

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 Kagarlitsky, 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).

Censorship was part of the institutional framework promoting NSM. The documents produced by Glavlit KFSSR,¹⁶ later Oblit KASSR, show how important censorship was in the Soviet period in general and during Stalin's regime in particular, because of the latter's sharply dichotomous conception of identity and its fear of difference, resulting in constant attempts to identify enemies inside and outside the Soviet Union. A frequent topic of Glavlit KFSSR's meetings were ideological publications that had to be pulped because of misprints. The same subject was again on the agenda in 1946, in a report on the activity of printing houses, with Sortavala's printing establishment being cited as one of the worst examples: 15,000 out of 20,000 copies of Stalin's *The Questions of Leninism* and 10,000 out of 15,000 copies of Lenin's *What Is To Be Done?* had to be destroyed. *Gosizdat*, the State Publishing House responsible for all matters related to printing, explained the disaster by evoking technical problems and the loose labour discipline. The report's authors advocated that decisive measures be taken for Sortavala's publishing house; otherwise, further printing there would be impossible (f. R-1051, op. 1, d. 2/5, l. 6 and 7).

The archival document 'Report on the work of the State Publishing House of the KFSSR in 1946' cites specific instances where the State Publishing House of Karelia permitted ideological defects. It states, for example, that 'the publishing house committed gross errors, which resulted in the publication of the Vasilii G. Bazanov's book *Behind Barbed Wire*.¹⁷ The book was withdrawn and destroyed by the General Directorate for the Protection of State Secrets in the Press under the Council of Ministers of the USSR (Glavlit).' 'Also in the textbook on literature for the VII tutorial class (author Topias Huttari¹⁸), the clearly defective poem of Armas Äikiä (in the archive document—Армас Эйкия)¹⁹ was published due to the lack of vigilance' (f. R-1051, op. 1, d. 2/15, l. 3).

The report noted that at the meeting of all editorial boards of the publishing house these instances of 'ideological defects' in the light of the Resolution of the Central

16 Glavlit KFSSR was short for General Administration Dealing with the Protection of Military and State Secrets in the Printing Industry, attached to the Council of Ministers of the KFSSR (*Glavnoe upravlenie po okhrane voennykh i gosudarstvennykh tain v pechati pri Sovete ministrov Karelo-Finskoi SSR*).

17 Bazanov (1945). V. G. Bazanov (1911–1981) was a Soviet literary critic and folklorist, a specialist in Russian literature of 19th century. He worked as Head of the Karelian State Pedagogical Institute in Petrozavodsk (1934–1940). He also was Head of the Department of Folklore at the Karelian Research Institute and the founder and first Dean (1940–1948) of historical-philological Faculty of the Karelo-Finnish State University (PetrGu today).

18 Topias Huttari (1907–1953) was a Finnish-speaking Soviet poet and writer. He is considered as one of the founders of Karelian national literature and was one of the organizers of the Union of the Karelian writers.

19 Armas Äikiä (1904–1965) was a Finnish poet, writer, journalist and politician. From the late 1930s onwards, he belonged to the leadership of the Finnish Communist Party (SKP). His writings were under strong influence of Soviet-type Marxist-Leninist dogmatism. He immigrated to the Soviet Union in 1935. In 1940, Äikiä became a chairman of the Union of Writers of the KFSSR. He wrote the lyrics of the KFSSR Anthem. Äikiä returned to Finland in 1947, but was a Soviet citizen until the end of his life.

Committee of VKP (b) on the Leningrad journals *Zvezda* and *Leningrad* (1948) were discussed. It was also noted that the publishing house's editorial portfolio was revised and a number of translations of the works with a low artistic standards were removed from production (cf. Ylikangas 2004). Some of the manuscripts were returned to the authors for the reworking. In particular, V. Chekhov's²⁰ novel *On the Right Flank* and poems by Äikiä were removed from production. When Äikiä corrected his poems, they again came into production (ibid.: l. 3–4).

The Republic's authorities also closely scrutinised the establishment because it printed publications in Finnish. The same report explained that 'taking into account that part of the Republic's territory had been occupied by the enemy and that some libraries had been destroyed, *Gosizdat* plans to produce mass editions of the Marxist-Leninist classics' (f. R-1051, op. 1, d. 2/5, l. 21), literature that was to play a key role in shaping NSM.

But censorship extended to the dissemination of all kinds of information. Access to it was the privilege of carefully selected citizens who had demonstrated their loyalty to the ruling power. In this manner, the political elite attempted to create a human being that identified with everything Soviet and abandoned anything related to the capitalist West. However, the main official goal claimed for censorship was the protection of state and military secrets in the face of the enemy. As a border district, Sortavala was subject to particularly strict controls.

In Karelia, Glavlit (and later Oblit) was also in charge of 'cleaning' the shelves of libraries and bookstores of 'prohibited' literature. Publishing permits for literary publications were tightly regulated by a set of precise rules and instructions, the so-called 'common rules,' adopted by central censorship institutions and obligatory for the entire country. Censors organised meetings with representatives from the printing industry, newspapers and publishing houses to explain and comment these rules.

In the 1950s, there was a resident censor in Sortavala who, together with her colleague in the Segezha district, controlled 434 issues of local and mass newspapers (introducing twenty-nine cuts in 1957, for example). Decisions were taken on the basis of a document titled 'The List of information forbidden for publication in district, municipal, large-circulation newspapers and radio programmes,' but censors also personally raised related issues with editors. In 1957, thirty-five titles on the catalogue of local publishing houses had still not received an official license, either because their authors had not yet been rehabilitated or because they were literary publications lacking any 'historic or scientific merit' (f. R-757, op. 4, d. 1/1, l. 5 and 6).

In 1964, Ekaterina E. Turpeinen, the local censor, reported to Oblit that she controlled six issues each week: four of the district newspaper *KZ* and the issues of two large-circulation weeklies, *Communist Labour* (*Za kommunisticheskii trud*) published by a pulp-and-paper combine in Läskelä and *Glory to Labour* (*Slava trudu*) published by a pulp-and-paper factory in Pitkäranta. In addition, Turpeinen monitored twice a

20 Viktor Chekhov (1901–1988) was a Soviet writer. He participated WWII on the Karelian front. Based on this experience, he wrote a novel *On the Right Flank* (Part 1 was written in 1946–47, Part 2 written in 1950). From 1952 onwards, he lived in Volgograd.

week local radio programmes. The year before, she had checked 169 issues of the district newspaper (f. R-757, op. 4C, d. 2/20, l. 38).

Cutting off Soviet citizens from the influence of capitalist foreigners remained important even during the years of the Thaw. In the early 1960s, Turpeinen censored two exhibitions—one on agriculture and the other of paintings—and inspected 85 local libraries. As a result, 378 copies of forbidden or outdated books were withdrawn from the shelves. On average, she paid five annual visits to the Sortavala publishing house (eight in 1964). Among other things, she informed the CPSU town committee that a book printed there and bearing the censor's stamp had been sent to a bookshop. The case was hotly debated at a meeting convened by the committee's bureau, to which a director, a chief engineer and a secretary of the primary party organisation of the publishing house had been invited (f. R-757, op. 4C, d. 2/20, l. 39).

As the media were reproducing almost exclusively the official discourse and its dominant narrative during most of the Soviet period and any other information was being censored, many ordinary citizens, but members of the intelligentsia in particular, were rather sceptical of these official sources of information. Until the 1970s, most of them turned to alternatives, such as the Russian-language broadcasting services of the BBC, Voice of America, Radio Freedom and others. After Stalin's death, Soviet mass media gradually underwent changes and a certain freedom of expression from the Khrushchev period survived during the more conservative Brezhnev era (see above), before Gorbachev's perestroika led to a significant liberalisation. While the Stalinist system had served the political purpose of reinforcing national identity at the expense of others, the perestroika years saw the reappearance of individual counter-memories that contradicted the earlier master narrative and production of national myths (Gero-vich 2008: 223).

4. THE CHANGING GEOPOLITICS OF BORDER DISCOURSES

During most of the post-war period, local geopolitical visions and narratives were dominated by the global geopolitical regime of the time. The Cold War rhetoric produced by the central elite was reproduced in the local context. Its grand narratives of a struggle between two radically different socio-economic and ideological systems produced in particular the identity of the defender of the holy socialist Motherland described above, which prevailed over other elements of local identity. Borders were invested with a symbolic meaning that reflected this view, such as in the metaphor of an 'iron curtain.' Finland, for example, was not seen so much as a neighbour than as a part of the capitalist world, which was accused of being expansionist and militaristic. In the Soviet discourse, the militarised border near Sortavala thus owed its existence to threats held to be emanating from the West.

The power of symbols on which Soviet discourse was based (Medvedev 1994) is especially obvious when it comes to the Soviet state border with the West. Beyond it lay hostile imperialist countries closely identified with the threat of war. In Soviet mass propaganda, but also in other forms of politicised discourses, such as art, the state border had therefore acquired a sacred meaning: the border defended the 'sacred