år vunna resultaten äro det bästa beviset på detta systems goda sidor.

⁴¹ “Fiskeriet på hög nivå i Sovjet,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 24 January 1941, p. 3. Translated from Swedish: I samband med reorganiseringen av vårt fiskerväsen till en självständig styrelse framförde vi till Sovjets Fiskerifolkkommissarie en muntlig bön om att förse våra fiskindustrier med behövliga inrättningar och erforderlig materiel (emedan våra planer för 1941 års fiskeri ej medförde några vidlyftigare förändringar), vilket är nödvändigt, enligt de rön vi tillägnat oss under vår vistelse i Sovjets fiskeriämbetsverk och företag.

The idea of collectivization in the ESSR was growing more firm and more certain. The following week assured readers that collectivization would bring larger incomes for all fishermen, as well as modernization to the entire industry. Among other benefits, the entire village would be put to work, with the women and children doing work on the shores while the fishermen were out at sea. Naturally, these benefits and improvements were said to be possible only after 21 June 1940 with the Bolsheviks coming to power, as the capitalistic Estonian government had held the fishermen in poverty.⁴²

In advancing collectivization, *Sovjet-Estland* focused on the fishing industry in the Soviet Union for inspiration. The newspaper was able to demonstrate the resulting improvements in the rest of society – schools, daycares, sporting facilities.⁴³ The Soviet structure was the best solution for the fishermen, making transitions to the fishing industry in the ESSR increasingly easier to argue, as was the case in a mid-March front-page story. Drawing on historical comparisons, *Sovjet-Estland* attempted to differentiate between the vast possibilities offered in the Soviet structure to oppression and manipulation by the previous bourgeois government.⁴⁴

By the end of April, it was announced that fishermen were starting to build collectives in Estonia. However, these new fishing collectives being organized had yet to include the ethnic Swedish regions, although this was not mentioned in the article. Once again, the benefits of collectivization were extolled, and the new members of the new collectives were shown to be taking advantage of the benefits of the Soviet structure to better their future.⁴⁵ The following week, another front-page article again highlighted the benefits. To do other than to build a cooperative, it was argued, would keep the fishermen in poverty.⁴⁶

The first indication in *Sovjet-Estland* of acceptance (or at least the appearance of acceptance) of collectives within the ethnic Swedish regions was the printing of a radio address given by fisherman Johan Engström in the 2 July issue. As one would expect from the propaganda, Engström drew from history, referring to previous oppression and being taken advantage of by bourgeois capitalists. But now, he says, the fishermen know who they are going to be selling their catches to and know that they will get a fair price.

⁴² “Genom kollektivt fiske blir det större inkomst för varje fiskare,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 30 January 1941, p. 2.

⁴³ See, for example, “Fiskindustrien i Sovjetunionen,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 13 February 1941, p. 3.

⁴⁴ “Sovjetordning förbättrar fiskarnas levnadsförhållanden,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 20 March 1941, p. 1.

⁴⁵ “Fiskarna bilda kooperativer,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 29 April 1941, p. 2.

The prices have been better, meaning more income to the individuals. The arrival of the Soviet system was greeted warmly and with enthusiasm.⁴⁷

The slow progress of the collectivization of the fisheries was intended to foster a growing curiosity among the fishermen and give the appearance that the move towards collectivization was the will of the people, and not directed from above. The issue was never forced first and explained later, as was the case with the land reform. However, this process appeared to have little progress among the Estonian-Swedish community. In the end, some collectivization was undertaken; Engström refers to the establishment of two organizations being founded on Vormsi. The idea of collectivization was demonstrated to have slowly evolved from the people, though. As such, it was an effective campaign.

Education and Youth

The transition into the Soviet system also impacted the youth of society, as well as the education system. However, progress was minimal, particularly in the case of the Estonian-Swedes. The slow progress can be seen to have been a result of linguistic difficulties as well as the high dissatisfaction within the community. Coverage of the education was minimal in *Sovjet-Estland*, with only a handful of articles, more heavily weighted to spring 1941.

Before the arrival of the newspaper in October, the Birkas school in Noarootsi had been heavily used by the Soviets. Soldiers were stationed within the school house, although in the middle of June 1940, the soldiers left Birkas. The building was heavily damaged and garbage was left everywhere.⁴⁸ Border-guards moved in shortly afterwards, but only temporarily. Churches and schools were closed by the new Soviet power. Each school was evaluated to determine the necessity and reopened following the Soviet school system. According to Isberg, the Birkas school was initially determined to remain closed. As the headmaster, he protested the decision, stating:

We poor Swedish farmers and fishermen here in Estonia have all the time hoped that the new socialist government would help us to have an increased education in our own language, and therefore, I find it difficult

⁴⁶ "Fiskartellerna och -föreningarna göra förberedelser för vår fiske," *Sovjet-Estland*, 8 May 1941, p. 1.

⁴⁷ "Fiskaren Johan Engströms radiotal," *Sovjet-Estland*, 2 July 1941, p. 2.

⁴⁸ Isberg, 167.

to understand that we suddenly should have it worse than we have had it before.⁴⁹

Isberg's protest worked, and Birkas was permitted to reopen.⁵⁰ The border-guards were moved and the building was returned to the school. The headmaster went about locating funds to re-renovate the building before trying to encourage students to come.

On 31 October, the third issue of *Sovjet-Estland*, the start of the school year at Birkas was announced, the 21st school year for the school, with an enrollment of 23 students. The article, written by Isberg, states that the school had to overcome considerable difficulties in the previous year, including having been forced to temporarily relocate on Vormsi. "Since the new, socialistic regime was carried in here in the country, the school's premises could, with the present government authorities' friendly aid and understanding for the cause, be released and moved back to its old location of Birkas in Noarootsi."⁵¹ In the article, Isberg was clearly paying tribute to the Soviet's policies and approval to allow the school to continue. In reopening the school, the state assumed control over the education of the ethnic Swedes, with Birkas working closely with the West National School Administration (in Estonian *Lääne Maakoolivalitsus*) located in Haapsalu. The state also promised to provide funds for necessary renovations and needed repairs, although does not mention the apparent reason for those renovations and repairs – the large damage done to the building by the Soviet soldiers who had lived there. Isberg's article includes Soviet ideology comparing the difficulties Estonian-Swedes had under the Eepalu government and treatment of the ethnicity as second-class citizens. In contrast, Isberg states, the new government has promised the Estonian-Swedes the same rights as the majority. "When we here at the school now begin a new school year, we come to do it in a whole new spirit and with great expectations for the future, knowing that we now are a free people in a free socialistic land, where all are equal."⁵²

⁴⁹ Isberg, 170. Translated from Swedish: Vi fattiga svenska bönder och fiskare här i Estland har hela tiden hoppats att den nya socialistiska regeringen skulle hjälpa oss att få en utökad skolutbildning på vårt språk, och därför har jag svårt att förstå att vi plötligt skall få det sämre än vi haft hittills.

⁵⁰ Isberg's protest may have raised the issue of the Swedish minority among the ESSR leadership, as this occurred prior to the arrival of the Swedish-language newspaper.

⁵¹ Fr. Isberg, "Birkas lantmannskola börjar sin verksamhet som statens skola," *Sovjet-Estland*, 31 October 1940, p. 2. Translated from Swedish: Sedan den nya, socialistiska regimen infördes här i landet, kunde skolans lokaler med de nuvarande statsmakternas vänliga bistånd och förståelse för saken befrias och överflyttas till sin gamla plats till Birkas på Nuckö.

⁵² Fr. Isberg, "Birkas lantmannskola börjar sin verksamhet som statens skola," *Sovjet-Estland*, 31 October 1940, p. 2. Translated from Swedish: När vi här på skolan nu börja ett nytt verksamhetsår, komma vi att

Perhaps it can be argued that Isberg's inclusion of ideology was felt to be a necessity; as headmaster of the school, he would have wanted to ensure that the education could continue for the Estonian-Swedes. He became a regular contributor of articles to *Sovjet-Estland* through his agricultural columns. However, none of his other articles contain such stark propaganda overtones of Soviet ideology. By having his name signed at the end of the article, it gave the appearance of his full support of the Soviet government and the socialist ideology; few other highly ideologically-based articles were ever signed.

School celebrations for the second half of the 1940-1941 school year were announced in *Sovjet-Estland* in late November (there had been no similar announcements in the newspaper covering the first half of the school year). The most important occasions to be marked were the anniversary of Lenin's death (23 January) and the May festivities (1 and 2 May). For Lenin's death day, it was announced a lecture would be given in memory of Lenin. The students were to prepare something to demonstrate the meaning of Lenin's work. During the May festivities, the school would be closed, although on 30 April the students were to be taught the meaning and significance of the festivities. Other dates included in the article were the end of the third quarter (22 March) and the dates of spring break (24-31 March). The fourth quarter was to end 28 May, with exams beginning on 30 May. All school work was to be completed by 7 June.⁵³

The Swedish school in Tallinn was mentioned on 4 January. The Swedish Cultivation Friends (SOV) was credited with the creation of the school (the main Estonian-Swedish cultural organization prior to the Soviet's arrival had also been credited by Isberg in his article), although like Birkas, the school was taken over by the state and reopened. The article points to some difficulties facing the school – there were only 15 students enrolled and only a single teacher to handle all of the subjects for all six grade levels. These set-backs were blamed squarely on the bourgeois Estonian policies of previous years.

The school's student population is, for the present, much lower (approximately 15), but this is not due to the school but rather the bourgeois Estonian government's twisted legislation. Eenpalu and

göra det i en helt ny anda och med större förhoppningar på framtiden, vetande att vi numera äro ett fritt folk i ett fritt socialistiskt land, där alla äro likaberättigade.

⁵³ "Skolferier, högtider, och bemärkelsedagar under andra hälften av skolåret 1940-41," *Sovjet-Estland*, 21 November 1940, p. 1.

company were nervous that the “outsiders” would denationalize the Estonian people, and therefore prescribed in 1935 that children from mixed marriages only should have the right to go in such a school that had the father’s language as the teaching language. In Tallinn at that time there was a large percentage of mixed marriages between Swedish women and Estonian men, so the natural right was taken from these parents of a mutual arrangement concerning their children’s possibility to education in the language they preferably wanted.⁵⁴

It was a strong attack against the Eenpalu policies, serving to highlight the different mentalities between the capitalist government and the Soviet policies of equality. There were high hopes for a brighter outlook at the school. With the government support and encouragement, surely the number of students and teachers could be increased overtime, particularly considering the new government’s minority-friendly stance, the article argued.

While the schedule of major days and the difficulties facing the schools were discussed in *Sovjet-Estland*, the newspaper did not discuss changes in the educational system or the new subjects being taught. According to Isberg, where students had previously been taught the Estonian language, geography, and history they were now taking five hours of Russian language and two hours of Stalinist government.⁵⁵ As was the case throughout Estonia, books needed to receive approval by the state, and this heavily affected the Swedish-language schools, as no textbooks in Swedish were approved or available for use in the 1940-1941 school year. Religious books, Estonian history books since 1918, and children’s literature were collected and burned. New literature, translations, artwork, theater, and music were all subject to state approval and had certain criteria. This meant that the schools had to make substitutions with other materials, including the use of *Sovjet-Estland* as teaching materials.⁵⁶

The value of using the newspaper can certainly be raised; as previously mentioned, Per Wieselgren was horrified at the poor language skills in the newspaper,

⁵⁴ “Om den Svenska Folkskolan i Tallinn, *Sovjet-Estland*, 4 January 1941, p. 2. Translated from Swedish: Skolans elevantal är f.n. mycket lågt (c:a 15), men detta beror inte på skolan utan på den borgerliga estniska regeringens snedvridna lagstifning. Eenpalu & Co var nämligen ängslig för att “utbölngarna” (muulased) skulle avnationalisera det estniska folket och därför stadgades år 1935, att barn ur blandade äktenskap endast skulle äga att gå i sådan skola, som hade faderns språk till undervisningsspråk. Då det i Tallinn finnes en mycket stor procent blandade äktenskap mellan svenska kvinnor och estniska män, så fråntogs dessa föräldrar sin naturliga rätt ett enligt ömsesidig överenskommelse bereda sina barn möjlighet till skolundervisning på det språk de helst önskade.

⁵⁵ Isberg, 174.

fearful that school children would learn improper Swedish. However, the newspaper did present the new Soviet ideology and a historical background of the Soviet Union – both of which could have proven to be fair propaganda materials. This was risky, though, since the content could have more easily been countered at home by parents who also received *Sovjet-Estland* and sharply disagreed with the content.

In all public buildings, a “Red Corner” was created, with portraits of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin; propaganda slogans; and local news. The young communists organization and the Pioneers – a Soviet version of scouting – visited Birkas in an attempt to recruit students.⁵⁷ However, the Pioneers had little success in recruiting members among the Estonian-Swedes.

The Sovietization of society was an ongoing process that was intended to continue over a longer period. The propaganda and agitation aimed at the youth was particularly important in this regard. The end of the school year was marked, as was the announcement of two new Swedish-language textbooks. During the first year of Soviet occupation, two textbooks were published in Swedish – *Läsebok för Folkskolan* (Elementary School Reader)⁵⁸ and *Läsebok för Mellanskolan* (Intermediate School Reader).⁵⁹ These were meant to be used in the Swedish schools in Estonia, but because of the war against Germany and the approaching frontline, the books were never distributed, and thus never used. The textbooks can, however, be used to see the future plans for the ethnic Swedes in terms of education and the attempts at propaganda that was to be aimed at the ethnic Swedish youth, examples of the anticipated propaganda campaign to be aimed at the children in the schools. Both books were compiled by Vormsi school teacher Tomas Gärdström (and overseen by Anton Vaarandi, the editor of *Sovjet-Estland*).

The books’ anticipated arrival was announced in the 11 June issue of *Sovjet-Estland*, after the 1940-1941 school year had been completed. The article highlights the devotion of the Bolsheviks to provide the ethnic Swedes with the opportunities to develop their culture, socialistic in content, and points to their support of Swedish-language education for the minority. Although the print run (1150 copies) was smaller than their

⁵⁶ See Per Wieselgren, *Från Hammaren till Hakkorset; Estland 1939/1941* (Stockholm: Idé och Form Förlag, 1942), 154.

⁵⁷ Isberg, 174.

⁵⁸ Tomas Gärdström, ed., *Läsebok för Folkskolan* (Tallinn: RK Pedagoogiline Kirjandus, 1941).

⁵⁹ Tomas Gärdström, ed., *Läsebok för Mellanskolan* (Tallinn: RK Pedagoogiline Kirjandus, 1941).

Estonian-language counterparts, the article states that the books would cost the same price, 2 rubels 50 kopek.⁶⁰

Läsebok för Folkskolan is a collection of 76 short stories and poems. Many entries feature nature themes; some are fiction, others are non-fiction. There are definite examples of propaganda at various stages. The table of contents provides an indication of the origin of the stories: some were written by ethnic Swedes (well-known figures such as August Strindberg and Pär Lagerkvist, as well as those in the Estonian-Swedish community such as Gärdström himself), some texts were written and translated from Estonian, and some were from Russian (including a story by Leo Tolstoj). The majority of the stories, though, do not list an author, simply stating that they were translated. Most likely, these were translated from Russian, as many of them are strong examples of propaganda.

One of the more overt examples of propaganda through the use of a parable is chapter 13 in *Läsebok för Folkskolan*, “The Children Build a Collective.” In the short story, a group of children are given some land. Each child owns a different farm implement. None of the children want to let the others borrow their implement, nor do they want to work the others’ crop. As a result, they fight and nothing is harvested. Father then comes along and suggests they build a collective. The children don’t know what a collective is, so Father explains it to them, extolling the benefits. The children do so, and when Father next visits, he sees that their land is flourishing and they are all sharing in the success. The children are appreciative of Father showing them the way, and offer him some of their crops.⁶¹ The collective is seen as the only logical solution in such a situation. Once it is implemented, the children are happy and their farm is successful. The story can be viewed as a parable to the Soviet’s collectivization of Estonian land, with a clear reference to Stalin acting as the Father. Since Father (Stalin) had shown them the way to work the land most effectively, they are more than willing to offer him part of their crops to thank him.

In contrast to *Läsebok för Folkskolan*, *Läsebok för Mellanskolan* does not list the authors or indicate when stories were translated. The book contained 45 chapters. While there were short stories, there was an increased focus on history and ideology, presenting

⁶⁰ N.R., “Den första svenskspråkiga läroboken för sovjet-folkskolorna har utkommit,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 11 June 1941, p. 2.

⁶¹ “Barnen bilda kollektivet” in *Läsebok för Folkskolan*, ed. Tomas Gärdström, pp. 19-21.

the historical figures and leaders of the Soviet Union; stories about Lenin and Stalin dominate, but there are also chapters relating to the Soviet celebrations. This collection focused less on parables and more on overt propaganda.

The ESSR Central Committee's May report also drew attention to the political work among the Estonian-Swedish children. The Central Committee wanted comrade Cher to monitor and control the work being conducted among the ethnic Swedes in Läänemaa, including the political education of the youth. The Committee wanted to strengthen and engage the youth into the comsomol movement, and particularly into the Pioneers. In addition, the Committee suggested increasing *Sovjet-Estland* to six pages in order to incorporate a youth-section (perhaps equating it to the work of *Noorte Hääl*).⁶² As in other areas of the May report, little work was accomplished in this area, made more difficult by the German advance. Perhaps the easiest of the Committee's recommendation was the expansion of the newspaper, although even this was not accomplished.

Diminishing the Dogma of Religion

In terms of gaining the Estonian-Swedes' support, arguably one of the more damaging of the new Bolshevik policies was the Soviet policy towards religion. Religion had been central to the formation of the Estonian-Swedish identity, and signified a close connection with Sweden, which naturally was severed with the arrival of the ESSR. While it was not a major topic covered in *Sovjet-Estland*, the anti-religious policies of the Soviet Union were mentioned on occasion.

The Soviet Union ideology was not compatible with religion. Riho Altnurme states that the attack against religion in 1940-1941 was external, with the internal affairs of the church not affected. He states:

It must be said that it is not reasonable to speak about the sovietization of the Church during the first year of Soviet occupation. The Church was put into a difficult situation by introducing the measures of deep secularization of society by the Soviets, but it still remained apart from the process of sovietization.⁶³

⁶² ERAF [Eesti Riigiarhiivi Filiaal] 1-4-71, *Õa iõðàèùéÊî ièðà ò Ê Ì (á) Ýñ òí ièè Ìñîáúé Ñà ñ ò ò ð*, 36-39. Minutes no. 8 of the Seating of the Central Committee, dated 15, 21, and 22 May 1941.

⁶³ Riho Altnurme, "The Sovietization of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church" in *The Sovietization of the Baltic States, 1940-1956*, ed. Olaf Mertelsmann (Tartu: Kleio, 2003), 188.

The church was still impacted by the Soviet presence, though, and an anti-religious sentiment pervaded in the propaganda.

There are several occasions of blatant anti-religious sentiment, and examples of how the churches and clergy were negatively impacted by the Soviets in *Sovjet-Estland*. The land reform hit the churches particularly harshly. In areas where land was restricted (such as the case on the islands of Vormsi and Ruhnu) with a limited amount of land for a large number of those seeking land, church property was taken away by the state and appropriated by the committees.

The first signs of the anti-religion position of the Soviets was seen in *Sovjet-Estland's* coverage of the land reform. In the 31 October 1940 issue, in providing an overview of the land reform's progress in various areas, it was indicated that land was taken away from the church on Ruhnu. With land limited on the island, the largest land holder was the church with 45-48 hectares. The article states that the land was divided among three farmers seeking land.⁶⁴ A later article stated that five people were given land taken from the church.⁶⁵

The next sign was more negative and more direct in its approach against religion. A 6 December article brought attention to the Läänemaa youth communists work in enlightenment in "questions of religion." The article stated:

Since the education of the people in Läänemaa has been much neglected and in succession a number of sects have come up, the young communists in Läänemaa have taken the task of antireligious development work into action for the liberation of the people from the blinding dogma and service to the priests' purse. The ELKNÜ [the Estonian youth communist organization] Läänemaa division's members have even begun their work.⁶⁶

This was a devastatingly harsh attack against religion. While this was a regional news brief, there was no mention of a direct call to action against religion in the Estonian-Swedish communities. It is intriguing that the editors ran such an article without previously providing the propaganda as to why religion was so horrible and why the Soviet ideology ran counter to religion. This background propaganda would have

⁶⁴ "Agrarreformens genomförande: I Runö," *Sovjet-Estland*, 31 October 1940, p. 2.

⁶⁵ H. H-i, "Även på Runö börjar ett nytt liv," *Sovjet-Estland*, 4 January 1941, p. 2.

⁶⁶ "Läänemaa ungkommunisters upplysningsarbete i religionsfrågor," *Sovjet-Estland*, 6 December 1940, p. 2. Translated from Swedish: Emedan i Läänemaa folkbildningen mycket negligerats och i följd därav en mängd trossekter uppkommit, ha Läänemaa ungkommunister fått i uppdrag att igångsätta antireligiöst upplysningsarbete för att befria folket från förblindande dogmer och tjänandet av prästernas penningpung. ELKNÜ Läänemaa avdelnings medlemmar ha även börjat sitt arbete.

lessened the blow of any negative responses among the readers – readers who had largely based their ethnic identity to links with the Lutheran church during the independent Estonian period. There was certainly a large danger of alienating the target audience with such blatant remarks made without the benefit of previous propaganda on the topic.

Religion on Ruhnu was again the center of attention in the 4 January issue. The church was depicted as having hoarded supplies away from the people, such as having five chamber organs while the local school went without any, indicating that teachers had previously not been able to teach school children to sing. Also at issue was the church's possession of a sewing machine that was not available to the public to use. The behavior of the Ruhnu pastor was singled out and presented as absurd. In response to the nationalization of some of the church's property and rooms in the parish for community use, Pastor Isakson was described as attempting to hoard objects from the rooms, such as the curtains. According to the article, items were found to have been hidden away in the attic. *Sovjet-Estland* attempted to portray him as acting superior and oppressive of others (qualities repeatedly scorned in Soviet ideology) and depriving the greater community of resources that the Soviets believed all were entitled to use collectively. Although religion was not the main topic of the article (it was an overview of socialism's arrival on Ruhnu), a portion of it was intended to belittle the pastor, but also religion in general.⁶⁷

Background propaganda clarifying the Soviet ideology in reference to religion was not to be found in *Sovjet-Estland* until the 13 February issue in an article entitled "The Origins and Evolution of the Religions." The article attempts to link religion to oppression by the priests as a method of exerting a control over the people and holding them in darkness. Religion originated with the cavemen – people who knew little of the current world. The various development of religions was explored – Christianity developing from Judaism – with religious differences leading to wars. The church was commended for its cultural development of the people during the Middle Ages. However, society has outgrown the church.

The Bible teachings have long since been overthrown, but one has not had success in overthrowing the belief in a higher power among the masses. One comes to a point where all discussions must end, and that point is the origin of life... We cannot believe all of the sagas and legends that were thought up during prehistoric times. They attempted to explain a number of things in their own way and following their ability. We know more than

⁶⁷ H. H-i, "Även på Runö börjar ett nytt liv," *Sovjet-Estland*, 4 January 1941, p. 2.

they did and abandon their theories. Our decedents will know more than us and so continues the cultural curve, constantly rising.⁶⁸

By placing religion as a creation of man and then drawing in the sagas and legends, it was attempted to diminish the role of the church and the belief in a god. Socialists should place their belief in the system and in society.

The belittling of religion, except in the cases mentioned, was infrequent and highly irregular in *Sovjet-Estland*. Their appearance certainly shined a light on the Soviet ideology, and would have been negatively received among a population that firmly believed in a higher power.

In each of these areas – the land reform, agriculture, fisheries, education, and religion – the Soviet policy was at odds with the Estonian-Swedes. Despite their best intentions and attempts to convince them otherwise, the Soviets failed in their propaganda attempts in each of these areas. The Estonian-Swedes had strong attachments to their land and therefore would take sharp exceptions to any alterations. And the Swedish-language schools and religion had been cornerstones in the development of the Estonian-Swedish identity. The difficulties in starting Pioneer programs among the youth in the Estonian-Swedish communities not only provides a sharp image of the failure of propaganda efforts in school, but also can be seen as a reflection of the rejection to the ideology in their homes. Perhaps if more propaganda material had been made available in Swedish in the schools, and over a longer period of time, the Soviets would have had increased success. Or perhaps they would have been equally unsuccessful.

⁶⁸ “Religionernas uppkomst och utveckling,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 13 February 1941, p. 3. Translated from Swedish: Bibelns lära har ju för länge sedan kullkastats, men tron på en högre makt har man ännu inte lyckats kullkasta hos de bredare lagren. Man kommer till en punkt där alla diskussioner måste avstanna, och denna punkt är livets uppkomst... Vi få inte tro på alla sagor och legender som forntidens vise utfunderat. De försökte förklara saker och ting på sitt sätt och efter sin förmåga. Vi veta nu mera än de och slopa deras teoria. Våra efterkommande veta mer än vi och så fortsätter kulturkurvan ständigt att stiga.

Chapter 5: Foreign Horrors and Domestic Bliss

The war's annihilation work is terrible... The capitalistic world's economic connection has ceased as a result of the war. There is not a single bourgeois country that has not been touched, directly or indirectly, by the war... Despite the war, which rampages all around, the Soviet people continue their calm, developing work. Thanks to Stalin's sensible foreign policy, the socialist land's borders have extended.¹

During the first Soviet occupation, two contrasting pictures were presented to the Estonian-Swedes through *Sovjet-Estland*. The first picture was tragedy and hardship abroad, a bleak overview of life in the capitalistic world beyond the borders of the Soviet Union. The second picture was of positive images and promises of life in the Soviet Union and under the socialistic system. Both pictures presented a similar image, however, with the same goal: that the Soviet system was the best option for a happy future. In combination, these two images can be viewed as an attempt to portray life abroad as harsh and uncertain, while life in Soviet Estonia is filled with promise and certainty. Both images arguably had the same goal. It was an effort to create an unconscious belief among the audience that life would be better for them by remaining in Estonia within the socialistic system, and dispelling emigration thoughts. Arguably, what was attempted was a shift in focus of the Estonian-Swedes away from Stockholm towards Moscow.

In both of these cases, it cannot be stated that the articles were written specifically for the Estonian-Swedes. Articles in these areas heavily relied on the TASS and ETA new agencies – under tight control from the Soviets. However, the selection of articles that were subsequently translated can be seen in some cases as specifically chosen based on the audience (except for domestically, which was often similar to content in the Estonian newspapers). While the newspaper was slow to respond to the negative reception of the ideology, specific areas appear to have been addressed, particularly in the area of the growing thoughts of emigration.

This chapter focuses on these two pictures – news from abroad portraying negative images of life and domestic news portraying positive images. The role of the

¹ “De kapitalistiska länderna år 1941,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 9 January 1941, p. 4. Translated from Swedish: Krigets förstöringsarbete är fruktansvärt... Den kapitalistiska världens ekonomiska förbindelser ha genom kriget avbrutits. Det finns intet borgerligt land, som icke har berörts av kriget direkt eller indirekt... Trots kriget, som rasar runt omkring, försätter Sovjets folk sitt lugna, uppbyggande arbete. Tack vara Stalins kloka utrikespolitik har det socialistiska landets gränser utvidgats.

news agencies will be explored first, followed by the promises of the Soviet Union. News from abroad has been separated into news concerning Sweden and news focusing on other regions, because of the close historical and cultural links the Estonian-Swedes had with Sweden. Also described in this chapter are the promises of Soviet life and specific attempts by the *Sovjet-Estland* editorship to dissuade the Estonian Swedes from emigrating to Sweden. The international coverage in *Sovjet-Estland* presented a constant picture of difficulties and hardship abroad, compounded by the war, which was depicted as a result of capitalistic tendencies. Equally important in looking at international reporting is what *Sovjet-Estland* did not print. The pictures being painted were not complete, but rather was the representation the editors wished to express. The propaganda was carefully being crafted in all aspects.

The war surrounding the Soviet Union was a constant throughout *Sovjet-Estland*. One can hardly explore the propaganda campaign from this period without focusing on the war, and how the international events were reported and used to further the Soviet propaganda effort. Prior to the German declaration of war on 22 June 1941, the Soviet Union was often described as immune to the struggles of war – both economically and on the warfront itself. As a result of Stalin’s foreign policy, the propaganda campaign exclaimed, the people of the Soviet Union lived in peace amid the chaos of the capitalistic war. Framed as such, the Soviet Union was then described as a savior of Estonia, by protecting the people from the certainty of the encroaching war.

Quite naturally, the focus of the war coverage shifted dramatically with the German declaration of war. In the next two months before the German occupation of Estonia began (and the final two months of the newspaper), the effectiveness of the Sovietization was put to the test, attempting to bring together all of the previous propaganda campaigns to convince the people for the need to rise up and defend the “native land” (*fosterland*) from the invading fascists and in the ideology that communism would prevail.

Coverage of the Second World War can be divided into two categories: war coverage prior to 22 June 1941 and war coverage after 22 June. Coverage of the war prior to the 22 June war declaration by Germany against the Soviet Union was predominately focused on warfare and conflict in far-off regions with the Soviet Union not involved. If one follows the newspaper coverage, it can be argued that the Soviet Union was pre-occupied with peace prior to 22 June, and following the declaration of war was involved in defending the motherland.

Soviet News Agencies

Articles were routinely published from two Soviet news agencies – the Soviet-wide agency TASS (*Telegrafnoe Agentstvo Sovetskogo Soiza*) and the Soviet-Estonian news agency ETA (*Eesti Teadete Agentuur*). These articles provided domestic and international news, interpretations, and analysis on a complete spectrum of topics. The articles were not prepared with the Estonian-Swedes in mind, but rather were part of a larger media organization; the news agency was intended to distribute news content throughout the Soviet system, sharing the same ideological goals but with a wide variety of audiences. The individual articles selected for publication in *Sovjet-Estland* would have been translated into Swedish from either Russian or Estonian.

The role of TASS as the Soviet news agency needs to be considered in covering the topic of foreign news. The Soviet news agency cannot be compared with other international news agencies such as the Associate Press or Reuters. The articles were selected and written to fit the Soviet ideology and sometimes included news analysis. This occurred under tight scrutiny and censorship. Martin Ebon, in his book *The Soviet Propaganda Machine*, writes, “TASS acts as the mouthpiece of the Soviet government: It collects and disseminates carefully selected news items, it prepares commentaries on world affairs, answers statements by other governments, and publicizes a wide variety of accusations.”² He states that often this was done by “emphasizing troubles in the world at large while glorifying Soviet achievements.”³ While negative news would be a constant feature of TASS foreign news coverage, only positive news would be included in Soviet news. News would come to the TASS offices from reporters, but also from the embassies around the globe.⁴ The resources of TASS was extensive for news gathering.

² Martin Ebon, *The Soviet Propaganda Machine*, (New York: McGraw Hill, 1987), 169.

³ Ebon, 172.

⁴ TASS sent content to communist newspaper around the world, including the Stockholm-based *Ny Dag*, edited by Gustav Johansson. It is not entirely clear, however, if the news of Estonia and the Baltic States in *Ny Dag* also came from TASS. It was never labeled as such, although occasionally news of Estonia carried a tagline of Moscow – possibly hinting at TASS’s role – or were labeled as coming from “our correspondent,” although no other source information was provided. *Ny Dag* was a member of the Comintern, though, making it increasingly likely that much of the foreign news came through TASS. TASS did not dictate the foreign content of *Ny Dag* to the same level it had in *Sovjet-Estland*. While control of the newspaper content of *Sovjet-Estland* was locally decided and censored within the ESSR, approved articles would be received from TASS. *Ny Dag* did not have the same level of approval and censorship from the Soviets as there would have been within Estonia, although there was some minimal Swedish censorship that

TASS was regularly cited for foreign and Soviet-wide articles, but typically not for news within the ESSR. This role was filled by ETA. Presumably, ETA would also submit articles to TASS for publication in other regions, fitting into the larger news agency network within the Soviet system. Occasionally, ETA would add content to TASS articles, with both news agencies being credited. The use of news agencies enabled the editor to select news content for the specific audience of the newspaper, while maintaining the same ideological perspective that was required of the highly-centralized system.

In *Sovjet-Estland*, articles from the news agencies were primarily printed on the third and fourth pages – the third page was typically domestic ESSR and Soviet-wide content with the fourth page devoted primarily to foreign news content. The far-and-wide reach of TASS and ETA provided expansive foreign and domestic news coverage for *Sovjet-Estland*. Readers were able to be informed of international events in a timely fashion which the editors of *Kustbon* had been restricted from doing because of economic concerns. This can be seen as a dramatic difference from *Kustbon*, which had relied on news gathered from other newspapers, and was fairly weak on international news content.

The vast resources of TASS became evident following the 22 June 1941 German declaration of war. Through TASS, reporting from the front lines was able to be transmitted quickly, and although written from the Soviet perspective, gave the readers an idea on the progression of the war effort, although declining to give coverage of considerable Soviet defeats as the Germans progressed rapidly. Columnists on the frontlines repeatedly were translated for publication in *Sovjet-Estland*, particularly from the main Soviet newspaper *Pravda*.⁵ Although these articles did not carry a TASS byline, the content would certainly have come through this route.

Promises of the Soviet Union

In addition to the promises for ethnic minorities (and the Estonian-Swedes in particular) covered in earlier chapters, *Sovjet-Estland* sought to draw further comparisons, between life within the USSR and life in the outside world. The resulting picture, which

affected all the newspapers in Sweden. The editor of *Ny Dag*, in fact, made a tour of the Baltic States in 1940, which greatly influenced the future reporting and editorials concerning the region.

⁵ See, for example: “Rödarmisternas hjältemod,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 2 July 1941, p. 3. See also: J. Tsvetoff, “Manlighet och tapperhet,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 9 July 1941, p. 4.

was meant to convince the Estonian-Swedes to remain in Estonia, provided a contrasting point of stability when compared to the world outside the Soviet system (Sweden in particular), which was portrayed as filled with economic difficulties and hardship. In contrast, life within the Soviet system was given as peaceful, stable, and filled with promises of success.

The Soviet Union was depicted as being unique, in large part because it was based on the ideological premise (or the appearance of being based on) the abolition of oppression and taking control away from the bourgeois capitalists, enabling all the workers to live in peace. In an article relating the Bolshevik October Revolution to those in Estonia, a 6 November article stated, “The Soviet Union is the only land in the whole world that pursues a strict peace politics, where citizens may peacefully continue socialism’s development work, where there is no hunger or phases of war.”⁶ It was argued that the development of the rest of the world was hindered by the capitalistic tendencies, which inevitably brought about war.

News from within the Soviet system demonstrated a bright future of peace and prosperity. Jobs were plentiful, and articles described the plans and changes for Estonia that would create more jobs. From the beginning of the publication of *Sovjet-Estland* and throughout its almost year-long publication, the Soviet system was praised. Of particular note were the economic and industrial benefits, including employment opportunities, and improved healthcare. Sometimes this was demonstrated through profiles of other regions within the Soviet Union, with the implicit meaning that those in Estonia would enjoy the same treatment. On other occasions, there were specific articles about what was to come for Estonia.

In the first issue, on 17 October 1940, an article on the third page proclaimed the Soviet plans for Tallinn. Tallinn would become a large, modern city with a population increase from the current 160,000 to half a million within five years. The article stated, “Within leading Soviet circles, one is of the view that Tallinn has all the conditions to be a considerable port and industrial city.”⁷ The plan included an increase in recreational

⁶ “Oktoberns seger är vår seger,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 6 November 1940, p. 1. Translated from Swedish: Sovjet-Unionen är enda landet i hela världen som bedriver en sträng fredspolitik, vars medborgare få lungt fortsätta socialismens uppbyggnadsarbete, där det icke finns hunger och krigsfasor.

⁷ “Tallinn skall bli modern storstad,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 17 October 1940, p. 3. Translated from Swedish: Inom ledande sovjetkretsar är man nämligen av den åsikten att Tallinn har alla förutsättningar att bli en betydande hamn- och industristad.

areas and dramatic increases in residential and industrial neighborhoods, to transform the city. Likewise, Haapsalu was to become a treatment and seaside resort town for the working people of the Soviet Union.⁸

Many articles provided a glimpse regarding the promises of the Soviet system in terms of access to employment. A 28 December article expressed the need for thousands of woodmen across Estonia, promising higher wages and improved living conditions.⁹ The creation of more than 800 new villages in the Ukraine was highlighted on 28 November. These villages included official buildings, schools, sports facilities, and parks.¹⁰ In addition to the new villages, access to electricity and mechanical farming equipment at Ukrainian kolхозes was mentioned on 6 December.¹¹ In both of these cases, the benefits of collectivization can be inferred as providing access to funding from the government and improving farming equipment.

According to the propaganda in *Sovjet-Estland*, the Soviet Union was able to create and guarantee full employment because it was isolated from the unstable capitalistic forces. For example, a 24 January 1941 article showed a factory in Krivorosje and spoke of the industrial progress that lay in Estonia's future within the Soviet Union. According to the article, the Soviet Union led the world in diverse spectrums of industry, under the leadership of the party of Lenin and Stalin, making great economic and cultural triumphs. "The Soviet Union is a state with a planned economy and is not affected by any crises. Therefore, also in the Soviet Union, an economic future like that is possible, of which the capitalistic world cannot even dream of."¹²

Throughout the Soviet Union, the Soviet system was depicted as overly generous in regards to healthcare. A 31 October article points to the opening of 27 new city hospitals with 2350 beds and 17 new village hospitals. In addition, care for children was expended.¹³ On 21 November, an article touted plans to increase medical research, highlighting the Soviet successes in treating infections.¹⁴ Medical treatment in the Ukrainian village Ostapje was profiled in a half-page article on 19 December. The

⁸ "Haapsalu blir det arbetande folkets kur- och badort," *Sovjet-Estland*, 4 January 1941, p. 2.

⁹ "Tusentals skogsarbetare behövs," *Sovjet-Estland*, 28 December 1940, p. 3.

¹⁰ "I Ukraina över 800 nya byar," *Sovjet-Estland*, 28 November 1940, p. 3.

¹¹ "Elektricitet och mekaniska inrättningar i kolhosfarmerna," *Sovjet-Estland*, 6 December 1940, p. 3.

¹² "Sovjetindustriens framsteg," *Sovjet-Estland*, 24 January 1941, p. 3. Translated from Swedish: Sovjetunionen är ett rike med planerad hushållning och känner inga kriser. Därför är också i Sovjetunionen en dylik ekonomisk framgång möjlig, om vilken den kapitalistiska världen icke ens drömmer.

¹³ "Nya sjukhus, sanatorier och barnbördshus.," *Sovjet-Estland*, 31 October 1940, p. 3.

isolated town boasted a dramatic decrease in the childhood mortality rate and in epidemics under the Soviet system. A village hospital had been established, with connections to medical personnel in Moscow, Leningrad, and Kiev. “The working people’s hygiene stands in the center of the Communist Party’s and the Soviet government’s attention. Nowhere else in the outside world has medical assistance organized so detailed as in the Soviet Union.”¹⁵

These successes in other areas of the Soviet Union were put into an Estonian context with a 6 December front-page article on cost-free medical help within the ESSR for all of the working people.¹⁶ On the island of Ruhnu, where healthcare had often been provided by Sweden, makeshift arrangements were undertaken, such as the use of a temporary ambulance and a clinic “established by Elisabeth Lorentz, who has therapeutic knowledge.”¹⁷ Specific initiatives were also announced in the 13 March issue in regards to the ESSR. Of vital importance was the education of maternal care, and their opposition to abortion and prostitution. The article also announced that 25 new doctors would graduate from the University of Tartu in the spring, with an additional 35 graduating in the fall (one can assume that these students were the product of the independent Estonian period, although the Soviets were claiming credit for their graduation), and that if more doctors were needed in Estonia, they would be made available from other areas of the Soviet Union.¹⁸

Throughout the promises of the Soviet Union, the idea was to connect the readers of *Sovjet-Estland* with people across the Soviet Union, to foster friendship of various nationalities, and to create an encompassing identity with regions further away. The promises also attempted to place high hopes in the possibilities of the Soviet system – possibilities previously not possible for the people of Estonia. The successes in far-reaching villages would be applied to the villages of Estonia and the Soviet experience was filled with prosperous possibilities.

¹⁴ “Sovjets läkarekonst,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 21 November 1940, p. 3.

¹⁵ “Läkarvården i en sovjetby,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 19 December 1940, p. 4. Translated from Swedish: Det arbetande folkets hygien står i medelpunkten för Kommunistiska Partiets och sovjetregeringens uppmärksamhet. Ingenstades i den övriga världen har läkarhjälp organiserats så vidlyftigt som i Sovjet.

¹⁶ “Kostnadsfri läkerhjälp,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 6 December 1940, p. 1.

¹⁷ H. H-i., “Även på Runö börjar ett nytt liv,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 4 January 1941, p. 2. Translated from Swedish: inrättad hos Elisabeth Lorentz, som äger terapiska kunskaper.

¹⁸ “Läkare av övriga unionsrepublikerna till ESSR,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 13 March 1941, p. 3.

Naturally, failures or difficulties were not mentioned in the newspaper, as this would have been contrary to the aim of the propaganda. However, Jacques Ellul states, "All propaganda that makes false promises turns against the propagandist."¹⁹ Certainly, the Soviet occupation was hindered in its process of rapid Sovietization by the arrival of the Germans in the summer of 1941. Many of these promises went unfulfilled in the one-year of occupation.

News from Abroad

Foreign news can be seen as a compliment to the promises of the Soviet system. Taken together, the reader would see prosperity in the Soviet Union and instability in the outside world. While coverage of the war added to this picture, numerous articles focused on economics, housing, food shortages and rationing, and healthcare. The news from abroad, relegated to the last page of each issue (except after the declaration of war by Germany when foreign news dominated most pages), demonstrated the difficulties of the workers in the capitalistic world and the uncertainty of life abroad. The majority of these articles carried TASS and/or ETA bylines, and readily can be viewed as selected news to meet the socialistic ideology, while not portraying an accurate picture of life abroad. In order to counter this appearance, though, foreign news frequently cited or mentioned foreign news organizations.

The first issue had a plethora of news briefs, mostly focused on Europe (articles focusing on Sweden will be covered in the following section). Articles included rationing in Finland,²⁰ the demilitarization of the Åland Islands,²¹ food shortages in Denmark,²² development of dictatorships in French towns,²³ the opinion of an American that England would win in a long war against Germany,²⁴ the Nazification of Norway,²⁵ and rising unemployment in Denmark.²⁶ There was also an article highlighting the 29th anniversary of the revolution against the Chinese monarchy,²⁷ an overview of a report indicating a 14

¹⁹ Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes* (New York: Vintage Books: 1965), 22.

²⁰ "Spisärter rationeras i Finland," *Sovjet-Estland*, 17 October 1940, p. 4.

²¹ "Åland demilitariseras," *Sovjet-Estland*, 17 October 1940, p. 4.

²² "Köttbrist i Danmark," *Sovjet-Estland*, 17 October 1940, p. 4.

²³ "Diktaturen i Frankrike," *Sovjet-Estland*, 17 October 1940, p. 4.

²⁴ "England vinner, anser Strong," *Sovjet-Estland*, 17 October 1940, p. 4.

²⁵ "Nazifieringen av Norge," *Sovjet-Estland*, 17 October 1940, p. 4.

²⁶ "100,702 anmälda arbetslösa i Danmark," *Sovjet-Estland*, 17 October 1940, p. 4.

²⁷ "Kina fortsätter sitt motstånd," *Sovjet-Estland*, 17 October 1940, p. 4.

percent decrease in the grain yield across Europe,²⁸ and an article on the continuing expansion of the imperialistic war.²⁹ The grain yield article was unique in that it mentioned the war in Europe as a factor in making the decrease increasingly more drastic, stating that importing grain from other regions were hampered (although not stating that the lower harvest was a result of the war). In most other cases of foreign news, the war was not indicated as a factor, particularly in declining economic conditions in capitalistic countries.

Throughout the almost year-long publication of *Sovjet-Estland*, the foreign news was consistent; the capitalistic countries were facing high unemployment, workers were being laid off, shortages of food and supplies were constant. This non-stop negative news intended to highlight the differences between the communist and capitalist systems, without making a direct comparison. As opposed to the communist system where decisions were made for the workers, the capitalist countries were forcing their policies onto the population, without regard to the effects of the workers and with drastic consequences.

The coverage of the war (prior to 22 June 1941) compounded the contrast between life in the peaceful Soviet Union and the war-prone capitalistic countries, suffering the devastating effects of the war effort. Workers were depicted in particularly harsh terms, with the effects of the housing shortages, high unemployment, and rationing. However, the economic difficulties and rationing in the capitalistic countries were not always explained to be a result of the war-effort. For example, it was reported that trade and cargo passing through Sweden had dropped considerably from 7.2 million tons in 1939 to 2.6 million tons in 1940 pointing to a weakening Swedish economy, without also stating that the harbor was being blockaded as a result of the war.³⁰ *Sovjet-Estland* provided regular updates on the war, with a heavy focus on London and Northern Africa.

Prior to the 22 June 1941 German declaration of war, Hitler's Germany fared better than other countries in the foreign news coverage. This, however, can be attributed to few articles focusing on Germany, except in reference to the continuing war.

The war itself was viewed as a capitalistic affair, and a result of imperialism and rulers intent on ignoring the people's will – in large part a reflection of the First World

²⁸ "Europas låga skörd," *Sovjet-Estland*, 17 October 1940, p. 4.

²⁹ "Krisområdet hotar utvidga sig," *Sovjet-Estland*, 17 October 1940, p. 4.

³⁰ H.L. "Sverige på tröskeln till det nya året," *Sovjet-Estland*, 30 January 1941, p. 4.

War which led to the Russian Revolution. Civilians were largely impacted by the effects of the war. In the first issue of *Sovjet-Estland*, the “imperialistic war” was described as continually expanding, with civilian populations suffering the consequences:

Suffering most by that [the German bombardment of London] is the civilian population. The supreme German commander indirectly gives consent to this. One calls this bomb attack a vengeful action against English pilots who bomb residential areas in German cities. The promise to spare civilian populations is, therefore, forgotten.³¹

The war was dominating the capitalistic countries. The “bloody struggle” (*blödiga kamp*) was being fought for reasons of capitalism and imperialism, with the leader’s ignoring the plight of the people.³²

According to a 9 January 1941 article, “The capitalistic world’s economic connections have been broken by the war. There is not a single bourgeois country that has not been touched, directly or indirectly, by the war.”³³ War as interpreted by the Soviet Union was not a possibility in the socialistic society. The capitalistic countries were demonstrated to be unable to cope with the economic and political consequences of a war, and yet were still willing to push ahead in the fighting.

Skepticism to the articles in *Sovjet-Estland* can be seen to be high; Per Wieselgren called the newspaper “a profitable, pleasurable joke” (*ett profitabelt skämtnöje*) and “naïve Bolshevik propaganda” (*naiv bolsjevikipropaganda*). He wrote, “The newspaper was read by everyone as a jest newspaper, but the humorless communists didn’t understand that and were properly pleased with the editorial efforts.”³⁴ The Estonian-Swedes can perhaps be seen as more skeptical of the news content, particularly considering the high level of emigration sentiments among the population. In an attempt to give the articles credibility and legitimacy, foreign newspapers were frequently cited.

³¹ “Krigsområdet hotar utvidga sig,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 17 October 1940, p. 4. Translated from Swedish: Mest lider därigenom civilbefolkningen. Indirekt medgiver tyska överbefälet detta. Man kallar dessa bombangrepp för hämndaktioner mot engelska flygare vilka lär bombadera boningsområden i tyska städer. Löften att skona civilbefolkningen äro alltså glömda.

³² “Från Europas horisont,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 31 October 1940, p. 4. Translated from Swedish: Tillsammans med kriget tycks även växa och imperialisternas blödiga kamp om jordklotets omdelning i kapitalets intressen hotar att utvidga sig allt mera.

³³ “De kapitalistiska länderna år 1941,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 9 January 1941, p. 4. Translated from Swedish: Den kapitalistiska världens ekonomiska förbindelser ha genom kriget avbrutits. Det finns intet borgerligt land, som icke har berörts av kriget direkt eller indirekt.

³⁴ Per Wieselgren, *Från Hammaren till Hakkorset, Estland 1939-1941* (Stockholm: Idé och Form Förlag: 1942), 155. Translated from Swedish: Tidningen lästes allmänt såsom ett skämtblad, men de humorfria kommunisterna förstodo inte detta och voro rätt belåtna med redaktionens ansträngningar.

The most common newspapers cited were from Sweden and Finland, along with British and American newspapers.

Swedish newspapers demonstrate the wide spectrum of ideology represented, typically not relying on foreign communist newspapers. The newspapers include: *Dagens Nyheter*,³⁵ *Svenska Dagbladet*,³⁶ *Göteborgs Handels Tidning*,³⁷ *Aftonbladet*,³⁸ *Finanstidningen*,³⁹ *Nya Dagligt Allehandas*,⁴⁰ *Göteborgs Posten*,⁴¹ *Socialdemokraten*,⁴² *Stockholms Tidningen*,⁴³ *Jönköping Vulkan*,⁴⁴ *Örebro Kuriren*,⁴⁵ *Västerbottens-Kuriren*,⁴⁶ *Västmanlands Läns Tidning*,⁴⁷ *Ny Dag*,⁴⁸ *Arbetaren*,⁴⁹ and *Arbetar-Tidningen*.⁵⁰ Finnish newspapers included: *Helsingin Sanomat*,⁵¹ *Suomen Sosiaalidemokraatti*,⁵² *Uusi Suomi*,⁵³ *Åbo Underrättelser*,⁵⁴ *Pohjolan Sanomat*,⁵⁵ and *Arbetarbladet*.⁵⁶

Of all the newspapers cited, the most common was the American *New York Times*.⁵⁷ Other American newspapers were the *Christian Science Monitor*,⁵⁸ *New York Herald Tribune*,⁵⁹ and the *Washington Post*.⁶⁰ The following newspaper were cited from

³⁵ *Sovjet-Estland*, 17 April 1941, p. 4; 8 May 1941, p. 4; 4 June 1941, p. 4; 18 June 1941, p. 4; 25 June 1941, p. 4; 23 July 1941, p. 2.

³⁶ *Sovjet-Estland*, 31 October 1940, p. 4; 4 June 1941, p. 4; 11 June 1941, p. 4; 18 June 1941, p. 4; 30 July 1941, p. 4.

³⁷ *Sovjet-Estland*, 30 January 1941, p. 4.

³⁸ *Sovjet-Estland*, 18 June 1941, p. 4.

³⁹ *Sovjet-Estland*, 15 May 1941, p. 4.

⁴⁰ *Sovjet-Estland*, 18 June 1941, p. 4.

⁴¹ *Sovjet-Estland*, 6 August 1941, p. 4.

⁴² *Sovjet-Estland*, 31 October 1940, p. 4; 30 January 1941, p. 4; 3 April 1941, p. 4; 4 June 1941, p. 4; 25 June 1941, p. 4.

⁴³ *Sovjet-Estland*, 4 June 1941, p. 4; 23 July 1941, p. 2, 4; 13 August 1941, p. 4.

⁴⁴ *Sovjet-Estland*, 31 October 1940, p. 4.

⁴⁵ *Sovjet-Estland*, 3 April 1941, p. 4; 18 June 1941, p. 4.

⁴⁶ *Sovjet-Estland*, 22 May 1941, p. 4.

⁴⁷ *Sovjet-Estland*, 18 June 1941, p. 4.

⁴⁸ *Sovjet-Estland*, 6 March 1941, p. 4.

⁴⁹ *Sovjet-Estland*, 20 March 1941, p. 4; 25 June 1941, p. 4; 13 August 1941, p. 4.

⁵⁰ *Sovjet-Estland*, 15 May 1941, p. 4.

⁵¹ *Sovjet-Estland*, 25 June 1941, p. 4.

⁵² *Sovjet-Estland*, 6 November 1940, p. 4; 21 November 1940, p. 4; 6 February 1941, p. 4; 25 June 1941, p. 4.

⁵³ *Sovjet-Estland*, 16 January 1941, p. 4.

⁵⁴ *Sovjet-Estland*, 30 July 1941, p. 4.

⁵⁵ *Sovjet-Estland*, 25 June 1941, p. 4.

⁵⁶ *Sovjet-Estland*, 13 March 1941, p. 4; 25 June 1941, p. 4.

⁵⁷ *Sovjet-Estland*, 28 November 1940, p. 3; 19 December 1940, p. 4; 6 February 1941, p. 4; 13 March 1941, p. 4; 27 March 1941, p. 4; 29 April 1941, p. 4; 8 May 1941, p. 4; 15 May 1941, p. 4; 22 May 1941, p. 4; 4 June 1941, p. 4; 2 July 1941, p. 4; 23 July 1941, p. 4.

⁵⁸ *Sovjet-Estland*, 12 December 1940, p. 4; 27 March 1941, p. 4; 30 July 1941, p. 4.

⁵⁹ *Sovjet-Estland*, 9 January 1941, p. 4; 13 March 1941, p. 4; 22 May 1941, p. 4; 13 August 1941, p. 4.

⁶⁰ *Sovjet-Estland*, 24 April 1941, p. 4.

Great Britain: *Daily Mail*,⁶¹ *Sunday Times*,⁶² *Times*,⁶³ *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*,⁶⁴ *News Chronicle*,⁶⁵ *Daily Express*,⁶⁶ *Sunday Express*,⁶⁷ and *Flit*.⁶⁸

Germany newspaper included: *Dienst aus Deutschland*,⁶⁹ *Deutsche Bergwerks-Zeitung*,⁷⁰ *Kölnische Zeitung*,⁷¹ *Frankfurter Zeitung*,⁷² *Bayrische Ostmark*,⁷³ and *Bromberger Rundschau*.⁷⁴ Newspapers from other Western European countries include: from Austria, *Süd-Ost Echo*;⁷⁵ from Belgium, *Ulenpiegel*;⁷⁶ from Denmark, *Federlandet*;⁷⁷ from France, *Le Matin*,⁷⁸ *Depeche*,⁷⁹ *Temps*,⁸⁰ *Au Travail*,⁸¹ *Journal*,⁸² *Jour-Echo de Paris*,⁸³ and *Petot Parisien*;⁸⁴ from Greece, *Ethnos*⁸⁵ and *Vradyni*;⁸⁶ from Italy, *Giornale d'Italia*,⁸⁷ *Popolo d'Italia*,⁸⁸ *Corriere della Sera*,⁸⁹ and *Messaggero*;⁹⁰ from Spain, *Arriba*⁹¹ and *Mundro Obrero*;⁹² and from Switzerland, *Journal de Genève*,⁹³ *Gazette de Lausanne*,⁹⁴ *Volksrecht*,⁹⁵ *Basler Nachrichten*,⁹⁶ *National Zeitung*,⁹⁷ *Neue Züricher Zeitung*,⁹⁸ and *Suisse*.⁹⁹

⁶¹ *Sovjet-Estland*, 1 December 1940, p. 4; 19 December 1940, p. 4.

⁶² *Sovjet-Estland*, 19 December 1940, p. 4; 4 January 1941, p. 4; 25 January 1941, p. 4.

⁶³ *Sovjet-Estland*, 17 April 1941, p. 4; 22 May 1941, p. 4; 30 July 1941, p. 4; 6 August 1941, p. 4.

⁶⁴ *Sovjet-Estland*, 28 December 1940, p. 4; 15 May 1941, p. 4; 30 July 1941, p. 4.

⁶⁵ *Sovjet-Estland*, 13 February 1941, p. 4.

⁶⁶ *Sovjet-Estland*, 17 April 1941, p. 4.

⁶⁷ *Sovjet-Estland*, 8 May 1941, p. 4.

⁶⁸ *Sovjet-Estland*, 22 May 1941, p. 4.

⁶⁹ *Sovjet-Estland*, 30 January 1941, p. 4; 6 March 1941, p. 4.

⁷⁰ *Sovjet-Estland*, 13 February 1941, p. 4.

⁷¹ *Sovjet-Estland*, 30 January 1941, p. 4.

⁷² *Sovjet-Estland*, 15 May 1941, p. 4; 30 July 1941, p. 4.

⁷³ *Sovjet-Estland*, 6 August 1941, p. 4.

⁷⁴ *Sovjet-Estland*, 13 August 1941, p. 4.

⁷⁵ *Sovjet-Estland*, 13 March 1941, p. 4.

⁷⁶ *Sovjet-Estland*, 9 December 1940, p. 4.

⁷⁷ *Sovjet-Estland*, 2 July 1941, p. 4.

⁷⁸ *Sovjet-Estland*, 28 November 1940, p. 4.

⁷⁹ *Sovjet-Estland*, 4 January 1941, p. 4.

⁸⁰ *Sovjet-Estland*, 4 January 1941, p. 4.

⁸¹ *Sovjet-Estland*, 13 January 1941, p. 4.

⁸² *Sovjet-Estland*, 24 January 1941, p. 4; 17 April 1941, p. 4.

⁸³ *Sovjet-Estland*, 17 April 1941, p. 4; 11 June 1941, p. 4.

⁸⁴ *Sovjet-Estland*, 2 July 1941, p. 4.

⁸⁵ *Sovjet-Estland*, 21 November 1940, p. 4.

⁸⁶ *Sovjet-Estland*, 21 November 1940, p. 4.

⁸⁷ *Sovjet-Estland*, 16 January 1941, p. 4.

⁸⁸ *Sovjet-Estland*, 6 February 1941, p. 4; 15 May 1941, p. 4.

⁸⁹ *Sovjet-Estland*, 20 March 1941, p. 4.

⁹⁰ *Sovjet-Estland*, 6 August 1941, p. 4.

⁹¹ *Sovjet-Estland*, 18 June 1941, p. 4.

⁹² *Sovjet-Estland*, 2 July 1941, p. 4.

⁹³ *Sovjet-Estland*, 17 October 1940, p. 4; 19 December 1940, p. 4; 27 February 1941, p. 4.

⁹⁴ *Sovjet-Estland*, 24 January 1941, p. 4.

⁹⁵ *Sovjet-Estland*, 20 February 1941, p. 4.

Eastern European newspaper cited included: from Bulgaria, *Völkischer Beobachter*,¹⁰⁰ from Hungary, *Pesti Hírlap*,¹⁰¹ *Pest*,¹⁰² and *Budapesti Értelme*,¹⁰³ from Rumania, *Buna Vestire*,¹⁰⁴ *Curentul*,¹⁰⁵ and *Universul*,¹⁰⁶ from Turkey, *Vatan*,¹⁰⁷ *Son Telegraf*,¹⁰⁸ and *Tan*,¹⁰⁹ and from Yugoslavia, *Vreme*.¹¹⁰ Four Russia newspaper were also cited: *Trud*,¹¹¹ *Krasny Flot*,¹¹² *Vetsjernjaja Moskva*,¹¹³ and *Krasnaja Zvezda*.¹¹⁴ Newspapers from more far-off locations were also cited. They include: from Chile, *La Hora*,¹¹⁵ from India, *Bombay Chronicle*¹¹⁶ and *Tribune*,¹¹⁷ and from Asia, *Ogoneki*,¹¹⁸ *Hotji*,¹¹⁹ *Kokumin*,¹²⁰ and *Mijako*.¹²¹

In addition to the TASS and ETA news agencies which regularly ran articles in *Sovjet-Estland*, three international news agencies were regularly cited in foreign news articles: Associated Press,¹²² Reuters,¹²³ and United Press.¹²⁴ A fourth agency, Overseas News, was cited in the final edition.¹²⁵

⁹⁶ *Sovjet-Estland*, 27 February 1941, p. 4.

⁹⁷ *Sovjet-Estland*, 8 May 1941, p. 4.

⁹⁸ *Sovjet-Estland*, 8 May 1941, p. 4.

⁹⁹ *Sovjet-Estland*, 22 May 1941, p. 4.

¹⁰⁰ *Sovjet-Estland*, 30 January 1941, p. 4.

¹⁰¹ *Sovjet-Estland*, 12 December 1940, p. 4.

¹⁰² *Sovjet-Estland*, 28 December 1940, p. 4.

¹⁰³ *Sovjet-Estland*, 3 April 1941, p. 4.

¹⁰⁴ *Sovjet-Estland*, 28 November 1940, p. 4.

¹⁰⁵ *Sovjet-Estland*, 12 December 1940, p. 4.

¹⁰⁶ *Sovjet-Estland*, 2 July 1941, p. 4.

¹⁰⁷ *Sovjet-Estland*, 6 August 1941, p. 4.

¹⁰⁸ *Sovjet-Estland*, 6 August 1941, p. 4.

¹⁰⁹ *Sovjet-Estland*, 6 August 1941, p. 4.

¹¹⁰ *Sovjet-Estland*, 28 November 1940, p. 4; 6 March 1941, p. 4.

¹¹¹ *Sovjet-Estland*, 24 October 1940, p. 4.

¹¹² *Sovjet-Estland*, 24 January 1941, p. 4.

¹¹³ *Sovjet-Estland*, 27 February 1941, p. 4; 20 March 1941, p. 4.

¹¹⁴ *Sovjet-Estland*, 6 March 1941, p. 4; 13 March 1941, p. 4; 20 March 1941, p. 4; 3 April 1941, p. 4; 10 April 1941, p. 4; 22 May 1941, p. 4; 2 May 1941, p. 4.

¹¹⁵ *Sovjet-Estland*, 27 February 1941, p. 4.

¹¹⁶ *Sovjet-Estland*, 20 February 1941, p. 4; 11 June 1941, p. 4.

¹¹⁷ *Sovjet-Estland*, 11 June 1941, p. 4.

¹¹⁸ *Sovjet-Estland*, 13 February 1941, p. 4; 25 June 1941, p. 4.

¹¹⁹ *Sovjet-Estland*, 20 February 1941, p. 4; 25 June 1941, p. 4.

¹²⁰ *Sovjet-Estland*, 20 February 1941, p. 4.

¹²¹ *Sovjet-Estland*, 20 February 1941, p. 4.

¹²² *Sovjet-Estland*, 6 November 1940, p. 4; 14 November 1940, p. 4; 12 December 1940, p. 4; 28 December 1940, p. 4; 4 January 1941, p. 4; 16 January 1941, p. 4; 30 January 1941, p. 4; 27 February 1941, p. 4; 27 March 1941, p. 4; 17 April 1941, p. 4; 24 April 1941, p. 4; 8 May 1941, p. 4; 11 June 1941, p. 4.

¹²³ *Sovjet-Estland*, 21 November 1940, p. 4; 12 December 1940, p. 4; 19 December 1940, p. 4; 28 December 1940, p. 4; 4 January 1941, p. 4; 30 January 1941, p. 4; 6 March 1941, p. 4; 3 April 1941, p. 4; 17 April 1941, p. 4; 24 April 1941, p. 4; 8 May 1941, p. 4; 28 May 1941, p. 4; 4 June 1941, p. 4; 18 June 1941, p. 4; 2 July 1941, p. 4; 6 August 1941, p. 4; 13 August 1941, p. 1.

Every issue of the newspaper carried at least one foreign newspaper or news organization citation, with numerous issues containing a wide variety of sources. The use of sources from such a wide variety of areas and ideological backgrounds emphasized the enormous resources available to the newspaper's staff. It emphasized that *Sovjet-Estland* was connected to the outside world in way *Kustbon* never had been able to be. By citing foreign sources, particularly of a different ideological background, the news included would gain the appearance of credibility as being an accurate depiction, whether or not this was the case.

View of Sweden in *Sovjet-Estland*

Particular attention was given to Sweden in *Sovjet-Estland*. It is enlightening to separate coverage of Sweden from other foreign news because of the ethnicity of the audience, the strong ties that had existed between the Estonian-Swedes and Sweden, and because of the high emigration thoughts among the Estonian-Swedes. With contact severely restricted between the Estonian-Swedes and Sweden during the Soviet presence, the coverage in *Sovjet-Estland* can be viewed as an attempt by the Bolsheviks to shift the focus of the ethnic Swedes away from Sweden and towards Moscow.

News of Sweden in *Sovjet-Estland* certainly came from TASS and was regularly cited in the byline. The tone of the articles from Sweden was demonstrated already in the first issue, with three news briefs focusing on the new view of the audience's ancestral homeland. The articles focused on the increased spending by the Swedish government for the War Department,¹²⁶ the rationing of bread,¹²⁷ and the increasing economic difficulties of Swedish farmers.¹²⁸ These articles served to emphasize three areas: the high cost of war (which according to the propaganda, was a capitalistic tendency that the Soviet Union was immune to), shortages in supplies and food, and the difficulties of workers (in this case, farmers). While none of the articles attempted to draw conclusions or comparisons, when combined with the news articles found in the rest of the newspaper, it would be

¹²⁴ *Sovjet-Estland*, 31 October 1940, p. 4; 21 November 1940, p. 4; 6 December 1940, p. 4; 20 February 1941, p. 4; 27 February 1941, p. 4; 27 March 1941, p. 4; 3 April 1941, p. 4; 24 April 1941, p. 4; 29 April 1941, p. 4; 8 May 1941, p. 4; 11 June 1941, p. 4; 23 July 1941, p. 4; 30 July 1941, p. 4; 6 August 1941, p. 4.

¹²⁵ *Sovjet-Estland*, 13 August 1941, p. 4.

¹²⁶ "Nya summor till riksförsvaret i Sverige," *Sovjet-Estland*, 17 October 1940, p. 4.

¹²⁷ "I Sverige ransonering bestämd även på mjukt bröd," *Sovjet-Estland*, 17 October 1940, p. 4.

¹²⁸ "Svenska jordbrukarnas läge är katastrofalt," *Sovjet-Estland*, 17 October 1940, p. 4.

difficult to not draw a distinction between the promises of the Soviet Union and the difficulties of life abroad.

In the following weeks, reports included price increases in Stockholm,¹²⁹ uncertainty among Swedish workers over job security,¹³⁰ the closing of factories,¹³¹ and housing shortages.¹³² The negative news from Sweden was constant, encompassing all aspects of life, and all areas in which *Sovjet-Estland* was demonstrating as positive features of the Soviet system. Foods were being rationed and herds were dying of starvation; healthcare was uncertain. Foreign trade was declining, however the articles did not attribute the decline to the effects of the war.

Sweden was a clear concern for the Soviets in terms of the Estonian-Swedes. In order to be successful at convincing them of Soviet ideology, the strong connections between the Estonian-Swedes and Sweden had to not only be severed, but the image of Sweden distorted into a country of uncertainty and failure. The positive attributes of Soviet society had to be contrasted with the negative aspects of Swedish society. Direct comparisons in *Sovjet-Estland* were rare, though. Instead, an indirect method was employed – juxtaposing the positive attributes and promises of Soviet life found in the first three pages (typically) with the negative news about Sweden on the last page. Promises of jobs versus rising strikes and unemployment. The abundance of crops versus rations and rising prices. This was a steady campaign throughout *Sovjet-Estland*. While other countries were also regularly mentioned, the dominance was focused on Sweden.

The image of Sweden being a land in crisis was overly prevalent; there were crises in the economy, with a lack of food or jobs, and there appeared to be no end in sight. It was also described as being a land in political crisis; supposed reformers were depicted as being ignored, so that the capitalistic elite could continue to exploit the workers. A June article stated:

The crisis within Sweden's inner life moves towards a catastrophic decrease in exports, industry, and their working people's prosperity. This goes still deeper. Every sort of reformer and opportunist is losing their

¹²⁹ "Prisstegringarna i Stockholm," *Sovjet-Estland*, 24 October 1940, p. 4.

¹³⁰ "Den växande arbetsbristen i Sverige," *Sovjet-Estland*, 31 October 1940, p. 4.

¹³¹ "Slut på margårinfabrikation i Sverige," *Sovjet-Estland*, 6 November 1940, p. 4.

¹³² "Bostadsnöden i Karlskoga i Sverige," *Sovjet-Estland*, 14 November 1940, p. 4.

influence, and the belief in a high-placed theory of “the co-development of socialism and capitalism” fades even more.¹³³

To face the threat of war and maintain a neutrality stance all of the political parties had joined in a coalition, excluding the communist party.¹³⁴ Naturally, the Soviet propaganda did not depict the government as unified and the communists as isolated.

Coverage of news from Sweden can best be described as selective, highlighting negative aspects. While this coverage was similar to the news from other western capitalistic countries, the news from Sweden in *Sovjet-Estland* served an additional purpose above the distinction drawn on an ideological basis (the capitalist system was bad, the communist system was good). With a high frequency of open dissent among the Estonian-Swedes and the expressed desire for them to emigrate to Sweden, the coverage of Sweden should also be viewed as an attempt to dissuade the emigration thoughts with an underlying sentiment that life in Sweden would be uncertain and worse than life in Estonia. Combined with the domestic-Soviet news that described the Soviet Union as prosperous and with promises of future benefits, it can be argued that *Sovjet-Estland* attempted to shift the focus of the Estonian-Swedes from Stockholm (and their role as ethnic Swedes abroad) to Moscow (and their role as an equal ethnicity in the Soviet system, as described in Chapter 2).

Across the board, the view portrayed in Estonia of Sweden was bleak. High unemployment; poor working conditions; rationing of food – Sweden was a land of uncertainty and hopelessness. This was meant to contrast with the bright and stable future the Soviets were providing and promising for the inhabitants of Estonia and covered extensively in the other pages of *Sovjet-Estland*, and was a subtle method of convincing the Estonian-Swedes to remain. This type of news was similar to how other Western countries were depicted.

¹³³ A.L., “Sverige av i dag,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 4 June 1941, p. 4. Translated from Swedish: Krisen inom Sveriges inre liv för mot en katastrofal nedgång av exporten, industrien och det arbetande folkets välgång. Detta går ännu djupare. Alla slag av reformister och opportunisterna förlora sitt inflytande och tron på en högt uppsatt teori om “sammanväxandet av socialism och kapitalism” bleknar allt mera.

¹³⁴ The Coalition Government (*samlingsregeringen*) was created on 13 December 1939 and was intended to present a unified voice in Sweden’s domestic and foreign policy for the duration of the war. There were critics of the Coalition Government in Sweden, though, including Torney Segerstedt, editor of *Göteborgs Handels och Sjöfarts Tidning*, arguing that without any opposing power, the Swedish people lost the ability to choose between the political parties in elections. See Torney Segerstedt, *När Stormen Klarar Sikten: Artiklar 1933-1945* (Stockholm: Ordfronts Förlag, 1980).

Coverage of Sweden, however, deserves special attention when looking at *Sovjet-Estland*. News from Sweden was regularly covered, as opposed to the relatively infrequency of coverage of Estonia in *Ny Dag*. The focus on Sweden in foreign coverage in *Sovjet-Estland* can be explained by the close connection between the Estonian-Swedish national identity and Sweden. In attempting to create and redefine the ethnic Swedish national identity along socialistic lines, the Soviets were attempting to shift the focus from Stockholm to Moscow.

In contrast to *Ny Dag*'s purpose and intent, *Sovjet-Estland*'s reporting of Sweden was intended, in large part, as a deterrent to emigration – in combination with local reporting extolling the benefits and promises of the Soviet system. There was little mention of news from Sweden in the Estonian-language newspapers, although in *Sovjet-Estland*, negative news from Sweden can be found in the majority of issues.

The majority of the articles about Sweden were brief, summarizing the main effects – with figures, if available – without offering a cause, or how the country was attempting to improve the situation. Only negative news was reported, so if segments of the economy were not in a decline, but rather improving, this would not have been reported in *Sovjet-Estland*.

One can not classify the articles as incorrect or falsehood. In large part as a result of the war, Sweden did suffer from economic difficulties, leading to the rationing of goods. However, the war was never portrayed in these news briefs; the articles were intended to stand on their own without the full explanation.

There is also evidence in *Sovjet-Estland* of a segment of society that accepted the Soviet propaganda, and wished to increase interactions. This segment of the ethnic Swedes, however, lived in Sweden and sent their greetings, with some longing for similar communistic progress to occur in Sweden. The number of copies that were regularly sent to Sweden has not been able to be determined, however, the presence in Sweden of *Sovjet-Estland* can be seen as an early stage in Terry Martin's "Piedmont Principle," in which a later goal would be an extension of the Soviet domestic policy towards a foreign policy.¹³⁵ On several occasions, *Sovjet-Estland* printed letters from Sweden.

¹³⁵ Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 9.

The Swedish response to *Sovjet-Estland* took on a personal approach early on. In the 21 November issue, the following announcement was printed:

Young communist in Sweden wishes to exchange letters with a Swedish-speaking young communist in Soviet Estonia. (A girl around the age of 17 would be desirable.) The letter should be sent to the address: Ingvar Augustsson, Wallenbergsgatan 1-a, Gothenburg, Sweden.¹³⁶

To what effect this letter had on the reader cannot be determined (whether anyone responded also cannot be stated). According to a note from the editor in the 6 December issue, the newspaper was receiving greetings and subscriptions from Sweden on an almost daily basis. The editor was quite humble in his statement: "It pleases all the Estonian-Swedes who gather around *Sovjet-Estland* a lot, and naturally the editorial staff, that one entertains such a large interest in our little Swedish-language newspaper in the ESSR."¹³⁷ The editor extended his appreciation for the subscriptions and the greetings, as well as passed along "comrade greetings and heartfelt thanks" ("kamratliga hälsning och hjärtliga tack") to the Publishing House of Working Culture (Förlaget Arbetarkultur) and the newspaper *Ny Dag* for their work in Sweden.

The Beginning of the End: The War Against Germany

The structure and tone of *Sovjet-Estland* changed dramatically with the 25 June 1941 issue. The German declaration of war on 22 June meant an end to the image of the Soviet Union being a land of peace and meant direct involvement in the war that had previously been portrayed as being restricted to the capitalistic countries. The newspaper had to shift from its propaganda campaign of strengthening the communistic culture among the Estonian-Swedes to a propaganda campaign to mobilize the population against the German war effort.

Jeffrey Brooks and David Brandenberger point to difficulties in Soviet propaganda to adequately deal with the sudden onslaught of war, frequently relying on the localized efforts rather than the central control which had existed previously. Brandenberger writes:

¹³⁶ *Sovjet-Estland*, 21 November 1940, p. 2. Translated from Swedish: Ungkommunist i Sverige önskar brevväxla med en svensktalande unggommunist i Sovjet-Estland. (Önskvärd vore med en flicka i åldern ca 17 år). Brevet torde sändas under adressen: Ingvar Augustsson, Wallenbergsgatan 1-a, Göteborg, Sverige.

¹³⁷ "Sovjet-Estland har väckt stor uppmärksamhet i Sverige," *Sovjet-Estland*, 6 December 1940, p. 4. Translated from Swedish: Det gläder mycket alla estlandssvenskar som samlats omkring "Sovjet-Estland" och naturligtvis mest redaktionen, att man hyser så stort intresse för vårt lilla svenskspråkiga organ i ESSR.

...the pages of the central press during the first days and weeks of the war reveal a cacophony of contradictory rallying calls that were only gradually arranged into a more effective propaganda campaign... In the absence of fresh instructions, state publishing – loath as ever to innovate – merely combined the existing line with snippets of new wartime speeches while waiting for initiative from above.¹³⁸

This can certainly be seen in *Sovjet-Estland*, which seemed to be inadequately prepared to shape the propaganda for the appropriate audience. Largely lacking were specific articles aimed at the Swedish minority. Instead, articles and speeches were translated, although from a much greater variety of sources than previously. This follows the trend noticed by Brooks, who writes:

An assortment of narrators with differing viewpoints – poets, writers, literary correspondents, local reporters, regular journalists, officials, and Stalin himself – began to use the press in different ways to advance one objective: victory over the invaders.¹³⁹

Even in *Sovjet-Estland*, a more diverse collection of sources was used, featuring Soviet columnists reporting from the frontlines.

While the arrival of the war demonstrated the vast resources of the Soviet press in having access to these different narrators, in the case of *Sovjet-Estland*, it also exposed considerable weaknesses. The impact of the war necessitated a speedy turnover time in production and preparation of content. Less time was given to translate at the same time as the number of articles available for translation increased. Less time was also given to proof content and noticeable goofs appeared. There was a return to the poor spelling of the early weeks of the newspaper, particularly of the use of “fösterländska”¹⁴⁰ instead of “fosterländska” meaning “native country” and the frequent misspelling of “Röda armén” (Red army) as “Röda armen” (Red arm).¹⁴¹ Although previously diligent in producing a newspaper each week (although at times changing the day of publication), a week was missed in mid-July between the 9 July and 23 July issues. This was preceded by a two-page issue – the shortest issue of the entire pressrun. Also demonstrating their being

¹³⁸ David Brandenberger, *National Bolshevism: Stalinist Mass Culture and the Formation of Modern Russian National Identity, 1931-1956* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 115-118.

¹³⁹ Jeffrey Brooks, *Thank You Comrade Stalin! Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 160.

¹⁴⁰ *Sovjet-Estland*, 25 June 1941, p. 1.

¹⁴¹ See, for example: “Sammandrag av överbefällets kommunique för Röda armen för den 23 juni 1921,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 25 June 1941, p. 2.

pressed for time, page 2 through 4 (all except the front page) in the 6 August issue were incorrectly numbered, listing the newspaper as issue number 24 instead of 31.

The German declaration of war fit into the Soviet interpretation that the war was a capitalistic affair, according to the propaganda; Germany brought the war to the Soviet Union despite the Soviet tendency for peace. The people were obliged to rise up and protect the peace-seeking society from the capitalistic greed. This is not to say, however, that war was a complete surprise. *Sovjet-Estland* held regular updates of the war in Western Europe, which appeared to favor France and Britain throughout its pressrun despite the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact linking German and the Soviet Union.

Once the Germans attacked, the view of Germany in press coverage was completely altered. Whereas *Sovjet-Estland* had previously avoided articles on German life such as the frequent articles concerning other Western countries, with the 25 June issue, Germany became the major aim of its negative attack campaign. Certainly criticism of other countries did not cease, although the news from other areas was largely limited, being pushed aside for the more pressing matters of wartime propaganda.

The war also brought a sudden prominence to the Red Army in the propaganda. Whereas rarely pictured or mentioned in earlier issues, following 22 June, photographs of the military appeared in each issue (except the 2-page issue which had a portrait of Stalin on the cover) – “Brave Soviet pilots,”¹⁴² a woman signing up to be a nurse on the frontlines and a group of men at a mobilization point,¹⁴³ submarines,¹⁴⁴ and soldiers.¹⁴⁵ Also appearing was a soldier who bravely captured an enemy tank¹⁴⁶ and the ruins of a “fascist plane” that was shot down.¹⁴⁷ Articles were written on topics of heroism and bravery on the frontlines.¹⁴⁸

As each of the Soviet leaders gave a speech, the text was translated and published in *Sovjet-Estland* for the Estonian-Swedes. They included radio addresses by: V.M.

¹⁴² *Sovjet-Estland*, 25 June 1941, p. 4.

¹⁴³ *Sovjet-Estland*, 2 July 1941, p. 1.

¹⁴⁴ *Sovjet-Estland*, 30 July 1941, p. 1.

¹⁴⁵ *Sovjet-Estland*, 6 August 1941, p.1.

¹⁴⁶ *Sovjet-Estland*, 13 August 1941, p. 1.

¹⁴⁷ *Sovjet-Estland*, 13 August 1941, p. 2.

¹⁴⁸ See, for example: “Rödarmisternas hjältemod,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 2 July 1941, p. 3. J. Tsvetoff, “Manlighet och tapperhet,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 9 July 1941, p. 2. N. Virta, “Sovjetläkarnas tapperhet,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 6 August 1941, p. 3.

Molotov's 22 June address,¹⁴⁹ Stalin's 3 July address,¹⁵⁰ K. Säres's 5 July address to Estonians,¹⁵¹ and J. Laurstin's 16 July address.¹⁵² From the date they were delivered, the staff had from three to seven days to translate before the articles were published.

However, while the official speeches were translated and articles from the frontlines pervaded, minimal focus was given to preparing propaganda articles specifically for the Estonian-Swedes. In one case, an article under the headline "The Estonian-Swedish farmers' duty in the fight against fascism," the only reference made to the Estonian-Swedes is in the final sentence: "We must show that the Estonian-Swedes battle fascism honorably."¹⁵³ *Sovjet-Estland* attempted to link historical oppression to the Baltic Germans with the need to rise up against fascism.¹⁵⁴ This involved a shift in focus away from the repeated assertions in earlier issues that placed the larger focus on oppression during the Interwar period, when it was oppression by bourgeois Estonians. Historically, the Baltic Germans and the Estonian-Swedes regularly cooperated with each other during the independent Estonian period. This contradiction was never addressed, although the revised message sought to portray the benefits and protections afforded to minorities in the Soviet Union. In the seven final issues beginning with the German declaration of war, there were only five articles concerning the Estonian-Swedes and the war.¹⁵⁵

In presenting foreign and domestic news, the Soviet propaganda was attempting to demonstrate the ideal life as being within the Soviet structure. These dual pictures of horror abroad and tranquility at home were an effort to emphasize the fluctuation of the capitalistic world to the detriment of the working people and to promote the progress and

¹⁴⁹ "Viceordföranden I USSR-s Folkkommisarierråd och utrikesfolkkommisariern V.M. Molotovs radiotal den 22 juni," *Sovjet-Estland*, 25 June 1941, p. 1.

¹⁵⁰ "Ordföranden I Statlig Försvarskommitten J.V. Stalins radiotal den 3 juli 1941," *Sovjet-Estland*, 9 July 1941, p. 1.

¹⁵¹ "Sekretären I EK(b)P-s Centralkommitté kamrat K. Säres radiotal den 5 juli 1941," *Sovjet-Estland*, 9 July 1941, p. 2.

¹⁵² "Vice ordförande I ESSR-s Statliga Försvarskommitté kamrat J. Laurstins radiotal den 16 juli 1941," *Sovjet-Estland*, 23 July 1941, p. 1.

¹⁵³ "Den estlandssvenska bondebefolkningens uppgift i kampen mot fascismen," *Sovjet-Estland*, 30 July 1941, p. 1. Translated from Swedish: Vi måste visa, att estlandssvenskarna med heder utgå ur kampen mot fascismen.

¹⁵⁴ "Estlandssvenskar, för en gemensam kamp mot fienden tillsammans med de övriga sovjetfolken!" *Sovjet-Estland*, 23 July 1941, p. 1.

potential available with socialism. This was accomplished in large part through the extensive news gathering and distribution mechanisms, namely the TASS news agency for the Soviet Union and the ETA news agency for Soviet Estonia. For the Estonian-Swedes, propaganda also involved encouraging a break away from their Sweden-focused mentality towards a Moscow-focused outlook. Extra coverage of hardships in Sweden were meant to sour thoughts of a potential emigration movement by presenting a life of uncertainty abroad.

However, the 22 June 1941 German declaration of war brought a dramatic change to *Sovjet-Estland*. Images of the Soviet Union as a land of peace and stability had altered in an effort to mobilize mass support in the war effort. The arrival of the war was the ultimate test of the previous propaganda efforts: if the population had successfully accepted the Soviet ideology, they could be mobilized to rise up against the fascist threat in order to protect the homeland. This was not the case for the Estonian-Swedes, though, and with the arrival of the war, efforts to focus attention on the minority were greatly diminished. If the population had not been convinced earlier, after 22 June it was too late.

¹⁵⁵ In addition to those already mentioned, see: "Estlandssvenskarna enhälligt vid mobilisationspunkterna," *Sovjet-Estland*, 30 July 1941, pp. 1-2; "Estlandssvenskarna hjälpa till att förintna fienden," *Sovjet-Estland*, 30 July 1941, p. 2; "Agitationsbrigaden på Vormsö," *Sovjet-Estland*, 6 August 1941, p. 2.

Chapter 6: Truth and Consequences

*The self-critique and the party's inner democracy are themselves inseparable. Only the party's inner democracy gives the Bolsheviks the self-critique the possibility to develop. Self-criticism is a worthwhile method for the education of party members. It is not unknown for a Bolshevik, says comrade Stalin, that the self-critique's order is grounded for our party's action, as a means for the strengthening of the proletariat's dictatorship and the soul of the method for the cadres' Bolshevistic upbringing.*¹

Despite the best intentions of *Sovjet-Estland*, sentiments among the Estonian-Swedes remained largely resistant to the Soviet ideology. Repeated attempts were made in various areas – whether in promoting the Estonian-Swedish culture, highlighting the elections, drawing distinctions between domestic life and foreign life – but the new ideology was rejected. Policies were rejected and criticism was high. Certainly one would expect *Sovjet-Estland*, as the primary organ of propaganda aimed at the Estonian-Swedes, to attempt to shape the arguments to best appeal to the audience. This appears to have occurred only minimally, though. *Sovjet-Estland* was not a representation of the Estonian-Swedes any more than it was an accurate and complete picture of life in 1940-1941 Estonia. It was propaganda.

Sovjet-Estland was under the direct control of the Bolsheviks. However, the perfect picture of life in Soviet Estonia was not always presented in the newspaper. Although infrequent, there are examples of criticism and doubt to be found in the pages. While the intent and whether these apparent slips were missed by the censors cannot be determined, they can perhaps be used as evidence that the newspaper was not as closely looked over as it should have been – perhaps as a result of a limited number of individuals at the upper levels of the party with a knowledge of Swedish. The content of *Sovjet-Estland* was not completely consistent and did feature some examples of dissent among the population.

¹ “Bolsjevistisk självkritik,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 4 June 1941, p. 3. Translated from Swedish: Självkritiken och partiets inre demokrati äro sinsemellan oskiljaktiga. Endast partiets inre demokrati ger den bolsjevistiska självkritiken möjlighet att utveckla sig. Självkritik är en givande metod vid uppfostran av partimedlemar. Det är icke obekant för en bolsjevik, säger kamrat Stalin, att självkritikens lösen är grunden för vårt partis verksamhet, medlet för förstärkandet av proletariatets diktatur och själen hos metoden för kadrenas bolsjevistiska uppfostran.

Appeals were made for more cooperation in the newspaper by the locals, and in some cases, these appeals were answered.² Participation from the community in the production, though, appears to have been minimal throughout the newspaper. *Sovjet-Estland* remained a newspaper created by the Bolsheviks with limited interaction from the target audience.

One of the overarching themes in *Sovjet-Estland* was to convince the ethnic Swedish population to remain in Estonia, to put aside thoughts of emigration and join the socialistic community completely. With the first issue arriving on the very day that the first group of Estonian-Swedes were arriving legally on the shores of Sweden,³ emigration was a key concern; if one group had received permission, why couldn't others? *Sovjet-Estland* had to deal with this, although as an organ of propaganda was restricted in its method, not willing to admit that a portion of the population was not joyously welcoming the arrival of the Soviets. To admit this would have been a far greater travesty for the propaganda campaign, because it would have given credence to the emigration thoughts.

In the final months of the first Soviet occupation, the Bolsheviks moved towards increasing terror. As was the case with all ethnic groups, the Estonian-Swedes were hard hit by deportations and forced mobilizations. And similar to propaganda aimed at the ethnic Estonians, there was no mention of either the deportations or forced mobilizations in the newspaper.

Considering the difficulties the Estonian-Swedes faced, not only in the Soviet occupation but also in the increased Estonianization policies of the previous government, it is hardly surprising that when the opportunity presented itself, a vast majority of the population emigrated to Sweden. The arrival of the Germans not only raised hopes of an independent Estonia, it also raised the hopes and possibilities of emigration.

² A small ad appeared in the 13 February issue of *Sovjet-Estland* (page 2) inviting readers to send notices from their hometowns into the editorial offices.

³ The Pakrite island Swedes were not the first group of ethnic Swedes to receive legal permission to emigrate from the Soviet Union. There was a group of approximately 900 ethnic Swedes from the village of Gammalsvenskby (Old Swedish Village) in the Zmejovka district of the Ukraine that received permission to emigrate to Sweden in 1929. Approximately 70 of this group later emigrated further to Canada, while 243 returned to the Ukraine by 1931. The remaining émigrés were placed throughout Sweden with the largest concentration on the island of Gotland. See: Jörgen Hedman and Lars Åhlander, *Historien om Gammalsvenskby och svenskarna i Ukraina* (Stockholm: Dialogos, 2003).

Dissatisfaction and Emigration Thoughts

Emigration thoughts among the Estonian-Swedes were a major concern for the Bolsheviks. The topic was frequently discussed in the Läänemaa communist party meetings.⁴ The topic of emigration thoughts was rarely openly discussed in *Sovjet-Estland*, although the sentiments could be found throughout the community. Instead, it was intended for the reader to make a connection between the promises of the Soviet Union and the horrors of life abroad with the idea that they should remain in Estonia. However, there were a few instances when the topic was explicitly raised.

The October 1940 departure of the 110 Pakrite islanders for Sweden (with the approval of the Soviet Union) was not initially mentioned.⁵ A reference was made of them in the 18 June issue with a reprint of an article originally published in the Swedish newspaper *Arbetarfolket*. The article depicted some of the hardships the recent émigrés faced, in particular the tale of a 76 year-old former fisherman who on Pakrite had two motorboats and a rowboat and now only has an old rowboat which leaks. Hardships were, according to the article, leading to homesickness for the Pakrite islands and a longing to be in Soviet Estonia where there is a goal, a future.⁶ However, the Swedish newspaper that originally published the article was a communist newspaper, and the thoughts of returning to Soviet Estonia held by a few were distorted by the article's author. It can be argued that by not mentioning the departure of the Pakrite islanders earlier and not attempting to incorporate it into the larger ideology and propaganda, the door appeared to remain open for future legal emigration for the Estonian-Swedes, perhaps irreparably hampering the entire propaganda and agitation campaign.

Throughout the 43-issues of *Sovjet-Estland* attempts were consistently made to convince the Estonian-Swedes that life was better in Estonia and to convert them to the Soviet-ideology. *Sovjet-Estland* attempted to isolate emigration thoughts as those of a minority. This was rarely this done in an overt manner.

When I bicycle back towards Riguldi colony I think: Home? Though the old woman was Swedish, she didn't want to leave Estonia, her home. It is not easy to leave the native country, to leave the soil that your forefathers

⁴ See, for example: ERAF [Eesti Riigiarhiivi Filiaal] 1-1-6, *EK(b)P Läänemaa Komitee koosolekute ja maakond parteiaktiivi nõupidamise protokollid (ärakirjad)*. See also: ERAF 1-1-48, *EK(b)P Läänemaa Komitee Informatsioonid*.

⁵ The date of their arrival in Stockholm ironically coincided with the appearance of *Sovjet-Estland* – 17 October 1940.

⁶ “Rågöborna längtar hem från Sverige,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 18 June 1941, 4.

have cultivated. The soil is barren and stony and still one loves it. It is the soil of the native country. It is impossible to replant an old tree – then it languishes away. Those that propagate moving away to “the old native country” should remember that.⁷

The author attempted to develop a closer relationship with the audience by writing in the first-person. This was a technique occasionally employed by the newspaper. While the author was rarely identified, these articles can be seen as a direct appeal, gaining credibility. The articles also routinely involved a conversation between the author and unidentified locals within the Estonian-Swedish areas.

As with the foreign affairs articles that cited foreign newspapers to gain credibility (mentioned in Chapter 5), direct appeals were also used through the use of personal, first-person articles – reminiscent of articles by columnists in *Kustbon* which recounted certain adventures, observations, or daily interactions with local people. Interestingly, the author (or authors) of these articles was never indicated, though. This would have been more effective in gaining additional credibility. These first-person articles recount interactions with locals – Estonian-Swedes who were also not identified – that demonstrated support for the Soviets among the population. These articles were a reinforcement of the other articles in the newspaper, meant to shed a more personal light on the society and to further isolate those with dissenting views.

The thoughts of emigration persisted and grew throughout the Soviet period. Per Wieselgren writes in his memories of the period that the sentiments grew following the forced evacuation of the island regions, and the military take-over of the Birkas school (although this was later returned and opened in October 1940). Those that were displaced lived “in deplorable conditions and could not obtain any settlements or any proper profitable gainful employment.”⁸ These thoughts spread from the displaced to incorporate the vast majority of Estonian-Swedes. Oskar Cher, the Läänemaa communist party secretary, prepared information on 8 October 1940 indicating that 10 of the

⁷ “Stämmingsbilder från Läänemaas kustbyar i Rikull,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 17 October 1940, p. 2. Translated from Swedish: När jag cyklar tillbaka mot Rikull nybygge tänker jag: Hem? Fast gumman var svenska, ville hon icke lämna Estland, sitt hem. Det är icke lätt att lämna fosterlandet, att lämna jorden som dina förfäder ha odlat. Jorden är ofruktbar och stenig och äntå älskar man den. Det är fosterlandets jord. Det är omöjligt att omplantera ett gammalt träd – då tvinar det bort. De som propagera omflyttandet till “det gamla fosterlandet” borde komma ihåg detta.

⁸ Per Wieselgren, *Från hammaren till hakkorset, Estland 1939-1941* (Stockholm: Idé och Form Förlag, 1942), 152. Translated from Swedish: ...under de bedrövlige villkor och kunde icke erhålla några nya boplatser eller någon ordentlig förtjänstmöjlighet.

approximately 20 families that had been displaced from Osmussaar and sent to Vormsi were demanding new farms, or they would depart for Sweden.⁹

L. Malmre prepared a letter concerning the situation on Vormsi on 6 Decemeber. The recipients included comrades Säre, Ruus, and Lauristin. In the letter, he indicated that the Estonian-Swedes were signing lists indicating their desire to emigrate – 90 percent of those in Borrby and 100 percent of those in Diby and Norrby had signed. He listed four reasons for their emigration thoughts:

1. There is no certainty about the possibility for survival in the future.
2. The taxes are unbearable if it will be per hectare.
3. They have heard from Russian soldiers, that Vormsi will be evacuated for the establishment of military bases.
4. Without fishing, the owners of the smaller farms have no possibilities to earn a living.¹⁰

Malmre does mention some hesitation, though. His letter concluded by stating, “It commonly demonstrates that light-heartedly they would not leave.”¹¹ However, it was later noted on 20 February 1941 that, in the opinion of Läänemaa committee, thoughts of emigration were not based on economic considerations, but rather a question of nationality. In addition, it was mentioned that all of the school teachers in Riguldi were advocating emigration.¹²

Agitators were frequenting the Estonian-Swedish areas; it was mentioned on 12 February that 29 agitators had been working in Riguldi alone. Their work noted that some individuals did not want to leave their farmland, but indicated that if the children left, there would be no reason for them to remain.¹³

Support and Criticism

Given the high amount of dissent among the Estonian-Swedes, one would have to assume that the audience accepting the Soviet ideology in *Sovjet-Estland* would be

⁹ ERAF 1-1-48, *EK(b)P Läänemaa Komitee Informatsioonid*, 1.

¹⁰ ERAF 1-1-77, *L. Malmre kirjad ja A. Klingbergi aruanne olukorrast eestirootslastega valdades ning tõlge ajalehes 'Västmanlands Läns Tidning' ilmunud artiklist*, 1. Translated from Estonian: 1. et ei ole mingit selgust eksisteerimise võimaluste kohta tulevikus. 2. et maksud käivad üle jõu, kui neid hektaarilt võotakse, 3. Vene sõjaväelastelt on kuulnud, et Vormsi saab evakueeritud baaside asutamise pärast, 4. ilma kalapüügita vähemate talude omanikel ei ole võimalik ülalpidamist hankida.

¹¹ ERAF 1-1-77, *L. Malmre kirjad ja A. Klingbergi aruanne olukorrast eestirootslastega valdades ning tõlge ajalehes 'Västmanlands Läns Tidning' ilmunud artiklist*, 1. Translated from Estonian: Üldiselt paistab, et kerge südamega ei taheta minna.

¹² ERAF 1-1-48, *EK(b)P Läänemaa Komitee Informatsioonid*, 52.

minimal. Certainly one cannot equate subscription to acceptance, however in assessing the impact of the *Sovjet-Estland* propaganda campaign, it is important to consider the subscription rate. Quite unsurprisingly, the newspaper's consistent filler-placement ad claiming that "all Estonian-Swedes read *Sovjet-Estland*" was considerably exaggerated. However, Wieselgren stating that no one accepted the propaganda is also an exaggeration, perhaps reflecting a biased view of one who had fled from Estonia.¹⁴

Wieselgren states that the newspaper was used in the classrooms, largely since textbooks were not yet available.¹⁵ A February Central Committee report from the Administration of Propaganda and Agitation (Â Óíðàãëá í è å Ìðñããá í ä û È Àãèðàöèè), Neeme Ruus writes that there were 800 copies of the newspaper being sent out each week to the ethnic Swedes. His number could be elevated, though, as the report being sent to Moscow also states that among the Estonian-Swedes there is a "great interest for Marxism-Leninism."¹⁶ An 8 May article in honor of Bolshevik Press Day states that the newspaper had a press run of 1100 copies.¹⁷ However, how many of those remained in Estonia and how many were sent to Sweden is unknown.¹⁸ As letters from those in Sweden published in *Sovjet-Estland* can attest, a significant number of subscribers lived abroad. The same article lists the *Kustbon* subscription rate at only 200 copies, certainly a considerable increase for *Sovjet-Estland* if the numbers are to be believed. Clues to the subscription among Estonian-Swedes can also be found in a May Central Committee report concerning the Estonian-Swedes, which listed the goal to increase subscription in select towns (without listing current levels). The report expresses the following subscription goals: for the island of Vormsi, 240 subscribers; Riguldi commune, up to 150; Noarootsi commune, up to 100; Harjumaa, up to 50; and Ruhnu, up to 50 subscribers.¹⁹ Goals for other regions were not given, and there was no mention of subscription numbers or goals for Sweden.

¹³ ERAF 1-1-48, *EK(b)P Läänemaa Komitee Informatsioonid*, 49.

¹⁴ Wieselgren, 155.

¹⁵ Wieselgren, 154.

¹⁶ ERAF 1-1-256, *ÜK(b)P KK jt.-ga parteihariduse finatseerimise, poliitilise kirjanduse väljaandmise, usuvastase propaganda jt. küsimustes*, 12-13. Translated from Russian: áíëü øíé èíðãðãñ ê èçó÷áí þ Ìððèñèçìà -Ëå í è í è ç ì à.

¹⁷ "Överblick över Estlands arbetarpress," *Sovjet-Estland*, 8 May 1941, p. 3.

¹⁸ Research in the archives has not yielded any definitive discovery of subscription or printing information for the newspaper or its distribution.

¹⁹ ERAF 1-4-71, *Õã íððàëüé Êí èððà ò ÊÏ(á) Ýñðííèðè Ìñíáüé Ñã ñðíð*, 36-39. Minutes no. 8 of the Seating of the Central Committee, dated 15, 21, and 22 May 1941.

Hints of the limited subscriptions among the Estonian-Swedes was shown in an unexpected location – a 22 May article on Neeme Ruus’ visit to Vihterpalu. The article states: “In Vihterpalu, where one does not have a single subscriber to *Sovjet-Estland*, one saw a great interest among them for the newspapers Comrade Ruus brought with him.”²⁰ This statement was used to articulate the support for Ruus, but is striking in stating that none of the residents subscribed to the newspaper. The interest was demonstrated, according to the author, but one would assume that by May, ethnic Swedes in Vihterpalu would have had at least some exposure to the newspaper in other areas of their life.

The archives can also be used to show approval, but even in the archival, support was minimal among the Estonian-Swedes. Archival materials of interviews for Communist Party membership in Läänemaa, for example, only list two individuals of Swedish ethnicity, Johannes Vesterman and Joosep Blomberg, both from Riguldi and both interviewed for membership on 10 March 1941.²¹ This is not to state that only two Estonian-Swedes were members of the Communist Party. Lists of names of party members were not compared with lists of Estonian-Swedes. Instead, this reflects only the interviews found in the Läänemaa committee’s reports and minutes in which ethnicity was stated.

The editors referred to appreciation within the community for the newspaper – not a complete endorsement by the entire ethnic Swedish community – but of an individual identified as Comrade Oskar Nilson of Riguldi. He was quoted in an article as stating, “I read *Sovjet-Estland*, which is the first Swedish-language newspaper the state has given to us. Before we had to satisfy ourselves with our own little newspaper.”²²

The level of participation by the Estonian-Swedes cannot be accurately measured through the use of *Sovjet-Estland*. As a tool of propaganda, the image was regularly manipulated to meet the goals of the campaign – to attempt to isolate the thoughts of emigration and dissent as belonging to a minority. Certainly doubt can be cast on all articles that were unsigned or failed to state names. However, participation can illuminate

²⁰ Åhörare. “Kamrat Neeme Ruus talade i Vipall och Rikull,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 22 May 1941, p. 2. Translated from Swedish: I Vipall, där man ej hade en enda prenumeration på *Sovjet-Estland*, visade man ett stort intresse för de av kamrat Ruus medhavda provnumren.

²¹ ERAF 1-1-6, *EK(b)P Läänemaa Komitee koosolekute ja maakond parteiaktiivi nõupidamise protokollid (ärakirjad)*, 38-39. The interviews were conducted in Estonian, and in both cases the interviewees responded that they read the newspaper.

some suggestions as to how wide-spread the newspaper was. Fridolf Isberg, for example, was a regular contributor. It would be inaccurate to state that there was no participation with the Soviets amid the Estonian-Swedes. Names were occasionally used in articles, although the level of their support could always be questioned, as well as possible reasons for the support. Those named in the paper can be doubted about the level of their participation and support of the Soviets. Indeed, Isberg focused on the education of agricultural techniques – a topic absent of the Soviet ideology. It can be argued that his articles with ideology were concessions for the greater goal of maintaining a Swedish-language school at Birkas, which according to his memoir about the period indicates was not a certainty. However, with such high numbers of public dissent to the Soviets, even the limited amount of support such as submitting articles is noteworthy.

There are a few examples of overt interaction between readers and the newspaper staff (excluding the case of Isberg's agricultural column which regularly sought questions from readers). One such exchange occurred over the issue of sports in the Estonian-Swedish regions. An initial article was published on 20 March by an unnamed author. The article provided an ideologically based overview of sports among the Estonian-Swedes, almost going so far as to hint that any sports gatherings and athletic success can be directly attributed to the Soviet effort. According to the article, sports in capitalistic countries only sought out top athletes and attempts at breaking records. In contrast, the Soviet Union was devoted to bringing the joys of sporting activities to the masses. Focusing on the Estonian-Swedish areas, the author proudly states that ethnic Swedes are always in first place whenever they compete (which seems to be at odds with the criticism of sports in capitalist countries), although hopes that the bureaucracy that existed previously would disappear, particularly the differences between those in the towns and those out in the countryside, whose young competitors were easily intimidated.²³

A few weeks later a counter article was printed, submitted by Viktor Aman. His article is striking in its complete lack of ideology, basically countering the claims of the previous article point by point. While not directly attacking the ideology, one can certainly read into it an almost anti-Soviet position. It is therefore surprising that it was

²² "Nuckö och Rikull förbereda sig för valen," *Sovjet-Estland*, 20 December 1940, p. 2. Translated from Swedish: Jag läser "Sovjet-Estland", vilken är den första svenskspråkiga tidningen som staten givit oss. Förr fingo vi nöje oss med vår egen lilla tidning.

²³ "En blick på sporten," *Sovjet-Estland*, 20 March 1941, p. 2.

printed at all. Aman states that when sporting competitions had been established in the ethnic Swedish areas earlier, the goals were not to bring the best athletes into the spotlight, but rather to come together as a community. In response to the intimidation of countryside competitors mentioned in the previous article Aman writes, “If some shy boy really would be frightened by the forward-rushing upper secondary boys and girls, it would be most advisable for him to run home and let mama blow on the pain.”²⁴ His nonsense contempt for the previous writer’s sentiments placed sporting activities among the Estonian-Swedes as a community activity, more so than a competition. He concluded, “Sports have required both sweat and hardship, but here if ever has been shown among the Swedes solidarity, good camaraderie, and bold fighting spirit, which has brought triumphs.”²⁵ Aman’s article is striking in that it counters so strongly the statements of the previous writer without directly countering the ideology. It can be seen as an example of dissent, although the editors must have seen some value to its inclusion.

However, Aman’s dissent was not the only example. In the first issue, an article mentions that there was not uniform support for the Soviets. The article states, “...Yet not everyone was pleased with the changes [since 21 June]. Even among the Swedish minority there are those behind the times, people unversed in political questions that do not find their way about within the new society. Luckily their numbers are not large!”²⁶ While labeling them as out of touch with society, such a statement indicated a lack of support, even if it was suggested that this was minimal.

In another example involving a rare moment of candor, the Estonian-Swedes were sharply criticized in terms of the wall-newspapers in the schools. The article on 19 December placed blame for the poor quality on the local leaders, and their lack of knowledge on the importance of the wall-newspapers. Specifically singled out for criticism were the schools in Noarootsi, Sutlepa, and Riguldi.²⁷ However, the poor quality

²⁴ V. Aman, “Om sporten,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 3 April 1941, p. 2. Translated from Swedish: Om någon blyg gosse verkligen skulle bli skrämmd av de framstormande gymnasiegossarna och –flickorna, så vore det lämpligast för honom att löpa hem och låta mamma blåsa på det onda.

²⁵ V. Aman, “Om sporten,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 3 April 1941, p. 2. Translated from Swedish: Idrotten har fordrat bade svett och svårigheter: men här om någonsin ha svenskarna visat sammanhållning, god kamratanda och frejdig kamplust, som bringat seger.

²⁶ “Stämningbilder från Läänemaas kustbyar i Rikull,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 17 October 1940, p. 2. Translated from Swedish: Efter den 21. juni förändrare sig stämningen i Rikull. Dock var det icke alla som gladde sig åt förändringen. Även bland svenska minoriteten finns det efterblivna, i politiska frågor obehövande människor som icke finner sig till rätta i det nya samhället. Lyckligtvis är deras antal icke stort!

²⁷ “Nuckö och Rikull förbereda sig för valen,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 19 December 1940, p. 2.

of the wall-newspapers as well as the inability to recruit Pioneers in the schools can also be seen as signs to discontent and dissent. Once attention was brought to the deficiency, however, the wall-newspapers needed to be improved.

Examples of dissent and criticism offer an altered picture of *Sovjet-Estland*. The majority of the articles sought to express a uniformity of support among the people for all of the socialistic policies and changes occurring in society. A reader with doubts, though, would certainly reject such claims of uniformity. While participation remained low in the newspaper, some Estonian-Swedes found a way to work within the system and make their voices heard, even if it wasn't in direct, full support of the system as the editors would have hoped for.

“Why I Don't Leave For Sweden”

Despite the high numbers that had indicated a desire to leave, the newspaper published statements to the contrary, making it appear that those with emigration thoughts were only a small minority. An article appeared in *Sovjet-Estland* on 6 March 1941 under the headline “Why I Don't Leave For Sweden” written by “J.L.” Among the reasons provided for not leaving Estonia were: a love of their home towns; uncertainty of healthcare coverage in Sweden, particularly for the elderly; the need abroad to overwork to pay for basic necessities such as food; because those who left already don't describe life in bright colors; and because life in Sweden certainly cannot be as peaceful nor have enough bread for everyone as in Estonia.²⁸ Clearly, the writer was tying into the foreign new portraying Sweden as a land in distress. Following these reasons was a letter, supposedly from an Estonian-Swede living in Vormsi, identified only by the initials “T.L.” He writes:

We that have been pushed around, who have been tread on without rights in the capitalistic power's misery, have had our eyes opened with the advantages that the Soviet power brought for us. Yes, all of us Swedes can now understand and see that it is the Soviet Union that comes to help and save us from the phases of the war. The Soviet power has created work and bread for thousands who in the capitalistic Estonia wandered around unemployed, broken and worn out, seeking work that was almost impossible to find. Estonia's joining the Soviet Union made our economic life independent from the capitalist powers and transformed it into blooming. The Soviet Union furnished these rights to us Estonian-Swedes,

²⁸ J.L., “Varför jag inte reser till Sverige,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 6 March 1941, p. 2.

which we lacked previously. I believe, for my part, that all Swedes living along Soviet Estonia's coast have understood which advantages the Soviet power has brought us. I believe, that we Estonian-Swedes already all are so clear of the circumstances in the capitalistic lands, that we will not be fooled in the capitalistic empire, although there are possibilities to travel to the motherland. I believe that I interpret all the Estonian-Swedes' conviction correctly, if I state that the Soviet Union strengthens our national independence and helps with our free national development, with our land's economy and our culture's growth, promotes for us a strong material and cultural upswing and that our native region begins a new blooming.²⁹

There are several interesting points that the writer raises. It is clearly intended to be taken as a representation of the greater Estonian-Swedish community. He is attempting to isolate and covert those who would disagree, pointing to the advantages the Soviets had brought and highlighting the misery that existed. The author refers to employment and food, both of which were frequent topics of shortages in the western world throughout *Sovjet-Estland's* publication. It is intriguing that he mentions there were possibilities to go to Sweden, considering the only groups to do so were the 110 from the Pakrite islands and those who had left illegally. Others who requested permission to emigrate never received responses. However, his use of the term "motherland" in referring to Sweden would seem to run counter to other propaganda around the Soviet Union which was attempting to draw comparisons between Stalin being the father-figure for the motherland, the Soviet Union.³⁰

The following week, another article appeared, claiming that the people of Vormsi (with the largest concentration of Estonian-Swedes) were against the idea of leaving

²⁹ T.L., "Varför jag inte reser till Sverige," *Sovjet-Estland*, 6 March 1941, p. 2. Translated from Swedish: Vi som blivit tillknuffade, där vi ha legat nedtrampade och utan rättigheter i den kapitalistiska maktens elende, ha fått våra ögon öppnade för de fördelar, som sovjetmakten fört med sig för oss. Ja, det kunna vi alla svenskar nu förstå och se, att det är Sovjetunionen, som kommit oss till hjälp och räddat oss från krigets fasor. Sovjetmakten har skaffat arbete och bröd åt de tusenden som i det kapitalistiska Estland vandrade omkring arbetslösa, trasiga och slitna, sökande arbete som var nästan omöjligt att finna. Estlands inträdande i Sovjetunionen gjorde vårt ekonomiska liv oberoende av de kapitalistiska makterna och förde det till blomstring. Oss estlandssvenskar har Sovjetunionen skaffat de rättigheter, som förr fattades oss. Jag tror för min del, att alla svenskar, som bo på Sovjet-Estlands kust, ha förstått, vilka fördelar sovjetmakten har bragt oss. Jag tror, att vi estlandssvenskar redan alla äro så klara om förhållandena i de kapitalistiska väldet, fastän det finns möjligheter att resa till moderlandet. Jag tror, att jog tolkar alla estlandssvenskars övertygelse rätt, om jag påstår, att Sovjetunionen befäster vårt nationella oberoende och hjälper till vid vår fria nationella utveckling, vid vår lanthushållnings och var kulturs höjande, befrämjar för oss ett kraftigt materiellt och kulturellt uppsving och för vår älskande hembygd börjar en ny blomstring.

³⁰ See, for example, David L. Hoffmann, *Stalinist Values: The Cultural Norms of Soviet Modernity, 1917-1941* (Ithaca; Cornell University Press, 2003), 152-159.

Estonia for Sweden.³¹ At first sight, these articles can be seen as a reflection of the general opinion of the public – which is exactly how it was interpreted by the communist newspaper *Ny Dag* in Stockholm when it was reprinted.³² However, these articles are an example – one of the more overt attempts in *Sovjet-Estland* – to convince the ethnic Swedish minority to not continue thoughts of emigration. By publishing these articles, the Bolsheviks hoped to portray those among the Estonian-Swedes with thoughts of emigration as isolated, and convince them that they were alone, realizing that life in Estonia was better than before, and better than the uncertainty of living in Sweden.

Later in the month of March, the community profiles (mentioned in Chapter 2) began. Although these profiles carried no ideological component and did not mention the topic of emigration, they can be viewed as serving that purpose. By emphasizing their strong connections to the land and the communities, the emigration thoughts would hopefully diminish. This argument, however, failed to consider the forced relocation in the summer 1940 which heavily impacted the Estonian-Swedes, the rumors circulating that further evacuations were inevitable, and the land reforms that had effected their connections with the land.

By late May 1941, the Central Committee was calling the Sovietization efforts towards the ethnic Swedes a failure, concluding that the failed efforts had led to thoughts of emigration.³³ Aggressive measures would have to be taken to dispel emigration thoughts and the Central Committee laid out those specific efforts. While some were markedly similar to those that had been followed all along, many plans were new and marked a privileged position for the Estonian-Swedes that would be unavailable to the Estonians. They also illustrate that the Bolsheviks had listened to, and attempted to address, some of the specific concerns that had been expressed by the ethnic Swedes. Among the planned changes included finding and recruiting ethnic Swedes that were friendly to the Soviet Union for activists and agitation. The translating of more literature into Swedish and spreading this material in the Swedish-inhabited areas. The promoting of cultural organizations among the Swedes (such as choirs, art, orchestra, theatre, choreography) was to take place. The lowering of the procurement norms for the ethnic

³¹ L. Malmre, “Bland vormsöborna,” *Sovjet-Estland*, 13 March 1941, p. 2.

³² “Vi estlandssvenskar har först nu fått nationella rättigheter,” *Ny Dag*, 21 April 1941, p. 2.

³³ ERAF 1-4-71, *Õä iõðäëüéÊîè ðä ð ÊÏ (á) Ýñðîîèè Ïñîáüé Ñäñðîðð*, 36-39. Minutes no. 8 of the Seating of the Central Committee, dated 15, 21, and 22 May 1941.

Swedish areas considering the poor soil quality; reducing the debt within farming communities; and making disbursements to those that had been resettled.³⁴ Specifically for *Sovjet-Estland*, the report also suggested working to increase the subscription rate, strengthen ties with correspondents while further educating them, improving the content of the newspaper, and extending the publication to six pages to allow for the inclusion of a youth-oriented section.³⁵

Deportations and Terror

The Soviet Union implemented a policy of instilling fear within the people of Estonia. While this remained minimal for the majority of the first year of Soviet occupation, the pace increased dramatically in June 1941. “People belonging to different layers of society were arrested, including workers and even Soviet activists. Nobody could be sure of tomorrow. Officially nothing was said about the arrests, which increased the fear even more.”³⁶

On 14 June 1941, the largest mass deportations occurred around the Baltic States. Done on a Saturday late at night, the rounding-up of people was wide-spread and fast-paced. Across Estonia, approximately 10,000 people (of all ethnic groups) were deported. The ethnic Swedish population was also affected by these deportations, with the loss of 36 people,³⁷ including six school instructors.³⁸ Although perhaps minimal in numbers when comparing the total deported, proportionally the ethnic Swedes were deported at a similar rate as ethnic Estonians. Among those deported from the ethnic Swedish communities were Nikolaus Blees (an instructor at Birkas), Mathias Westerblom (a former Estonian parliamentarian and leader of SOV), Major Anders Lindkvist (from SOV), M. Gottkamf, Tomas Gärdström (a teacher and compiler of the two Soviet textbooks in Swedish), Anders Nyman (a leader of SOV), and A. Vesterblom.

Those deported included a large number of what can best be described as the Estonian-Swedish intelligentsia – teachers and leaders in the former cultural organization.

³⁴ ERAF 1-4-71, *Õa idäädäüéÊî è dá ò Ê Ī (á) Ýñðííèè Ìñîáúé Ñã ñðîð*, 36-39. Minutes no. 8 of the Seating of the Central Committee, dated 15, 21, and 22 May 1941.

³⁵ ERAF 1-4-71, *Õa idäädäüéÊî è dá ò Ê Ī (á) Ýñðííèè Ìñîáúé Ñã ñðîð*, 36-39. Minutes no. 8 of the Seating of the Central Committee, dated 15, 21, and 22 May 1941.

³⁶ Mati Laur, et. al., *History of Estonia* (Tallinn: Avita, 2002), 267.

³⁷ Viktor Aman, “Andra världskriget och överflyttningen till Sverige” in *En bok om Estlands svenskar* (Stockholm: Kulturföreningen Svenska Odlingens Vänner, 1961), 202.

Perhaps one of the more striking names, though, was the inclusion of Gärdström in the deportation. As the compiler of the two textbooks for the Soviets (the announcement appeared in that week's *Sovjet-Estland* – 11 June), one would have expected him to have been spared that fate.

The following week's *Sovjet-Estland* remained silent about the deportations. There was no official word about why these people were rounded up or what their fates were. It was as if the deportations had never even occurred. Gracing the pages instead was the focus on the upcoming anniversary of the Bolsheviks coming to power in Estonia.

Men were also mobilized by the Soviets. Although the Swedish minority had not been included in the first wave of mobilization, in 1941 314 ethnic Swedes were mobilized,³⁹ including Viktor Pöhl (Birkas) and A. Lindström. Many more had escaped mobilization by hiding in the forests or other hiding locations at night.⁴⁰ In *Sovjet-Estland*, there were reports of men voluntarily joining the war effort against the fascists, and looking for more people to report to mobilization points.⁴¹ There was no mention, however, of forced mobilizations. Mobilized men were sent to the forest region of Archangel, where large numbers died of starvation or from the cold. Of those ethnic Swedes mobilized or deported, only 129 eventually returned.⁴² The others all presumably died.

While targeting those who were vocally opposed to the Soviets – individuals who were also leaders in the Estonian-Swedish national identity – the actions ignored the findings of the May report. The Central Committee report had specifically listed as one of its tasks to give the Estonian-Swedes a one-year reprieve from mobilization in the Soviet army for those ethnic Swedes in the party, political instructors, and teachers considering a the shortage of qualified individuals in these areas.⁴³ The report, though, was prepared before the German declaration of war and before the situation in Estonia for the Bolsheviks looked grim. The deportation and mobilization of these Estonian-Swedes was

³⁸ Uppsala universitetsbiblioteket, *Svenskarna i Estland Fram Till År 1944* (Uppsala: Uppsala universitetsbiblioteket, 1992), 42.

³⁹ Aman, 202.

⁴⁰ Jan Persson, "Flykten Över Östersjön: En studie över estlandssvenskarna utbrott från fäderneslandet Estland" (Thesis, Uppsala University, 2001), 14.

⁴¹ "Estlandssvenskarna enhälligt vid mobilisationspunkterna," *Sovjet-Estland*, 30 July 1941, pp. 1-2.

⁴² Uppsala universitetsbiblioteket, 26.

not in the long-term interest of a developing Estonian-Swedish identity, as many were in what little category one could claim as an intelligentsia. It marks a failure of ideological conversion attempts, and a complete failure of the propaganda campaign with little promise of a qualified continuation; targeting teachers when there was already a shortage casts serious doubt that a continued campaign could have lasted.

Departure of the Estonian-Swedes

On 13 September 1940, a Committee for Rågö-Swedes⁴⁴ was formed in Sweden with the intent of bringing the displaced Swedes from the Pakrite island to Sweden. The island, along with Naissaar and Osmussaar, had been evacuated in the summer to make way for Soviet military bases. An initial request was made by the Swedish legation in Moscow, although the government did not pursue it further. On 17 October 1940, 110 Estonian-Swedes from the Pakrite islands arrived in Stockholm aboard the “Estonia.” It was approximately a third of the island’s inhabitants, and apparently the first to indicate a desire to emigrate. During the first Soviet occupation of Estonia, this was the only group of people legally permitted to emigrate, and little information is known as to why their application was accepted while the requests of others went unanswered. The Committee assisted the newly arrived ethnic Swedes to settle in Sweden, collecting and distributing funds, and assisting with citizenship problems.

For the remainder of the first Soviet occupation, the emigration possibilities appeared to remain static with no legal possibilities to leave and difficulties to leave illegally. The outlook for Estonia changed when Germany attacked the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941. By early July, German forces were at the southern border of Estonia. Several ethnic Swedes on Ruhnu successfully recaptured the island from the four Soviets in July, but lost it in August when a larger group of Soviets arrived.⁴⁵ While many had hoped that the arrival of the Germans would mean a return of Estonian independence, the Soviet occupation of Estonia was replaced by a German occupation. The nationalization undertaken by the Soviets were simply transferred to German control and the land

⁴³ ERAF [Eesti Riigiarhiivi Filiaal] 1-4-71, *Õa iõðàèùéÊîîèðà ò ÊÏ (á) Ýñðííèè Ìñíáúé Ñàñðîð.* 36-39. Minutes no. 8 of the Seating of the Central Committee, dated 15, 21, and 22 May 1941.

⁴⁴ “Rågö” is the Swedish name for the Pakrite islands. In this instance, Rågö will be used in referring to the committee formed in Sweden.

⁴⁵ Aman, 202.

reforms remained in effect. Emigration thoughts persisted and grew among the Estonian-Swedes.

Throughout the Second World War, Sweden attempted to maintain a flexible policy of neutrality in order to not be pulled into the war. While all of her neighbors were either occupied or engaged in battle, Sweden was successful at maintaining her independence. Sweden engaged in concessions to all sides (depending on who was the most imminent threat and with the best advantage at the time). During the German occupation of Estonia and with German and Finland acting as co-belligerents against the Soviet Union, Sweden permitted Germany to transport troops on their way to Finland to travel through Swedish railways, waterways, and airspace beginning 26 June 1941. Swedish foreign policy, however, moved away from concessions to Germany following the Soviet victory at Stalingrad in February 1943.⁴⁶

In December 1941, Birkas was visited by a German delegation, including a Dr. Lienhard. Several of the students and faculty were stripped and body measurements were taken. They were later notified that the Estonian-Swedes were Germanic with certain Baltic features.⁴⁷ This would become important a few years later when determining ethnicity would be necessary. From 18 January to 14 February 1942, a committee from Sweden visited the Estonian-Swedes, coming via Berlin. Among the delegation were parliamentarian James Dickson, doctor Gerhard Hafström, and Major Carl Mothander. Following their return to Sweden, the Committee for Aid Expeditions to Estonian-Swedes was founded under the leadership of C. Lindhagen.⁴⁸

Through the Committee, the Swedish Red Cross visited the Estonian-Swedish regions in the second half of June 1942.⁴⁹ They brought with them two tractors, 50 boat-motors, clothing, farming supplies, books, an automobile for transporting the sick, medical supplies, and two nurses.⁵⁰ Ironically, many of these boat-motors were later used

⁴⁶ See: Byron J. Nordstrom, *Scandinavia Since 1500* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 316-319; Paul A. Levin, *From Indifference to Activism: Swedish Diplomacy and the Holocaust 1938-1944* (Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 1998); and W.M. Carlgren, *Swedish Foreign Policy During the Second World War* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1977).

⁴⁷ Fridolf Isberg, "Birkas folkhög- och lantmannaskola under tiden 1939-1943," in *Birkas: Svensk folkhögskola i Estland* (Stockholm, Svenska Odlingens Vänner, 1971), 178.

⁴⁸ "Kommittén för estlandssvenskarna: Redogörelse över dess verksamhet 1940-1950," *Kustbon*, February 1951, 7.

⁴⁹ "Kommittén för estlandssvenskarna: Redogörelse över dess verksamhet 1940-1950," *Kustbon*, February 1951, 7.

⁵⁰ Aman, 207.

by the Estonian-Swedes to emigrate illegally. In spring 1942, the Swedish Foreign Ministry began negotiating with Berlin over the fate of the Estonian-Swedes. As a result of their negotiations, the medical ship “Seagull II” traveled to Estonia in May 1943 and returned with 42 sick or elderly ethnic Swedes who had relatives living in Sweden. The ship “Odin” made three similar trips in November and December of the same year, returning with an additional 736 ethnic Swedes. Additionally, 60 Estonian-Swedes were transported during this period via Finland.⁵¹

In terms of Swedish diplomacy over the Estonian-Swedes, the Swedish government would have had greater success in negotiations with Berlin up until Stalingrad. However, once the process of repatriation of the ethnic Swedes had begun, it became easier to maintain. As the situation changed for Germany, the local officials in Estonia like Lienhard were more willing to cooperate on their own in an attempt to gain favor with the West, in case Germany eventually lost. In January 1944 as the chances for a German victory increasingly seemed dim, the Swedish Foreign Ministry attempted to negotiate for all of the remaining Estonian-Swedes.⁵² The cultural organization for the Estonian-Swedes was put in charge of determining ethnicity, and membership in Friends of Swedish Culture (SOV) quickly soared. For many, membership in the organization was viewed as a guarantee of their ability to leave, and in some instances, ethnic Estonians successfully emigrated through this process. The agreement reached between the Germans and the Swedes included a complete press black-out of the action, prohibiting the media to report anything about the arrangement or the arrival of people.⁵³

German SS-Waffen officer Dr. Lienhard, who spoke Swedish, organized transportation in cooperation with the Committee for Aid Expeditions to Estonian-Swedes and the Swedish Red Cross aboard the cargo ship “Juhan.” This resulted in nine voyages flying under the Nazi flag between 21 June and 11 September 1944 and the transportation of 3,335 Estonian-Swedes to Stockholm. An additional 70 ethnic Swedes traveled aboard the Estonian boat “Triina” on 22 September.⁵⁴ The 50 kronor passage cost was paid for by

⁵¹ “Kommittén för estlandssvenskarna: Redogörelse över dess verksamhet 1940-1950,” *Kustbon*, February 1951, 7.

⁵² “Kommittén för estlandssvenskarna: Redogörelse över dess verksamhet 1940-1950,” *Kustbon*, February 1951, 7.

⁵³ Aman, 243.

⁵⁴ “Kommittén för estlandssvenskarna: Redogörelse över dess verksamhet 1940-1950,” *Kustbon*, February 1951, 7.

the Swedish state.⁵⁵ Following the final voyage of the “Juhan”, the Committee for Aid Expeditions to Estonian-Swedes attempted to ease the ability of ethnic Swedes to come to Sweden via other countries, particularly from Germany. Approximately 300 Estonian-Swedes were able to make it to Sweden as a result of this.⁵⁶

Beginning in January 1944, the Soviets began advancing towards Estonia again. In February, Naissaar, the Pakrite islands, and Osmussaar were once again evacuated.⁵⁷ The pace was relatively slow until September. On 22 September 1944, Tallinn was recaptured. As the Red Army moved closer, the pace of mass transportations increased; “Juhan” had the final transport in September.

By the end of the war, approximately 7,900 Estonian-Swedes had fled to Sweden – 4,357 legally. Upon their arrival in Sweden, they were first placed in Stockholm until work could be located. Each family was given a loan of 300 crowns for clothes and household goods. The Committee for Rågö-Swedes, which overtook the responsibility of all the Estonian-Swedes, organized the purchase of 51 fishing places and 83 farms. In total, the Committee spent 4,418,000 crowns, or approximately 557 crowns per person. Sweden, which had an abundance of jobs at the end of the war, was able to accommodate the work needs of the new arrivals. *Kustbon* was able to restart and resume publication in June 1944 after a four-year hiatus. This time, however, it was published in Sweden. As a community, the Estonian-Swedes grew stronger following the immigration, with the experience uniting them, regardless of where they were placed in Sweden.

Their arrival in Sweden caused some debate and disagreements. As they were not citizens of Sweden, fishermen were vocal in their opposition to their ability to use Swedish-fishing areas. King Gustav V attempted to intervene in the dispute by speeding up their citizenship applications, rather than requiring them to wait five years. Ethnicity did not mean automatic citizenship for the Estonian-Swedes. Sweden also rebuffed Soviet attempts to reclaim their citizens. While the Soviet government was granted permission to meet with some of the refugees, they were not able to force anyone to return. In the case of those who had left illegally, the Soviets argued that they had stolen nationalized

⁵⁵ Persson, 16.

⁵⁶ “Kommittén för estlandssvenskarna: Redogörelse över dess verksamhet 1940-1950,” *Kustbon*, February 1951, 8.

⁵⁷ Aman, 238.

property – namely the boats. The Swedish government agreed to return this property to the Soviet Union.

For those remaining in Estonia, with such a small fraction of the ethnic Swedish population, the Bolsheviks saw no need to continue and resume a propaganda campaign in Swedish aimed at the group. *Sovjet-Estland* did not resume publication and Soviet policies attempted an attitude of assimilation into the Estonian majority. The numbers simply did not justify any further extended effort of outreach to the Estonian-Swedes.

Conclusion

Even the Swedes here were glad for the agitation-brigade's visit, and after having been given an overview of the war, the local farmers promised an even higher degree of help than before in order to annihilate the hated German fascist barbarians and bandits, and in doing so assure the Soviet power which strives to deliver the whole world's working people from exploitation and to create a certain foundation for the working people's joyous and carefree life.¹

For ten months, the ethnic Swedish population living in Estonia drew the attention of the government in Tallinn. A newspaper was published for them in their native language and government representatives periodically came to their communities to meet and talk with them, in some cases speaking their language. The Estonian-Swedes were repeatedly told that the government considered them as equals with the majority culture, deserving of encouragement and resources to expand their cultural development. The Estonian-Swedes were told that they were just as deserving, if not more, to have economic possibilities available to them to lift them out of poverty. They were just as entitled as other groups to be full and active members of society.

If it wasn't for their frustration with and opposition to the ideology of the Communist Party and methodology of the Sovietization process, the Estonian-Swedes had never had a better situation. Week after week, *Sovjet-Estland* portrayed an image of prosperity and possibilities available to the Estonian-Swedes, but the majority were reluctant to believe the propaganda being offered in the newspaper. Perhaps it was the reduction of the land in the land reforms, or the humiliation of the clergy that turned the population against the ideology. Perhaps it was the loss of their cultural organization (SOV) and the closing of their newspaper. Or perhaps it was the knowledge that a group of their ethnic brethren had received permission to emigrate to Sweden (and the willingness of Sweden to accept them).

The audience of *Sovjet-Estland* can best be described as a hostile audience; as the archival material from the Läänemaa Communist Party demonstrates, thoughts of

¹ "Estlandssvenskarna hjälpa till att förrinta fienden," *Sovjet-Estland*, 30 July 1941, p. 2. Translated from Swedish: Även svenskarna här voro glada över agitationsbrigadens besök och efter att ha fått en överblick av kriget lovade de lokala jordbrukarna att i ännu större mån än förr hjälpa till att förrinta de hatade tyska fascistiska barbarerna och banditerna för att därmed försäkra sovjetmakten, som strävar att befria hela världens arbetarfolk från exploateræ och skapa en säker grundval för arbetarfolkets glada och bekymmerlösa liv.

emigration pervaded the Estonian-Swedish communities. It is enlightening, therefore, to investigate how the editors directed the newspaper for this hostile audience. What one finds is that the only side represented in the pages of each issue was one of overwhelming excitement and support for the Bolsheviks. This can be seen as an attempt to isolate those with opposing viewpoints, but it can also be used as an example of the party fooling themselves to give the appearance of greater support (particularly to those higher up in the political structure). Much as Neeme Ruus sought to receive approval from Moscow by noting a “large interest” among the Estonian-Swedes for Marxist-Leninism despite numerous reports from Läänemaa to the contrary, the editors of *Sovjet-Estland* wanted to portray their work as being effective and widely supported. And the false view worked in some regards – those in Sweden who saw and subscribed to the newspaper had full confidence in its complete accuracy.

In many respects, *Sovjet-Estland* was a failed propaganda attempt. The newspaper was unsuccessful at converting the ethnic Swedish population of Estonia to the socialist ideology. But even worse, it failed at quieting resentment amid the communities to the Soviet policies. The subscription rates remained low (even if exact numbers have not been determined) and public resentment remained high. The main goals of *Sovjet-Estland* were a failure.

But it was not a complete failure. There are aspects of the campaign that can be seen as having benefited the Estonian-Swedes. While the weekly reporting of change was an important function of *Sovjet-Estland*, the main themes throughout its pressrun of 17 October 1940 to 13 August 1941 were ideology, national identity, and preventing emigration. If one were to rate the effectiveness in these three areas in the 43 issues, there were some benefits and successes in two of the three areas.

Whether or not the ideology was accepted, *Sovjet-Estland* was effective in presenting the Estonian-Swedes with a background in Soviet history and the development of the socialist ideology. The basic principles were laid out in the “What is socialism” series and reinforced in almost all of the articles that followed. In preparation for the election, considerable agitation and propaganda campaigns were undertaken to not only explain the Soviet political structure, but also instill in the people the rights and obligations of living in a socialist society. *Sovjet-Estland* provided the Estonian-Swedes with the historical understanding of the holidays and celebrations, giving them the context in which to participate. The ethnic Swedes were told through the various articles how they should behave and how they should celebrate these occasions. While the conversion

of the Estonian-Swedes to the socialist ideology should be viewed largely as a failure, the education of that ideology was a success.

Returning to Benedict Anderson's view of nationalism as the creation of imagined communities, largely through print capitalism, the newspaper can be a power uniting force for an emerging national identity. The Estonian-Swedes had this in *Kustbon* prior to the Second World War when it was published in the Estonia and again following the war when it was published in Sweden. The newspaper adapted to the political and economic environments in order to continue publication, with the editors all maintaining a strong need to foster the concept of Swedishness among the ethnic Swedes. Identity and culture were constant themes, meshing perfectly with Anderson's theory on the development of the national identity.

Sovjet-Estland sought to be a suitable replacement to *Kustbon* while presenting the Soviet ideology, attending to the needs of the ethnic Swedish minority. The Estonian-Swedish national identity and culture were again strong themes, although through the guise of socialism. *Sovjet-Estland* was not a replacement of *Kustbon*, though; *Sovjet-Estland* did not receive the support or the respect within the Estonian-Swedish community that would be necessary in furthering the ideas of national identity. The newspaper was also created by an outside group with little direct participation from the ethnic Swedish community themselves, therefore making it difficult to place within Anderson's theory.

However, the publication of *Sovjet-Estland* by the Bolsheviks demonstrated a pro-minority policy in a way previously not offered to the ethnic Swedes. While the Interwar Estonian constitutions sought to protect minority rights, government policies increasingly became more nationalistic. In contrast, the Soviets not only expressed their commitment to minority protections, but repeatedly demonstrated these commitments by reaching out to minorities. The Estonian-Swedes were just one example of many across the Soviet Union that were encouraged and given the resources to develop their national identity, although restricted to being socialistic in content. The treatment of the Estonian-Swedish minority was not unique but fits into a well-established pattern of national minorities.

There are a number of things that makes the Estonian-Swedish case unique. They were a small minority that had been developing a national identity for several decades before the Soviets arrived. Their identity was largely intertwined with contacts to Sweden and the Swedish Church. The ethnic Swedes also had connections with their ethnic

brethren in Finland. Their location on the islands and coastal regions of Estonia had long made them on the fringes of society.

The one area where *Sovjet-Estland* had no success was in emigration thoughts. Even before publication began, the Estonian-Swedes were contemplating leaving. Only a third of the Pakrite islanders were given the right to leave, and very few left on their own accord illegally. The possibility existed, though. The community was small enough and well-connected enough for them to know about the emigration, and it was arguably a significant mistake for *Sovjet-Estland* to put off addressing this concern. Once the foundation had been laid with emigration, it was difficult to offer reasons to change their minds. The promises of the Soviet Union extolled in the ideology and the domestic news went unfulfilled. While as a group the Estonian-Swedes were being treated better than previously, as individuals their situations worsened.

The problems in the propaganda campaign were recognized by the Estonian Central Committee in May 1941. Their report found that the Soviet efforts had been a failure and sought to put into place changes that would improve the situation for the Estonian-Swedes. These improvements were to be in political and ideological education, the economic standing by lowering production norms and providing compensation for land lost in forced evacuations, and linguistic resources such as increased books and films made available in Swedish. These improvements were to be achieved by increased involvement in campaigns by ethnic Swedes, expanding the newspaper and increasing subscriptions, attracting more youths, delaying military service.

These actions were never given a chance to be put into action; the next month the Germans declared war and Soviets shifted from the development of the Estonian-Swedes in socialism to the mobilization of the entire society. The propaganda no longer attempted to convert the Estonian-Swedes to the Soviet ideology but to convince the people of the need to rise up in defense of their native land and prevent the fascist advance. The ethnic minority was nearly lost in the shuffle in the redirected propaganda campaign. National identity was no longer of much importance. And if the readers had not been convinced of the ideology by that point, there was little hope of the people voluntarily rising up in support of the Soviet Union against the Germans.

These moderate benefits of the campaign go more towards benefits to the ethnic group than benefits for the Soviet Union. As a group, the Estonian-Swedes benefited by having increased attention focused on them by the Soviet government. It can be said to have instilled a sense of being deserving in the development of their national identity.

Their wartime experience, and particularly their emigration from Estonia arguably brought them closer together as a group, strengthening their distinctness from the Swedish identity. *Sovjet-Estland* can be seen to have aided this development, although with quite a different end result than was anticipated and hoped for in its creation.

It is difficult to guess what could have happened if the German declaration of war never occurred. Would the Central Committee's plan have been put into action? Would the campaign have continued with increased success? Or would the group have caused such a commotion within Estonia and in the international community as to warrant permission to emigrate? One can only hazard a guess of what could have been.

By investigating the propaganda campaign found in *Sovjet-Estland*, the Soviet policies in the recently acquired territory can be seen. With a hostile audience, the campaign is especially interesting. The attempts to shape the thoughts of the population were largely a failure, although the newspaper never stopped trying. The Soviet ideology dictated that it was a noble cause to pursue, and necessary for the liberation from the masses of capitalism. It was a doomed effort, though. Thoughts of emigration were just too strongly maintained. And once the large number finally were able to depart for their Swedish homeland during the German occupation, there was little value or need in resuming the propaganda campaign.

Appendix A: Place Names in Estonian and Swedish

<i>Estonian Name</i>	<i>Swedish Name</i>
Borrby	Borrby
Diby	Diby
Haapsalu	Hapsal
Harjumaa	Harrien [•]
Hiiumaa	Dagö
Läänemaa	Vik [•]
Naissaar	Nargö
Noarootsi	Nuckö
Norrby	Norrby
Nõmmküla	Klottorp
Osmussaar	Odensholm
Pakrite	Rågö
Paldiski	Baltischport
Pürksi	Birkas
Põõsaspea	Spithamn
Riguldi	Rickul
Rooslepa	Roslep
Ruhnu	Runö
Saaremaa	Ösel
Sutlepa	Sutlep
Tallinn	Reval [•]
Tartu	Dorpat [•]
Vihterpalu	Vippal
Vormsi	Ormsö / Vormsö

[•] *Sovjet-Estland* only used the Estonian name throughout its publication.

Appendix B: *Sovjet-Estland* Publication Dates

Volume 1: 1940

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| No. 1 – Thursday, 17 October | No. 7 – Thursday, 28 November |
| No. 2 – Thursday, 24 October | No. 8 – Friday, 6 December |
| No. 3 – Thursday, 31 October | No. 9 – Thursday, 12 December |
| No. 4 – Wednesday, 6 November | No. 10 – Thursday, 19 December |
| No. 5 – Thursday, 14 November | No. 11 – Saturday, 28 December |
| No. 6 – Thursday, 21 November | |

Volume 2: 1941

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| No. 1 (12) – Saturday, 4 January | No. 17 (28) – Thursday, 24 April |
| No. 2 (13) – Thursday, 9 January | No. 18 (29) – Tuesday, 29 April |
| No. 3 (14) – Thursday, 16 January | No. 19 (30) – Thursday, 8 May |
| No. 4 (15) – Friday, 24 January | No. 20 (31) – Thursday, 15 May |
| No. 5 (16) – Thursday, 30 January | No. 21 (32) – Thursday, 22 May |
| No. 6 (17) – Thursday, 6 February | No. 22 (33) – Wednesday, 28 May |
| No. 7 (18) – Thursday, 13 February | No. 23 (34) – Wednesday, 4 June |
| No. 8 (19) – Thursday, 20 February | No. 24 (35) – Wednesday, 11 June |
| No. 9 (20) – Thursday, 27 February | No. 25 (36) – Wednesday, 18 June |
| No. 10 (21) – Thursday, 6 March | No. 26 (37) – Wednesday, 25 June |
| No. 11 (22) – Thursday, 13 March | No. 27 (38) – Wednesday, 2 July |
| No. 12 (23) – Thursday, 20 March | No. 28 (39) – Wednesday, 9 July |
| No. 13 (24) – Thursday, 27 March | No. 29 (40) – Wednesday, 23 July |
| No. 14 (25) – Thursday, 3 April | No. 30 (41) – Wednesday, 30 July |
| No. 15 (26) – Thursday, 10 April | No. 31 (42) – Wednesday, 6 August |
| No. 16 (27) – Thursday, 17 April | No. 32 (43) – Wednesday, 13 August |

Bibliography

Newspapers

- Kustbon*. Tallinn, 1918-1940.
Ny Dag. Stockholm, 1940-1941.
Sovjet-Estland. Tallinn, 1940-1941.
Töötav Läänlane. Haapsalu, 1940-1941.

Government Documents

- ERAF [Eesti Riigiarhiivi Filiaal] 1-1-5. *EK(b)P Läänemaa Komitee koosolekute protokollid (ärakirjad)*. 8 August - 25 December 1940.
- ERAF 1-1-6. *EK(b)P Läänemaa Komitee koosolekute ja maakond parteiaktiivi nõupidamise protokollid (ärakirjad)*. 1 January - 23 July 1941.
- ERAF 1-1-7. *EK(b)P Läänemaa organisatsiooni I konverentsi materjalid*. 25 - 26 January 1941.
- ERAF 1-1-43. *ENSV Töö RK parteialgorganisatsiooni koosolekute protokollid*. 10 October 1940 - 19 May 1941.
- ERAF 1-1-48. *EK(b)P Läänemaa Komitee informatsioonid*. 8 October 1940 - 26 June 1941.
- ERAF 1-1-71. *Õa tõdäëüé Êîîè òà ò ÊÏ(á) Ýñòîîèè Ìñîáúé Ñãñòîä* 8 March - 19 August 1941.
- ERAF 1-1-77. *L. Malmre kirjad ja A. Klingbergi aruanne olukorrast eestirootslastega asustatud valdades ning tõlge ajalehes "Västmanlands Läns Tidning" ilmunud artiklist*. 6 December 1940 - 10 May 1941.
- ERAF 1-1-225. *Aruanded, ettekanded, plaanid jne. agitatsioonija propagandatööst linnades ja maakondades (peamiselt seoses NSVL ÜN valimistega)*. 1940 - 1941.

Books

- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities*. New York: Verso Books, 1991.
- Arvidsson, Claes and Lars Erik Blomqvist, eds. *Symbols of Power: The Esthetics of Political Legitimation in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe*. Stockholm, Sweden: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1987.
- Blomqvist, Marianne. *Svenska ortnamn i Estland med estniska motsvarigheter*. Ekenäs, Finland: Svenska folkskolans vänner, 2000.

- Brandenberger, David. *National Bolshevism: Stalinist Mass Culture and the Formation of Modern Russian National Identity, 1931-1956*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2002.
- Brooks, Jeffrey. *Thank You Comrade Stalin!: Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.
- Carlrgren W.M. *Swedish Foreign Policy During the Second World War*. Trans. Ernest Benn. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1977.
- Crozier, Brian. *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Empire*. Roseville, California: Forum, 2000.
- Ebon, Martin. *The Soviet Propaganda Machine*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1987.
- Ellul, Jacques. *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes*. Trans.: Konrad Kellen and Jean Lerner. New York: Vintage Books, 1973.
- Fitzpatrick, Sheila, Alexander Rabinowitch, and Richard Stites, eds. *Russia in the Era of the NEP: Explorations in Soviet Society and Culture*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1991.
- Fitzpatrick, Sheila ed. *Stalinism: New Directions*. London: Routledge, 2000.
- Gärdström, Tomas. *Läsebok för Folkskolan*. Tallinn: RK Pedagoogiline Kirjandus, 1941.
- Gärdström, Tomas. *Läsebok för Mellanskolan*. Tallinn: RK Pedagoogiline Kirjandus, 1941.
- Hedman, Jörgen and Lars Åhländer. *Historien om Gammalsvenskby och svenskarna i Ukraina*. Stockholm: Dialogos, 2003.
- Hoffmann, David L. *Stalinist Values: The Cultural Norms of Soviet Modernity, 1917-1941*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2003.
- Hoffmann, David L., ed. *Stalinism*. Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing, 2003.
- Inkeles, Alex. *Public Opinion in Soviet Russia: A Study in Mass Persuasion*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1950.
- Ketola, Mikko. *The Nationality Question in the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church, 1918-1939*. Helsinki: Finnish Society of Church History, 2000.
- Kirby, David. *The Baltic World 1722-1993: Europe's Northern Periphery in an Age of Change*. London: Longman, 1995.
- Kulski, W.W. *The Soviet Regime: Communism in Practice*. Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1954.
- Kummel, Bengt. *Svenskar i all världen förenen eder!: Vilhelm Lundström och den allsvenska rörelsen*. Åbo, Finland: Åbo Akademi University Press, 1994.
- Kuuli, O. *Revolutsioon Eestis 1940*. Tallinn: Eesti Raamat, 1980.

- Kuusik, Argo, Olev Liivik, Meelis Maripuu, Külli Niidassoo, Valdur Ohmann and Jüri Saar. *Eestimaa Kommunistliku Partei Keskkomitee Organisatsiooniline Struktuur 1940-1991*. Tallinn, 2002.
- Lagman, Edvin, ed. *Birkas: Svensk folkhögskola i Estland*. Stockholm: Svenska Odlingens Vänner, 1971.
- Lagman, Edvin, ed. *En bok om Estlands svenskar*. Stockholm: Kulturföreningen Svenska Odlingens Vänner, 1961.
- Levin, Paul A. *From Indifference to Activism: Swedish Diplomacy and the Holocaust 1938-1944*. Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 1998.
- Marcuse, Herbert. *Soviet Marxism: A Critical Analysis*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969.
- Martin, Terry. *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2001.
- Mertelsmann, Olaf, ed. *The Sovietization of the Baltic States, 1940-1956*. Tartu, Estonia: Kleio, 2003.
- Mothander, Carl. *Baroner, Bönder och Bolsjeviker i Estland*. Helsingfors: Holger Schildts Förlag, 1943.
- Nordstrom, Byron J.. *Scandinavia Since 1500*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000.
- Nyman, Elmar, ed. *Estlands svenskar 25 år i Sverige* Stockholm: Svenska Odlingens Vänner, 1968.
- Pipes, Richard. *Communism: A History*. New York: Modern Library Chronicles, 2001.
- Pipes, Richard. *Russia Under the Bolshevik Regime*. New York: Vintage Books, 1995.
- Raun, Toivo. *Estonia and the Estonians*. Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1991.
- Rickul/Nuckö Hembygdsförening. *Minnen i ljus och mörker: Estlandssvenskar från Rickul/Nuckö berättar*. Sweden: Rickul/Nuckö Hembygdsförening, 1999.
- Rose, Clive. *The Soviet Propaganda Network: A Directory of Organisations Serving Soviet Foreign Policy*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988.
- Ruus, V. *Sotsialistlikud ümberkorraldused Eestis 1940-1941*. Tallinn: Eesti Raamat, 1980.
- Segersted, Torgney. *När Stormen Klarar Sikten: Artiklar 1933-1945*. Stockholm: Ordfronts Förlag, 1980.
- Stalin, Joseph. *The Foundations of Leninism and On the Problems of Leninism*. Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1950.

- Stalin, Joseph. *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question*. Marxist Library Works of Marxism Leninism, Vol. XXXVIII. New York: International Publishers, 1935.
- Stalin, Joseph. *The National Question and Leninism*. New York: International Publishers, 1942.
- Suny, Ronald Grigor and Terry Martin, eds. *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Tannberg, Tõnu, Ain Mäesalu, Tõnis Lukas, Mati Laur and Ago Pajur. *History of Estonia*. Tallinn: Avita, 2002.
- Toynbee, Arnold J., Neil McInnes, Hugh Seton-Watson, Peter Wiles and Richard Lowenthal. *The Impact of the Russian Revolution 1917-1967: The Influence of Bolshevism on the World Outside Russia*. London: Oxford University Press, 1967.
- Tumarkin, Nina. *Lenin Lives!: The Lenin Cult in Soviet Russia*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1983.
- Uppsala universitetsbiblioteket. *Svenskarna i Estland Fram Till År 1944*. Uppsala: Uppsala universitetsbiblioteket, 1992.
- Wieselgren, Per. *Estlands Svenskare Under Ockupationerna*. Lund: Lunds Universitets Geografiska Institution, 1943.
- Wieselgren, Per. *Från Hammaren till Hakkorset, Estland 1939-1941*. Stockholm: Idé och Form Förlag, 1942.
- ÜK(e)P Keskkomitee Komisjon. *Üleliidulise Kommunistliku (enamlaste) Partei Ajalugu: Lühikursus*. Tallinn: RK Poliitiline Kirjandus, 1940.

Journal Articles and Academic Papers

- Brandenberger, David. "Soviet Social Mentalité and Russocentrism on the Eve of War, 1936-41." *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 48 (2000): 388-406.
- Brooks, Jeffrey. "Public and Private Values in the Soviet Press, 1921-1928." *Slavic Review* Vol. 48, no.1 (Spring 1989): 16-35.
- Filatova, Irena. "Interpretations of Dogma: Soviet Concepts of Nation and Ethnicity." *Theory* (December 1997): 93-120.
- Persson, Jan "Flykten Över Östersjön: En studie över estlandssvenskarna utbrott från fäderneslandet Estland." Thesis, Uppsala University, 2001.
- Schönberg, Alar. "Några inblickar i den estlandssvenska identiteten i slutet av 1930-talet." Master's thesis, University of Tartu, 2001.

- Sillaste, Toomas. "Protection of Minorities in the Baltic States." PhD diss., University of Notre Dame, 1995.
- Stites, Richard. "Adorning the Revolution: The Primary Symbols of Bolshevism, 1917-1918." *Sbornik* Vol. 10 (1984): 39-42.
- Tumarkin, Nina. "Religion, Bolshevism, and the Origins of the Lenin Cult." *Russian Review* Vol. 40 (January 1981): 35-46.
- White, Stephen. "The Political Poster in Bolshevik Russia." *Sbornik* No. 8 (1982): 24-37.

Summary in Estonian – Kokkuvõte¹

Vähemuse agiteerimine:

Eestirootslastele suunatud propaganda okupeeritud Eestis 1940-1941.

Esimese Nõukogude okupatsiooni aasta vältel proovis Nõukogude Liit käivitada laiaulatuslikku sovetiseerimisprotsessi, mis oli suunatud Eesti ühiskonna kõikide tahkude vastu. Aasta vältel läbiviidud kampaania üks lahutamatu koostisosadest oli kommunismi levitamine rahvale. Protsessi kaasati ka väikesearvuline etniliste rootslaste kogukond, mis moodustas umbes 0,7 % Eesti rahvastikust, ja kes olid Tsaari Venemaa ja Eesti valitsuse poolt täiesti ära unustatud. Propagandakampaania mõjutas eestirootslaste rahvusliku identiteedi arenemist läbi sotsialismi prisma, kusjuures etniliste rootslaste rahvusgrupp oli sealjuures privilegieritud seisuses. Propagandakampaania keskne organ oli Nõukogude poolt kirjastatud rootsikeelne ajaleht *Sovjet-Estland*. Kampaania proovis mõjutada eelkõige rahvuslikku identiteeti ja levitada Nõukogude ideoloogiat. Jõupingutused jooksid suuresti liiva, kuna suur osa sihtgrupist avaldas avalikult soovi emigreeruda Rootsi.

Käesoleva töö eesmärgiks on uurida nimetatud kampaaniat, samuti selgitada välja, milline oli ideoloogiline taust, mispärast selline kampaania üleüldse ette võeti. Magistritöö käsitleb ajalehte *Sovjet-Estland*, mis ilmus teise maailmasõja esimese okupatsiooniaasta jooksul; uurimisobjektiks on ajaleht, mille sihtgrupiks oli nii poliitiliselt, rahvusvaheliselt kui ka siseriiklikult vähetähtis ning väikesearvuline etniline grupp, mis moodustas vähem kui 1 % kogu rahvastikust. Siiski arvasid okupandid, et sellisele vähetähtsale ühiskonna segmendile, mis koosnes peamiselt vaestest põllumeestest, kalameest ja meremeestest, tasub tähelepanu pöörata.

Nõukogude Liidu esimene okupatsioon algas 18. juunil 1940 (millele järgnes kogu territooriumi liitmine Nõukogude Liiduga 6. augustil 1940), ja kestis kuni sakslaste saabumiseni 1941. aasta suvel. Pea aastapikkune Nõukogude okupatsioon pani aluse kiiretele muutustele Eesti ühiskonnas tervikuna, mis päädis täieliku integreerimisega Nõukogude süsteemi. Muutused tähendasid kõikide keskvoimu poolt taunitud organisatsioonide ning väljaannete sulgemist ja/või asendamist Bolševistliku partei kontrolli all olevatega. Intensiivne sovetiseerimine puudutas kõiki Eesti elanikke

¹ The summary was translated into Estonian by Martin Karner.

vaatamata nende rahvusele, elukohale, töökohale või poliitilisele eelistusele. Tegu oli Oktoobrirevolutsiooni sünnitatud ning sellejärgselt väljaarenenud bolševistliku süsteemi võimalikult kiire sisseseadmisega Eestis. Selleks, et saavutada hea tulemus, pidi lisaks administratiivsele, poliitilisele ja kultuurilisele muutusele kaasnema ka muutus inimestes endis. Viimatimainitud eesmärgi saavutamiseks Eesti elanike seas rakendati tööle aktiivne propagandamasin ning viidi läbi agitatsioonikampaaniaid.

Teiste vähemuste hulgas elas Eestis umbes 8,000 etnilist rootslast. Eestirootslased elasid peamiselt Loode-Eesti saartel ja rannikualadel. Suurim kogukond asus Läänemaal, ning suuremaid asualasid võis leida ka Harjumaal ja Saaremaal. Propaganda oli suunatud muuhulgas ka eestirootslastele, mille tagajärjel asendati juulis 1940 ilmumise lõpetanud eestirootslaste ajaleht *Kustbon* (Randlane) ajalehega *Sovjet-Estland* (Nõukogude-Eesti), mille esimene number avaldati 17. oktoobril samal aastal.

Sovjet-Estland sai Eesti Kommunistliku (Bolševistliku) partei Lääne maakonna ametlikuks häälekandjaks. Seega asendus eestirootslaste **poolt** väljaantav rootsikeelne ajaleht eestirootslaste **jaoks** väljaantava ajalehega, mille peatoimetajaks sai eesti rahvusest Anton Vaarandi. Seoses sakslaste pealetungiga nädalalehe ilmumine katkes 13. augustil 1941. Selleks ajaks oli trükitud 43 numbrit, vahele oli jäänud nädalane paus juuli keskel 1941.

Ajalehe toimetus asus Tallinnas ENSV Riikliku Kirjastuskeskuse Ajalehtede Kirjastuse ruumides pikk tänav 58. *Sovjet-Estland* trükiti Tallinna trükikojas Punane Täht. Nädalaleht oli ainuke Läänemaa väljaanne kuni 1940. aasta detsembris alustas ilmumist ajaleht Töötav Läänlane, mis oli samuti kohalike kommunistide ametlik väljaanne. Väljaanne oli tavaliselt neljaleheline, mis kasvas kuueleheküljeliseks parteikongressi eriväljaande puhul ja kahanes kaheleheliseks siis kui ilmus teade, et Saksamaa on Nõukogude Liidule sõja kuulutanud.

Sovjet-Estland ei kajastanud täielikult ei Eesti sündmusi ega ka rootslaste seas toimuvat. Informatsiooni esitamine *Sovjet-Estlandi* veergudel nagu ka muudes nõukogude väljaannetes oli suunatud propaganda ja agitatsioonitöö elluviimiseks. Artiklid näitasid nõukogulasi positiivse nurga alt ning esitasid valikulist teavet. Lehtedest puudusid loomulikult teated deporteerimistest, kodanike väärkohtlemisest ja rahulolematusest, vägivaldsetest mobilisatsioonidest, eestirootslaste lahkumisest Rootsi ning vastuhakkudest okupatsioonijõududele. Vastupidi, ajaleht pani rõhku ideoloogiale, administratiivsete muutuste kajastamisele Eesti valitsuses ja Eesti ning eestirootslaste heale käekäigule Nõukogude võimu all.

Stalinism mõjutas kõiki ühiskonna aspekte, kaasaarvatud eesti-rootslasi nende viimaste Eestis veedetud aastate jooksul. *Sovjet-Estland* on kujukas näide sellest, kuidas nõukogude võim end Eestis positsioneeris ning oma propagandat üritas teostada. Vaadeldes üht kindlat ühiskonna osa, ilmnevad detailid, mida pinnapealsel vaatlusel võibolla ei märka - eriti mis puudutab fakti, et teise maailmasõja käigus kadus Eestist kolm vähemusgrupp: eesti-rootslased, baltisakslased ja juudid. Keskendumine eesti-rootslastele kui ühele vähemustest, võib heita uut valgust mitte ainult olukorrale tollases okupeeritud Eestis, vaid ka Stalinismi natsionalistlike initsiatiivide elluviimisele uutel territooriumidel, kusjuures vaatamata sellele, et eesti-rootslased moodustasid vaid alla ühe protsendi rahvastikust, tegid okupandid märkimisväärseid pingutusi et teha nende seas propagandat. Eesti-rootslased on selles osas eriti hea näide, kuna nad sobivad Stalini arusaamaga rahvusgrupist ja samuti seetõttu, et eksisteeris rootsikeelne Nõukogude propaganda ja keskvalitsuse raportid rootsi rahvusest elanike kohta. Selgub, et mõnes valdkonnas olid eesti-rootslased kui rahvusgrupp ENSV-s kõrgema sotsiaalse staatusega, mida Nõukogude rahvuspoliitika uurija Terry Martin nimetab "*affirmative action*" ehk võrdsete võimaluste loomine.

1. peatükk

Eesti-rootslastele ajalehe loomisel 1940. aastal üritasid toimetajad hõlmata väga marginaalset lugejaskonda. Rootsi rahvusest elanikke oli arvuliselt vähe ja neil oli vähe otsest poliitilist kaalu, seda vaatamata oma sidemetele Soome ja Rootsi hõimlastega. *Sovjet-Estland* üritas läbi ajaloolise vaatevinkli tuua teravaid näiteid kodanluse soovist eesti-rootslasi majandusliku ja poliitilise surutise abil ühiskonna ääremaile tõrjuda. Enamlased toetusid enim kahe sõja vahelisele perioodile – ajale mil eesti-rootslaste kui rahvuse identiteet Eestis arenes jõudsalt.

Pärast esimest maailmasõda oli vähemuste olukord äsja iseseisvunud Eestis ebakindel. Vastavalt 1922. aasta rahvaloenduse andmetele moodustasid vähemused rahvastikust 12,3 %. Suurimad vähemused olid: venelased (8,2%), sakslased (1,7%), rootslased (0,7%), juudid (0,4%) ja muud (1,3 %). Mitmel juhul oli rahvusvähemuste näol tegemist kunagise võõrvõimu esindajatega, seda nii Saksa, Vene kui Rootsi puhul. Eesti riik asus vähemusrahvaste õigusi kaitsma muuhulgas ka 1922. aastal vastuvõetud Põhiseaduses (paragrahvid 20 ja 21), mis sätestas vähemuste huvide vastavuse riigi huvidele. Iseseisvuse ajal kerkisid siiski pinnale konfliktid natsionalistliku debati käigus eestlastest enamuse ja vähemuste vahel. Esimesed üritasid kaitsta ja arendada oma

rahvuslikku identiteeti ja viimased soovisid säilitada oma rahvusliku identiteeti ja jätkata selle kultiveerimist. Lisaks üritas valitsus anda lisagarantiisid Kultuuraautonoomia seadusega, mis võeti vastu 12. veebruaril 1925. Seadus ei pakkunud vähemustele siiski täielikku kaitset, jättes tähelepanuta pikaajalised garantiid etnilisest kuuluvusest lähtudes. Pinged kasvasid 30ndatel, eriti pärast Konstantin Pätsi riigipööret ja sellele järgnevat autoritaarset valitsemiskorda. Kuigi Päts kinnitas vähemuste õigusi 1937. aasta põhiseaduses, oli ajastu jooksul tunda natsionalistliku poliitika süvenemist.

Rootsikeelse ajalehe ilmumine rootsi rahvusest elanikele sai teoks 1918. Järgnevatel aastatel proovis ajaleht *Kustbon* olla katalüsaatoriks Rootsi identiteedi rõhutamisel ja rahvusliku ühtsuse loomisel eesti-rootslaste hulgas. Ajaleht julgustas neid olemaks tegusad ja osavõtlikud Eesti kodanikud, säilitades ja tugevdades samal ajal oma eripärast kultuuri. Ajaleht sõltus pidevalt majanduslikest ja poliitilisest oludest kuni eesti-rootslaste häälekandja Nõukogude võimu poolt suleti. *Kustbon* oli sõltumatu ajaleht, mida andis alguses välja poliitiline organisatsioon *Svenska Folkförbundet*. Pärast poliitiliste organisatsioonide keelustamist 1935. aastal, lõpetas leht ajutiselt ilmumise; kuni *Kustbon* 1936. aastal kultuuriorganisatsiooni *Svenska Odlingens Vänner* egiidi all taas ilmuma hakkas, andis Nicolas Blees välja ajalehte *Nya Kustbon* nime all. Mõjutusi sai ajaleht ka 1934. aasta seadusest, mis nõudis eestikeelsete kohanimedele kasutamist isegi rootsikeelses väljaandes.

Seoses surve kasvuga Eestile 1939. aastal pärast Molotov-Ribbentropi pakti allakirjutamist oli Eesti sunnitud evakueerima mitmed saared lubamaks Nõukogude Liidul rajada sinna oma sõjaväebaasid. Etniliste rootslaste jaoks tähendas see täielikku evakueerumist oma kodudest Osmussaarelt, Pakri saartelt ja Naissaarelt; oma kodudest sunniti ümber asuma umbes 600 eestirootslast. Osa elanikke Pakri saartelt proovis saada Rootsi saatkonnalt Tallinnas luba emigreerumiseks Rootsi. Lõpuks sai Nõukogude võimu käest loa 110 (ehk kolmandik) avalduse esitanutest, ning nad lahkusid 1940. aasta oktoobris. Need inimesed olid ainukesed, kes said ametliku loa ENSVst emigreeruda.

2. peatükk

Üks propagandakampaania juhtmõtteid keskendus eestirootslaste rahvuslikule identiteedile. Sageli korratud fraas ajalehes rõhutas mõtet, et Nõukogude süsteemis olid kõik rahvad võrdsed. Seda tõestati ikka ja jälle ajalooliste näidetega rahva (loe: eestirootslaste) majanduslikust, kultuurilisest ja keelelisest ikestamisest eestlastest enamuse poolt. Taolise propagandaga üritasid bolševikud siduda Eesti kodanluse vastase

ülelõusu Nõukogude päästva režiimiga, jättes mulje nagu oleks eestirootslasi tulnud vabastama eestlaste ikke alt, ja proovisid seoses sellega näidata Nõukogude poliitikat eestirootslasi soosiva nurga alt. Tugeva Nõukogude ideoloogia survele joonistusid välja erinevused rahvakillu loomuliku identiteedi ja pealesurutud Nõukogude mõjuga identiteedi vahel.

Siiski polnud selline natsionalismi õhutamine rootsikeelse vähemuse seas ainulaadne. See järgib teatud järjekindlat Nõukogulikku õpetust rahvaste staatusest ja kohtlemisest Nõukogude Liidu territooriumil. Nõukogude rahvaste poliitika kujunes välja juba enne Oktoobrirevolutsiooni, mille peamisteks ideoloogideks olid Lenin ja Stalin. Selle asemel, et vastandada natsionalismi Bolševike propageeritud revolutsiooniõpetusele, katsus Lenin sobitada diskursuse Bolševike ideoloogiasse, rõhutades hoopis natsionalistlike meeleolude toetavat mõju revolutsiooni ideele.

Stalini arusaam rahvuse olemusest sobis suurepäraselt eestirootslastega, kes elasid omakeelses kogukonnas ja neil oli enamvähem ühesugune majanduslik olukord, ühine ajalugu ja kultuur. Lisaks oli suhteliselt vaeste talumeeste ja kalurite seisund soodne pinnas Nõukogude majanduspoliitika sisseviimiseks. Kirjeldatud näitajad tegid eestirootslaste kogukonna (vähemalt teoreetiliselt) kommunistliku ideoloogia ja sovetiseerimise jaoks ideaalseks märklauaks, mis asetas nad erilisse seisusesse Eesti Nõukogude Sotsialistlikus Vabariigis.

Eestirootslaste rahvusliku identiteedi nõukogulik versioon üritas kombineerida areneva identiteedi elemente ja kujundada protsessi soovitud suunas. Paljudel juhtudel oleks taoline riiklik identiteedi rõhutamine võib-olla eestirootslastele isegi kasulik olnud. *Sovjet-Estland* üritas näidata oma toetust eestirootslaste rahvuslikule identiteedile lingvistiliste vahenditega, pakkudes elanikele omakeelset ajalehte ja organiseerides aegajalt rootsi keelt rääkivate valitsusametnike külaskäike kogukondadesse. Ajalehe rootsi keel polnud kaugeltki täiuslik, sisaldas üsna palju grammatilisi vigu. Samuti üritas väljaanne siduda lugejaid ühe regionaalse identiteediga, pühendades viis numbrit erinevatele piirkondadele: Ruhnu, Põõsaspea, Rooslepa, Noarootsi ja Vormsi. Kirjeldatud numbrid üritasid tugevdada sidet inimeste ja maa vahel, ning väärivad äramärkimist ideoloogilise sisu puudumise poolest.

3. peatükk

Selleks, et inkorporeerida Eesti ühiskond suuremasse Nõukogude süsteemi, oli vaja levitada vastselt anastatud territooriumil ka Nõukogude kommunistlikku ideoloogiat.

Propagandavahendina kandsid ajalehes avaldatud artiklid pea alati Nõukogude ideoloogia sõnumit. Artiklid olid kirjutatud Nõukogulikust vaatenurgast, pakkumata muid alternatiivseid lähtekehti. Äsjaannekteeritud territooriumil, kus toimus kiire poliitilise, sotsiaalse ja majandusliku keskkonna muutus, oli vajalik selgitada elanikele uut ideoloogiat. Loodeti, et kui inimesed mõistavad kommunismi ideoloogiat, on nad muutustele vastuvõtlikumad ja sobituvad Nõukogude ühiskonda aktiivsete kodanikena.

Sovjet-Estland proovis eestirootslasi harida lugematute artiklitega Nõukogude ideoloogiast sarjas „Mis on sotsialism“ („Vad är socialism“). Hilisemad valimistele pühendatud artiklid valgustasid lugejaid nõukogude poliitilisest süsteemist, rõhutades nõukogude kodanike rolli ja kohustusi. Uutelt kodanikelt oodati Nõukogude Liidu ülistamist. Lähenevate nõukogude pühade eel selgitas ajaleht nende tausta ja ajaloolist tähtsust. Järgnevalt õpetati lehes seda, kuidas Eesti elanikud neid pühi peaksid tähistama, ning hiljem kajastati seda, kuidas eestlased ja mõnel puhul ka eestirootslased neid tähtpäevi olid tähistanud. Mõnikord seisnes see vaid selles, et tähtis päev leidis äramärkimist koolis, aitasid puhkepäevad ja tähtpäevad aru saada Nõukogude kodaniku rollist uue ühiskonna kontekstis. Levinuim meetod kuidas eestirootslaste tulevast rolli Nõukogude süsteemis rõhutada, oli nende halva kohtlemise meenutamine Tsaari-Venemaa ja Eesti Vabariigi ajal.

Eestirootslastele suunatud argumentidest leidis tihti kasutust ka mõte, et Nõukogude kord oli nende päästjaks. Argumendi loogika oli järgmine: kui Nõukogude võimu poleks kehtestatud, oleksid eestirootslased praegugi veel vaesed ja kapitalistliku Eesti valitsuse natsionalistliku poliitika ohvrid. Ideoloogiate erinevuse rõhutamiseks tõi *Sovjet-Estland* näiteid ajaloosündmustest. Suur osa ajaloolistest näidetest puudutas vähemuste õigusi. Artiklite raskuskese asus peamiselt Eesti Vabariigi ajal toimunud vähemuste rõhumisel. Vähem leidis argumendina kasutust Tsaari-Venemaa ajal toimunud rõhumiste kirjeldamine.

4. peatükk

Režiimimuutus raputas tõsiselt kõiki ühiskonna osi. Ajalehe *Sovjet-Estland* üks eesmärkidest oli nendesamade muutuste teadvustamine ja ideoloogiline õigustamine, kasutades tööliste ja põllumeeste eelnevat vähest väärtustamist oma kasuks ära.

Ajalehe propaganda apelleeris korduvalt paranenud majandusnäitajatele, uute töökohtade loomisele ja tehnoloogia täiustamisele, mis oli propagandistliku ajalehe arvates võimalik vaid kommunistliku süsteemi abil. Paljud neist muutustest haaratud

valdkondadest, eriti põllunduse, kalapüügi, hariduse ja religiooni vallas toimunud muutused põhjustasid eestirootslaste seas vastuseisu. Vaieldamatult olid need valdkonnad, mis seostusid kõige tihedamalt rahvusliku identiteediga. Eestirootslased olid enamuses põllumehed ja kalamehed, ning neid elualasid mõjutasid nõukogude süsteemiga kaasnenud muutused enim.

Nii maareformi, põllumajanduse, kalanduse kui ka hariduse ja religiooni osas vastandusid eestirootslaste huvid nõukogude poliitikale. Vaatamata parimatele kavatsustele ja katsetele eestirootslasi ümber veenda, kukkus nõukogude propaganda haledalt läbi kõikides valdkondades. Eestirootslastel oli tugev side oma maaga ja nad suhtusid kõikidesse maaga seotud muutustesse väga vastumeelselt. Rootsikeelsed koolid ja jumalasõna moodustasid eestirootslaste identiteedi nurgakivi. Pioneeriliikumise vaevaline juurutamine eestirootslastest noorte seas pole ainult tõestuseks propagandakampaania edutusest koolis, vaid seda võib vaadelda ka kui ideoloogia koduse tõrjumise peegeldust. Võib-olla oleks suurema hulga rootsikeelse propaganda pikaajaline levitamine koolis toonud endaga kaasa suuremat edu. Kuid võib-olla ka mitte.

5. peatükk

Esimese nõukogude okupatsiooni vältel esitas *Sovjet-Estland* eestirootslastele kaks teineteisele vastanduvat pilti. Esimene kujutas traagilisi ja raskeid aegu välismaal, mis tähendas seda, et manati silme ette sünge pilt Nõukogude liidu välisest kapitalistlikust maailmast. Teine kujutas aga positiivsetes värvides lootusrikast elu sotsialistliku riigikorraga Nõukogude Liidus. Mõlemad teenisid aga sedasama eesmärki, nimelt mõtet, et vaid Nõukogude kord oli hea elu parim retsept. Neid kahte koos vaadates näeme, et elu välismaal katsuti näidata ebakindla ja karmina, kuivõrd Nõukogude Eestis oli elu lootusrikas ja kindel. Eesmärk oli luua publiku seas alateadlik mulje sellest, et jäädes sotsialistliku režiimiga Eestisse oleks neile parem ja see omakorda peletaks eemale emigreerumise mõtled. Vaieldamatult oli tegu katsega suunata eestirootslaste tähelepanu Stockholmi suunalt Moskva poole.

Kajastades kodumaiseid ja välismaiseid uudiseid, katsus Nõukogude propaganda kujutada nõukogude süsteemis valitsevat ideaalset elu. Taoliste kaheste piltidega kohutavast olukorrast välismaal ja harmoonilisest elust kodumaal üritati portreerida kapitalistliku maailma ebakindlust ja kahjulikkust töölistele ning ülistada sotsialismi potentsiaali ning edusamme. Seda üritati saavutada suuresti tänu laiaulatuslikule info kogumise ja levitamise mehhanismide, nimelt läbi nõukogude uudisteagentuuri TASS ja

Eesti NSV vastava organi ETA. Eestirootslastele tähendas see survet suunata oma tähelepanu Rootsi-keskselt mõtlemiselt Moskva-kesksele. Rootsis valitseva raske olukorra detailne kajastamine pidi peletama emigreerumismõtted, kuna elu välismaal on ebakindel.

Ajalehe toon ja struktuur muutus kardinaalselt 1941. aasta 25. juuni väljaandes. Sakslaste sõjakuulutus 22. juunil lõhkus kujutluspildi Nõukogude Liidust kui rahuriigist ja tähendas otsest sõtta astumist, mida loeti nõukogude propagandas vaid kapitalistlike riikide pärusmaale kuuluvaks teguviisiks. Eestirootslaste kommunistliku kultuuri tugevdamise asemel pani ajaleht nüüdsest rõhku rahva õhutamisele Saksamaa sõjategevuse vastu. Arusaam Nõukogude Liidust kui rahumeelsest ja stabiilsest ühendusest oli muutunud üleöö masside mobiliseerimiseks, et alustada sõda. Sõda oligi eelneva propagandakampaania proovikiviks: kui rahvas oleks Nõukogude ideoloogia omaks võtnud, oleks nad ilma pikemata fašistide vastu kodumaa kaitseks välja astunud. Seda aga eestirootslastega ei juhtunud ning sõjategevuse kandudes Eestisse, lakkas vähemusele osutatud tähelepanu. Kui rahvast ei suudetud veenda enne 22. juunit, siis pärast seda oli juba kindlasti liiga hilja.

6. peatükk

Vaatamata ajalehe püüdlustele jäi eestirootslaste meelsus nõukogude ideoloogia poolt enamjaolt mõjutusteta. Propageeriti küll Eesti ja Rootsi kultuuri, reklaamiti valimisi, näidati lõhet kodumaise ja välismaise vahel, kuid uus ideoloogia ei leidnud poolehoidu. Arhiivimaterjalidest selgub, et Eestist lahkumise meeleolud olid eestirootslaste seas vägagi aktuaalsed, ning see põhjustas bolševike parteile peavalu. Üks peamistest ajalehe eesmärkidest oli veenda eestirootslasi loobuma emigreerumismõtetest, jääma Eestisse ning sulanduma täielikult sotsialistlikku ühiskonda. Emigratsioon oli nõukogude võimu jaoks tähtsal kohal juba algusest peale: ajalehe esimene number ilmus selsamal päeval kui Rootsi saabusid esimesed seaduslikult Eestist ümberasunud eestirootslased. Kui juba osa sai loa lahkumiseks, miks ei võinuks teised järgida nende eeskujut? *Sovjet-Estland* pidi olukorraga leppima, ja vaikima oma propagandafunktsiooni tõttu maha tõsiasja, et osa rahvast ei tervitanud nõukogude okupante oma maal.

Ka eestirootslastest ei läinud terrorilaine mööda ja nad kannatasid võrdselt ülejäänud eesti rahvaga deporteerimiste ja sundmobilisatsioonide läbi. Küüditatute hulgas oli kõige enam inimesi, keda võis nimetada eestirootslaste intelligentsiks – need olid õpetajad ja kultuuriorganisatsioonide juhid. Propagandaorganile kohaselt vaikis *Sovjet-*

Estland kõikidest taolistest sündmustest. Just nende inimeste deporteerimisest ja mobiliseerimisest sündis pikas perspektiivis eestirootslaste identiteedile kõige rohkem kahju. Teguviis on tõestuseks ideoloogilise mõjutamise ebaõnnestumisest ja propagandakampaania täielikust läbikukkumisest.

Sakslaste saabudes olid emigreerumise mõtted eestirootslaste seas valdavad. Tänu Rootsi Punasele Ristile, Rootsi Kirikule ja Waffen SS ohvitserile Dr. Lienhardile õnnestus paljudel saada luba ümberasumiseks Rootsi. Teise maailmasõja lõppedes oli Rootsi põgenenud 7,900 eestirootslast, kellest 4,357 olid lahkunud seaduslikult. Seoses sellega, et Eestisse olid jäänud vaid vähesed eestirootslased, ei hakanud *Sovjet-Estland* uuesti ilmuma. Sihtgrupi suurus ei õigustanud edasisi pingutusi.

Kümne kuu jooksul elasid eestirootslased valitsuse kõrgendatud tähelepanu all. Nende jaoks ilmus emakeelne ajaleht ning valitsuse esindajad käisid regulaarselt inimestega kohtumas ning nendega rääkimas, mõnel juhul lausa nende emakeeles.

Eestirootslastele räägiti pidevalt, et valitsus käsitleb neid kui eestlastega võrdseid, kes väärivad oma kultuuri arendamiseks julgustust, vahendeid ja võimalusi. Eestirootslastele räägiti, et nad mitte ainult ei olnud seda ära teeninud, vaid isegi rohkem õigustatud saamaks majanduslikke vahendeid oma vaesusest ülesaamiseks. Neid peeti samaväärseteks aktiivseteks ja täieõiguslikeks ühiskonnaliikmeteks nagu kõiki teisi rahvusgruppe.

Kui see kõik ei oleks olnud (nende suureks õnnetuseks) otse vastupidi Kommunistliku partei sovetiseerimiseideoloogiale ja –meetoditele, oleks eestirootslastele kätte jõudnud läbi aegade kõige parem olukord. Nädalast nädalasse kujutas *Sovjet-Estland* rikkust ja võimalusi, mis eestirootslastele avanenud on, kuid propagandana suurele osale eestirootslastele korda ei läinud. Võibolla oli põhjuseks maareformi käigus äravõetud maatükid või kirikuõpetajate alandamine, mis rahva uue ideoloogia vastu üles keeras. Võimalik, et põhjuseks oli oma kultuuriorganisatsiooni (SOV) kadumine ja selle ajalehe sulgemine. Või tuleks põhjust otsida hoopis sajandite tagant, kui nende esiisad olid saanud loa emigreeruda Rootsi (ning Rootsi soov neid vastu võtta).

Paljuski oli *Sovjet-Estland* läbikukkunud propagandaprojekt. Ajaleht ei saavutanud edu eestirootslaste pööramisel sotsialismi-usku. Vastupidiselt eesmärgile ei suutnud propaganda muuta eestirootslaste kriitilist suhtumist Nõukogude võimu poliitikasse. Tellimusi oli vähe (täpseid andmed puuduvad) ja rahva rahulolematus püsiv. Peamised ajalehe eesmärgid võib lugeda seega läbikukkunuteks.

Siiski polnud kogu projekt täielik fiasko. Kampanias võib leida aspekte, mis tõid eestirootslastele kasu. Kuivõrd igapäevane muutuste kirjeldamine oli ajalehe *Sovjet-Estland* peamine funktsioon, olid peateemadeks 17. oktoobrist 1940 kuni 13. augustini 1941 ideoloogia, rahvuslik identiteet ning väljarände takistamine. Kui proovida hinnata ajalehe efektiivsust neis kolmes valdkonnas, võib tuua välja mõned edukust tõestavad elemendid.

Vaatamata sellele, kas ideoloogiat aktsepteeriti või mitte, oli *Sovjet-Estland* tõhus vahend selgitamiseks eestirootslastele Nõukogude Liidu ajalugu ja sotsialistliku ideoloogia arengukäiku. Neid põhimõtteid tutvustas rubriik pealkirjaga “Mis on sotsialism” ning seda toetasid peaaegu kõik järgnevad artiklid. Valimiste eel sisaldas leht suurel hulgal agitatsiooni- ja propagandamaterjale selleks, et selgitada Nõukogude poliitilist struktuuri kui ka süstida inimestesse teadlikkust nende õigustest ja kohustustest sotsialistlikus ühiskonnas. *Sovjet-Estland* aitas kaasa pühade ja tähtpäevade mõistmisele, selgitades konteksti, milleks neid tähistada. Eestirootslastele selgitati lugematute artiklite kaudu kuidas nad peaksid sellistel puhkudel käituma ja mil moel tähtpäevi tähistada. Arvestades, et eestirootslaste “kommunismi-pööramine” ebaõnnestus, võib ideoloogilist koolitamist lugeda kordaläinuks.

Sovjet-Estland püüdis olla sobiv aseaine ajalehele *Kustbon*, samal ajal jutlustades Nõukogude ideoloogiat ja sobitades seda eestirootslastest vähemusrahvuse hulka. Eestirootslaste rahvuslik identiteet ning kultuur olid taas tähtsad teemad, kuid neid vaadeldi läbi sotsialismi prisma. *Sovjet-Estland* ei suutnud siiski asendada endist ajalehte *Kustbon*; *Sovjet-Estland* ei saavutanud eestirootslaste seas sellist kandepinda, mis oleks olnud vajalik rahvusliku identiteedi mõtte edasiarendamiseks. Ajalehte toimetas ka kogukonnaväline grupp inimesi, kel oli kohaliku kogukonnaga vähe ühist, ning seega on raske paigutada Andersoni teooria raamidesse.

Kõigele vaatamata pakkus *Sovjet-Estland* Bolševikepoolset vähemustesõbralikku poliitikat, mida varem eestirootslaste puhul praktikas polnud rakendatud. Kui kahe sõja vahel toimunud Eesti põhiseadused üritasid vähemusi kaitsta, muutusid valitsuste vaated üha natsionalistlikumaks. Nõukogude võim ei väljendanud pelgalt soovi vähemusi kaitsta, vaid tõestas oma püüdlusi sellega, et jõudis vähemustega tegeleda. Eestirootslased olid vaid üks paljudest Nõukogude Liidu vähemusrahvastest, keda julgustati ja anti vahendeid selleks, et nad saaksid tegeleda oma rahvusliku identiteedi arendamisega; kuigi seda kõike sisulises kooskõlas sotsialistlike põhimõtetega. Eestirootslaste kui vähemuse kohtlemine polnud erand, vaid peegeldab vähemuste suunas toimunud üldist praktikat.

Rida aspekte muudab eestirootslaste juhtumi siiski eriliseks. Tegemist oli väikese vähemusega, kelle rahvuslik identiteet oli arenenud juba aastakümneid enne Nõukogude perioodi algust. Identiteet oli tihedalt läbipõimunud kontaktidega Rootsi riigi ning Rootsi kirikuga. Samuti olid eestirootslastel sidemed hõimlastega Soomes. Nende asualade tõttu rannikualadel ning saartel kuulusid nad ka ühiskonna mõttes perifeeriasse.

Üks, kus *Sovjet-Estland* ei saavutanud mingisugust edu, oli väljarändemõtete mahasurumine. Juba enne kui sarnased artiklid ilmusid, heietasid eestirootslased lahkumismõtteid. Vaid kolmandik Pakri saarte elanikest sai loa lahkumiseks, ning vaid vähesed lahkusid omal initsiatiivil salaja. Seda vaatamata sellele, et võimalus selleks ju oli. Kogukond oli piisavalt väike ja hästiinformeeritud, seega oli selle teema käsitlemise edasilükkamine ajalehes tähelepanuväärne viga. Kui kord oli tekkinud lahkumiseks põhjus, oli raske sundida inimesi oma meelt muutma. Nõukogude Liidu ideoloogilised lubadused ja uudised jäid sisutühjadeks ja teostamatuteks. Kuivõrd eestirootslasi kui rahvusgruppi koheldi tervikuna paremini, toimus igaihe olukorra pidev halvenemine.

Propagandakampaaniaga seotud probleemid olid arutlusel Eesti NLKP Keskkomitees mais 1941. Raportis märgitakse, et Nõukogude pingutused ei olnud vilja kandnud ning seoses sellega pakkus raport välja muudatusi, mis parandaks eestirootslaste olukorda. Muudatused puudutasid nii poliitilist kui ideoloogilist harimist, majandusliku olukorra parandamist läbi tootmisharimise alandamise ja äravõetud maatükkide rahalist kompenseerimist. Samuti pakuti välja plaan suurendada rootsikeelsete raamatute ning filmide kättesaadavust. Sealjuures loodeti saavutada viimatikirjeldatud eesmärgid koostöös kohalike eestirootslastega, samuti suurendada ajalehe mahtu ja tellimuste arvu, kaasata ettevõtmistesse rohkem noori ja vabastada osa eestirootslastest sõjaväeteenistusest.

Neid plaane ei suudetud kunagi ellu viia; kuu aega hiljem kuulutasid sakslased Nõukogude Liidule sõja ja Nõukogude võim suunas tähelepanu eestirootslaste arendamiselt kogu ühiskonna mobiliseerimisele. Eestirootslasi ei "valgustatud" enam propagandaga Nõukogude ideoloogia kohta, vaid püüti veenda selles, et rahvas astuks vastu fašistide pealetungile. Täielikult ümberorienteeritud propagandakampaania käigus kadus rahvusvähemus peaaegu täielikult pildilt. Rahvuslik identiteet ei olnud enam tähtis. Kui lugejaid polnud siiani toimunud kampaania ideoloogiliselt veennud, oli vähe lootust, et rahvas tõuseks vabatahtlikult üles kaitsmaks Nõukogude Liitu sakslaste eest.

Uurides ajalehe *Sovjet-Estland* kaudu läbiviidud propagandakampaaniat, võib näha, milline oli Nõukogude Poliitika vastvallutatud aladel. Kampaaniat on eriti huvitav

jälgida seetõttu, et publik oli vaenulikult meelestatud. Vaatamata sellele, et inimeste mõtteviisi kujundamine oli suures osas läbikukkumine, ei jätnud ajaleht siiski oma joni. Nõukogude ideoloogiast lähtuvalt oli rahva kapitalistliku massi käest päästmine hädavajalik ja üllas ettevõtmine, seda vaatamata sellele, et pingutus oli läbikukkumisele määratud. Emigreerumismeeleolud sihtgrupi seas ei kadunud. Ning siis kui lõpuks saksa okupatsiooni ajal sai üsna suur arv eestirootslasi loa lahkuda oma kodumaale, kadus nii põhjus kui vajadus kampaania taaslustamiseks.