

# Integration, Multinational Estonia and Estonian-Language Press. Soviet-Time Immigrants in Newspaper *Edasi/Postimees* in 1988–2000

Riina Reinvelt

In September 2000 my attention was attracted by the headlines on the front page of the newspaper *Eesti Päevaleht* saying “Estonians Want Aliens Leave”.<sup>1</sup> I became interested in how the press has treated the topic of aliens<sup>2</sup> since the Estonians’ national reawakening in the late 1980s. I decided to browse through the odd years’ issues (except for the first (1988) and last (2000) years, which are even) of the newspaper *Edasi/Postimees* beginning from 1988 and ending with the year 2000, viewing the articles with the eyes of the so-called ordinary newspaper reader. I looked through all the newspaper issues published during the aforementioned years. In all these years articles treating of the topic of non-Estonians had been published (in all, I read through 226 articles, although only few of them are quoted below). The material ranged from brief news items to voluminous articles covering a whole page. They had been written by both professional journalists and representatives of many other occupations who, due to their research topic, sphere of

<sup>1</sup> The article introduced the results of the survey conducted to the order of the Integration Foundation in March 2000. 1142 people and 46% of the respondents considered the leaving of immigrants as beneficial for Estonia. Although the estimation level of “usefulness” was, according to the survey data, very different and the survey also revealed that, for instance, 86.3% of Estonians consider it important that non-Estonians would feel as part of the Estonian people and state, the newspaper still picked out this particular (not the most positive) result to be highlighted (*Eesti Päevaleht* 11.9.2000, p. 1; Sikk 2000a: 4; 2000b: 4).

<sup>2</sup> Alien (in Estonian “*muulane*”) “other”, “the person from the other nationality”. Aliens in Estonia are the part of population group that developed as a result of the immigration to Soviet Estonia favoured by the Soviet Union. According to the population census data of 1989, Estonians constituted 61.5% and other ethnic groups – 38.5% of the population of Estonia. According to the population census data of 2000, the proportion of Estonians had increased to 67.8% and the proportion of other ethnic groups had decreased to 32.1%. Major ethnic groups were and still are Russians, Ukrainians, Belorussians and Finns ([www.stat.ee](http://www.stat.ee). 23.10.2002).

work or pure interest had thought about these matters and wanted to express their viewpoints

### **“Aliens”, “non-Estonians”, integration and Estonians**

On the following pages, through the newspaper *Edasi/Postimees*, we are going to talk about the people whose “center did not held”, as David D. Laitin has quite pertinently defined them (1998: IX). It is the people who, due to the dissolution of the Soviet Union, happened to start living in a new state, which was not different from the geographical, but political, social and cultural point of view.

Both in official, journalistic and oral statements of opinions, the terms aliens (including, perhaps, also non-Russian ethnic minorities), Russians, Russian-speaking population, Russian speakers, non-Estonians, Soviets, migrants, Ruses, illegals, occupants and non-citizens are used (see also Laitin 1998: 265–268). Alien is the word that the press seems to like more than anything else. Sometimes the terms Russians and Russian-speaking population, more seldom also non-Estonians are used, and other nations are practically not mentioned at all. Especially marked is the word “*tulnukad*” (in Estonian meaning alien creatures/extra-terrestrials), which is also sometimes found in the articles. In this particular case the proverb “A darling child has many names” does not hold true, as in Estonian public discourse the bearer of the name seems to play the role of a “dangerous, incapable and troublesome” rather than a “good” child.

The social and cultural merger into Estonian society of the immigrants “inherited” from the Soviet occupation period has become one of the most complicated problems in the Estonia with regained independence. In this connection the integration topic is among the most frequently treated ones, although quite often it is viewed as the immigrants’ integration into Estonian society, not as the need of Estonia and Estonians to integrate in their minds an understanding of Estonia as ethnically complex and multicultural state. If we view integration as a two-sided process, it should comprise knowledge of each other’s culture and mentality as well as understanding and tolerance towards some inevitable differences. In addition to personal contacts and experience, the Estonians’ vision and understanding of non-Estonians is also influenced by the media. To what extent does the media bring immigrants nearer to Estonians and try to make them understand the formers’ life and aspirations? In this respect the TV programme *Subboteja*, which is on the air on Saturday mornings, is very successful.

Its main ideology is as follows:

*Russian people are not opposed to the Estonian state and Estonians, ethnic conflicts are avoided, and the situation is not over-dramatised. The programme constantly introduces non-Estonians who live by a positive programme and, in their own way, are patriots of Estonia. The integration issue is prevalent in Subboteja, as, although the programme is in Russian, it is not concerned with Russian affairs. It takes care of common affairs* (Pettai 1999: 7).

What is the contribution of the press to bringing these two big communities<sup>3</sup> residing in Estonia closer to each other? What does the press make look like the people who immigrated to Estonia during the Soviet time and who now constitute about a third of the population of Estonia? Most of us read or at least browse through papers every day, glancing at the headlines. More often than not, we do not think about which different persons, groups or topics have found treatment in this particular paper and which have not. And we are far from contemplating about it throughout a week, month or year; neither do we pay attention to the fact what tonality is used when speaking about different topics in such a long perspective. However, we should do it from time to time, and at closer look our discoveries might be quite surprising.

Beginning from the mid-1990s, mainly sociologists, media researchers, and, to a smaller extent, also psychologists, started researches into the social and psychological processes related to the adaptation of non-Estonians.<sup>4</sup> While analysing both Estonian and Russian-language newspapers, the perspectives of public opinion and integration have been studied (see, e.g., Jakobson 1997; Raudsepp 1997). Maaris Raudsepp says, “in conclusion, the press reflects rather a low readiness for integration in Estonian society” (1997: 169). This conclusion was drawn in 1997 (the press under study dating from the years 1991–

<sup>3</sup> The notion of “community” is rather conventional here, as one community comprises those who at the population census determined themselves as Estonians, and the other – those who regarded themselves as belonging to any other ethnic group. In real life these borders are not so clear at all. A person who is Russian, Ukrainian, Finn, etc. by their nationality, can belong to the Estonian community by their circle of friends and acquaintances. The same way, an Estonian by nationality can belong to the Russian community; for instance, ethnic Estonians who live in Narva and do not speak Estonian, due to this fact, communicate more with other ethnic groups in Narva.

<sup>4</sup> See, e.g., *Vene noored Eestis: sotsioloogiline mosaik* (Russian Youth in Estonia: Sociological Mosaic), compiled by Priit Järve, [Tallinn] 1997.

1995), but has anything changed in this respect by now?

The aim of this article is to analyse what topics are discussed in connection with immigrants and what the non-Estonian part of population looks like through these articles to the readers of Estonian-language newspapers, or, in other words, how has the press succeeded in integrating Estonians into the ethnically diverse Estonia? While reading the articles published in the selected years' issues of the newspaper *Edasi/Postimees*, the objective was not to divide them into certain groups (e.g., with positive, negative, neutral undertone). This was a qualitative approach, i.e., reading was started with the year 1988 and carried on from this point. In the course of reading the main key words emerged, which also served as the basis for this article. This kind of approach can also be viewed as the researcher's subjectiveness, yet in this case it was the aim to assume the role of an ordinary newspaper reader, who is subjectively rather than objectively minded.

### **Year 1988 – prologue**

In 1987 and even more in 1988 the public discussion in Estonia started to claim that the Estonian nation had changed a lot during the last 50 years and that for the native people the change had occurred in a destructive manner. The Estonians feared becoming a minority in their own land (Reinvelt 2002: 240). The problem of bilingualism was also getting more and more acute – the advance of the Russian language both at everyday level due to the continuous growth of the Russian-speaking population and also due to the official policy, which introduced more and more Russian as an official language used in government offices. The press started to publish more and more articles, which, at first, discussed the issue of language and the continuing immigration rather modestly, but with years passing, became angrier and more heated.

The first articles asked, in a rather friendly way, the Russians and migrants (both terms are taken from the then press) about their thoughts and wanted to know about their opinions and viewpoints.

*If I were a Russian residing in Estonia, I would probably not understand at all the so-called problem of bilingualism, which has caused/is causing such a heated discussion among Estonians. Why should I be able to speak Estonian? Yet, as I am an Estonian and only (in my thoughts) a self-proclaimed Russian and, as we know, we have perestroika now, which mainly means glasnost, I would very much like to*

*know about the real thoughts of a real Russian, my mate in Estonia, who cannot speak Estonian and who will not learn it, either (Raudver 1988: 3).*

The year 1988 differs from the following ones by the fact that also articles written by Russians were published, where they presented their viewpoints, which mainly justified their immigration, living in Estonia and not learning the language. Although these statements were carried by the Soviet rhetoric and mostly conveyed the message “*davaite zhit druzhno*” (let’s live in friendship), they represented the viewpoints and opinions of the “other side” or, at least pointed to the participating existence of “the other side”, i.e., a kind of discussion was going on.

*My parents told me that somewhere there is Estonia, which is not ravaged by war. So I came to live in Tartu, but today some people here call me insultingly and unfairly an immigrant. A person who has settled down in a foreign country forever. I think that I live in my multinational Soviet state side by side with Estonians, Latvians, Ukrainians and Kazakhs. I do not consider nationality as an important factor in evaluation a person. /—/ We, non-Estonians, are accused of eating the Estonians’ pasture bare, being lazier at work, polluting the nature, and so on. Even Stalinism is blamed down to Russians, bashfully ignoring the fact that no other nation lost as many of its sons as Russia. /—/ I keep thinking of who these people are that are so eager to start a quarrel between us. /—/ I really hope that the common sense of the inhabitants of Tartu will gain the upper hand and the group of people who are of a different opinion today will remain without support (Ivanov 1988: 4).*

The idea of an expected remigration<sup>5</sup> was also voiced for the first time, which accompanied the topic of non-Estonians throughout the whole decade and has not really faded until now.

<sup>5</sup>Nearly all political groupings have considered it necessary to diminish the ethnic heterogeneity of Estonian society. Differences have occurred only in the choice of strategy. In Estonia national-conservative viewpoints oriented to the “happy past” have been prevalent in shaping the official national policy. Their basic idea was to decrease national diversities purely physically, mainly by favouring the re-migration of the immigrants, and when this did not yield the expected results, high barriers were set for getting citizenship or some other ways were found to hinder them from entering Estonian official society (Hallik 1997: 102).

*Sociological surveys have shown that 47% of the local non-Estonians do not actually care where they live. Let us then create possibilities for them to live and work where their work and they themselves are actually more needed than here, where they have their inherent cultural and linguistic environment and where no negative emotions arise when they arrive. We have to achieve a negative migration balance by helping to create better work and living conditions for people at the places from where too many of them have emigrated. This kind of remigration would certainly cost us something and our living standard could even fall temporarily, yet I believe that we would be ready for that, if only eventually we could be masters in our own land (Kaplinski 1988: 3).*

The idea of remigration was carried by the initial euphoria of freedom and the attempts to restore the nation state similarly to the one that had existed before 1940.<sup>6</sup> The Estonians' hopes were placed on massive remigration and due to these expectations the matter-of-fact and constructive discussion on alien policy was given up by both the press and the wielders of power (see, e.g., Hallik 1997: 101–111). Unfortunately, the time has shown that the remigration of the Soviet-time immigrants to their former homeland has been carried out with difficulty. The population census data reveal that beginning from the time when the remigration idea was formed and started to be propagated, the proportion of non-Estonians in the population of Estonia has decreased only by 6%.

Side by side with the rise of national awakening and the gradually increasing freedom of speech in the late 1988 and early 1989 writings became less and less tolerant and more and more demanding.

*The majority of them are rootless people without a homeland, who are used to GETTING, DEMANDING, BEING PREFERRED at any cost and at any price. The government of the Estonian SSR should be bold enough to categorically oppose to this coercive migration (Weidebaum 1988: 4).*

*Examples of cultural genocide are not difficult to find. Here we could mention, for example, the fact that Russians are the only nation in the Soviet Union who, by fair means or foul, demand that they should be*

<sup>6</sup> The 1934 census showed that Estonians formed 88.2% of the population. The annexation of Estonia by the USSR – and WW II – had a disastrous effect on the population (*The Baltic...* 1991: 15).

*addressed only in their own language, not acknowledging any other's right to life* (Lõhmus 1989: 4).

In spite of the fact that the size of the population group who do not determine themselves as Estonians, remains almost of the same size in Estonia, the Estonian press is gradually losing deep interest in them and the articles on non-Estonians deal with practically anything but concrete individuals and lives; they are rather dealt with as a mob without individuals with different viewpoints, attitudes or aspirations. Also articles written by non-Estonians themselves disappear from the press, which in its turn brings along the disappearance of public discussion between the two communities. Both sides hold debates on their own and inside their own groups. Maaris Raudsepp has analysed both the Estonians and Russian-language press in the years 1991–1995 and reached the conclusion that “two separate media worlds seem to be existing side by side, who do not share a language, neither in direct nor in indirect meaning. Rejecting withdrawal is more characteristic of the Estonian-language press, which tends to either ignore the non-Estonians’ everyday problems, express paternal attitude towards them (attributing certain belonging or features to them) or find justification for the official policy carried out with regard to non-Estonians. The Russian-language press is rather trying to distance themselves from the authorities, often resorting to irony as a self-defence. Yet, they are more open to the translations and commentaries from the Estonian-language sources. /—/ The predominant position is the distrustful observation of the other community from afar, rather avoiding direct contacts” (Raudsepp 1997: 168–169). So, either of the communities lives on their own in their “own” language space. Only at the very end of the decade, with some profiles published of non-Estonians, their thoughts and opinions appear again in the Estonian-language press.

### **Hostile and dangerous**

During the first half of the decade the press quite often depicted the non-Estonians as a dangerous mob, which were hostilely minded towards Estonia. As the media has quite a strong influence on people’s opinions, in March 1996, for instance, only a third of the questioned Estonians considered Russians as totally trustworthy towards the Republic of Estonia (Kirch, Kirch, Tuisk 1997: 58). When the rally of a few hundred Russian pensioners made the front pages of newspapers, Estonian readers might have developed the feeling that “my Estonia is

in danger and it is caused by Russians”.

*Those making speeches [at the rally] claimed to have been living in Estonia for 15, 30, or 45 years, or were born here and could even speak Estonian. They have neither the wish nor the opportunity to leave Estonia, but they wish to have the same rights as those granted to Estonians. /—/ The Estonian nation is said to have formed only a hundred years ago – Estonians themselves are said to have testified to that as well –, and this does not give them the right to feel superior to the ancient Russian nation, whose representatives live here for the second generation and who therefore cannot be called real Russians any more. As Russians are not granted the same kind of right to self-determination as Estonians, a cold war is going on at present, and, sooner or later, it would turn into a hot war (Sarv 1991: 2).*

The non-Estonians' yearning for the lost Soviet Union was also much emphasised in the press until the mid-1990s. This could also be interpreted as a counter-Estonians' act, as at the same time Estonians were eager to shake off the remnants of the Soviet time from themselves and their state. For instance, the headlines in the newspaper *Postimees* on May 3, 1993, saying “May 1 Celebrated with Rally in Kohtla-Järve and Narva”, immediately brought forth a connection with the Soviet time May and October demonstrations. Actually the article included information about the fact that people protested against the poor social and economic situation in North-East Estonia. Or, another example from the year 1997, that is four years later, when a headline said, “Victory Day Gathers Veterans on Tõnismäe”.

*Yesterday morning a few hundred people gathered at the statue of the Bronze Soldier on Tõnismäe in Tallinn to celebrate the 52<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the end of the Great Patriotic War. Those who participated were mainly elderly people, however, some sturdy young men and several groups of children with red carnations were also moving around among them. /—/ One of the speakers said that the fight was not over yet, as the current situation was also extremely difficult. It was emphasised that on Victory Day those who had died for “our great homeland, the Soviet Union”, were remembered (Paet 1997b: 2).*

A press coverage of the Russian citizens participating in the elections of the Russian State Duma or the President held at the Russian Embassy in



Tallinn was published each time there was a reason for that. This left you with an impression that Estonian readers were reminded of the fact that actually the hearts of local Russians beat more in the rhythm of Russia and they were loyal rather to the latter than their place of residence, Estonia. The press did not care about the issue why people chose the Russian citizenship. The reasons were often connected with the rigid and strict citizenship policy in Estonia or also some practical considerations, as, for instance, people's wish to visit the relatives living in Russia, which was much easier and cheaper if you had Russian citizenship.

A great number of articles reflected life in North-East Estonia and mostly the biggest towns there – Narva, Sillamäe and Kohtla-Järve –, where the majority of the population is constituted by the Soviet-time immigrants or their descendants. Some headlines from the year 1993 say, “Trade Unions in Narva Threaten with General Strike and Civil Disobedience”, “Inhabitants of Narva Demand Special Status Again”, “When Will Visit to Narva Become Festival for Estonians”, “I Do Not Need Narva”, “Narva Still Worships Other Gods”.

Yet, there were also those who, from time to time, restrained Estonians and tried to treat things from the point of view of the so-called “ordinary” Russians. This kind of writings were usually published in the rubric of *Readers' Letters*, where usually no representatives of the press or authorities expressed their opinions.

*We do not know what Russians themselves think about it. We should not take seriously the former red functionaries who are eager to save the little power they still have and are trying to frighten people. Estonians possess the power of thinking and so do Russians (Vassar 1993: 6).*

### **Linguistically handicapped and culturally ignorant**

From the very beginning the most important topic in treating non-Estonians is the language issue, i.e., learning Estonian as the key to Estonian society. The language issue was raised repeatedly each year. In the late 1980s and early 1990s the articles mainly spoke about the necessity to explain to non-Estonians how important it was to learn Estonian.

*All the immigrants should be motivated to learn Estonian, they have to be explained why it is better to live in Estonia if you can speak Estonian, than if you cannot. /—/ The aliens should be explained that the*

*country where they arrived is Estonia, not Russia, that the reason why they came here is mainly their own necessity, not that of Estonians', that the people who live here are not aborigines who must be taught how to read and write. Only when this information has been entirely understood and also other conditions have been created, we can start teaching the language (Valge 1989: 3).*

In the middle of the decade the Estonian general public became aware of the fact, first and foremost through the press, that things were still not so good with the knowledge of Estonian, and articles about officials who did not have command of Estonian started to be published in newspapers. The Russian-speaking immigrant was portrayed as a negative hero who, despite the existing laws, had not been able to master Estonian as the state language. It is quite understandable that East Virumaa and especially its two easternmost towns – Narva and Sillamäe – stood out as the most negatively characterised regions.<sup>7</sup>

*Yesterday three policemen in Narva were fired, as they were not able to speak enough Estonian. All in all, 73 Narva policemen participated in the appraisal procedure, and all of them, except for four men, were appraised only conditionally until the autumn (Soolep 1997: 2).*

*Among others, Yuri Bozhko, Chairman of Sillamäe Municipal Council, and Georgi Bystrov, Mayor of Maardu, were criticised for their poor knowledge of Estonian. /—/ Sirje Kupts, the interpreter-desk officer at Sillamäe Municipal Council, said to the Postimees that in documents Yuri Bozhko did not need translation for each line. “Generally he is able to understand the written language and sometimes even makes efforts to speak. He has attended courses of Estonian and continues doing so.” When the journalist asked him in Estonian to comment on his knowledge of the language, Yuri Bozhko, Chairman of Sillamäe Municipal Council, said in Estonian, “Vene keel palun” (Russian, please) (Paet 1997a: 3).*

As the situation had not improved much by 1997, it was assumed even at the state level that the efforts made so far had been insufficient. So,

<sup>7</sup> According to the data of the population census of 2000, the percentage of those in Narva and Sillamäe who determined themselves as representatives of some other ethnic groups (not Estonians) was 95.15 and 95.82, respectively (www.stat.ee, 23.10.2002).

side by side with the integration propaganda launched at the same time, a new language teaching policy was initiated. The bet was made on schoolchildren. In Russian-language schools the position of a state language teacher was established. However, the situation did not improve as quickly as it was expected, and when in 1999 (ten years after the law on the Estonian language had been passed) the language inspection checked the teachers of the Estonian language in the Russian schools of East Virumaa, 59 out of 250 had such a poor knowledge of Estonian that they should not have worked at school. Both the establishment of the position of the state language teacher and the checking of the language teachers' knowledge of their subject were accompanied by the attention from the media, who stated the fact that "they still cannot speak it".

While elsewhere in Estonia non-Estonians had learned Estonian at least to a certain extent, then in Narva and Sillamäe the knowledge of Estonian was and still is almost non-existent. Katri Raik, Director of the Narva College, in an article in *Postimees* told a true story of a language examination that was spread as an anecdote.

*When a person who has passed the examination at the beginners' level is congratulated in Estonian with the words "Palju õnne!" (Congratulations!), then they keep silent as they do not understand what is said. Those who have passed the examination at the intermediate level, happily answer "spassiiibo" ("Thank you" in Russian) and only those who are awarded a diploma for the pass at the advanced level, are able to answer "aitäh!" ("Thank you" in Estonian) (Püttsepp 2000b: 24).*

While Estonian journalists consider non-Estonians themselves as the main ones to be blamed as they have not mastered Estonian, either because they take it easy, or are lazy, unwilling or incapable, the "culprits" themselves think that the reasons for that are somewhere much deeper down, among other things also in the inexpedient use of the money meant for language studies. Zukerman, the presenter at the *Subboteja* programme, commented on it:

*I think that if all the integration money pumped in by the foreign organisations and foundations were allocated for the purpose of teaching Estonian in Narva, the people there would not be able to recall a single word in Russian any more (Zukerman 2000: 17).*

## Nice people – quite similar to Estonians

The former Soviet military who stayed in Estonia were one of the first who deserved some positive attention from the press. Part of them were married to Estonian citizens, yet, despite that, they were not granted the residence permit, not to mention the citizenship. The so-called “problem” of the retired servicemen started to be discussed through concrete people in trouble, and a personal touch appeared in the articles. For instance, in the summer of 1997 people sympathised with the sufferings of Zobin and his family, as the Estonian state deported the father of the family. The press was rather on the side of the non-Estonian in trouble than supported the officials and the government offices.

Quite a number of non-Estonians have problems with legalising their life in Estonia, partly through their own fault, but partly also through the inefficient work organisation at the Citizenship- and Migration Board. Generally it can be said that, beginning from the second half of the 1990s, the press has become friendlier towards immigrants and they rather rail against the political decisions made in Estonia and the officials’ ineptitude, which make the situation complicated for non-Estonians due to the complexity of applying for residence permits and citizenship, the poor work organisation at government offices, lack of information or insufficient knowledge of the language, both in solving the problems of everyday life and those of a wider meaning.

At the very end of the decade writings trying to delve more and more into the problems of non-Estonians started to be published. Articles about non-Estonians were written on the basis of concrete people, and the so-called aspect of human understanding became evident.

*Ivan, who was freshening himself with a Coca-Cola his daughter had brought him from a shop, was standing throughout the whole night by the wall of the bureau, on a sandy hill covered with thousands of footprints, in order to get the residence permit sticker for his two-and-a-half-years-old granddaughter Valeria. “The whole family lives with the permits here, but she, the little one, turned out to be illegal,” said the bewildered Ivan, who had started queuing up at 7 o’clock the previous night. By 3 p.m. the next day he was already queuing inside the building and hoped to face the clerk before the closing time (Rooväli 2000: 5).*

People started to look for justifications for the immigrants’ passiveness and evasion of society. To what extent has the public attitude dictated

by Estonians made it possible for them to participate in the social and political life of Estonia? Ivi Proos from the Open Society Institute associates Russians' passiveness with the notion "occupant's complex" and with the attitude of the Estonian state towards Russians as a homogeneous community.

*The political passiveness of the majority of adult Russians is programmed in their lives in Estonia. The occupant's complex inherent to Estonian Russians sets up voluntary barriers for them in many of their undertakings in Estonian state. Being an occupant or being responsible for all the crimes of the former Soviet Union has been instilled in all the Russians living in Estonia since the beginning of the new struggle for independence, even before the independent statehood was re-established in Estonia. The Russians' positive answer to forcing the role of occupants on them was: "Davaite zhit druzhno" (Let's live in friendship). This passive attitude tinged with a guilt complex is certainly not enough for the Russian youth. This was their parents' slogan for the sake of domestic peace, but the generation of twenty-year-old Russians in Estonia wants something more. So far the Estonian state has not considered it very important to view the Russian community in Estonia in a differentiated way (Proos 1999: 7).*

In real life the people who immigrated to Estonia during the Soviet period can be divided into several different groups, proceeding from their nationality, legal status in Estonia, age, social status, time of immigration, and so on. Klara Hallik has analysed the adaptation of Estonia to new ethnic minorities and she finds that "the vision of the minority group of an integrated society can become influential if they have sufficiently strong collective identity and they possess social instruments in the form of institutions in order to implement their will. Immigrants in Estonia possess neither. On the one hand, it is because in the Soviet period the ethnic determination opposing to Estonian identity was not practically topical, on the other, the immigration policy of the re-established state put the numerous groups of new settlers in a different legal status (citizens of Estonia and Russia, non-defined "foreigners", those possessing or not possessing different kinds of residence permits), which temporarily diminished the formation of collective subjects on the ethnic basis" (1997: 103).

So, until the very last year of the decade, the press still wrote about aliens, non-Estonians, Russians and Russian-speaking population as a

uniform mob, with no people with different lives, wishes, aspirations and hopes for the future. At the same time, quite a few profiles of Estonians were published. The only exception was Anna Levandi<sup>8</sup>, of whom a profile was published in *Postimees Extra* already in 1993.

*But Anna came and won the hearts of even the toughest sceptics with her pleasant simplicity, as already in a few months' time she was able to say some easier things in Estonian. Now, having lived here for four years, Anna Levandi has mastered Estonian and only has a very slight accent. She has become – if we may say so – a model non-Estonian* (Kruus 1993: 1–2).

In 2000 a breakthrough occurred in the press and, as quite a new tendency, non-Estonians' life started to be shown at the level of concrete individuals, and the idea of “a nice and, often, already integrated non-Estonian or at least one willing to integrate” started to be propagated. Suddenly the immigrant became a person who was fond of Estonia and who was learning or at least was eager to learn Estonian.

*Irina Vikentyeva puts a home-made apple cake on the dinner table. “Õun” (an apple), her eight-year-old daughter Masha, pupil of an immersion class, says in such a loud and clear voice that everybody gapes at her in amazement. /—/ [Father] Sergei, however, gets in trouble when he goes shopping with Masha. The daughter demands that Father would voice his wishes in the state language. “Piim, kohupiim,” (milk, curds) Masha prompts her father strictly, and, as it seems to the latter, also a little bit impatiently* (Püttsepp 2000a: 24).

*The thirteen-year-old Maksim Butsenko, who has spent two weeks on Roosi tourist farm in Läänemaa, in the camp for learning Estonian, allows neither incorrect words nor faulty sentence structures slip in his speech. The boy from Sillamäe came to the camp to polish up his Estonian, in order to get rid of the Russian accent. /—/ The children from Sillamäe are not afraid of integration policy or of losing their own national identity. “I am Russian in my heart, but, as I live in Estonia, I*

<sup>8</sup>Anna Levandi (née Kondrashova) is married to Allar Levandi, the former Estonian Nordic skier (bronze medal at Calgary Olympic Games). Anna Kondrashova was one of the best figure skaters in the Soviet Union in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 1980s.

want to learn Estonian and know the local culture well,” Maksim said (Randmaa 2000: 13).

## Conclusion

At the beginning of the 1990s, the immigrants who had come to Estonia in the Soviet time and settled down here, were shown as a protest-spirited homogeneous group, which represented a great danger for Estonia, longed for Russia (rather the Soviet Union), and would not understand the Estonian language and culture. This group did not comprise individual people with their lives and destinies, and it did not show any interest in the Estonian language and culture. The breakthrough occurred only at the very end of the decade together with the integration propaganda that had gained a new impetus, and completely different writings started to be published in 2000. So we can say that in the late 1990s a vision was formed of Estonia as a multinational state in the positive meaning of the word, where the representatives of other nations live side by side with Estonians, almost the same way Estonians do, with their everyday sorrows and joys and strivings for becoming part of Estonia.

## References

- Ivanov, Nikolai 1988. Miks meid tahetakse tülli ajada? – *Edasi* 17.3.: 4.
- Kaplinski, Jaan 1988. Et tüli ei tuleks. – *Edasi* 25.3.: 3.
- Kruus, Tiina 1993. Anna Levandi tunneb end Eestis oivaliselt. – *Postimees Extra* 17.7.: 1–2.
- Lõhmus, Aivo 1989. Õigus kuristiku serval. – *Edasi* 20.1.: 4.
- Paet, Urmas 1997a. Maardu ja Sillamäe linnaisade eesti keel on nõrk. – *Postimees* 4.2.: 3.
- Paet, Urmas 1997b. Võidupüha koondas veteranid Tõnismäele. – *Postimees* 10.5.: 2.
- Pettai, Iris 1999. Laupäevaklubi tolerantsetele. – *Postimees* 2.10.: 7.
- Proos, Ivi 1999. Vene noorte staatuse kriis. – *Postimees* 7.4.: 7.
- Püttsepp, Juhani 2000a. Keelekümbleja Maša eelistab Hiiumaad Moskvale. – *Postimees* 29.8.: 24.
- Püttsepp, Juhani 2000b. Algaseme eesti keel võrdub Narvas vaikusega. – *Postimees* 31.8.: 24.
- Randmaa, Kristiina 2000. Vene lapsed ihkavad kõnelda täiuslikult veatut eesti keelt. – *Postimees* 22.7.: 13.
- Raudver Guido-Roland 1988. Kui ma oleksin venelane. – *Edasi* 12.2.: 3.
- Rooväli, Küllike 2000. Elamisloa taotlejad ummistavad ikka kodakondsusameti bürood. – *Postimees* 19.4.: 5.
- Sarv, Maris 1991. Antikommunistid (!?) interliikumise poolel. – *Postimees* 19.1.: 2.
- Sikk, Rein 2000a. Eestlane ihkab rahvusriiki. – *Eesti Päevaleht* 11.9.: 4.
- Sikk, Rein 2000b. Rahvus pole geenid, vaid kultuur. – *Eesti Päevaleht* 12.9.: 4.
- Soolep, Argo 1997. Narva politseist vallandati kolm umbkeelset politseinikku. – *Postimees*

23.5.: 2.

- Zukerman, Aleksandr 2000. Õnnest elada integratsiooniajastul. – *Postimees* 10.3.: 17.
- Valge, Jüri 1989. Keeleseadus ja eesti keele õpetamine. Ettekanne keelefoorumil 21. jaanuaril TÜ aulas. – *Edasi* 25.1.: 3.
- Vassar, Liivi 1993. Me ei tea, mida narvakad mõtlevad. – *Postimees* 22.7.: 6.
- Weidebaum, Boleslaw 1988. Eestimaa rahvuste foorumi initsiatiivgrupile. – *Edasi* 23.9.: 4.
- www.stat.ee, 25.10.2002. EV Statistikaameti kodulehekül. 2000. aasta rahvaloendus.

## Sources

- The Baltic States. A Reference Book* 1991. Tallinn: Estonian Encyclopaedia Publishers; Riga: Latvian Encyclopaedia Publishers; Vilnius: Lithuanian Encyclopaedia Publishers.
- Hallik, Klara 1997. Mitterahvuslike ühiskondade integratsioonistrateegiad ja Eesti kohanemine etniliste uusvähemustega. – *Vene noored Eestis: sotsioloogiline mosaiik: [materjalide kogumik]*. [Tallinn]: Projekt “VERA”. Koost. Priit Järve, 101–111.
- Jakobson, Valeria 1997. Venekeelne meedia mitte-eestlaste hoiakute kujundajana: integratsiooni poolt või vastu. – *Vene noored Eestis: sotsioloogiline mosaiik: [materjalide kogumik]*. [Tallinn]: Projekt “VERA”. Koost. Priit Järve, 151–155.
- Kirch, Aksel, Marika Kirch, Tarmo Tuis 1997. Vene noorte etnilise ja kultuurilise identiteedi muutused aastatel 1993–1996. – *Vene noored Eestis: sotsioloogiline mosaiik: [materjalide kogumik]*. [Tallinn]: Projekt “VERA”. Koost. Priit Järve, 47–67.
- Laitin, David D. 1998. *Identity in Formation. The Russian-Speaking Populations in the Near Abroad*. Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press.
- Raudsepp, Maaris 1997. Vene küsimus ja Eesti trükiajakirjandus. – *Vene noored Eestis: sotsioloogiline mosaiik: [materjalide kogumik]*. [Tallinn]: Projekt “VERA”. Koost. Priit Järve, 161–169.
- Reinvelt, Riina 2002. “People of Finnish Extraction...” Ethnicity and History in Ingrian Life Stories. – *Etnisk komplexitet. Nordliga länder. Kulturvetenskapliga perspektiv. NNF Publications 15*. Red. av Magnus Berg, Riina Reinvelt och Line Alice Ytrehus, 231–245.

Translated by Tiina Mällo