The landscape of the Karelian Isthmus and its imagery since 1944

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This paper traces the correlation between the functions of landscape, its dynamics under its human influences and the dominant images of its terrain. A great deal of attention is given to Vyborg Karelia – the part of the Karelian Isthmus ceded by Finland to the Soviet Union in 1940. The author considers the consequences on the landscape of population exchange and settlement after 1944, alterations in landscape due to increased recreation, forest protection, the abandonment of agricultural lands, bog drainage and open-cut mining. The conclusions reached concerning the landscape imagery of the region are based chiefly on an analysis of texts and pictures from between the 1950s and the 1980s, and the author's observations and research data. Predominantly examined is the perception of the residents of Leningrad (now St. Petersburg) as being the widest human cross-section vis-à-vis Vyborg Karelia at the period under examination. The radical changes in its imagery during the post-war period were wrought by: 1) great alterations in landscape functions and land use; 2) the loss of historical recollection of past landscapes in the present population; and 3) the strong ideologization of landscape perception during the Soviet period. An integral image, dominating up to now, embodies the principally "recreational model" of landscape development, one which is not completely adequate to the present state of the landscape. During the post-Soviet period, regional imagery becomes more complex and contradictory in regard to the increased transitional function of the Isthmus as a bridge between Russia and the European Union.

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Introduction

The Karelian Isthmus is a territory between the Gulf of Finland and Lake Ladoga, lying to the north of the Neva River. For one thousand years at least, the interests of different countries, nations, confessions, landowners and administrative units were focused right here. Therefore, the actual landscape of the Isthmus is quite saturated with the accumulated heritage of different historical epochs.

Among the peculiarities of the territory that have exercised the most important effects on landscape development one could mention: 1) outstanding opportunities for using water routes such as the Gulf of Finland, Lake Ladoga, and the Neva and Vuoksi lake river systems; 2) the contact zone between the Baltic crystalline shield and the East European plain that is responsible for dividing the Isthmus respectively into rocky and sandy parts; and 3) the shortage of land suitable for agriculture owing to the broad spread of glacial and fluvio-glacial sands containing a great deal of cobbles and boulders, plus granite ridges and an abundance of lakes.

The Karelian Isthmus also presents a prominent example of terrain where the role of landscape function is quite crucial in the creation of dominant landscape images. In turn, landscape function changes in the course of time, conforming to the consecutive periods of the regional development. Every change of function will leave appreciable traces in the landscape, giving rise to a new landscape profile, forming a new visible land-

scape and correspondingly fresh enduring images of the countryside.

This paper deals with the main changes in the Karelian Isthmus landscape during the latter half of the 20th century and their reflection in the imagery of the territory. The main attention is given to the territory of *Vyborg Karelia* by which is meant the part of the Karelian Isthmus ceded to the Soviet Union in 1940. Actually it includes both the Vyborg and Priozersk administrative *rayons* (districts) of the Leningrad *oblast*, and part of the Kurortnyi *rayon* of St. Petersburg. The total area is slightly more than 11,000 km^2.

Conclusions concerning landscape imagery in this region are based chiefly on an analysis of descriptions (newspaper and magazine articles, local lore pamphlets, guidebooks, itineraries, popular songs) and pictures (book illustrations, emblems, advertising images). Alongside all this, distinct images of the territory continue to penetrate daily communication and can even affect the behaviour of people in their concrete milieu. The author uses his personal observations made in the course of an over 20-year study of the region. Chiefly examined are the perceptions of St. Petersburg (or Leningrad, before 1991) populace as the broad totality of people in relation to Vyborg Karelia during the period following 1944.

A short excursion into the past

For the best understanding of the specificity of Vyborg Karelia development during the Soviet and post-Soviet periods it is necessary to point out the most crucial events in the previous history of the region, events which had influenced the perception of the area by St. Petersburgers as well. In a more detailed fashion such questions have been examined in certain other works (Isachenko 1997, 1998).

At the beginning of the 18th century, when the Isthmus and Ladogan Karelia were turned over to Russian jurisdiction, and just when St. Petersburg was founded (1703), the territory became practically a capital-city zone. Nevertheless, despite the proliferation of landscape functions such as large-scale timber cutting, building-material excavation and the establishment of country estates by Russian noblemen, in the consciousness of newly settled Russian population (and in different social groups), the environs of the new capital were known for a long while as a shelter for wretched *chukhna*. *Chukhna* was the common Russian name for Ingermanland Finns (*äyrämöiset* and *savakot*) and broadly applied to the Finnish people. Until the mid-19th century, this image, expressed by A. Pushkin, had prevailed in the minds of the majority of Petersburgers when considering this territory. Furthermore, Vyborg Karelia (and to a greater extent Ingermanland, which surrounded the new northern capital) were perceived by the townsfolk as the curators of the most ancient strata of the regional history, strata evoking the Finnish past of this northern Russian capital. Numerous legends about Finnish shamans and miracles, which for many years cropped up in Petersburgian folklore, were also abundantly embodied in Russian fiction over the first part of 19th century (Spivak 1998).

The perception of Vyborg Karelia essentially changed over the last third of the 19th century. Now it was connected with the economic growth of the Grand Duchy of Finland, the strengthening of Finnish national consciousness, and the intensification of regional agriculture, oriented predominantly to the St. Petersburg market. The last important influence was railway construction and the consequent large-scale recreational development of the area. By the end of the 19th century the living standards of the rural population in the region had distinctly improved: the average Karelian-Finnish peasant was no longer so poor and wretched as he looked during the 18th century and at the beginning of the 19th century. The first Russian guidebooks and itineraries devoted to Finland underscored the cleanliness and prosperity of the Finnish villages along the Isthmus.

The establishment of the railway line St. Petersburg–Vyborg–Riihimäki (1870) and also Vyborg–Antrea–Sortavala (Serdobol) (1893), plus mass *dacha* (villa) construction along these railways led to the discovery of so-called Old Finland by members of St. Petersburg's upper and middle classes. Vyborg Karelia became the visiting card for the whole of Finland for the inhabitants of the Russian capital and other great cities. The absorbing reality of Finland began at that time right at the Finland Station in St. Petersburg, where all the staff were Finnish. This was also the case along all the railway line, where station buildings had been designed by Finnish architects and engineers in the National Romantic style. Some of these buildings can still be seen today.

At the end of 19th and at the beginning of the 20th centuries, this Fennomania was strongly ex-

pressed amidst a Russian (notably Petersburgian) creative intelligentsia that was also being stimulated by the National Renaissance current in Finnish artistic life. But it should be stressed that this Vyborg Karelia landscape was being perceived not only as a pattern of wild (or pure) nature, but also in its intimate connections with the unhurried, cyclical way of life of its Back-to-Nature inhabitants. These feelings were aptly depicted by the very relevant Russian poet Osip Mandelshtam (1971) who wrote: "I always vaguely felt the special significance of Finland for the Petersburgian: here he could ponder over the questions that he could not think about in St. Petersburg."

Such immersion in Finland's imagery was one manifestation of the Way to the North, idealized by Russian artistic intellectuals of the so-called Silver Age. In a more realistic context autonomous Finland was a European threshold for Russian democrats and revolutionaries – implanted here were the democratic traditions and the casual police surveillance that were not to be seen in any other territory of the Russian Empire.

After the proclamation of independence of Finland (1917) and the consequent civil war, which affected Vyborg Karelia as well, the state frontier between Finland and Soviet Russia (subsequently the USSR) became one of the sectors of the iron curtain. Concurrently with the creation of defensive zones on either side of the border across the Karelian Isthmus, and under the influence of the dominant ideological lines, the fruitful interrelation between Finnish and Russian culture almost completely ceased.

In the pre-war period, the leading agricultural function of the area peaked. In the creation of new arable lands, large areas of forest were felled, marshes and bogs were drained, and even the level of some lakes was lowered. By 1939, the total extent of cultivated land in Vyborg Karelia had increased by 17–18% (according to some calculations, by even more than 20%). It was just then the proportion of agricultural activity was at it greatest in the history of the region. The forest area of Vyborg Karelia correspondingly decreased to its minimum extent, namely less than 50%. Pre-war industrial development, however, could not essentially alter the dominant agricultural profile of the region.

Population and settlement change after 1944

The ceding of Vyborg Karelia to the Soviet Union in 1940, and the cessation of hostilities in the war between the USSR and Finland in 1944 have marked the most crucial changes in the destiny of the region over last millennium. The population has been transformed totally: over the course of a few months in 1944 more than 200,000 Finnish inhabitants of Vyborg Karelia were evacuated to Finland. People originating from the central and northern oblasts of European Russia, Byelorussia and Ukraine became the new settlers of the region.

This great ethnic change of 1944 has brought about an ensuing disruption of the settlement system that had developed over centuries. From the end of the 1940s until the 1970s this process was planned and realized under such ideological slogans as "enlarge the *kolkhozes*", "liquidate isolated farms (*khutors*)" and "liquidate unpromising villages". By 1955, newly created collective farms (*kolkhoz*) in Vyborg Karelia had 50–100 houses and a respective population of 200–500 people each. The isolated houses whose transfer to farm centres had been considered inexpedient, were systematically destroyed. What is more, the fate of a great number of villages was predetermined by such factors as their proximity to the new state frontier and the establishment of new military units and artillery ranges.

The liquidation of small villages has resulted in serious toponymic changes as well. A new Russian name was generally assigned to a group of neighbouring houses (thus small villages) with their distinguishing Finnish names; therefore the total number of names assigned during the renaming of the 1940s–1950s villages decreased 3 to 4 -fold. For example, to the south of Vyborg, the villages of Nuoraa, Tamminiemi, Niemelä, Pukkila and Hortana have been united under the common name of Sokolinskoje.

Inspection of the data from Table 1 shows that over the course of 50 years the number of settlements in three *volosts* (parishes) of Vyborg Karelia decreased by 2.5–4 times. If we try to take into account not only the settlements officially registered by 1939, but also their isolated sectors bearing their proper names, the total decrease in rural settlements could be 10 times estimated by the 1980s.

Table 1. The decrease of the number of rural settlements in certain *volosts* (parishes) of Vyborg Karelia, 1939–1989.

The name of the parish (volost) in 1939	Present name of the volost	Administrative rayon (district) 1989	Number of settlements 1939	Number of settlements 1989
Kaukola	Sevastyanovo	Priozersk	30	10
Sakkola	Gromovo	Priozersk	29	13
Kivennapa	Pervomaiskoe	Vyborg	47	12

Throughout the post-war period such "spontaneous" migration took place from the villages (particularly from those where there were no schools, shops or reliable communications) into the cities and new urban settlements. Since 1940, the number of towns in Vyborg Karelia has increased from two (Vyborg and Käkisalmi) to seven. Urban status has been given to the settlements with reconstructed or newly created industrial enterprises: pulp and paper mills (Svetogorsk – former Enso, Kamennogorsk – Antrea, Sovetskiy – Johannes), hydroelectric power stations (Lesogorskiy – Jääski), and war industries or similar features. Over the same period numerous "agro-towns" (formally rural settlements with multi-storey houses and more than 1000 people) have been constructed: Pervomayskoe (former Kivennapa), Melnikovo (Räisälä), Sosnovo (Rautu), Gromovo (Sakkola) and others. Table 2 demonstrates the transformation of Vyborg Karelia from a rural into an urbanized area over the course of forty post-war years. The rural population of this region has decreased more than twice over during this same period. Clearly this process could not have proceeded without serious consequences for the landscape.

The new functions of territory and landscape alterations

The new settlers in Vyborg Karelia had land-management experience (notably an agricultural one), not quite suitable for local environmental conditions. The inheritance of the agricultural traditions of Karelian Finns was not altogether possible due to the kolkhoz-sovkhoz system based on such cornerstones as the enlargement of fields and remaking of the old drainage network. Landscape structure, characterized by high local contrasts and a modest average size of arable plots, opposed such a method of land utilization development and agriculture on its own. Therefore, Vyborg Karelia lost quickly its former agricultural imagery (Figs. 1 and 2). The culture of rural life proper to "old Russia" has not emerged here so far. By 1991 the total proportion of agricultural land had fallen to between 11–12% of the entire Vyborg Karelia territory. This process was terminated in the 1970s and 1980s, when around 300 km^2 of desolate land were cleared and drained for cultivation as a result of the campaign of "complex melioration".

Table 2. The dynamics of population (in thousands) and numbers of settlements in Vyborg Karelia, 1938–1989.

Characteristic	Year			
	1938	1947	1953	1989
Rural population	210.0	35.0	76.4	95.8
Urban population	79.4	45.4*	59.6*	179.8
Total population	289.4	80.4*	136.0*	275.6
Number of rural settlements	c. 1000	522	–	103
Number of towns	2	6	6	7**
Number of urban settlements	0	3	3	4

* Excluding the population of Zelenogorsk (former Terijoki), which was incorporated in Leningrad (St. Petersburg), along with nearby settlements.

** Including Zelenogorsk, which now is part of the Kurortnyi *rayon* of St. Petersburg.

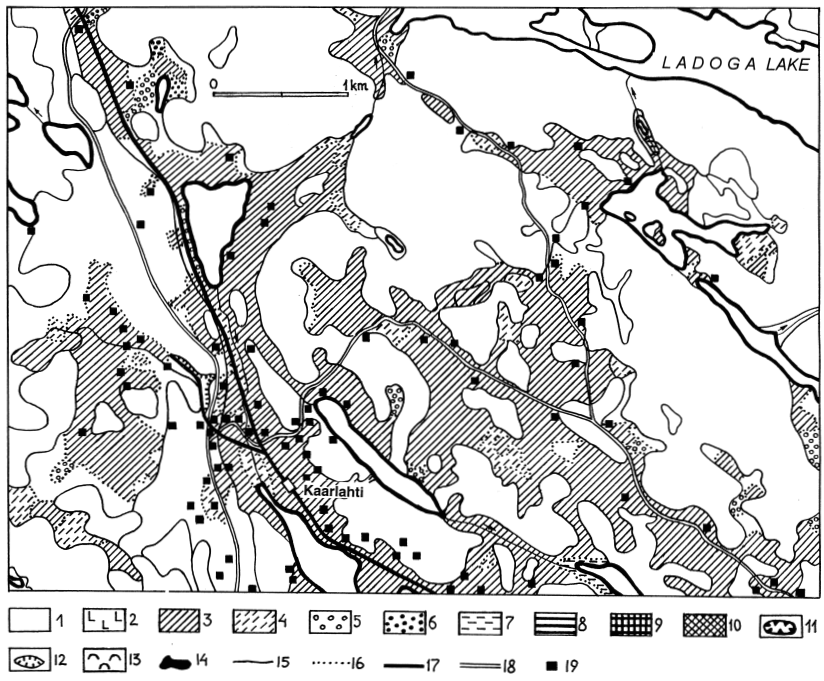

Fig. 1. The landscape of the northwestern Ladoga coast near Kaarlahti in 1939: (1) Forest, open woodlands, non-drained peat bogs; (2) Fire sites and clearings (predominantly on granite hills); (3) Meadows and arable lands (predominantly on limnetic terraces); (4) First stage of meadows overgrowing; (5) Second stage of meadows overgrowing; (6) Third stage of meadows overgrowing (small-leaved forest); (7) Paludification of meadows; (8) Artificially stimulated peat overgrowth; (9) Stone industrial development; (10) Stone residential development. Anthropogenic sites: (11) Granite quarries; (12) Sand pits; (13) Dumps (overgrowing parts are indicated by point hatching); (14) Artificial reservoirs. Borders (15) of landscape sites; (16) of vegetation units. (17) Railways; (18) Main roads; (19) Houses.

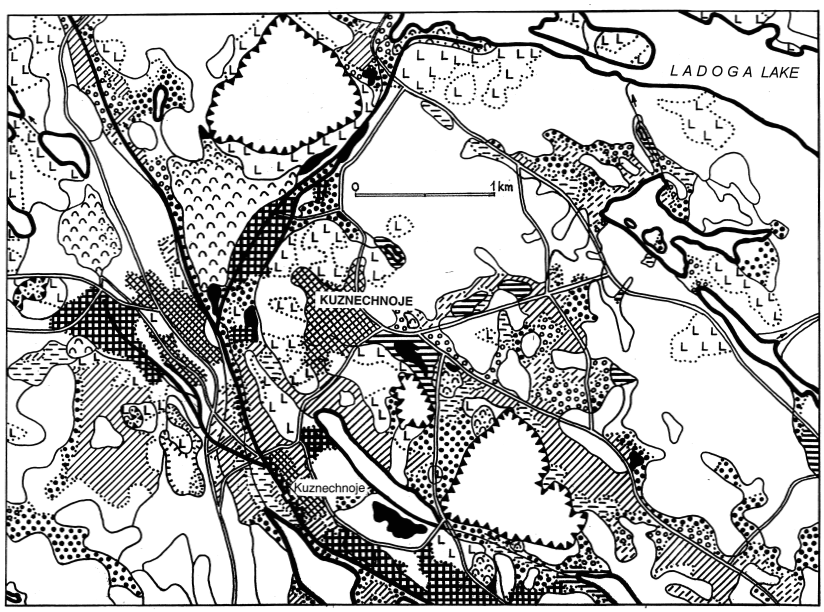

Fig. 2. The landscape of the northwestern Ladoga coast near Kuznechnoye (former Kaarlahti) at the end of the 1980s. Legend as in Fig. 1.

During the Soviet period the forestry of Vyborg Karelia was greatly changed. Approximately 80% of the forest-covered area had been included in the first group, where industrial tree cutting was strictly forbidden. The forest estimate depended on the priority given to recreation. The reforestation of areas subjected to cutting and fires during the war was carried out. A system of fire prevention using aeroplanes has been developed. In the near surrounds of Leningrad several recreational

forest parks (*lesopark*) have been established. As a result, total forest cover in Vyborg Karelia increased and reached 60–65% by the beginning of the 1990s; in certain areas it approached 80%. The increase of forest area is due to forest regeneration in abandoned arable lands; the percentage of the loss of cultivated land is estimated in different parts of the region to be from 30 to 60%.

The establishment of a regime of forest protection on the Karelian Isthmus has been instrumental in the active manifestation of natural dynamic trends in forest vegetation. Thus, forest regeneration, stimulated by the wartime fires, has now resulted in a predominance of 40–50 year pine stands on broad areas of sandy plain. In the absence of fire and in conjunction with pine, spruce regenerates most actively, subsequently supplanting the pine in timber stand. In consequence of this process, the share of spruce forest in the total forest-covered area of the Karelian Isthmus increased from 21% in 1948 to 29% in 1983 and actually continues to rise. The share of the pine woods, on the other hand, fell from 63 to 51% during the same period. The presence of alder groves has been somewhat greater in recent decades due to forest growth on abandoned fields and meadows.

Bog drainage has also been a significant factor in landscape change in Vyborg Karelia after 1944. By the end of the 1980s, the total area of drained bogs and mires (completely or partially) had extended to about 75 km^2. Whereas the main goal of bog drainage before 1940 had been the enlargement of agricultural area, drained bogs and mires were mainly intended for forest growth and peat excavation during the Soviet period.

The current aspect of the Vyborg Karelia landscape cannot be visualized without a great number of granite quarries and sand pits. Using topographic maps of the territory (issued in the 1970s), we counted more than 30 operating open pits within a square of over 10 hectares each. Only few of them were inherited from the Finnish period, but were subsequently extended (e.g. Kavantsaari and Antrea to the northeast of Vyborg). Every large quarry or sand pit with its attendant dumps, precipitation tanks, logistical roads, and crusher enterprises modifies irreversibly and unrecognizably the nearby landscape to the several square kilometres or even more (see Figs. 1 and 2).

Without exaggeration, we can determine recreation as being the prevailing function of Vyborg Karelia over the last 50 years. In 1946 a governmental decision concerning the creation of a health-resort zone around Leningrad was issued. At the beginning of the 1960s the total area of this zone was approximately 150 km^2, thus transforming the region into one of the largest recreational territories of USSR-wide significance. The health-resort zone included in particular the coastal area of the Gulf of Finland between Solnechnoje (former Ollila) and Smolyachkovo (Lautaranta), i.e. the recreational core of the region at the end of 19th and the beginning of 20th centuries. One former settlement, Terijoki, was transformed into the town of Zelenogorsk, now the unofficial health-resort capital of the region.

The Soviet recreational development of Vyborg Karelia followed a fast pace and was not limited only to the Gulf of Finland coastal area. From the beginning of 1950s to the end of 1980s, the total number of recreational institutions had increased by more than 10 times. By the end of 1980s, there were 175 sanatoriums, rest homes, guest houses, tourist centres, 55 camps for hunting and fishing, and approximately 130 pioneer camps and summer kindergartens in Vyborg Karelia. Establishments, enterprises, and high schools preferred to construct their resort facilities directly in Vyborg Karelia. The shores of the Vuoksi and other large lakes in the Isthmus have become dotted with recreational institutions. Simultaneously hiking, skiing, boating and bicycle tourism have been actively promoted.

Along with the building of state recreational institutions (so-called organized recreation) from the beginning of 1950s, a great number of land plots have been allotted for individual dachas (especially for gardening). Since the 1970s a wave of townsfolk-gardeners has accompanied the flood of genuine leisure-seekers or tourists. The cultivation of individual gardens became compensation of a kind for the partial loss of the agricultural functions in the Karelian Isthmus. It is no exaggeration to say that for hundreds thousands of Leningrad (St. Petersburg) residents of the ages of 40–80, the older generation, the image of the area is intimately connected with their activity on the famed 600 square meters (the standard size of the individual land plot).

In the middle of 1990s, the total area of collective gardens along the Karelian Isthmus was estimated at about 200 km^2, including about 100 km^2 in Vyborg Karelia. The largest concentration of gardens, possessing an area of more than

5 km² each, is located near Roshchino (former Raivola), Gor'kovskoye (Mustamäki), and Sosnovo (Rautu). Over the summer period each large collective garden concentrates a population comparable to that of a small town. On the one hand, the cumulative effect of such collective gardening in the landscape results in the transformation of unproductive forest and bog sites into cultivated and drained lands, bringing about a change in the local hydrographic network. On the other hand, this mode of land use leads to the fragmentation of the landscape into numerous identical cells and, in general, an increases the monotony of the area.

Recreational needs on the Karelian Isthmus come into conflict with the goals of nature conservation. The network of protected areas is represented by six regional complex reserves (*zakaznik*), two hydrological reserves, one botanical reserve, one zoological reserve and eight natural monuments. Most of them are located in Vyborg Karelia, occupying less than 5% of its territory. The low status of the existing protected areas cannot provide any real control over activities carried out in their territory, and correspondingly to attain the goals of nature protection. It is notable that during the Soviet period not less than one third of Vyborg Karelia was included in the frontier zone, and thus limited access to this territory proved to be indirectly beneficial for natural landscape conservation.

Ideological influence on imagery

How have such essentially altered functions of the landscape influenced the imagery of Vyborg Karelia during the last half of the 20th century? Undoubtedly, influences until to the beginning of 1990s were brought about under greatest pressure from Soviet Communist ideology. These main points of ideological pressure concerning landscape imagery formation should be noted:

1) Inculcation of the idea of Vyborg Karelia as primordial Russian countryside. Of course, the ancient settlement of the region by Karelians was acknowledged, but in so doing the peaceful coexistence of Karelians and Slavic people (not always supported by historical data) was nonetheless strongly underlined. Vyborg, founded by the Swedes in 1293, and Priozersk (former Korela, Kexholm, Käkisalmi – also was established by the Swedes, soon to be taken over by Novgorodians) were regarded as "ancient Russian towns".

The role of Sweden in the development of the Karelian Isthmus was at least briefly covered by popular publications, but the Finnish past of Vyborg Karelia was passed over in silence, particularly concerning the events of the 20th century. For example, the texts of certain popular books and brochures did not even make it clear with whom the USSR was at war with on the Karelian Isthmus in the years 1939–1940 and 1941–1944. Such vagueness was clearly dictated by the special character of post-war Soviet-Finnish relations.

The impact of geographical names on the imagery of the territory is difficult to overestimate. From 1948 to the middle of 1950s the total transformation of the toponymy of Vyborg Karelia was completed. Its aim was to eradicate the Finnish provenance of the names of settlements, rivers, lakes, bays and even bogs and mires. Only about ten Finnish names of railway stations have survived (Kanneljärvi, Myllypelto among others).

The new geographic names in Vyborg Karelia belong to three main categories: 1) in memory of soldiers and officers of Soviet Army killed on the Karelian Isthmus during 1941–1944: Simagino (former Joutselkä), Larionovo (Norsjoki), Tsvelodubovo (Kauko-Lempiälä) etc.; 2) ideologically coloured names: Lake Komsomolskoje (former Kiimajärvi), Lake Pionerskoje (Kuolemajärvi), Leninskoje (Haapala) etc.; and 3) neutral "landscape" names such as Berezovo (former Pukinniemi, from Russian *bereza* – birch), Lugovoje (Saapro, from Russian *lug* – meadow), Ozerki (Seivästö, from Russian *ozerko* – little lake) etc. It is interesting to note that many toponyms of the third type present a calque from Finnish names: Sosnovyi Island on Lake Ladoga (former Mäntysaari, both meaning 'pine island'), Bolshoi Berezovyi, an island on the Gulf of Finland (Koivistonsaari, meaning 'birch island') and numerous others.

Such manipulations of geographic names, along with the absence of guardians of historical memory, the scarcity of reliable information concerning the history of the region and the falsification of the overview of certain periods, have enhanced the fairly easy inculcation of ideological clichés among the core of the present inhabitants of Vyborg Karelia and Leningrad residents as well. To a large extent the image of "a landscape without previous population and culture" was adopted, where only local peculiarities might be of interest. These notions were no obstacle to the pre-

dominantly recreational and touristic development of the territory. On the other hand, the preceding centuries-old experience of land cultivation was not only ignored but was employed to explain away "failures" in post-war agriculture along the Karelian Isthmus.

2) The sacralization of memorial sites of V. Lenin on the Karelian Isthmus. A section entitled "Lenin sites" was obligatory in all guidebooks concerning the region and, as a rule, was the prime subject of appropriate publications. The places where Lenin "hid from the Bourgeois Provisional Government of Russia in 1917" (e.g. Jalkala near Terijoki, present Iljitchevo) were in the 1960s–1970s transformed into monumental memorial ensembles with exhibition pavilions, conference-halls, bus parks etc. Such hypertrophied accentuation of "Lenin's sites, dear to all progressive mankind" (a typical cliché from Soviet publications of 1960s–1980s) determines the overall perversion of the cultural heritage of the Karelian Isthmus, and Vyborg Karelia in particular. Places connected with Finnish figures (writers, artists, composers etc.) practically remained without mention.

3) The creation of a virtual sphere of USSR-wide health resorts replete with the propaganda of the Communist Party's care of the Soviet working people's health. Thus, pictures of newly constructed sanatoria and guest houses, happy health-resort visitors, tourists with backpacks and kayaks figured prominently in the publications from the end of the 1950s to the 1970s.

4) The promotion of Soviet economic achievements in the region, especially those of reorganized socialist agriculture. The itineraries of the 1950s–1960s abound with recommendations to visit collective and Soviet farms (*kolkhoz* and *sovkhoz*), fur farms, machine and tractor stations, new hydroelectric power stations, plants and factories. Every adjustment to Communist Party policy was peculiarly reflected. For example, a guidebook edited in 1962 (Ippo et al. 1962), focuses much attention on the cultivation of maize (!) in the sovkhoz fields of the Karelian Isthmus. The idea of maize growing in every region of the USSR was advocated by Nikita Khrushchev, the Soviet leader in 1953–1964. Since the 1970s, however, descriptions of subjects of this kind have occupied an increasingly modest position due to their lack of attractiveness.

Dominant images and their correlation with the actual landscape

Now we can point out the outstanding elements of landscape, employing the image of the landscape of Vyborg Karelia of the 1950s–1980s, based in the analysis of the appropriate texts and recent toponyms of the area. The majority of epithets are related to forest, indicating its prime role in the actual landscape: "enormous", "stretching to the horizon", "evergreen", "dark-green necklace", "picturesque", "majestic", "sublime", "mighty", "powerful", "dense", "thick", "difficult to traverse", "venerable" (age-old), "primordial", "virgin", "severe", "thoughtful", "misty", "wonderful". The most mentioned tree is pine: "powerful pines", "gigantic pines", "rustle of pines". Spruce, birch and larch (the latter is artificially grown) appear in texts much more rarely, and aspen and alder are almost never mentioned.

No less important place in the creation of the landscape imagery belongs seemingly to the features of inland lakes of the Isthmus: "extremely picturesque"; "blue spots"; "light, quiet wood lakes"; "mirror-like, calm surface of boundless lakes"; "endless extent of lakes"; "small but very beautiful lakes"; "Lake Krasavitsa" (means "beauty", there are several expressions for such toponyms); "countless islands and islets"; "labyrinths of islands"; "chains of islands"; "woody islands"; "rocky islands"; "little bays overgrown by tender-green reeds". Such integrated definitions such as "the land of lakes" and "land of blue lakes" appear very often. The coasts of Lake Ladoga, which is the largest lake in Europe, are depicted in a more severe tone: "long and narrow bays (gulfs), resembling Norwegian fjords"; "granite cliffs"; "coasts, reared over by granite hills"; "sheer walls". The shore of the Gulf of Finland is described as a contrast to the Lake Ladoga coast: "sea surf", "sparkling surface", "Laskovyi ('caressing') beach". The texts pay attention to other bodies of water, mainly rivers and streams: "impetuous", "quick", "vigorous", "dodging in stony river-beds", "thundering", "whimsically twisting", "quiet-water", "green tunnels", finally – "the beauty of Vuoksi".

The climate of the Karelian Isthmus is characterized as being "mild", "salubrious" or "temperate". The air is "wonderfully clear" or "saturated with the aroma of warmed pine pitch".

Among the different forms of relief most often are named hills, valleys, narrow and steep river

and lake shores, terraces, crests, rocky ridges, steep granite rocks, granite islands, stony or sandy cliffs, corridors made from granite rocks, enormous granite massifs, conglomerations of granite. Such geomorphological terms as kames and eskers are also used. It is notable that bedrocks are cited only as the crystalline rocks of the Baltic shield along with sand. The terms "clayey and loamy lacustrine terraces" (which is a "gold reserve" of agricultural land on the Isthmus) are practically absent. Glacial boulders, a very important landscape element, are always depicted as "enormous"; "as though thrown about by somebody's huge hand"; "covered with moss", "of whimsical forms".

As to the works of man, the most varied set of images was specific to the town of Zelenogorsk (former Terijoki, at present a district of St. Petersburg): "garden-town", "northern health-resort", "Northern Riviera" (also the name of a guest house).

Considering the correlation between the above-listed definitions (epithets) and the real (objectively observed) features of landscape, it should be remembered that the quoted features, as a rule, do not bear epithets of negative value, expressing unattractive aspects of the described landscape. Nevertheless we cannot ignore the influence of information of this kind on the "image array" available to the general public.

For understandable reasons, guidebooks and itineraries do not concern themselves with landscapes generally considered unattractive or desolate, such as bogs and wooded peatlands, which occupy more than one third of the area of the Isthmus. Agricultural lands (fields, meadows, pastures) that take up more than 10% of the territory, would be mentioned only as featureless "*kolkhoz* (*sovkhoz*) fields".

As to their stand composition, the imagery of forests of the Karelian Isthmus, while reflecting correctly the actual dominance of pine, nevertheless can distort the total picture. The foregoing indicates the increase in area covered by spruce taiga forest, along with its proper features: gloominess, high moisture content, poverty of plant composition etc. At the same time the Karelian Isthmus has a large coverage of small-leaved woods (mainly consisting of birch and aspen), occupying about 20% of the forest area. This proportion may rise due to the overgrowth of desolate fields and meadows.

With regard to the "virginity" of the "age-old" woods of Vyborg Karelia, the forest inventory data of 1983 expressively demonstrates that the total area of woods with a median age over 180 years on the Karelian Isthmus can in measured by tens of hectares. Could, however, the "primordial taiga" (more precisely, the term *taiga* is not even mentioned in the itineraries) be maintained on the Isthmus if its forest area was reduced to a minimum by 1939, while protected woods were not in existence? At the moment, the region is characterized by the dominance of stands of post-war generations, i.e. 50–60 years old.

According to the research data (Table 3), respectively 71% to 72% of the respondents estimate that forest and particularly pinewoods to be the "most expressive features" of the Karelian Isthmus, 20% of respondents affirm the same with respect to spruce forest, and only 3% distinguish birch woods. As to the agricultural peculiarities of the Isthmus, 83% of respondents regard them as insignificant or not even present. Hence, such above-cited traits of the Karelian Isthmus landscape perceived by Peterburgians in 2000 do not very much differ from the image created by the itineraries of the 1950s–1980s.

Table 3. The results of a survey of the residents of St. Petersburg regarding their perception of the Karelian Isthmus (2000), % of the total number of respondents (50).

Qualities (features) of the Karelian Isthmus	Degree of expression (prevalence in the territory)			
	High	Moderate	Weak	Absent
Forest coverage	71	29	0	0
Agricultural land	2	15	66	17
Pine wood	72	26	2	0
Spruce wood	20	46	32	2
Birch wood	3	34	56	7
Collective gardening	37	51	7	5

The present imagery perhaps most adequately reflects the abundance of lakes on the Isthmus. In this case, however, an enormous number of lakes with inaccessible shorelines, surrounded by floating bog, will be passed over in silence. Interestingly enough, the descriptions of tourist routes generally concern the great physical-geographic border between the Baltic crystalline shield (or Fennoscandia) and the East European (Russian) plain; this border divides the Isthmus into the rocky and sandy parts respectively.

Such graphic representations of the post-war landscape of the Karelian Isthmus generally correspond to its textual images. The above-cited guidebook (Ippo et al. 1962) has ten graphic illuminations, seven of which present "pristine nature" (with tourists and children in two illustrations). Only three pictures contain clear evidence of human activity: Vyborg castle, a house in a forest and a road with a car. Similar relationships between illustrations are characteristic of other tourist outlines of the Isthmus edited in the 1960s and 1970. Besides the predominant "natural" views (usually with tourists), there are the monuments of Vyborg and Priozersk, *Penaty* (the estate of the Russian artist Ilya Repin in former Kuokkala) and the pier at Vuoksi.

By such means and owing to mass recreation, the "romantic-touristic" image of Vyborg Karelia as a "realm of sandy plains, rocky hills, thousands of lakes and pine woods between the Gulf of Finland and Lake Ladoga" has been formed over the last 50 years. At present the landscape that can be represented by such an image takes up no more than half the area of the Isthmus. Moreover, traces of human activity can be discovered everywhere: from the former meadows, now covered by dense forest, to the forest fire areas, caused by excursionists of the beginning of the 21st century.

We might even say that the post-war period was a time when the myth of primordiality (or virginity) of nature in Vyborg Karelia was created and promoted. The ideological background of this myth is quite evident: it allowed the denial of the cultural heritage of the "Finnish period" in the landscape thereby confirming the "Russian primordiality" of the territory.

The notions of the wilderness present in the Karelian Isthmus in particular might serve as the basis for the agenda of extremists of the Green Movement, and even certain biologists, who insist on making the greater part of the Isthmus into a nature preserve. It is agreed, by following such a mode of thought, that any economic development of the region is not only valueless, but also bad for the landscape.

The cultural icons of the Karelian Isthmus that were inherited from previous ages are not particularly numerous. Primarily there are Vyborg castle, the main stronghold of Swedes in the region until the beginning of 18th century, and the Monrepos landscape park, created on an island near Vyborg by the Duke of Württemberg and the Nikolai family – Germans active in Russian service. Finally, Repin's *Penaty* symbolize the affection felt by the Russian artistic intelligentsia towards the lonely coastline around the Gulf of Finland. This tradition was to some extent preserved in the Soviet period when in Repino, Komarovo (former Kellomäki), Zelenogorsk there appeared the summer cottages (*dachas*) of Leningrad cultural workers, and the "Academic settlement", guest houses for writers and composers. We should point out that the above-named cultural symbols are not strongly connected to Finnish history proper. Not one of the Finnish churches (some ten of which are still preserved, chiefly the most representative ones) was incorporated into the current imagery of Vyborg Karelia due to the reasons cited above.

The post-war mythology of Vyborg Karelia perhaps received the greatest input from tourists, fishers and mushroom-pickers, penetrating into the most desolate places and generally having quite wild ideas about local history. When coming across numerous building foundations, made from big granite blocks, quite often in the middle of the forest, travellers used to take them for the "remnants of the Mannerheim line". The figure of the Marshal of Finland and former general in the Russian army embodied for them all military and political figures of Finland before 1945. "Mannerheim's dachas" appeared here and there. A large selection of prominent "Finnish" constructions were reckoned to be in this category (in fact Mannerheim never had his own villa in Vyborg Karelia).

"Finnish origin" was even attributed to buildings that were newly constructed during the post-war years. For example, one long wooden house, built in the 1950s in the area of the field study station of St. Petersburg University (near Kuznechnoje, former Kaarlahti), was believed to be a "Finnish spy school" by the local people. Over the past decade, Finns – natives of Vyborg Kare-

lia before 1944 – have had the opportunity to visit their birthplaces and to contact present-day inhabitants, among whom were those who actively developed highly mythologized views relating to the " happy life of Finns before the war". Accordingly, such myth creation might be considered for a variety of "lost history".

Tourists and other categories of travellers played the role of discoverers of Vyborg Karelia during the Soviet period. This rediscovery of the region by inhabitants of Leningrad – St. Petersburg (and visitors from other parts of the USSR as well) had a more mass popular character than it did at the end of the 19th and the beginning of 20th century. One of its results, apart from the above-mention, has been an entire system of "tourist toponymy" which does not agree at all with official geographic names (i.e. those indicated on the topographic maps): the Cape of Friendship on Lake Balakhanovskoe (former Torhonjärvi), numerous Bays of Tourists, Forgotten Lake, Cheery River, etc. The toponymical establishment of a new imagery of the Karelian Isthmus thus took shape.

Tourism and recreation in the region have continuously evolved through the post-war decades. The tourists of the 1950s, on foot, skiing and in boats, "explored" Vyborg Karelia as exotic mysterious ruins, left by previous inhabitants of the country, with overgrown roads and place-names in a misunderstood language – in addition to freely abounding in closed areas. In the 1960s and 1970s kayaking and bicycle tourism became very popular, more and more private cars appeared on the roads, and the Karelian Isthmus (except the frontier zone) began to be considered as a "home training ground" for tourist-debutants.

By the end of the 1980s, with the construction of numerous rest houses, the improvement of roads, the organizing of bus traffic, and a certain facilitation of access to the frontier zone, the extent of recreational development of the territory had been raised to its maximum. In many popular places along the main railway lines, Leningrad–Vyborg and Leningrad–Priozersk, the recreational digression of the landscape has been appreciable. On the other hand, among "serious" tourists the Isthmus was not really highly regarded, and it was usually seen as a place for country walks and picnics. This recreational stereotype was in particular expressed in a well-known song of the 1980s with the words: " I'll go to Komarovo for a week…". At the same time, other kinds of sport connected with nature have been developed on the Isthmus, all with their non-official centres: slalom (Toksovo–Kavgolovo, Korobitsino, Jukki–Mistolovo), rock-climbing (Lake Jastrebinoje near the border with Republic of Karelia), water slalom (the Losevskaja stream, former Kiviniemi), and snowboarding (Orehovo–Sosnovo) etc.

New tendencies in the post-Soviet period

The post-Soviet development of the Karelian Isthmus is extremely contradictory, and even conflicting. The significant change in the geopolitical situation of Russia after the collapse of the USSR caused a need for new seaports on the Gulf of Finland. One of these ports, devoted to oil and oil products exports was taken into use in 2001 near Primorsk (former Koivisto). This new seaport is connected to the centres of oil extraction and oil processing by a pipeline, traversing the Karelian Isthmus (the so-called BTS, or Baltic pipeline system). The construction of this project and other schemes of creating new communications through the Isthmus not only affect the interests of different stakeholders and land-users in the territory, but also open up serious economic contradictions between the Leningrad *oblast* and St. Petersburg.

Moreover, new port and BTS construction is being seriously attacked by the Greens and other adherents of nature conservation. Since the latter half of the 1980s, with the growth and strengthening of the environmental movement in the post-Communist USSR and Russia, the imagery of the Karelian Isthmus has been penetrated by environmental notions of its serving as a kind of "lungs of St. Petersburg". Stark images of Lake Ladoga perishing from water pollution, and the Gulf of Finland being lost due to the "Leningrad dam" were being actively inculcated into mass consciousness.

The other process transforming the landscape of the Karelian Isthmus over the last 10–15 years is the secondary development of abandoned villages and arable lands, termed the *reconquista* (Isachenko 1997). Since the end of 1980s, mass building of country cottages has spread everywhere over the area. As a rule, the new cottage settlements occupy the sites of desolated villages and nearby fields and meadows. The appearance of these cottages and especially the scale of re-

lated investments serve to form an enduring image of a "New Russians settlement". It is notable that this form of settlement is temporary (generally over the summer period) and, what is important, it hardly involves inheriting the agricultural functions of the landscape. In view of this background, the landscape input of such newly created farms, following, within certain limits, from the land-use system of the "Finnish period" has thus far remained quite modest.

Due to the post-Soviet economic crisis, the Karelian Isthmus almost lost its function as a "USSR-wide" or All-Russian health resort area. The recreational use of the territory, nevertheless, does actively continue, being transferred from the state sphere to the private sector. For practical purposes, hiking is no longer seen. Total motorization of the population and the opening up of formerly closed areas (military sites, sections of frontier zones etc.) have made the region almost completely penetrable.

Under post-Soviet conditions, the system of forest preservation (see above) does not function in any full measure. Moreover, certain large forest areas were officially excluded from the most protected premier group. The operation of numerous temporal forest companies in the absence of any effective state control of felling provokes serious damage to the forests of the region. Nowadays, every visitor to the forest of the Isthmus has a chance to see quite recent open clearings (i.e. under the rubric of "landscape clearings").

However, despite clearly increasing press reports of anthropogenic impact on the landscape, it will be a long way to the utter demolition of the image of primordial nature firmly imprinted in the minds of generations of tourists and leisure-seekers. It seems that for a long period the natural priorities in perceptions of the area will dominate the cultural values. Nevertheless, the first signs of animation or historical memory have now appeared. We mean here the publication of Russian periodicals referring to the forgotten past of Vyborg Karelia, the publishing of guidebooks, reconstructing the lacunae of the history of the "Finnish period" (Balashov 1996–2002), above all the activities of local heritage societies and associations. These processes are not at all one-sided because of the opportunity for contact with Finns were born in Vyborg Karelia, or who are now actively investigating its history. It is not out of passing interest that a survey of the residents of St. Petersburg (in 2000) showed that 66% of respondents regard the Karelian Isthmus to be "cultivated" (lived-in) rather than a "wild" area, but only 49% think that the Isthmus "has been settled since ancient times".

The fall of the Iron Curtain has provided for the transformation of the Russian-Finnish border from semi-penetrated (i.e. penetrated mainly by Finnish citizens) to being accessible from both sides. Now a weekend trip to Lappeenranta or Helsinki is not such an outstanding event for an average Petersburgian. These circumstances together with geopolitical changes – the narrowing of the Russian "Window to Europe" and Finland joining the EU – make for the creation of a new image of the Karelian Isthmus. Many residents of St. Petersburg and other big cities of Russia now perceive the Isthmus as a bridge between St. Petersburg and Finland, and the shortest land route from both Russian capitals to the EU countries.

Using the new "Scandinavia" motorway, one can traverse the Isthmus from St. Petersburg to the Finnish border at Torfyanovka or Brusnichnoye in two hours. Taking into consideration that the north-western margin of present-day "Greater St. Petersburg" has penetrated into Vyborg Karelia for a distance of more than 30 km (now reaching former Lautaranta), the sense of crossing a bridge will be scarcely noticeable in the near future.

Concluding remarks

We have thus followed the correlation between functions of the landscape of the Karelian Isthmus over the period after 1944, its dynamic under different human influences and the dominant (enduring) images of the territory. It was established that while conserving several stable dominant perceptions, the images of the region have radically changed over the last 50 years. Accordingly, essential substitution of regional imagery was influenced by:

1) Change in landscape functions and land-use systems;
2) The lack of a historical memory of landscape of the past possessed by the present population of Vyborg Karelia;
3) The strong ideologization of landscape perception during the Soviet period (up until the middle of the 1980s).

The previous integral image, dominating up to now, principally embodied a recreational model of territorial development and is not quite ade-

quate for the present state of the landscape. In the near future, as the inertial pressure of the previous ideological toolbox is decreased, the array of landscape images should become more complex, and even more contradictory. These processes will be stressed in the post-Soviet development of the region, including the conflicts of interests between different kinds of stakeholders and land users as well as the revival of historical memory through the elimination of lacunae in the history of the Karelian Isthmus. Finally, the extension of the transition function of the Isthmus serving as a bridge between Russia and the European Union should play a key role in the future development of the territory and its imagery.

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