

“BUT IN RUSSIAN TIMES ALL THE TEACHING MATERIAL HAD TO BE TIED TO POLITICS.”

IDEOLOGICAL EDUCATION AT LATE-STALINIST ESTONIAN SSR SCHOOLS*

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Since the beginning of the Soviet occupation education in Estonia was supervised by the People's Commissariat of Education. This institution was renamed in 1946 and became the Ministry of Education of the ESSR that was subjected to the Central Committee of the ECP and, specially, to its department of education (in 1948-1951, though, education was relegated to the department of canvassing and propaganda). The department of schools was responsible for the ideological supervision and inspection of curricula and syllabi. Ideological upbringing was defined and understood as the process of developing a soviet citizen who is patriotic and ready to fight for Communist ideas.¹ The *sovietisation* (i.e. changing the former system into a soviet one) of Estonian education policies started in 1940-1941 when the Soviet system was enforced. It was rather formal, not touching the real content of education yet, but there was no escape from the changes in 1944-1953, when the policies were adapted to those of the Russian SFSR.² Within the re-occupation period in the autumn of 1944, most of the schools in continental Estonia were reopened in October. In 1944/45 there were 198 primary schools, 790 7-year schools and 38 secondary schools in Estonia.³ 4405 teachers started working at these schools. The number of primary schools increased but that of the 7-year schools decreased in the following years. By 1950 there were 7500 teachers.⁴

The present article focuses on the ideological education in the framework of different disciplines in a Soviet school, including the changed position of a teacher in these conditions. It does not comprise out-of-school activities, the work of the pioneer organisation and the Young Communist League. Ideological education in this article concerns mainly the forceful substitution of the former national values with new Soviet ones, the purpose of which was to make everybody feel that they were

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¹ A. Raudsepp. Ajaloo õpetamise korraldus Eestis eesti õppekeelega üldhariduskoolides stalinismi ajal (How history was taught in Estonian language general-educational schools at the time of Stalinism) (1944–1953), pp. 389. T.Tannberg(compiler). Eesti NSV aastatel 1940–1953: Sovetiseerimise mehhanismid ja tagajärjed Nõukogude Liidu ja Ida-Euroopa arengute kontekstis. (The Estonian SSR in 1940–1953. Mechanisms and results of the sovietisation). Eesti Ajalooarhiiv (Estonian History Archives), Tartu, 2007, pp. 389–418.

² A. Raudsepp. Ajaloo õpetamise korraldus Eesti NSV eesti õppekeelega üldhariduskoolides 1944–1985. (How history was taught in Estonian-language general-educational schools in 1944–1985). Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus, (University of Tartu Publishers) 2005, pp. 10–11.

³ *ibid*, p 22.

⁴ V. Sirk. Haritlaskond osutus visaks vastaseks (Intellectuals turned out to be tough adversaries), p. 61. – *Tuna* 2004/1, pp. 51–69

citizens of the empire and not Estonians or Latvians, for example. The result of the ideological education was to be a homogeneous population for the whole Soviet Union, everybody having the same values, appreciation and understanding.⁵ Minutes of the Estonian Communist Party CC meetings, archive documents of the Ministry of Education of the ESSR, stored in the National Archives, and the contemporary memoirs that can be found at the Estonian National Museum, give us an idea about the means and measures how such a human being was to be created. It should be mentioned that the documents of the Ministry of Education include reports by inspectors of schools that have not been much used by the researchers yet. Doctor Veronica Nagel⁶ (since 25 July 2009 Varik), PhD in education, has studied the Soviet-time education in Estonia in greater detail, Anu Raudsepp,⁷ PhD in history, has studied teaching history in a totally changed situation. Historian Tiiu Kreegipuu⁸ has researched how history was used as a propaganda agent and the general management of culture in Soviet times. I should certainly mention David Branderberger,⁹ history professor at Richmond University, who has studied Stalinist mass culture, Jeffrey Brooks,¹⁰ professor of European history at John Hopkins University, who has observed the development of Stalin's personal cult and John Alexander Swettenham¹¹ from the War Museum of Canada.

Soviet educational system: general ideological principles and compulsory education

In Estonia propaganda be-lauding the Soviet system started immediately after the Soviet occupation and annexation. Replacing the national social values with soviet estimates was launched in 1940-41 already but it obtained its systematic and persistent form after the reoccupation of the country in 1944. In the autumn of that year the organising bureau of the Central Committee of the C(b)P adopted a

⁵ T.Kreegipuu. Ajaloo rakendamise propagandarelvana (History as a propaganda weapon, pp. 47–48. – Tuna 3/2007, pp. 46–69

⁶ V.Nagel. Hariduspoliitika ja üldhariduskorraldus Eestis aastatel 1940–1991. (Education policies and management of general education in Estonia in 1940–1991). Tallinna Ülikooli sotsiaalteaduste dissertatsioonid (Dissertations on social sciences of the University of Tallinn), 2006

⁷ A.Raudsepp. Ajaloo õpetamise korraldus Eesti NSV eesti õppekeele üldhariduskoolides 1944–1985. Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus, (How history was taught in Estonian-language general-educational schools in 1944–1985). University of Tartu Publishers, 2005, pp. 10–11.

2005; A.Raudsepp. Ajaloo õpetamise korraldus Eestis eesti õppekeele üldhariduskoolides stalinismi ajal (1944–1953) (How history was taught in Estonian language general-educational schools at the time of Stalinism) (1944–1953), p. 389.

⁸ T.Kreegipuu. Nõukogude kultuuripoliitika printsiibid ja rakendused Eestis NSV-s aastatel 1944–1954 kirjanduse ja trükiajakirjanduse näitel. Magistritöö. (Principles and practices of soviet cultural policies in the Estonian SSR in 1944–1954 based on examples from literature and press. MA thesis).Tartu, 2005; T.Kreegipuu. Ajaloo rakendamise propagandarelvana. (History as a propaganda weapon, pp. 47–48. – Tuna 3/2007, pp. 46–69.

⁹ Branderberger, D. National bolshevism. Stalinist Mass Culture and the Formation of Modern Russian National Identity 1931–1956. Harvard University Press, 2002.

¹⁰ J.Brooks. Thank You, comrade Stalin! Soviet public culture from revolution to Cold War. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2001

¹¹ J.A.Swettenham. The tragedy of the Baltic States. A report compiled from official documents and eyewitnesses' stories. London, Hollis and Carter, 1954.

resolution about *The Drawbacks and Further Tasks in the Political Work of the ESSR Party Organisation*. Tiiu Kreegipuu considers that the foundation document of post-war sovietisation of the Estonian SSR. This document was the basis for the whole ideological suppression and especially the struggle against “bourgeois nationalism”.¹² David Branderberger underscores three points in the Soviet official ideology propagation: first of all the popularisation of suitable historical events and their heroes. John Alexander Swettenham also stresses that everything before 1917 was described as a sort of prologue to the great October revolution.¹³ The second point worth mentioning for Branderberger is Russianization. While the equality and friendship of all the peoples was advertised, the emphasis in Soviet ideology lay in the superiority of the Russians, always the first among the equal nations. The third point emphasised is the personal cult of Stalin.¹⁴ And all this was certainly reflected in textbooks and teaching. The task to bring up the so-called new human who should not have any individuality, who should not differ from the others was given to schools. These new beings were insignificant cogs, always ready to march in the direction shown to them in order to achieve communism.¹⁵

Basically the Soviet ideological education remained the same throughout all the Soviet period. Swettenham shows that there were five main principles that would have guaranteed the upbringing of a new human being: atheism, communist morals, Soviet patriotism, collectivism and internationalism and these principles were never eliminated. Facts had no importance whatever, what mattered was the propaganda. Although everybody knew that it was not so, they were told to believe and say that it was true, like, for instance with the statement that in bourgeois Estonia children had to find most of their grub in the garbage bins of the rich.¹⁶ This sort of school was but a training centre to break the young in. There was a single ideology, nothing else existed, it was prohibited to question it or to search for another.¹⁷ This did not change either. For instance, at the staff meeting of Tallinn Secondary School No 1 on 25 March 1974, one of the issues was the pupils’ ideological-political upbringing. It was declared to be the teachers’ obligation to *teach the young people to be critical about their opinions not in accord with the accepted truths*.¹⁸

The second programme of the Russian Communist (bolshevik) Party¹⁹ (valid up to the adoption of the third programme in 1961) set up the task for the party to turn the

¹² T.Kreegipuu. Ajaloo rakendamise propaganda relevants. (History as a propaganda weapon, – Tuna 3/2007, pp. 46–69.

¹³ D.Branderberger. National bolshevism. Stalinist Mass Culture and the Formation of Modern Russian National Identity, 1931–1956, p 93; A. Swettenham. The tragedy of the Baltic States, p 108.

¹⁴ D. Branderberger. National bolshevism. Stalinist Mass Culture and the Formation of Modern Russian National Identity 1931–1956. Harvard University Press, 2002. pp. 2, 93.

¹⁵ J.A.Swettenham. The tragedy of the Baltic States, pp. 103–116

¹⁶ J.A.Swettenham. The tragedy of the Baltic States, p. 107.

¹⁷ T.Karjahärm, V.Sirk. Kohanemine ja vastupanu. Eesti haritlaskond 1940–1987(Adaptation and resistance. Estonian intellectuals in 1940–1987). Argo, Tallinn, 2007, p. 76

¹⁸ TLA R-205-1-95. Tallinna 1. Keskkooli pedagoogilise nõukogu protokollide raamat, 8. mai 1973–29. september 1974; protokoll nr 17, 25 (Minutes of the staff meetings from 8 May 1973 to 29 September 1974 at Tallinn Secondary School no 1), March 1974, pp. 62–63.

¹⁹ Venemaa Kommunistliku (bolševike) Partei programm. –NLKP kongresside, konverentside ja keskkomitee pleenumite resolutsioonid ja otsused I. (Programme of the Russian Communist

school *the instrument of remaking the society into a communist one*. The school was to become an institution that brings up a new generation that could realise communism. The state resources and apparatus were to be put into the service of extensive communist propaganda.²⁰

The whole educational system was to base on communist propaganda, the curriculum was to be made up with a *special part in each of them dedicated to the history of the great Russian revolution* and the explanations of the Soviet constitution.²¹ Absolutely every subject in the curriculum was to educate the pupil ideologically and politically.²² *There are no forms of art that would not be connected with the great ideas of communism and the extensively variegated work of communist economy.*²³ The deputy people's commissary of the ESSR Commissariat of Education Aleksander Valsiner emphasised, *"In mathematics class mathematics should be taught and in natural sciences just that. But they should be treated in a Marxist way and correspond to the demands of dialectical materialism, whereas every topic must be treated as a social issue as well."*²⁴

Thus school had the fundamental role in ideological education and furthermore, it had to have an influence not only on the pupils but on their parents as well.²⁵ The latter could not be trusted. Even teachers could not be blindly trusted but they were easier to check and obligate, as they had to do what the programme foresaw them to do. And the programme was tied to communist propaganda in every discipline. Nothing depended on the individual teacher's ideology, the study materials were the same for everybody and the message of these had been taken care by the state.

However, one was not to wait until the child went to school, the ideological education had to start already at the kindergarten. According to the statute of pre-school establishments, adopted and confirmed in 1941 by the ESSR People's Commissariat of Education, these pre-school establishments for kids at the age of three to seven had to grant *many-sided development in the spirit of communism.*²⁶ As it was not compulsory to send the child to the kindergarten, the establishment

(bolshevist) Party. Resolutions and decisions of the USSR CP congresses, conferences and CC plenary assemblies I.) Eesti Riiklik Kirjastus, (Estonian State Publishers) Tallinn, 1956, pp. 409–454

²⁰ Venemaa Kommunistliku (bolševike) Partei programm, (Programme of the Russian Communist (bolshevist) Party) pp. 419–420.

²¹ *ibid*, pp. 449–451; A. Must, Koguteos "Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin kultuurist ja kasvatuses", (Collected works "Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin about culture and education"), pp. 65. Eesti Bolševik: EK(b)P Keskkomitee ajakiri (Estonian Bolshevik. Journal of the ESSR C (b) P Central Committee), 1947/24, pp. 63–66.

²² Ideelis-poliitilise kasvatus küsimused nõukogude koolis (Ideological-political issues at soviet school), pp. 1219. Eesti Bolševik: EK(b)P Keskkomitee ajakiri (Estonian Bolshevik: Journal of the EC(b)P Central Committee), 1946/17, pp. 1215–1221.

²³ Venemaa Kommunistliku (bolševike) Partei programm (Programme of the Russian Communist (bolshevist) Party), pp. 449–451.

²⁴ A. Valsiner. Ühiskondlik-poliitiline kasvatus õppetundides (Social-political education in class), p. 124. –Nõukogude Kool (Soviet School) 1941/2, pp. 123–128.

²⁵ Kommunistliku kasvatus alused. Õpik. (Basis for communist education. Textbook.) Estonian State Publishers), Tallinn, 1964, pp. 37–38.

²⁶ ENSV Teataja (ESSR Gazette) 1941, 25, 325, Eesti NSV Hariduse rahvakomissariaadi käskkiri nr 363 lasteaija põhikirja kinnitamise ja kehtimapanemise kohta, (Decree no 363 of the Estonian SSR People's Commissar on confirming and enforcing the kindergartens' statute), 26.02.1941.

was to be made attractive for parents. Free meals were granted and they were rather alluring perks for the parents, so the aim to remove the kids from the *bourgeois atmosphere* at home was achieved. Sometimes, for the same purpose, new kindergartens were established at places where there was no demand for them yet.²⁷ *Children's upbringing is not and should not be a private business of their parents as it is really important for the whole society and for the future of our country.*²⁸

The children in kindergartens were told from the very beginning that the Soviet Union was the best country ever and Stalin the most wonderful man. Every kindergarten had a portrait of Stalin and close by it was the banner, *"Thank you, comrade Stalin, for our happy childhood!"*²⁹ Expressions of gratitude to Stalin were quite common also in media. The population was expected to be thankful to the great and magnanimous leader of the country for their freedom, for their social and economic relationships. While in Lenin's lifetime people were supposed to be grateful for their well-being to the revolution, the Soviet system, the party or even the working masses, the personal cult of Stalin focused only on him. The purpose, however, was rather the same in both cases: not to pay attention to an individual, to common people in general, thus abating their image in history.³⁰

Compulsory education

10-year secondary school had been established in the Soviet Union. For rural children 4 forms were compulsory, for urban children 7. The general seven-year compulsory school was established in 1949.³¹ Initially, in 1940/41 the primary school in Estonia remained a 6-form-school as it was in the Republic of Estonia, the progymnasium, modern school and gymnasium was combined to become a general secondary school. At first it retained its 6-year period, i.e. the whole school period lasted for 12 years. The reform in 1944 changed it into a 4-year primary, 7-year or non-complete secondary school and 11-year secondary school. The additional year that was different from Russian schools was established on the pretext of the need to intensively teach the Russian language. (This was also done in Latvia, Lithuania and Georgia.)³² The basic school became an 8-year one all over the Soviet Union in 1959/60 and the first basic-school leavers' certificates were issued in 1962/1963.³³

²⁷ J.A.Swettenham. The tragedy of the Baltic States, pp. 103–104.

²⁸ Kommunistliku kasvatuse alused. Õpik. Eesti Riiklik Kirjastus, Tallinn (Basis for communist education. Textbook. Estonian State Publishers), Tallinn, 1964, pp. 37–38.

²⁹ J.A.Swettenham. The tragedy of the Baltic States, pp. 103–104

³⁰ J.Brooks. Thank You, comrade Stalin! Soviet public culture from revolution to Cold War. p XV

³¹ T.Karjahärm, V.Sirk. Kohanemine ja vastupanu. Eesti haritlaskond 1940–1987. (Adaptation and resistance. Estonian intellectuals in 1940–1987). Argo, Tallinn, 2007, p. 76.

³² V.Nagel. hariduspoliitika ja üldhariduskorraldus Eestis aastatel 1940–1991. Tallinna Ülikooli sotsiaalteaduste dissertatsioonid, (Education policies and management of general-education in Estonia in 1940–1991. Dissertations on social sciences of the University of Tallinn), 2006, pp. 50.

³³ T.Karjahärm, V.Sirk. Kohanemine ja vastupanu, (Adaptation and resistance...), p. 81.

Reforms and changes in the Estonian SSR – new syllabi and textbooks

A temporary plan was compiled for school-year 1940/1941. In history syllabus the main attention was paid to the evolution of the Soviet Union. Geography had to include the physical and economic geography of the Soviet Union and the discipline was added to the school-leavers' programme, where it had not been before. Literature was to include books that described the life of the working class, whereas special emphasis was laid on the revolutionary poetry.³⁴ The editors of all the newspapers published in the ESSR, and especially the editorial office of the journal *Looming* were obligated to pay heed to all the articles dealing with the Estonian literature of the past and be particularly attentive and careful about *the progressive writers of the past*.³⁵ *Эстполитграфиздат* publishers ordained editorial offices to liquidate all previously-made mistakes, to check the texts in a scientific way, comparing them to the original in order to get rid of whatever changes and mistakes had been made *by the tsarist censors and bourgeois nationalists*³⁶ in the works of Eduard Vilde, Friedrich Reinhold Kreutzwald, Anton Hansen Tammsaare, Eduard Bornhöhe, Lydia Koidula and others.

The number of periods in mathematics and chemistry was increased. The natural science programmes of the three senior forms became extended with a new subject called the Bases of Darwinism. Local lore and local history were not taught any more as their patriotic content did not correspond to Soviet ideology. Religious instruction, Latin and Greek, civics and philosophy could not be found in the timetables any longer but the Russian language (beginning in the 6th form), Soviet constitution (beginning in the 8th form) and the already mentioned history and geography of the Soviet Union. The PE classes had to include military training.³⁷

As the existing textbooks did not meet the new demands and the publication of new ones was time-consuming, the former had to be redacted. This work was launched immediately in 1940. So, for instance, *Compendious Estonian Grammar I* by Elmar Muuk and *Compendious Estonian Grammar II* by Elmar Muuk and Mihkel Tedre were allowed to be used only when some sentences concerning religion or Estonian history were eliminated. This completed, the ESSR People's Commissariat of Education was appealed to give permission for using the textbooks.³⁸ R.Aavakivi, senior assistant of Tallinn Technical University, wrote reviews about Jüri Grünthal's³⁹ and Gerhard Rägo's *Algebra for Secondary Schools* and Rägo and Arnold Vihman's *Algebra Exercises for Secondary School* and mentioned that both textbooks were

³⁴ V.Nagel. hariduspoliitika ja üldhariduskorraldus Eestis aastatel 1940–1991 (Education policies and management of general-education in Estonia in 1940–1991. Dissertations on social sciences of the University of Tallinn), p. 20.

³⁵ ERAF 1-4-1246, pp. 75–76, EKP KK büroo protokoll nr 32, päevakorrapunkt 40 (Record of the ECP CC bureau no 32, clause 40), 26.11.1951.

³⁶ *ibid*, clause 32, 26.11.1951.

³⁷ V.Nagel. hariduspoliitika ja üldhariduskorraldus Eestis aastatel 1940–1991 (Education policies and management of general-education in Estonia in 1940–1991. Dissertations on social sciences of the University of Tallinn), p. 20.

³⁸ ERAR-14-1-300, p. 1, Kooliosakonna Algkooliasjade abijuhataja Eesti Kirjanduse seltsile (from deputy head of the primary school department to the Estonian Literary Society), 10.09.1940

³⁹ Better known under the name Jüri Haldre.

good but there were ideologically unsuitable exercises concerning private capital ownership. *“There are exercises concerning the capitalist ideas...”* (the unsuitable exercises were with headlines “Profits of trade”, “Purchase and selling of a farm”, “Strike”, “Prices of bread are rising”). The reviewer was also dissatisfied with the abbreviations BC and AD in the part “Historical data”⁴⁰. The same reviewer criticised several other math textbooks for dealing with capitalist finances *that need revision from the point of state administration*; for exercises that based on charity work and donations but also for mentioning the term *the Republic of Estonia* or historical events unsuitable for Soviet history.⁴¹ New texts about Lenin, Stalin, the Great October Socialist Revolution, heroic Red Army, heroes of labour – the *Stakhanovites*, (workers, officially declared to have excelled in Stakhanovism. The latter got its name after miner A.G.Stakhanov who initiated an efficiency system in the SU.) collective farms, pioneers etc, were included in the revised textbooks. Lenin and Stalin in these texts were idealised as workers, fighters, people’s friends and great teachers.⁴²

The work on textbooks broken by the war recommenced in 1944. The regulation of the ECP CC on 27 December, the same year, demanded that schools should reorganise their work according to the principles of Soviet pedagogical ideas and destroy the textbooks that had been in use in bourgeois Estonia and during the nazi occupation.⁴³ The ideological issues had to have priority in the new textbooks, the publication of which was directed by the party and the government.⁴⁴ *The foremost claim for any new textbook is the total firmness of the communist direction.*⁴⁵ Thus the new textbooks presented the soviet people as a homogeneous mass that had the same lifestyle, fought for the same values and reacted to everything happening in their society just in the same way. So, for example, the textbook *The History of the Soviet Union III* describes the people’s reaction to Fanny Kaplan’s attempt to assassinate Lenin on 30 August 1918 as follows: *Information about the assassination attempt immediately spread all over the country. Millions of workers and peasants were furious about the enemy of the people. Working people were worriedly reading*

⁴⁰ ERAR-14-1-300, p. 21, R.Aavakivi retsensioon õpperaamatutele J.Grünthal-G.Rägo “Algebra õpik keskkoolile”, G.Rägo-A.Vihman “Algebra harjutustik keskkoolile”, dateerimata (R.Aavakivi’s critical notice on textbooks “Algebra for Secondary Schools” by J.Grünthal-G.Rägo and “Problems of Algebra for Secondary Schools” by G.Rägo-A-Vihman, not dated).

⁴¹ ERAR-14-1-300, p. 23, R.Aavakivi retsensioon õpperaamatutele E.Etverk-G.Rägo “Matemaatikaõpik humanitaargümnaasiumile”, K.Ratassepp-G.Rägo “Matemaatika harjutustik gümnaasiumile, I klassi kursus”, K.Ratassepp-G.Rägo “Matemaatika harjutustik gümnaasiumile, II klassi kursus”, K.Ratassepp-G.Rägo “Matemaatika harjutustik gümnaasiumile, III klassi kursus”(R.Aavakivi’s reviews on textbooks “Mathematics for gymnasium” by E.Etverk-G.Rägo, “Problems of mathematics for gymnasium, form one” by K.Ratassepp-G.Rägo; “Problems of mathematics for gymnasium, form two” by K.Ratassepp-G.Rägo; “Problems of mathematics for gymnasium, form three” by K.Ratassepp-G.Rägo) 30.08.1940.

⁴² J.A.Swettenham. The tragedy of the Baltic States, pp. 107–108.

⁴³ ENSV Teataja 1945, 2, 23, Eesti NSV Rahvakomissaride Nõukogu ja Eestimaa Kommunistliku (b) Partei Keskkomitee määrus koolide töö parandamise kohta, (ESSR State Gazette 1945, 2, 23. ESSR Soviet of People’s Commissars and Estonian Communist (b) Party Central Committee’s decree on improving the educational work in schools), 27.12.1944.

⁴⁴ V.Nagel. hariduspoliitika ja üldhariduskorraldus Eestis aastatel 1940–1991, (Education policies and management of general education in Estonia in 1940–1991), p. 52.

⁴⁵ B.Jessipov, N.Gontšarov. Pedagoogika. Õpik pedagoogilistele koolidele II. Pedagoogiline Kirjandus, (Education. Textbook for teachers’ training colleges II). 1947, p. 161.

*bulletins on Lenin's health. Lenin's strong construction helped him survive but his health had got a severe blow.*⁴⁶

The syllabi adopted in 1948 were even more doctrinal and ideological than the earlier ones. Until 1949/1950 it was still allowed to use textbooks published and written in Estonia in some subjects (like the Estonian, Russian, German and Latin languages, mathematics, Estonian geography, physics and chemistry) but then even the textbooks published in Soviet Estonia were not good enough. Literature textbooks were found to be the worst from the ideological point of view. Nevertheless, several textbooks published in Estonia, remained and in 1952/1953 45 out of the 115 textbooks in use had been written in the Estonian SSR, the rest were translations of textbooks used in the Russian SFSR. All history books belonged to the latter group.⁴⁷ As the total change from the old system to correspond to the demands of Soviet ideology took time, the syllabi were continuously rewritten. This was especially true about those of Russian and Estonian literature, geography and history.⁴⁸ *The disciplines like history, literature, the constitutions of the USSR and the ESSR and geography possess a very special role in the ideological instruction of the pupils.*⁴⁹

“Correct” teaching of history

History was, above all, a propaganda weapon and means of ideological education throughout the soviet times. It was expected that when the communist party was declared to be supreme and the Soviet regime ideal in history classes, the whole Soviet Union would think in the same way, have no doubts and dissidents would be eliminated. Loyalty of the population and continuation of the empire would be granted by successful Soviet propaganda.⁵⁰ It goes without saying that nothing from the former history instruction survived, it was condemned as wrong. *The right instruction of Estonian history that shows the friendship of the Estonian people and the Russian people and how it developed through the centuries in the common struggle against the German invaders should be restored in Soviet Estonian schools.*⁵¹

⁴⁶ A.Pankratova (toimetaja/editor). NSVLiidu ajalugu III: Õpperaamat keskkooli XI klassile. Eesti Riiklik Kirjastus, (History of the USSR, III. Textbook for form11 of secondary school. Estonian State Publishers). Tallinn, 1951, p. 271.

⁴⁷ A.Raudsepp. Ajaloo õpetamise korraldus Eestis eesti õppekeelela üldhariduskoolides stalinismi ajal (1944–1953) (How history was taught in Estonian-language general-education schools at the time of Stalinism (1944–1953)), pp. 391–392.

⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 398.

⁴⁹ Ajaloo ja kirjandusloo õpetamisest Eesti NSV keskkoolides, lk.9. – Eesti Bolševik. EK (b)P KK ajakiri 1948/5(About teaching history and literature in Estonian SSR secondary schools, p. 9. – Estonian Bolshevik. Journal of the EC(b) CC), pp. 7–22

⁵⁰ T.Kreegipuu. Ajaloo rakendamine propagandarelvana (History as a propaganda weapon), p. 47. – Tuna 3/2007, pp. 46–69.

⁵¹ ENSV Teataja1945, 2, 23, EestiNSV rahvakomissaride Nõukogu ja Eestimaa Kommunistliku (b) Partei keskkomitee määrus koolide töö parandamise kohta, (ESSR State Gazette1945, 2, 23. ESSR Soviet of People's Commissars and Estonian Communist (b) Party Central Committee's decree on improving the educational work in schools), 27.12.1944.

Compared to other subjects, history classes were under special attention and control. *History is a party subject.*⁵² /... □ *One of the most important tasks while teaching history is instruction in Soviet patriotism.*⁵³ Instead of the name Russian history, the discipline was called history of the USSR and the instruction was to become even more patriotic.⁵⁴

*Soviet people proudly feel that the Soviet Union is a true stronghold of democracy and peace among the nations, it is the country of progressive social ideas, education, science, literature and art.*⁵⁵ The official concept of history instruction demanded that differently from all the other great states the Soviet Union was a tireless fighter for the world peace. It was necessary to give a different image of all the other states and so even Finland was turned into a dangerous and hostile country. Thus the Soviet government had to acknowledge on 29 November 1939 *that the troops of Finland had invaded Soviet borders /.../ All the statements that this was the Soviet Union that had attacked Finland were declared slander by the foreign bourgeois press. The Finnish military clique, in close collaboration with the German fascists, urged on by the ruling classes of England, France and the USA, started the war with the Soviet Union /.../ On 12 March 1940 the peace-treaty with Finland was concluded. /.../ The peace-treaty with Finland showed again how the Soviet Union treats small countries. Having destroyed the Finnish army, the Soviet Union demonstrated magnanimity. It could have claimed contribution for its military losses. But the Soviet Union was satisfied with only a minimum to ensure the security of Leningrad and Murmansk.*⁵⁶ David Branderberger gives a very good example of a Soviet history teacher's statement that her pupils may not know all the facts in history but they certainly know what they have to love and what to hate.⁵⁷

In Estonia the changes began with the new syllabus for 1944/1945. Tartu University historians Hans Kruus, Jaan Konks, Lydia Roots, Richard Kleis, Hilda Moosberg and Julius Madisson could not have any right for decisions about the content of the syllabus. The main purpose of instruction in history for the whole Soviet Union had been declared and this was to bring up Soviet patriots. The most important topic was the Great October Socialist Revolution – this was the official term for the communists' coup-d'état in November 1917, every word had to be written with a capital letter as an orthographic exception until the collapse of the Soviet Union. The next significant topic was the history of the Soviet Union beginning from 1922 up to the present day. The textbooks were translations from the Russian language and

⁵² A.I.Stražev. Ajaloo õpetamine koolis, meie noorsoo ideelis-poliitilise ja kõlbelse kasvatuse võimas relv (Teaching history in school – a mighty weapon for our youth's ideological-political and moral education), p. 484.- Nõukogude Kool (Soviet School)1947/8/9, pp. 483–492.

⁵³ Ibid, p. 487.

⁵⁴ A.Raudsepp. Ajaloo õpetamise korraldus Eestis eesti õppekeele üldhariduskoolides stalinismi ajal (1944–1953) (How history was taught in Estonian language general-education schools at the time of Stalinism (1944–1953)), pp. 396 -397.

⁵⁵ A.Pankratova. NSVLiidu ajalugu III (History of the USSR III), p. 493.

⁵⁶ Ibid, pp. 432–434.

⁵⁷ D.Branderberger. National Bolshevism. Stalinist Mass Culture and the Formation of Modern Russian National Identity, 1931–1956, Harvard University Press, 2002, p. 76.

they had been compiled according to the obligatory syllabi.⁵⁸ Tiiu Kreegipuu says that history became an instrument of power that was expected to replace the former national identity with Soviet one.⁵⁹

In order to teach “correct” history, literature programmes were also changed. Educator Aleksander Elango said that this was influenced by the USSR C (b) P CC decisions on 14 August 1946, concerning the journals *Zvezda* and *Leningrad*.⁶⁰ Actually there was nothing new in these decisions that reproached the editorial offices of the journals for having forgotten the Leninist principle: a journal could not be apolitical. Publications had to observe the Soviet politics as they were meant to be a powerful tool in the upbringing of the young. The Soviet system could and would not stand indifference and idea-free spirit in this important task. The Soviet literature was called the most progressive one in the world as it was carrying in mind only the interests of the state and its people. This literature was to assist the state to bring up an aware generation of young people who believe in what they do and are not afraid of difficulties facing them. “Art for art’s sake”, apolitical and idea-free literature was alien to the Soviet people and harmful for the state.⁶¹

Tiiu Kreegipuu, MA has analysed the decision about the journals *Zvezda* and *Leningrad* in her thesis and stated that this decision became a significant ideological basis for the whole policy concerning culture and education in the SU. Ideological pressure on culture that had intensified since August 1946 became known as zhdanovism after the name of the USSR C (b) P CC ideology secretary A. Zhdanov. It meant restoration of the pre-war party policies, purification of culture from any western influence and a much stricter ideological control.⁶²

The new programmes paid much attention to the history and culture of the Russian people, calling it Soviet culture, though. It was emphasised what enormous influence it had been having on the world culture.⁶³ So, for example, the chapter “Education, science and art at the end of the 19th century” in the second part of Anna Pankratova’s *History of the USSR* there is very little space for other Soviet peoples’ literature and only five writers have been mentioned. Three of them were from the Ukraine (Ivan Franko, Pavel Gabrovski and Ossip-Juri Fedkovitch), the fourth was an Armenian Alexander Shirvanadze (Movsesyan) and the fifth, Kosta Hetagurov, came from Ossetia. All five, according to the textbook, had been struggling for the interests of the working class and had been close to the Russian culture. So, for example, Franko was *tirelessly struggling to establish contacts between Ukranian*

⁵⁸ A.Raudsepp. Ajaloo õpetamise korraldus Eestis eesti õppekeelega üldhariduskoolides stalinismi ajal (1944–1953) (How history was taught in Estonian language general-education schools at the time of Stalinism (1944–1953)), pp. 396–397.

⁵⁹ T.Kreegipuu. Ajaloo rakendamise propagandarelvana (History as a propaganda weapon), p. 48. Tuna 3/2007, pp. 46–69.

⁶⁰ A.Elango. Pedagoogika ajalugu (History of education), Valgus, Tallinn, 1984, p. 227.

⁶¹ Постановление Оргбюро ЦК ВКП(б) О журналах "Звезда" и "Ленинград", 14 августа 1946 г. Московский Государственный Университет им. М. В. Ломоносова, Исторический факультет, <http://www.hist.msu.ru/ER/Etext/USSR/journal.htm>, 14.01.2009.

⁶² T.Kreegipuu. Nõukogude Kultuuripoliitika printsiibid ja rakendused Eesti NSVs aastatel 1944–1954 kirjanduse ja trükiajakirjanduse näitel. Magistritöö. (Principles and practices of Soviet cultural policies in the Estonian SSR. MA thesis), Tartu, 2005, p. 31.

⁶³ A.Elango. Pedagoogika ajalugu (History of education), p. 227.

*and Russian democratic culture, Kosta Hetagurov dealt with his own people's greatest expectations and Russian people's best traditions in his work.*⁶⁴

The new history syllabus for 1948 increased the amount of periods for history by 122. History was taught for 748 periods during the 8 years of basic school. 405 of these periods were meant for the history of the USSR and 343 for general history. A year later the number of history periods increased to 795. The elementary programme was started in for four, where the main attention was paid to the personality of Stalin. The fifth form studied the ancient Orient and Greece, the seventh form got the Middle Ages and Modern times were started in the eighth form and continued in the ninth that also started with the history of the Union republics up to the year 1613. The tenth form continued with the latter (until the end of the 19th century) and the eleventh form studied the history of the USSR and contemporary history.⁶⁵ Everything that had preceded 1917 was described as prologue to the Great October revolution.⁶⁶

Until 1948/1949 the final exam had to be taken in general history but later it was in the history of the USSR. There was not much change in the demands as earlier three questions of the four were about the USSR anyhow.⁶⁷

Due to the special attention paid to history as a subject, teachers of history were scrutinised carefully. Administrators of educational departments, directors of teacher training colleges and schools were personally responsible of keeping the files of history teachers in good order and available for control. The files had to contain a photo, a CV, a detailed character testimonial and copies of employment documents. Every change in the staff concerning teachers of history had to be immediately reported.⁶⁸

Repudiation of teaching Estonian history

The purpose of history instruction in the Soviet system was to develop a fixed consciousness of history that contained an ability to know the most important historical events (according to the SUCP directions) connected with the Soviet power, its establishment, consolidation and defence. The so-called right interpretation of events and personages had to be separated from the wrong ones

⁶⁴ A.M.Pankratova (toimetaja). NSVLiidu ajalugu II. Õpperaamat keskkooli X klassile (History of the USSR II. Textbook for secondary schools. Form ten). Eesti Riiklik Kirjastus (Estonian State Publishers), Tallinn, 1951, pp. 369–378.

⁶⁵ A.Raudsepp. Ajaloo õpetamise korraldus Eestis eesti õppekeelega üldhariduskoolides stalinismi ajal (1944–1953) (How history was taught in Estonian language general-education schools at the time of Stalinism (1944–1953)), pp. 399–401.

⁶⁶ J.A.Swettenham. The tragedy of the Baltic States, pp. 108.

⁶⁷ A.Raudsepp. Ajaloo õpetamise korraldus Eestis eesti õppekeelega üldhariduskoolides stalinismi ajal (1944–1953) (How history was taught in Estonian language general-education schools at the time of Stalinism (1944–1953)), p. 401.

⁶⁸ ERA R-14-3-318, p. 12, ENSV Haridusministri asetäitja H.Maran Haridusosakondade juhatajaile, tehnikumide direktoreile, õpetajate seminaride ja eelkoolikasvatuse seminari direktorile (Assistant minister of education of the ESSR H.Maran to heads of education departments, directors of technical schools and teachers' training schools and colleges), 12.02. 1948.

and have the correct attitude to both. Above all, the learner had to believe that the Communist Party was supreme and the illusion that the Soviet power would eliminate the former inequality and the communist society would be entirely an ideal equal one.⁶⁹ David Branderberger has pointed out that in the second half of the 1940s the propaganda became more and more strongly focused on Russia and Russian. The culture and history of the Russian people was dominating and the union republics' culture and role in the common pot were forgotten and not spoken about.⁷⁰

Local history was not taught in Estonian schools either according to the ECP bureau decision on 12 September 1945. The same decision cut off the ESSR People's Commissariat of Education's commission to the history department of Tartu University for making up a 35-period programme of Estonian history for the 11th form secondary school pupils. The same decision foresaw the establishment of a commission that should compile a new Marxist syllabus and textbook of Estonian history. The commission consisted of professors Hans Kruus, Richard Kleis, Harri Moora, senior lecturer Hilda Moosberg and Villem Orav, the expert in methods at the ESSR People's Commissariat of Education. The syllabus was to be completed by the 15th of September the same year, the theses of the textbook by the 15th of November and the manuscript of the textbook by the 15th of January 1946. Professor Kruus and lecturer Moosberg were sent to Moscow to consult specialists of the Baltic history there.⁷¹ However, the decision was reneged in the syllabus for 1946 that only allowed a few periods for local history in between the chapters of the USSR history.⁷²

It was only the syllabus adopted in 1948 that allowed teaching Estonian history in the fourth and eleventh forms but only in case the textbook would be completed by the time. As the textbook was not even being written yet, the issue of Estonian history was shelved for unknown times. The editor of the missing textbook, however, was confirmed – Gustav Naan.⁷³ When the department of Estonian history was liquidated in the summer of 1949, Estonian history was not taught in basic and secondary schools any more again. (At the end of the 1940s and the beginning of the 1950s local history was no more taught in the other two Baltic republics either).⁷⁴ Tartu University historians raised the issue about restarting Estonian history teaching immediately after Stalin's death but it was first publicly discussed at the

⁶⁹ A. Raudsepp. *Ajaloo õpetamise korraldus Eesti NSV eesti õppekeelega üldhariduskoolides 1944–1985* (How history was taught in Estonian language general-education schools in 1944–1985), p. 90.

⁷⁰ D. Branderberger. *National bolshevism*, p. 196.

⁷¹ ERAF 1-4-206, pp. 11–12, *Eesti ajaloo õpetamisest ENSV koolides* (About teaching Estonian history in Estonian SSR schools) 12.09.1945.

⁷² A. Raudsepp. *Ajaloo õpetamise korraldus Eestis eesti õppekeelega üldhariduskoolides stalinismi ajal (1944–1953)* (How history was taught in Estonian language general-education schools at the time of Stalinism (1944–1953)), p. 398.

⁷³ ERAF 1-4-1028, p. 168. *Keskoolide ENSV ajalooõpiku küsimusest* (About the issue of secondary school ESSR history textbook), 21.09.1950; Raudsepp, A. *Ajaloo õpetamise korraldus Eestis eesti õppekeelega üldhariduskoolides stalinismi ajal (1944–1953)*, (How history was taught in Estonian language general-education schools at the time of Stalinism (1944–1953)), pp. 401–402.

⁷⁴ A. Raudsepp, *Ajaloo õpetamise korraldus Eestis eesti õppekeelega üldhariduskoolides stalinismi ajal (1944–1953)* (How history was taught in Estonian language general-education schools at the time of Stalinism (1944–1953)), pp. 402–403, 408–409.

conference of history teachers organised by the Tartu University history department in the spring of 1954. In 1955 Karl Laigna, lecturer of TU history department, compiled the programme for teaching Estonian history at schools of general education but the ESSR Ministry of Education did not confirm it. Some Tartu schools, though, attempted to teach according to this programme. Officially Estonian history was taught again in 1957/1958 (40 periods), unofficially it had been attempted to do it at several schools already earlier.⁷⁵ The layout of the first Estonian history textbook was completed in 1957.⁷⁶

History of the Estonian SSR (from the earliest times to the present) edited by Gustav Naan was published in 1952 but it was not mentioned that it was a textbook.⁷⁷ Even when it was not used as textbook at school, I would like to give some examples of the text to explain how it was possible that this book was published and *Concise Estonian History*⁷⁸ never was. Naan's book met the current ideological demands and at the same time gives a very good idea of them.

The chapter of the above-mentioned book, titled "The end of the primitive communal system and the birth of class-system (from the first to the ninth century), particularly its sub-chapter "Relations with neighbouring tribes and especially with the Slavs" contains the following. "*Next to the continuous relationship with the Baltic tribes in the South, Estonian tribes became closely connected with the Eastern-Slavonic tribes. /.../ Several words taken over from the Russian language point at novel ways in land cultivation and handicrafts. Let us mention, in addition to the word sahk (plough) a few more – sirp (sickle), words connected with spinning and weaving like värten (spindle), koonal (distaff), piird (sley) and others. Thus relations with the Slavonic neighbours had a fertile influence on ancient Estonian tribes, making their development quicker in economy, culture and social relations.*"⁷⁹ Another good example is the chapter about the Tartu peace-treaty that does not mention a single name of that-time Estonian government – *The negotiations revealed Estonia as a small but greedy beast of prey. In all the issues it tried to achieve some usurpation purposes.* Describing the point where the areas beyond the Narva River and the territory of Petserimaa remained within the Estonian borders and the 15 million gold roubles as compensation for Estonia, the Soviet peace policies are emphasised. *Making these concessions to Estonia that had not yet been*

⁷⁵ A.Raudsepp, Ajaloo õpetamise korraldus Eestis eesti õppekeele üldhariduskoolides 1944–1985 (How history was taught in Estonian language general-education schools in 1944–1985), p. 90.

⁷⁶ Eesti NSV ajalugu (õpik keskkooli IX-XI klassile) (Estonian SSR history (textbook for forms 9–11 of secondary schools). Tallinn, 1957.

⁷⁷ G.Naan (editor). *History of the Estonian SSR (from the earliest times to the present)*, Eesti Riiklik Kirjastus (Estonian State Publishers), Tallinn, 1952

⁷⁸ The manuscript for the *Concise Estonian history* had been completed by 1948 and it was discussed several times at the EC (b) P Central Committee. It was favourably compared with the *Concise History of the USSR CP* in correct division into periods, construction and volume but remained unpublished. This was mainly due to Hans Kruus, the editor-in-chief, who had fallen in disgrace and was accused of "putting brakes on the work". Part two of the book that was to deal with the second half of the 19th and the 20th century had not even been written yet when Hans Kruus was condemned as a bourgeois nationalist in 1950 and the idea of the *Concise History* was given up. It was decided to publish two general treatises, one consisting of three and the other only of one volume. (T.Kreegipuu. Ajaloo rakendamine propagandarelvana. (History as a propaganda weapon), p. 51 – Tuna 3/2007, pp. 46–69.

⁷⁹ G.Naan (editor). *History of the Estonian SSR (from the earliest times up to the present)*, p. 17.

recognised by any state in the world, Soviet Russia again showed the world its generosity and its policy of peace. The Tartu Peace Treaty had to be considered the victory of Soviet Russia as the treaty was concluded without violence, was a victory over imperialism and made Bolsheviks popular all over the world. *The victory of the Soviet Republic granted peace for Estonia that did not have to shed any more blood in the interest of New York and London bankers. While the American and British imperialism brought war to the Estonian people, Soviet Russia brought them peace.*⁸⁰ When the 1939 non-aggression pact was discussed, the authors insist that the bourgeois governments of the Baltic States accepted it only because they were afraid of their people's anger. The working class of these countries understood that the pact meant protection from the Soviet Union. *The amount of letters and telegrams expressing gratitude to the leaders of the Soviet government is a proof of how highly the Estonian working people appreciated this friendly act towards them.*⁸¹ Quite a significant part of the book was dedicated to the disparaging of Estonian cultural policies. Literary groupings *Noor-Eesti*, *Siuru* and *Tarapita* were declared to be degenerated and grovelling to the capitalist west while they all denigrated the realistic production of local writers. *Only the restoration of Soviet power in Estonia helped the Estonian culture to be liberated from the deadlock and go on along the free road of development.*⁸²

Instilling Soviet patriotism and internationalism in other disciplines

As said before, ideological instruction had to be a part of absolutely every subject at school. Journals and papers published for the teachers proceeded from that. The journal *Nõukogude Kool/ Soviet School* that was launched in 1940 *w a s r e a d a n d s u b s c r i b e d b y e v e r y o n e /spacing in the original/ among Soviet Estonian teachers* as Nigol Andresen, that-time people's commissar of education emphasised.⁸³ The journal published recommendations, demands rather, how to bring up true and faithful communists. The same demands were presented in the newspaper *Nõukogude Õpetaja/ Soviet Teacher* that was the other organ of the Ministry of Education of the ESSR. Soviet press was not even supposed to reflect everyday life, it was to be one of the most important means of ideological party propaganda, it was an ideological weapon that was easier to direct and control than radio and later television.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ Ibid, pp. 326–327.

⁸¹ Ibid, pp. 374–377.

⁸² Ibid, pp. 366–368.

⁸³ ERAR-14-1-48, p. 33, Hariduse Rahvakomissariaadi 1940.a. 21. Septembri ringkiri nr. 3888 koolivalitsustele, koolide inspektoritele, koolijuhatajatele ja kõigile õpetajaile ajakirja "Nõukogude Kool" asjas. (Circular no 3888 from the People's Commissariat of Education on 21 September 1940 to school boards, inspectors, heads of schools and all teachers concerning the journal "Soviet School").

⁸⁴ T.Kreegipuu. Ajaloo rakendamine propagandarelvana (History as a propaganda weapon), pp. 53–54. T.Kreegipuu. Nõukogude Kultuuripoliitika printsiibid ja rakendused Eesti NSV-s aastatel 1944–1954 kirjanduse ja trükiajakirjanduse näitel (Principles and practices of Soviet culture policies in the Estonian SSR in 1944–1954 based on examples from literature and press) p.44.

An article by Pavel Gruzdev was published in the second issue of *Nõukogude Kool* in 1940. This is quite a good example of the style and content of the articles published in the journal all the time. The author instructed the readers how to educate the pupils in the spirit of Soviet patriotism within the framework of the current subject and topic. Teachers of literature should instil political convictions selecting topics for essays and compositions like “Why I do love my country”, “Why Pavel Kortchagin⁸⁵ is the most beloved hero of Soviet youth” and so on. More important than the topics themselves were, in the author’s opinion, certainly their analysis that had to point out *wrong ideas* and *discuss the results and evaluations*.⁸⁶ Indeed, pupils’ essays were not supposed only to instil convictions but they were a means of checking them. Just for this purpose the Ministry of Education told schools to make 7th and 11th-form pupils write compositions on topics “Victorious Red Army arrived at your home-place” and “My role in raising and reinforcing the well-being of Socialist society”.⁸⁷ The textbooks and readers of the mother tongue were full of extracts like “About Lenin”, “Meeting Stalin”, “Commander Suvorov”, “Stalin and Voroshilov on the Front”, “How the Steel Tempered” and others like that.⁸⁸

Foreign language lessons were quite important in the ideological upbringing as well. A voluminous article was published in the newspaper *Nõukogude Õpetaja* on 14 September 1952, focusing on teaching the anthem of the USSR in Russian lessons. At the beginning of the period the teacher was advised to explain that the people glorify in the anthem what is dearest to them – their Socialist homeland.⁸⁹ Certainly, textbooks were the main source for ideological work. For example, the English textbook for the 8th form published in 1952 opens with a patriotic text about the birthplace of Stalin.⁹⁰ The message of the texts is quite clear – the Soviet Union possesses the world’s biggest number of good writers for children, whereas, at the same time, American children have to read comic books that poison their young minds. No superman of the comic books would be strong enough to defeat the rampant crime in America. The American government, however, does not do anything about protecting the children. Warmongers as they are, they long for a new war and the children today will be the army tomorrow.⁹¹ The German textbook of

⁸⁵ The main character and obviously the author’s *alter ego* of the novel “How Steel was Tempered” by Nikolai Ostrovski . It was first published in 1934, the next publication in 1935 had already been completed and improved with more party propaganda and Soviet pathos. It is supposed to be realistic but it is full of fabrications especially in the parts about the Russian Civil War. This novel was obligatory reading material at schools of general education until the end of the Soviet period.

⁸⁶ P.N.Gruzdev. Nõukogude patrioismi ja internatsionalismi kasvatamine (Instilling Soviet patriotism and internationalism), p. 98/*Nõukogude Kool* (Soviet School) 1940/2, pp. 90–102.

⁸⁷ A.Raudsepp. Ajaloo õpetamise korraldus Eesti NSV eesti õppekeele üldhariduskoolides 1944–1985 (How history was taught in Estonian language general-education schools in 1944–1985), p. 28.

⁸⁸ See, e.g. J.Seilental. Emakeele lugemik IV klassile, Eesti Riiklik Kirjastus (Reader of mother-tongue. Form four, Estonian State Publishers), Tallinn, 1950; A.Selmet. Kirjanduse õpik-lugemik VI klassile, Eesti Riiklik Kirjastus, (Literature Textbook-cum-Reader. Form six, Estonian State publishers) Tallinn, 1950.

⁸⁹ T.Burmeister. NSVliidu hümnü käsitlemine 4.klassis (Teaching the anthem of the USSR in form four). – *Nõukogude Õpetaja* (Soviet Teacher) 1951/37, 14.09.1951

⁹⁰ J.Belova, L.Todd. Inglise keele õpik VIII klassile. English textbook. Form eight. Estonian State publishers, Tallinn, 1952, pp. 3–4.

⁹¹ J.Belova, L.Todd. Inglise keele õpik VIII klassile. (English textbook. Form eight). Estonian State publishers, Tallinn, 1952, pp. 8–11.

1950 includes a text dedicated to the anniversary of the Red Army including the slogans – *Es lebe die Sowjetarmee!* (Long Live the Soviet Army!), *Es lebe die Sowjetflotte!* (Long live the Soviet Navy!), *Es lebe die Sowjetluftflotte!* (Long live the Soviet Airforce!).⁹²

Music and art had to be used to instil patriotism and internationalism as well. *The teacher explains to the pupils the significance of Russian classical music and tells them what influence Russian composers and painters have had on the foreign artists /.../*⁹³ The compulsory repertoire of music instruction included the *International*, *Marsellais*, *Red banner*, *Dead march* and *Song for Motherland*. Besides there were optional songs like *Comintern*, *Song about Stalin*, *Song about Voroshilov*, *March of the working army*, *Song of the common front* and several others of the kind.⁹⁴ Leelo Tamm, a pupil of the 8th base school remembers that when they all had to sing the *International* at the every-morning assembly, she never joined in but she could not help liking the dynamic melodies by Isaac Dunayevsky and some other contemporary Soviet composers.⁹⁵

Science teachers had to speak first of all about *our country's* technology, the importance of chemistry in the national defence, about the life and work Soviet scientists⁹⁶, who, to the contrary of the scientists of capitalist countries were happy to have enough work and who were respected for it. Teachers of physics and chemistry had to try much harder than did those who taught mathematics. They did get a few short biographies of carefully selected Russian scientists and the story of the electrification of the vast homeland.⁹⁷ Already in 1951 an article was published in the paper *Nõukogude Õpetaja*, reminding the teachers of physics not to forget their duty to bring their pupils up in the spirit of materialistic world outlook.⁹⁸ It was a bit easier for the teachers of mathematics as the exercises in textbooks had already been compiled so that they contained comparisons of the most backward workers' daily quotas with those of the *Stakhanovites*.⁹⁹ *The language of numbers is convincing and it is necessary that the teacher of mathematics would use the statistic data of socialist construction like teachers of history and geography do was*

⁹² M.Petrenko, M.Jastržembskaja. saksa keele õpik VI klassile (German textbook. Form six). Estonian State Publishers, Tallinn, 1951, p. 62.

⁹³ P.N. Gruzdev. Nõukogude patriotsismi ja internatsionalismi kasvatamine (Instilling Soviet patriotism and internationalism), p. 99.

⁹⁴ ERAR-14-1-48, p. 26, Üldlauluvara keskkoolidele 1940/41 (Songs for secondary schools in 1940/41). Kooliaastaks, kinnitanud Hariduse Rahvakomissar Nigol Andresen (Confirmed by the people's commissar of education Nigol Andresen). 16.09.1940.

⁹⁵ Eesti Rahva Muuseum (Estonian National Museum, further on ERM) KV 783, pp. 416–417.

⁹⁶ P.N.Gruzdev. Nõukogude internatsionalismi ja patriotsismi kasvatamine, (Instilling Soviet patriotism and internationalism), p. 99.

⁹⁷ See, e.g. I.Sokolov. Füüsika X klassile. Elekter (Physics for form ten. Electricity.), Estonian State Publishers, 1952; V.Levtšenko, M.Ivantsova, N.Solovjov, V.Feldt. Keemia X klassile (Chemistry for form ten). Estonian State Publishers, 1952.

⁹⁸ K.Jelizarov. Õpilaste maailmavaate kujunemine (Pupils' worldview and how it is shaped) – Nõukogude Õpetaja (Soviet Teacher), 1951/36, 07.09.1951, p. 3.

⁹⁹ O.Rünk, H.Roos. Matemaatika õpik V klassile. II vihik. Pedagoogiline Kirjandus (Textbook of mathematics for form five. The second part. Educational literature). Tallinn 1948, p. 25.

emphasised in an article of the newspaper *Nõukogude Õpetaja* on 21 September 1951.¹⁰⁰

Geography was considered really important for carrying out ideological instruction and upbringing. Valsiner, the deputy to the ESSR People's commissar, published the article *Socio-political upbringing at school* in the 1941 February issue of the journal *Nõukogude Kool* and explained the directives of the commissariat for the 3rd, 4th and 6th form geography classes. The teacher was obligated to focus on economic geography for two thirds of the periods and the rest had to be dedicated to political and geographical regional geography of the USSR. Only two periods were given to the geography of the ESSR and at these two a survey of the construction of building socialism was to be taught. The directives specially pointed out that at the lessons about the ESSR, the bourgeois system had to be criticised. It should be emphasised that the 1919 land reform did not offer any solution *for the working peasants' interests* and as the industry was developed in a wrong way, unemployment followed. On the other hand, it had to be shown that the *working people's revolution on 21 June 1940 set the economy on a right track and the achievements were not long to follow.*¹⁰¹

School radios were put into service of the ideological education. The Estonian Radio Broadcasting Corporation had special broadcasts twice a week in 1936 and they could be used as a part of instruction during the periods. In 1940 the broadcasts started on 15 October, two weeks later than they had before, as suitable material had to be obtained. *./.../radio broadcasts, like instruction at school, should proceed from totally new ideological principles ./.../*¹⁰² Pupils could learn about the birth of Soviet Estonia, the republic being admitted to the Soviet Union, the life and activities of the pioneers, the birth and development of the *International*, the life of soviet pilots and the Red Army, the events of the October revolution in Leningrad, the Stalinist constitution, the soviet youth and so forth.¹⁰³

Every article in the writing media was stock-full of directives and demands to bring up the youth that would be patriotic and international. Everybody can notice, though, that even when generally the great friendship among the peoples was talked about, only the Russian nation was mentioned for its culture and saving all the others from servitude, simultaneously raising these peoples' morals and morality. *All the peoples of Soviet republics naturally considered the Russian Federation and the Russian working class their leader.*¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ Kommunistlikust kasvatusesest matemaatikakunni (About communist education in mathematics class (after S.Ponomaryov)) – *Nõukogude Õpetaja* (Soviet Teacher), 1951/38, 21.09.1951, p. 4.

¹⁰¹ ERAR-1013-1-217, unpagged, directives for forms 3, 4 and 6 geography syllabi, a circular. 17.02.1941.

¹⁰² ERAR-14-1-400, pp. 3–4, Riigi Ringhääling ENSV Hariduse rahvakomissariaadile (The State Broadcasting Company to the ESSR people's Commissariat of Education). 09.10.1940.

¹⁰³ ERAR-14-1-400, pp. 3–4, ENSV Ringhäälingu kooliradio saatekava 1940/41 aasta oktoobri, novembri ja detsembrikuus (ESSR State Broadcasting Company's School Radio Programme for October, November and December 1940/41).

¹⁰⁴ A.M.Pankratova (editor). History of the USSR III, p. 355.

Ideological education as seen in the reports of school inspectors and in people's memoirs

According to the reports of inspectors the situation at schools did not differ much from what was actually demanded. There were certainly schools the ideological education of which was not approved but praise dominates in the reports. It depended, of course, on the heads and teachers of the schools and how well they managed to hide their convictions and anti-Soviet mentality. Not everything the inspectors put down can be taken for pure gold and actually sometimes one cannot get anything from all these improving, increasing, intensifying and making more profound phrases. So for example, in the autumn of 1947 Altof Lammas, an inspector of the Läänemaa Executive Committee educational department described the ideological-political education in one of the schools subjected to him as follows: *The political education through instruction has considerably improved. The teachers have paid heed to moments that need emphasising and deepened.*¹⁰⁵

There are quite detailed reports as well, one of them is Juhan Heinpalu's from November and December 1946. Inspecting schools in Virumaa, he wrote about the issues in cents. *Political education was included only at 15% of the lessons I inspected in October, in November the percentage had increased up to 33% already. By the end of December it was 50% on the average.* The inspector reported on the ideological education individually for every school: Väike-Maarja 7-year School 80%, Pudivere and Kurtna 60%, Tammiku, Äntu and Simuna Schools 50%, Väike-Maarja and Kohtla-Järve Secondary School where instruction was carried out in the Estonian language 40% and Kohtla-Järve Russian Secondary School only 35 per cent. The inspector was really pleased that Soviet ideology had found its proper place in classes and not artificially so – it matched the topic of the period and discipline. He described the work of the teachers in detail.¹⁰⁶ Some examples might not go amiss.

The 3rd-form pupils of Pudivere School solved problems of fulfilling the grain delivery quota and teacher H. Roosvald asked a boy what was the quota for his father. The boy said that it was 140kg. The teacher was surprised that it was so small and asked whether it has been delivered. The boy answered in the affirmative and the inspector detected lots of pride in his voice. After that the teacher explained to pupils that this was a correct conduct as *the workers and intellectuals needed bread, too and in their turn they helped the farmers. So the gain was mutual.* The second-formers of the same school read a text about hunger at their Estonian class and the pupils pointed out themselves that people who do not work will be hungry and that if one does not work one has no right to eat. Then the teacher explained to the pupils that in capitalist countries capitalists did not work but ate better than the

¹⁰⁵ ERAR-14-4-28, p. 128p, Läänemaa TK Haridusosakonna koolide inspektor Altof Lammase septembri-ja oktoobrikuu 1947. aasta aruanne (Report of school inspector Altof Lammas from Läänemaa executive committee board of education for September and October 1947), not dated.

¹⁰⁶ ERAR-14-4-27, pp. 81–83. Virumaa koolide inspektori Juhan Heinpalu 1946. aasta novembri-ja detsembrikuu aruanne (Inspector of Virumaa schools Juhan Heinpalu's report on November and December, 1946), not dated.

working people. The pupils expressed their conviction that the capitalist was feeding on the workers' labour and sweat.¹⁰⁷

The history teacher of Nõmme 10 secondary school, /Leida/¹⁰⁸Annus, the inspector said, explained the Marxist-Leninist teaching as the only true worldview to her pupils and was apt to connect the subject of the class with the present issues. Dealing with the period of Alexander II in form 11, she managed to give a good comparison of the peasants' situation at that time and in the Soviet Union. In form 10 she explained the equality of the man and the woman, talked about the elections and fulfilling the five-year plan. *Her pupils are well aware of the issues, can ask questions and reply to them with lively interest.* Teacher Tols¹⁰⁹ explained at her biology class how well the Soviet Union was fighting against infectious diseases. *Her examples showed that there were no infectious disease epidemics in the Soviet Union during the war like they occurred in bourgeois countries.* At the same time several reports mention that school attendance was disturbed owing to contagious disease amidst the pupils. At geography lessons the pupils learned that fascism is anti humanity, while Soviet peoples share brotherly friendship and equality.¹¹⁰

The form mistress/master's lesson was ideal for ideological education, as it was possible to talk about Soviet topics separately from every subject and, naturally, just this was the duty of the form teachers. *Communist education is a special responsibility of form teachers, deputy heads and heads of the school. A form teacher has to be aware of every pupil's views, of who influences the pupils and in which direction. They are responsible for giving correct answers to all the pupils' questions and take care of the Marxist-Leninist world outlook of them.*¹¹¹ More often than not, the topics discussed at these lessons were appointed by the head, announced at the beginning of the year and after that the form teachers could make up their own plans around them. So, for instance, at Kaagvere School one of these topics was worked out together at a meeting every week. It was discussed where to find suitable material, how to pose the main issues and what means should be used to illustrate the topics.¹¹² The same was true about Tartu School no 3, where a seminar for form teachers was organised every week to discuss the topic planned for the next week. Form teachers had one period a week. *The topics were selected to bring the pupils up in the spirit of love and respect for their Soviet country, its leaders and bolshevist party. Some of these topics were for example "Collective farm system*

¹⁰⁷ ERAR-14-4-27, pp. 81–83. Virumaa koolide inspektori Juhan Heinpalu 1946.aasta novembri-ja detsembrikuu aruanne, (Inspector of Virumaa schools Juhan Heinpalu's report on November and December, 1946), not dated.

¹⁰⁸ H.Meri. Tagasivaateid veerevast vagunist. Eesti Päevaleht, (Retrospect from a rolling cattle-car. Estonian Daily), Tallinn 2010, p. 139.

¹⁰⁹ aka Tols. Ibid

¹¹⁰ ERAR-14-4-27, pp. 110–111p, Tallinna linna Nõmme rajooni TSN TK HO koolide inspektori Hella Lumiste 1946/47 õppeaasta II veerandi (november, detsember) aruanne (Tallinn Nõmme district EC education department inspector Hella Lumiste's report on the second term (November, December) 1946/47), not dated.

¹¹¹ Ideelis-poliitilise kasvatus küsimused nõukogude koolis (Issues of ideological-political education in soviet school). p.1220. – Eesti Bolševik. EK(b)P Keskkomitee ajakiri (Estonian Bolshevik. Journal of the EC(b)P Central Committee). 1946/17, pp. 1215–221.

¹¹² ERAR-14-4-65, p. 108. Akt Kaagvere Seitsmeaastase Kooli revideerimise kohta 24.kuni 26.veebr.1950. (Inspection statement on Kaagvere 7-year school on 24–26 February 1950).

*guarantees the economic and cultural development of our country”, “The Great October Revolution and its achievements”, “Stalinist constitution”, “The Soviet Union – the stronghold of peace and democracy” and others.*¹¹³

The so-called mornings of culture were frequently held at all schools. When they were introduced they were supposed to replace morning prayers. These morning assemblies were dedicated to red-letter days but several generally ideological topics were also discussed. So, for example, the morning assemblies at Tallinn 7-year school no 27 had the following topics – the five-year plan, artillery in the Great Patriotic War, liberation of the ESSR and about the life and work of Johannes Vares.¹¹⁴ School no 28, however, managed to arrange literary assemblies on Anna Haava, August Kitzberg, Eduard Vilde, Nikolai Ostrovski but they certainly could not avoid talks about comrade Stalin’s life and work either. School no 29 paid attention to the principles of the SU five-year plan, the five-year plan of the ESSR, the struggle of the ESSR working people, communist party as the leading and organising force, soviet artillery and Johannes Vares as a writer and politician. There is not much good said about Secondary School no 10, the inspector has reported only the five-year plan and meeting its demands as the main topic.¹¹⁵

Not all the reports lavish praise on the political-ideological education. Arnold Kurve, inspector from Viljandi County, reported that very few teachers were able to meet the demands of ideological education through their subjects. History, geography and constitution classes failed to tie ideological upbringing to the current topic. His example concerned Alexander Nevsky. The teacher had not paid enough heed to his patriotism and his troops’ eagerness to destroy the knights on the ice of Lake Peipsi but had said only that the Russians were victorious. The teachers excused themselves for not dealing with internationalism, socialist humanism and bolshevik education due to lack of special skills, shortage of time, composite forms and other things.¹¹⁶ Neither was satisfied Gustav Toomingas, school inspector of Läänemaa. *Our schools are not on the level demanded by soviet education.*¹¹⁷ Bernard Sööt who inspected literature classes in Paide, Türi and Viljandi declared the topics *not connected with the socialist content of contemporary life*, neither were there any

¹¹³ ERAR-14-4-65, p. 99, Akt Tartu Linna Seitsmeaastase Kooli juhtkonna revideerimise kohta (Inspection statement on Tartu 7-year school), not dated.

¹¹⁴ Johannes Vares (pen-name Barbarus), a doctor and poet, was the prime minister after the Soviet invasion from June to August 1940 and thereafter the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet Presidium of the ESSR until his suicide in 1946.

¹¹⁵ ERAR-14-4-27, pp. 110–111p. Tallinna linna TSN TK HO koolide inspektor Hella Lumiste 1946/47 õppeaasta II veerandi (nov. dets.) aruanne (Tallinn Nõmme EC education department inspector Hella Lumiste’s report on the second term (November, December) 1946/47), not dated.

¹¹⁶ ERAR-14-4-28, p. 94, Viljandi maakonna koolide inspektor Arnold Kurve 1947. Aasta septembri ja oktoobri aruanne (Inspector of Viljandi County Arnold Kurve report on September and October 1947), not dated.

¹¹⁷ ERAR-14-4-27, pp. 27–27p. Läänemaa TK haridusosakonna koolide inspektor Gustav Toominga 1946. a. novembri ja detsembrikuu aruanne (Inspector of Läänemaa EC education department Gustav Tooming’s report on November and December 1946), not dated.

political topics in written work.¹¹⁸ Elmar Kalmus was not satisfied with all the schools he inspected in Viljandi County either. *There are schools and teachers, unable to cope with political education in their subjects.* His examples were taken from two geography classes. The topic in the composite form 5 to 7 of Käsukonna School was Germany. The pupils could talk about its borders, rivers and lakes but did not know which part Germany played in the Second World War. When the inspector wanted to know which battles took place on the River Oder, nobody could answer. Neither did they know about the government in Germany and Berlin. His other example came from Võhma School, where form 6 was studying the peoples and animals of North America in their geography class. The teacher mentioned that Negroes were persecuted in the USA but did not point out that all the peoples had equal rights in the USSR. *Does not show how progressive the SU is.*¹¹⁹ Inspector Ellu Eigo from Viljandimaa, also had to admit that very little ideological and political education could be seen. *Everyone is busy with teaching the subject. It is especially true about the teachers who have worked at the school already for a couple of decades and do not live in the present.*¹²⁰

We can come to the same conclusion reading the memoirs that are being stored at the Estonian National Museum: everything depended on the school, the teacher and naturally, of how much was told to the children at home, how much the parents dared to tell. Anni Teidaru who taught the Estonian language, music and geography for 40 years has written, “ *But in Russian times everything had to be tied to politics. The teacher had to point out 3 aims: the informative, educational and political. They were put down but the last aim was usually only on paper.*”¹²¹ Helju Reinsalu from Kiltisi 8-year school believes that the teachers did what was demanded from them.¹²² Enno Augjärv from Järvakandi School also remembers that teachers attempted at least to show that they met the demands. “*Politics penetrated instruction at school like everywhere else. School life was strongly influenced by the wishes and attitudes of the local communist party organiser. The concepts had been dictated by the state, they figured in the curriculum and syllabi and meeting them was strictly under control. Schoolchildren were used for assisting at political events like elections and festive meetings in the club (pioneers’ guard of honour).*”¹²³

The new system was disagreeable and unpleasant and the old traditions did not yield easily. The minister of education Arnold Raud published an article about the tasks facing school in the coming year in September 1947. He praised the achievements in the ideological-political education but stressed that there were still a lot of

¹¹⁸ ERAR-14-4-13, p. 194. Aruanne kirjandusõpetuse revideerimise kohta Paide, Türi ja Viljandi keskkoolis 16. Novembrist 22.novembrini 1946 (Report on literature teaching inspection in secondary schools of Paide, Türi and Viljandi 16–22 November 1946).

¹¹⁹ ERAR-14-4-12, p. 137, Viljandimaa, Kabala, Imavere, Kõo ja Taevere valdade koolide inspektor Elmar Kalmuse 1946. a novembri ja detsembrikuu aruanne (Inspector of Kabala, Imavere, Kõo and Taevere parishes in Viljandi County Elmar Kalmus’s report on November and December 1946), not dated.

¹²⁰ ERAR-14-4-64, p. 368, Viljandimaa koolide inspektori seltsimees Ellu Eigo 1949/50. õppeaasta aruanne (Comrade Ellu Eigo’s report on schools of Viljandi County in 1949/50), not dated.

¹²¹ ERM KV 781, p. 24.

¹²² ERM KV 780, p. 316.

¹²³ Ibid, p. 258p.

drawbacks. *“We cannot speak about successful education in the spirit of peoples’ friendship and soviet patriotism until bourgeois nationalistic phenomena like rings and emblems with blue-black-white colours that some pupils but even some teachers wear or if they do not wear them, the teachers and heads pretend not to see them.”*¹²⁴ In addition to the blue-black-and-white symbols, school uniforms and badges were prohibited as well. Heino Laagus from Viljandi Secondary School no 2 writes, *“We still commissioned the graduation badges but it caused a lot of trouble. /.../ The consecration of the badges was taken for a political resistance, the pupils were accused of organised anti-Soviet activities. Out of our three graduates’ forms one third of the boys were sent “to the cold land”, where one of them died. The others could return home after Stalin’s death and graduate from higher educational establishments.”*¹²⁵

Teachers – Ideological pressure and staff purification

As the first task at schools was to change the ideological content of instruction, the teachers were the first to change or to be changed. *A teacher can be successful in bringing up communists only when raising her/his own ideological-political level continuously. Thus it is not a wish of every teacher to develop in this field but any teacher is required /spacing by the author/ to do it in order to meet the demands of the party and the government.*¹²⁶

The decree of the ESSR people’s commissar of education from 5 January 1945 obligated all the teachers to learn the books *About the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union* and *The Concise History of the SUCP*.¹²⁷

The Ministry of Education of the ESSR compiled the plan for ideological work in 1947–1950. The plan required that the journal *Nõukogude Kool* and the newspaper *Nõukogude Õpetaja* should systematically publish articles about fighting against formalism and survivals of the bourgeois past. They also had to carry out anti religious propaganda. The same issues dominated on the so-called teachers’ days, in the groups of in-practice studies of methods and at the teaching staff meetings. The Teachers’ Further Education Institute was required to work all these issues through separately for every subject at general school by 1 June 1948.¹²⁸

¹²⁴ A.Raud. Meie ülesanded käesoleval õppeaastal (Our tasks in the present school-year) – *Nõukogude Kool* (Soviet School), 1947/48, p. 468.

¹²⁵ ERM KV 783, pp. 120–121.

¹²⁶ Ideelis-poliitilise kasvatuse küsimused nõukogude koolis (Issues of ideological-political education in soviet school), p. 1221. – Eesti Bolševik. EK(b)P Keskkomitee ajakiri (Estonian Bolshevik. Journal of the EC (b) P Central Committee), 1946/17, pp. 1215–1221.

¹²⁷ Eesti NSV Hariduse Rahvakomissari käskkiri nr.19 (Decree no 19 of the Estonian SSR people’s commissar of education), 5 January 1945. – *Nõukogude Kool* (Soviet School) 1945/1/2, p. 7.

¹²⁸ ERAR-14-3-245, pp. 3–8, Eesti NSV Haridusministeeriumi ideoloogilise töö plaan 1947–1950 (Plan for ideological work in 1947–1950, issued by the Estonian SSR Ministry of Education).

Teachers were required to take exams in several subjects – the communist party’s history (according to the concise history), Soviet education (according to the three-part textbook *Education: Textbook for Teachers’ Training Colleges* by Boriss Jessipov and Nikolai Gontsharov), psychology (textbook *Psychology for Teachers’ Training Colleges* by Konstantin Kornilov) and logic (the source material for the latter had not been dictated by the ministry). All the teachers of Tartu and Tallinn had to graduate from the Marxist-Leninist Evening University within the period 1947–1950 and everybody who could not speak Russian had to start learning it. The ministry promised to arrange classes for it.¹²⁹ Teachers were required to make a plan for the second half of the 1946/47 by 10 January. They had to state what means would be used to raise the ideological-political knowledge, how the soviet education system and methods would be obtained and, if necessary, where they learn the Russian or the Estonian language.¹³⁰ However, already in March 1947 the newspaper *Nõukogude Õpetaja* complained that there was too little control over the teachers’ ideological-political self-education and it should be improved.¹³¹

The compulsory exams in party’s history, Soviet education and psychology as well as talks on Stalin’s biography and his main works started in 1947. This was the first year of the existence of the ideological work plan after the ESSR minister of education and the chairman of the republican trade union of educators and artists had instructed the schools to improve the ideological-political awareness and the qualifications of the staff. The examining committee for Soviet psychology had to consist of three members. The chairman was the head of the local department of education the two members had to be either school inspectors or teachers of psychology. A commission of three had to supervise the talks on Stalin’s biography and work. The chairman had to be the local party organisation’s representative, the other two a representative of the Trade Union and a school inspector. The Soviet education examining body has not been so precisely appointed. The last chance to take the exam was between 15 to 23 August 1949. Only these teachers who were studying Marxism-Leninism at the evening classes of Tartu University, teachers’ training colleges or other higher educational establishments were excused of taking these exams. The ministry of education and the trade union of educators and artists both demanded a report of the exam results by the 5th September 1949. There is record of the exam in logic that was mentioned above.¹³²

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Juhend haridustöölise ideelispoliitilise taseme tõstmise töö parandamiseks ja kvalifikatsiooni tõstmiseks (Direction for raising the ideological-political level and the qualifications of educational staff). 03.01.1947. - Nõukogude Õpetaja (Soviet Teacher) -1947/1.

¹³¹ Õpetajate enesetäiendamistööd tuleb juhtida, abistada ja kontrollida (Teachers’ work on further education should be managed, assisted and inspected), 14.03.1947. Nõukogude Õpetaja (Soviet Teacher) 1947/11

¹³² ERAR-14-3-337, pp. 1–4, Haridusministeeriumi juhend ÜK(b)P ajaloos, nõukogude pedagoogikas ja psühholoogias sooritavate eksamite korraldamise kohta (Ministry of Education direction about arranging exams in the SU C(b) P history, soviet education and psychology) 30.06.1948; Juhend haridustöölise ideelispoliitilise taseme tõstmise töö parandamiseks ja kvalifikatsiooni tõstmiseks, (Direction for improving the efforts in raising the ideological-political level and qualifications of educational staff) 03.01.1947.

In addition to these exams the teachers had to attend lectures dictated by the ministry of education. Local committees of the educators and artists' trade union were made responsible for arranging the lectures. They were on *the five-year plan of the USSR and ESSR, Marxism and national issues, falsification of the Estonian history by German fascists and their hirelings, the fight of Kalevipoeg and the Estonian people for their freedom against the German invaders etc.*¹³³

Schools were instructed to pay more attention to methodical and political issues at the staff meetings. *Continuous and carefully planned* atheist propaganda had to be made in science, astronomy and geography classes. (It was required that the schools should present the ministry of education a biography and character reference of every teacher of natural sciences. The teacher's past career had to be clear and a special clause confirmed whether the teacher had the classes of the fundamentals of Darwinism¹³⁴) The teachers of the Estonian language were checked in the same way.¹³⁵ Form teachers were obligated to use their compulsory visits to pupils' homes also *for making propaganda among the parents.*¹³⁶

Staff purification

Mass discharge of teachers was launched already in 1944. Moscow dictated the principles and framework of the purification but local party committees had their say in it as well.¹³⁷ Quite often the politically unsuitable teachers were given an opportunity to leave at their own request but some were dismissed. 4405 teachers worked in Estonian general education schools in the autumn of 1944. By 1948 about a quarter of them had left. The Ministry of Education reported that 802 teachers left schools in 1948–1949, 167 of them for direct political reasons.¹³⁸ 200 teachers were discharged in 1950 and 22 of them were arrested.¹³⁹ Anu Raudsepp who has researched Estonian education policies has said that all in all 4176 teachers were dismissed at their own request or transferred to other jobs in 1946–1950, it is almost the same amount as the total number of teachers in the autumn of 1944.¹⁴⁰ Still,

¹³³ Juhend haridustöölise ideelispoliitilise taseme tõstmise töö parandamiseks ja kvalifikatsiooni tõstmiseks (Direction for raising the ideological-political level and the qualifications of educational staff). 03.01.1947.

¹³⁴ ERAR-14-3-318, p. 64, ENSV Haridusministri asetäitja H.Maran ja ENSV Haridusministeeriumi Kaadrite Osakonna juhataja J.Rannaste kõigile TK Haridusosakondade juhatajaile (ESSR assistant minister of education H.Maran and the ESSR Ministry of Education personnel department head J.Rannaste to all the heads of educational departments). 31.08.1948.

¹³⁵ ERAR-14-3-245, pp. 3–8, Eesti NSV Haridusministeeriumi ideoloogilise töö plaan 1947–1950 (Plan for ideological work in 1947–1950, issued by the Estonian SSR Ministry of Education).

¹³⁶ Ibid

¹³⁷ V.Sirk. Haritlaskond osutus visaks vastaseks (Intellectuals turned out to be tough adversaries), p. 58.

¹³⁸ A.Raudsepp. Ajaloo õpetamise korraldus Eesti NSV eesti õppekeele üldhariduskoolides 1944–1985. (How history was taught in Estonian language general-educational schools in 1944–1985), p 389 Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus, University of Tartu Publishers, 2005, p. 22.

¹³⁹ V.Sirk. Haritlaskond osutus visaks vastaseks (Intellectuals turned out to be tough adversaries). p.61.

¹⁴⁰ A.Raudsepp. Ajaloo õpetamise korraldus Eesti NSV eesti õppekeele üldhariduskoolides 1944–1985, (How history was taught in Estonian language general-educational schools in 1944–1985), p 389 University of Tartu Publishers. pp. 22–23.

500 teachers were left who had belonged to political parties some other organisations in the independence period. There were 104 who had served in the German army. Actually there was no staff that would have been absolutely in the clear at schools – the older teachers' lives contained something unsuitable anyhow and the younger ones, even if they had not been in the German army could have some relatives who were unsuitable. That is why it was impossible to purify the schools totally. Only 266 teachers and 23 heads had served in the Soviet army. 439 teachers were discharged from January to September 1951 and 150 of them were imprisoned. Väino Sirk who has researched the staff purification among teachers stated that the mass repression in education came to an end in 1952.¹⁴¹

The discharged teachers were replaced with the so-called Russian Estonians (the offspring of Estonians who had migrated to Russia hoping to get land in the second half of the 19th century. By that time they barely spoke Estonian.), who had had some hasty training but no professional and very little general education. As there were not enough teachers they were given many classes. After these changes the number of teachers who belonged to the party increased considerably – when in the early 1946 there were 82 members of the communist party, in 1952 the number was 482.¹⁴²

Conclusion

The programme of the communist party adopted in 1919 demanded that schools should bring up a generation that would be able to realise communism. Whereas the changes of Estonian education policies started indeed in the first year of the Soviet occupation, the result was still formal and did not change much. The real changes occurred in 1944–1953. The greatest attention was paid to teaching history, literature, geography and certainly the Estonian and Russian languages. The teachers were expected to praise Soviet peoples and their unity in other classes as well and the superiority of the Russian nation had to be generally understood and accepted.

All these changed truths and principles were especially hard on the teachers. They had to take exams in party's history, Soviet education and psychology. Teachers of Tallinn and Tartu had to graduate from the Marxist-Leninist evening university. Every plan had to show instructive, educational and ideological aims to be achieved. Schools were required to subscribe to the journal *Nõukogude Kool* and the newspaper *Nõukogude Õpetaja* that published practically the same long articles in every new issue – how to bring more ideology into the classes. The teachers who were not able to do it were discharged, many of them were arrested. They were replaced by teachers from Russia, most of who did not have necessary education for teaching.

¹⁴¹ V.Sirk. Haritlaskond osutus visaks vastaseks, (Intellectuals turned out to be tough adversaries) pp. 61–63.

¹⁴² Ibid, pp. 61–63

Nevertheless, Stalin-time propaganda did not quite achieve what was expected of it. People still remembered well what life had been like in the Republic of Estonia and what happened to them when they were supposed to build communism. Deportation and imprisonment were not stories from the past but everyday events happening to them and the nearest and dearest. The ideological mumbo-jumbo was taken as something unavoidable, disliked but to be endured. The new generation that had not lived at the time before the soviet occupation were not of age to go to school yet. This was the generation that could truly be influenced by the propaganda if (!) it was let to happen at home and at school.