ratives produced by the political elite at the highest level was obligatory during the entire Soviet period. At the same time, the educational and cultural development of the population increasingly came to be seen as contradictory with the shortcomings of the country's socio-economic system. Propaganda which stressed the achievements of socialism was confronted with dissatisfaction about the lack of consumer goods in the shops, the low quality of services etc. To many young people, the Western way of life looked more attractive. The more liberal the regime became, the more these contradictions in public narratives and social practices became apparent.

As shown above, the erosion of the Stalinist model of NSM began right after the tyrant's death. Nonetheless, the ambition of creating a new kind of human being was not abandoned. The more recent concept of developed socialism, prevalent in the late 1970s, characteristically produced a discourse that emphasised the new historical social unity of the Soviet people, whose creation was stated to be a new stage in constructing NSM. To implement this goal of creating a communist society, the CPSU defined three main fields of indispensable societal improvement: politics, economics and human personality. Changes of the latter were to be achieved through 'complex education,' a concept specific of the late 1960s and 1970s.

All these ideological mechanisms were only gradually disappearing in the late 1980s, at the height of perestroika. The political rhetoric of local actors in Sortavala echoed the situation in the rest of the Soviet Union. Many residents no longer identified themselves with the Party's policies, some of them even adopting an anti-Soviet stance. While the Communist Party continued to promote its discourse in the media, new forms of political representation were emerging. The formerly monolithic Soviet identity produced in official discourses became a sort of hybrid identity that included both old and new components.

2. Patriotic Education, Paramilitary Training and People's Patrols: Defending the Socialist Motherland

Military themes were a key element of Soviet identity politics and place-making in Sortavala. Military discourses and practices were, of course, present in many spheres of Soviet everyday life, but were even more obvious in a garrison town located near the Soviet state border, where people wearing the uniform of the Soviet Army or the Border Troops were a common feature of the urban landscape.[10] A division of the 6th Army was stationed in Sortavala[11] and only left in 2001 (*Ladoga*, 2 March 2001; Izotov

10 A source of particular interest is the weblog run by former border guards that have served in the North Ladoga area during the Soviet post-war period (see: URL Odnoklassniki.ru web-page 'My iz Sortavala'/'We are from Sortavala'). Its users often publish photographs showing them in uniform.

11 The 6th Army (see e.g. Feskov et al. eds. 2004) was a part of Leningrad Military District (1960–1998). Headquarter of the Army located in Petrozavodsk before it was finally disbanded in a course of the Military reform in 1998 (Boiko, *Karelia* 4.04.2002). The 6th Army listed the 111th Motor Rifle Division, of which the 185th Motorised Rifle Regiment stationed in Sortavala, and several other military units stationed in Lahdenpohja.

2001: 97). Access to certain areas, especially near the border, was heavily restricted, and some areas are still closed to civilians today. The mission of the Border Troops was to prevent the unauthorised entry of foreigners and to keep Soviet citizens from leaving the country illegally.[12] Strips along the state border, defended with anti-vehicle obstacles, fences and barbed wire, clearly demarcated the border patrolled by the Border Troops (see Ezhukov 2008: 12).

Militarisation reinforced Sortavala's 'Sovietness' (Izotov 2008: 59–60; Izotov 2013: 172). Of particular importance in this respect was the military and patriotic education of the residents organised by various public organisations, foremost among them the DOSAAF, the Voluntary Society of Assistance to the Army, the Air Force and the Navy (see below for more information). But the subject was widely discussed in other contexts, as shown by the example of a local public organisation responsible for culture and education that debated the question in 1965 within the framework of mass political work with students and of political education with the teachers of the local musical schools (f. R-2203, op. 1, d. 44/1006, l. 4).

Military subjects and border issues in particular were also widely present in the official discourse, often through the prism of local representations. Military rhetoric, generally accompanied by communist rhetoric and slogans, mostly made its appearance in speeches and newspaper articles by officials of the military commissariat (*voenkomat*, short for *voennye komissariaty*).[13] The ideological significance of military activities could look back on a long tradition starting in the post-revolutionary period and was of crucial importance during the Cold War. Military narratives were thus an integral part of Soviet identity politics and military or paramilitary practices a major feature of everyday life.

Shortly after the Second World War, every employed resident of Sortavala was thus compulsorily instructed in air-defence techniques, training being provided by the Osoaviakhim (1927–1948), a predecessor organisation of DOSAAF. Although nominally a public organisation, it was under strict state control. Archival evidence from Sortavala shows that the local authorities regularly judged this military training to be insufficient. In 1946, the town's executive committee, for example, expressed its dissatisfaction that the number of individuals trained by the Osoaviakhim had not reached the numbers initially planned for of 1500 persons (f. R-2203, op. 1, d. 2/59, l. 9).

After 1948, DOSAAF became responsible for military education and training, the latter often in the form of paramilitary sports. Every local establishment had its own DOSAAF branch. The activities of DOSAAF primary organisations were being controlled in the same way as the work of other public organisations described above.

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12 Overall, the numbers of Border Troops varied between 100,000 and 250,000 in Soviet times. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, many troop members left the country and numbers decreased by about one third (Ezhukov 2008; online source, p. 3).

13 Military commissariats (*voenkomat*), of which there were some 4000 nation-wide, existed at every administrative level (republic, oblast, *raion*, municipality) and were responsible for military affairs, such as conscription, veterans and pre-military training. At the age of seventeen, every male citizen had to report to a *voenkomat* for conscription.

In 1960, at the 4th Conference of the Society's local branch, it was stressed that defence work and sports activities of the masses had to be perfected. Investigation into the activities of the local branch of Värtsilä's metallurgic factory revealed that every shop there had its own group and that overall 900 employees participated in the organisation, 136 of them party members and 287 Komsomol members. In the manner typical of Soviet self-criticism, the head of the local branch admitted that not enough young people were involved in technical military training and that political agitation work among the members was lacking (*KZ*, 7 January 1960). Even after disaffection of the population grew during the Brezhnev era, especially in the 1970s, the Soviet identity of the homeland defender continued to be a prominent feature of media discourses and everyday practices in Sortavala, where paramilitary training by DOSAAF was still common for local residents.

In early 1978, *KZ* reported on a 'Week of the Letter,' during which the residents were encouraged to correspond with fellow townsmen accomplishing their military service (*KZ*, 31 January 1978). In February, the local DOSAAF branch organised a rifle-shooting competition dedicated to the 60th Anniversary of the Soviet Armed Forces during a 'Month of Mass Defensive Work,' in which nineteen teams were reported to have taken part (*KZ*, 23 February 1978). Among the main objectives of the event, which took place under the motto 'The Army—A Child of the People' (*Armiia—detishche naroda*), was the commemoration of the 'heroic traditions of the Armed Forces of the USSR.' The programme also included a Winter Olympics competition for pre-conscription youths (*«zimniaia spartakiada» doprizyvnoi molodezhi*), a youths relay race Sortavala–Värtsilä–Sortavala and a paramilitary sports event named 'The Ski-Track of Antikainen,' which consisted of a ski march between Sortavala and Värtsilä organised in memory of an historical raid the Reds had accomplished during the civil war in Karelia.[14]

In the field of education, the Soviet approach was characterised by the production of visual imagery and positive examples. In addition to compulsory classes in paramilitary training (*voennaia podgotovka*), educational efforts were targeted at raising patriotic sentiments among the children, often through popularised presentations of heroic battles fought during the Second World War. The aim was to turn every schoolboy into a defender of the homeland, a key figure in patriotic narratives and Soviet identity construction.

Material from the local media shows that it was the primary party organisations that were given this task. In 1966, for instance, teachers who were also party members suggested establishing a patriotic club called 'For the Motherland' at Sortavala's School No. 3, which was to write the history of the 'heroic ways' in which the 168th Motor Rifle Division had for forty-five days defended 'our Sortavala territory against the enemy.' This campaign also led to the renaming of Polevaia Street after A. L. Bondarev, the commander-in-chief of that division. Several years later, the bureau of the Komsomol district committee decided to name the Pioneer squad (*druzhina*) at the same school after Bondarev, a Hero of the Soviet Union:

14 Toivo Antikainen, a Finnish social-democrat, took part in the civil war on the side of the Reds and later emigrated to the Soviet Union.

> Hundreds of boys and girls are competing for the honour to call themselves *bondarevtsy*. They want to resemble the soldiers of the 168th Division. Older pupils are giving lectures on 'the heroic act of the division, which accomplished a 127-km-ski-raid in the enemy's rear during the Finnish campaign' (*KZ*, 28 January 1969).

Patriotic narratives were among the cornerstones of Soviet identity politics. Activities of this kind continued to be practiced at Sortavala's School No. 3 until the very end of the Soviet era. In 1986, at the beginning of perestroika, the educator responsible for organising leisure activities at the school, in an article wrote under the headline 'Our Debt to the Fatherland': 'The fundamental tasks of the pupils' military and patriotic education are preparation for the military service in the Armed Forces and the defence of the Motherland, as well as teaching them to love the Soviet Army.' The author emphasised that the system of military education at School No. 3 had been adapted to the respective age of pupils. As early as the first and second grade, they were being introduced to the feats of arms accomplished by the Heroes of the Civil War, while third- and fourth-grade pupils were being taught about the Great Patriotic War.

In fact, patriotic education already started in nursery schools. In an article titled 'To educate young patriots,' a preschool educator working at Nursery School No. 1 stressed that the methods employed were natural, since 'children always like military games,' and that family and nursery schools both had a share in this important task. With every year passing, she continued, children were becoming more aware of the idea that the Motherland and the Soviet Army were 'standing for peace and the people's happiness.' Among the activities mentioned were lectures and meetings with veterans of the Second World War, the latter with the intention to produce the image of a good and brave Soviet Army soldier who is ready to defend the homeland (*KZ*, 13 June 1978).

Young people were instructed within the framework of the Pioneer organisation. In the 1970s, schools of the KASSR organised an annual ski ride, 'The Ski-track of Antikainen' (see also above), which was particularly popular in the northern districts, where a museum for the 'legendary hero' Toivo Antikainen still exists today. In Sortavala, school children participated each year in a similar event. *KZ* highlighted the success of the Ladoga detachment from School No. 3 during one of these 'military sports competition' (*KZ*, 20 June 1978).

As Sortavala was located on the shore of Lake Ladoga, naval themes, such as basic knowledge about navigation, played a central part in paramilitary and patriotic education. In the late 1960, a Club of Young Sailors was established at the Station of Young Technicians under the leadership of the captain of a training ship, the *Border Guardian Kaimanov*. In summer, naval patrols on the lake were part of the training; in winter fifty schoolboys learned the basics of navigation on it (*KZ*, 15 June 1978).

In the 1970s, paramilitary training and military education also took place during summer internships at local enterprises. In summer 1978, a 'defence sport camp' named 'The Patriot' thus was organised on the grounds of a local construction company, PMK-3. According to a decision taken by the bureau of the Komsomol district committee and the town council's executive committee, the camp was to accommodate

fifty youngsters and offer a programme combining work with patriotic paramilitary training. The local branch of The Knowledge society (*obshchestvo «Znanie»*), another Soviet public organisation, was given the responsibility for lectures on patriotic and military themes during the summer camp (*KZ*, 24 May 1978).

The public commemoration of the military past was aimed at consolidating the local community and thus played a significant role in narratives intended to create a local identity. A typical phenomenon of the 1970s were clubs dedicated to the Great Patriotic War. Members of the club Raid (*Poisk*) undertook historical research on the war, trying to collect new information on military operations or to identify the names of soldiers who had participated in them (*KZ*, 28 October 1978). The same year, the local newspaper reported on the foundation of a new club, Courage (*Muzhestvo*), at the local House of Culture, whose declared goal was to promote patriotic education (*KZ*, 14 February 1978).

Paramilitary sports games, called The Eaglet (*Orlenok*), were another prominent feature of patriotic education for the young in the 1970s. Widely popular across the country, the games were introduced in Sortavala upon the initiative of the Komsomol town committee. They included a competition for producing the best hand-produced wall newspaper or 'battle sheet' (*boevoi listok*),[15] several sports competitions, such as ski rides to famous battle sites, and meetings with war veterans. Part of the programme was a film festival organised under the title 'Born in October,' where the 'best films' dedicated to the Soviet Army were shown (*KZ*, 23 March 1978). The author, who personally participated in these games along with his schoolmates, has to admit that contrary to many other activities organised by the Pioneers or the Komsomol, these games were interesting and exciting for teenagers. Soviet citizens born in the 1950s and 1960s were raised watching films about the Great Patriotic War, and spontaneous war games in backyards were highly popular among kids. Generally, children and young people were strongly influenced by these literary, cinematographic and other cultural productions promoted by the Soviet authorities.

For the young, paramilitary training only ended with conscription. In the 1960s and 1970s, it usually was organised at the work place. In 1968, for example, 117 employees under the age of eighteen participated in such training at the local Sewing Combine (*Shveinoe ob"edinenie*). The weekly programme included drill, studying the field manual (*ustav*) and firing practice, as well as technical instruction into the mechanics of a motorcycle. The instructors were often former soldiers (f. R-2203, op. 1, d. 51/1093, l. 66).

Paramilitary activities, such as 'research work' (*poiskovaia rabota*) on the history of the Second World War, continued during the perestroika years. In 1986, for example, the local newspaper reported on research carried out by a detachment of

15 Combat sheets, introduced by the Soviet armed forces after the Second World War, are handcrafted wallpapers that describe various aspects of soldiers' lives and military training and comment, positively or critically, on military life within a division. Subsequently, they were adopted by civilian collectives including at schools to preserve a record of the 'battles' fought during paramilitary training.

schoolchildren, called *The Flame*, in a border settlement near Värtsilä. The article, titled 'The Motherland Begins Here,' also informed readers that the students had created a room dedicated to 'military glory' at the school. The title can be interpreted as a reference to both the political frontier (i.e. the Finnish-Russian state border) and the symbolic boundary of Soviet identity. Meetings with war veterans were among the most popular activities. Students also paid an annual visit to an anonymous war grave located on the settlement's territory, taking care of it and supplying flowers (*KZ*, 22 February 1986).

In June 1986, Sortavala's Agricultural School (*Selkhoztekhnikum*) ended the sowing period with a military and patriotic celebration, which took place at the town stadium. The programme included competitions in athletic and primary military disciplines, as well as a performance by amateur artists (*KZ*, 26 June 1986). At a time when the transformation processes initiated by Gorbachev were at their very beginning, older social-political practices and forms of socialisation were still common. In spring 1986, the Pioneers' annual paramilitary sports games Zarnitsa [Summer Lightning], a variation on the previously mentioned 'Eaglet,' still took place along the same lines as in the 1970s. The local newspaper called the final parade of the event, which took place on Victory Day (9 May), 'A Combat Review of the Best Young Fighting Units of Town' (*boevoi smotr luchshikh iunarmeiskikh otriadov*). The programme included sports competitions and a test on traffic law (*KZ*, 14 May 1986).

Throughout the Soviet period, a military dimension was thus omnipresent in Sortavala everyday life, reinforced by the town's status as a garrison town. In the tense world of the Cold War with its frequent crises (such as the Cuba crisis), even a small locality like Sortavala was represented as being part of the battlefield, where everybody was meant to be a defender of the homeland. Essentially, Soviet man was considered a fighter, or warrior, an aspect notably present in newspaper rhetoric. But military metaphors extended well into other spheres of life, and the official discourse regularly depicted social life in general as a battle. Militarisation and peaceful life thus coexisted in the Soviet imagined community, impressing their stamp on the local identity.

3. The Role of Censorship in Soviet Identity Politics

In totalitarian and authoritarian societies, the media are tightly controlled by the ruling political elite. It is therefore no wonder that the Communist Party of the Soviet Union paid great attention to them, and in particular to print publications, and early on established institutions of censorship. The workings of censorship were complex and permeated the entire political and social space. As Boris Kagarlitsky has pointed out, 'formally, the censor's functions are performed by "Glavlit," but they are also being carried out by editorial boards themselves' (Kagarlitsky 1989: 103). To these two, a third form of censorship must be added according to Kagalitsky, which resulted from the state's declaration that art must be accessible to the masses. For this reason, it was the nomenklatura, or ruling elite that provided literature and other arts with aesthetic concepts that became general norms (ibid.: 105–109).