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EASTERN FINNO-UGRIAN COOPERATION AND FOREIGN RELATIONS

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Britons and Iranians do not wax poetic when they discover that “one, two, three” sound vaguely similar in English and Persian. Finns and Hungarians at times do. When I speak of “Finno-Ugrian cooperation,” I am referring to a linguistic label that joins peoples whose languages are so distantly related that in most world contexts it would evoke no feelings of kinship.¹ Similarities in folk culture may largely boil down to worldwide commonalities in peasant cultures at comparable technological stages. The racial features of Estonians and Mari may be quite disparate. Limited mutual intelligibility occurs only within the Finnic group in the narrow sense (Finns, Karelians, Vepsians, Estonians), the Permic group (Udmurts and Komi), and the Mordvin group (Moksha and Erzia). Yet, despite this almost abstract foundation, the existence of a feeling of kinship is very real. Myths may have no basis in fact, but belief in myths does occur. Before denigrating the beliefs of indigenous and recently modernized peoples as nineteenth-century relics, the observer might ask whether the maintenance of these beliefs might serve some functional twenty-first-century purpose.

The underlying rationale for the Finno-Ugrian kinship beliefs has been a shared feeling of isolation among Indo-European and Turkic populations. Given such a feeling it is perhaps a relief to Finno-Ugrians to find another language that shares similar grammatical features with one’s own tongue. To different degrees, all Finno-Ugrian peoples also have felt the heavy hand of what the Finns call “the big neighbor”—the Russians—and this establishes a field of common experience. Finno-Ugrian identity overlaps with other identities, such as Nordic for Finns, Baltic for Estonians, Central European for Hungarians, Middle Volga for Mari, circumpolar for Nenets, and *rossiiskii* (politically Russian) for all Finno-Ugrian peoples within the Russian Federation. Such cross-cutting cleavages usually contribute to social and international stability, avoiding a single identity that could be directed against all others.

This study focuses on the eastern Finno-Ugrians, those located in the Russian Federation, whereas the western Finno-Ugrians live mainly in states that are part of the European Union (Finland) or hope to join it (Hungary, Estonia). Under the present conditions, one might expect the eastern Finno-Ugrians to have more in

common with the other minorities in the Federation than with the western Finno-Ugrians. However, the strongest ethnically distinct peoples within the Russian Federation are Turkic and Muslim, and they look southward for cultural and political models. Excluded from this Turkic fraternity, the remaining indigenous minorities in the northwestern part of the Federation might be expected to establish a separate sphere of cooperation practically by default, based on common circumstances and vulnerability. The Finno-Ugrian label supplies a common denominator, strengthened by the myth of common origins.

The existence of the western Finno-Ugrians also supplies historical examples and role models of how to develop a modern culture based on a language not spoken by most neighboring peoples. It also affords a cultural window to the West, bypassing Moscow, provided the western Finno-Ugrians are interested in the eastern ones. Their interest is, in fact nominal, compared with the western Finno-Ugrians' interest to join economic and political unity with the West, now that the Soviet restrictions are gone. Yet there is also the fear among these Finno-Ugrian peoples that European Union membership might erase their distinct cultural identities. In the case of Hungarians, Finns, and Estonians, the promotion of Finno-Ugrian ties supplies a welcome antidote to the homogenizing impact of the European Union (besides relieving the age-old feeling of linguistic isolation). A genuinely federal and multinational Russian Federation would probably be less likely to attempt to re-establish control over its western neighbors. If so, then it would be in the national interest of any East-Central European country to support cultural revival in the republics of the Russian Federation. In the case of Hungarians, Finns, and Estonians the inevitably scarce resources are rather naturally channeled along the longstanding linguistic contact lines. Memories of Russian domination reinforce the feeling of common fate with the eastern Finno-Ugrians.

A minor endeavor on the part of the western Finno-Ugrians to assist their eastern kin can represent an important infusion of funds into, for example, school textbook publishing in an eastern Finno-Ugrian language. It can change a lack of direct contacts west of Russia into limited contacts. Computer literacy is a case in point which will be addressed in more detail below. Direct contacts between western and eastern Finno-Ugrians may trigger scare stories of political separatism among the proponents of a monoethnic Russia, but there is little substance to them. Besides conceivable intentions, one also must consider capabilities. The geographical locations and population mixes of the Finno-Ugrian titular republics make political separation from Russia idle talk. Reinforcement of various indigenous cultures is a prerequisite for maintaining and developing a genuine federation.

The scope of this article is cooperation and foreign relations involving the eastern Finno-Ugrians. It excludes cooperation among the western predominantly Finno-Ugrian states and their foreign policies, unless these affect the eastern Finno-Ugrians. The basic issues are: the level of interaction; the type of interaction—political, economic, social, or cultural; and how this interaction matters, if at all.

There is some terminological ambiguity when one deals with peoples having an ethnic group identity based largely on language and the political entities established on an ethnic basis but including people with a different ethnic identity. When should one use “Hungarians” or “Udmurts,” and when “Hungary” or “Udmurtia?” When does “Hungarian” designate any citizen of Hungary, and when does it mean any person who speaks Hungarian as one’s mother language? The language of the “titular” people is most often one of the official languages (and at times the only one) in the given political entity. It implies some responsibility of this political entity, shared by no other, for the development of the titular language and culture while maintaining responsibility toward citizens of any ethnic background. Sometimes these distinctions become blurry. People’s self-identification usually determined nationality. An ethnic Russian resident of Udmurtia rarely accepts being called Udmurt. A political entity, such as Hungary, may act at times on behalf of the titular people and culture. Finally, there are cases where “Udmurts” as an ethnos represented by non-governmental organizations have foreign cultural relations with “Hungary” as a state acting on behalf of the titular culture.

Cooperation among the Eastern Finno-Ugrians

One should distinguish between cooperation within the Russian Federation and cooperation that goes beyond its borders as well as between the activities at the republic level and those of ethnic organizations. The latter often involve populations living outside the titular republics, whose governments often are in the hands of Russians rather than the titular peoples.²

During the Soviet era only purely linguistic, ethnographic or archaeological conferences among the Finno-Ugrians were tolerated by the Communist authorities. The World Congresses of Finno-Ugristics eschewed topics awkward to Moscow even when held outside the USSR in Hungary and Finland. This pattern changed only in the 1990s—at conferences in Debrecen, Hungary (1990) and particularly in Jyväskylä, Finland (1995), where there was an extensive scholarly discussion of the past and present, with wide participation by eastern Finno-Ugrians.³ The Ninth Congress was held in August 2000 in Tartu, Estonia.

A breakthrough in cooperation came in 1989, one year after eastern Finno-Ugrian ethnic organizations began to form, when the Mari Writers Union organized the First Congress of Finno-Ugrian writers from 22 to 27 May in Ioshkar-Ola. Writer after writer expressed the pent-up frustration of their peoples with the ethnic conditions in the USSR, to the surprise and dismay of the Russian representatives. Western Finno-Ugrian writers also participated. Initiative for an International Finno-Ugrian Writers Union bogged down when the cautious Finns pulled out. In January 1992 the Union gave way to a Committee of Finno-Ugrian Writers, a loose forum the Finns could join.⁴

The Youth Association of Finno-Ugrian Peoples (YAFUP) was founded in July

1990 in Ioshkar-Ola in conjunction with the First International Finno-Ugrian Folklore Festival, which became a yearly event: 1991 in Syktyvkar, Komimu (Komi Republic); 1992 in Saransk, Mordovia; 1993 in Khanty-Mansiisk, Khanty-Mansia (the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous District); 1995 in Kudymkar, the Komi-Permiak Autonomous District; 1997 in cities across Estonia.⁵ The 1993 Festival included a conference on the “Search for Forms of Indigenous Self-Government.” Headed by the Komi Nina Nesterova, in November 1997 YAFUP held its Fourth Congress in Tallinn, Estonia. A Finno-Ugrian Peoples’ Cultural Development Fund with headquarters in Ioshkar-Ola emerged on 6 October 1990. Since its foundation, the Fund has been headed by Nikolai Gavrilov, who is now also Secretary of State of Mariel (Marii El). Overdependence on subsidies from the Russian central government caused a collapse in 1993, when Moscow pulled the financial rug out from under it, but the Fund was reborn in 1995. Since 1991, Pan-Finno-Ugrian Days (or “Kindred Peoples’ Days”) have been observed on the third weekend in October among almost all Finno-Ugrian peoples. The tradition began in Finland in 1928 and spread to Estonia and Hungary. Suppressed by the Soviets in all three countries, it was rekindled in Estonia in 1988. Moscow frowned on a meeting of Finno-Ugrian journalists in April 1991, and no regular meetings followed for several years. In contrast, yearly International Festivals of Finno-Ugrian Television Documentaries and Programs took off in October 1991. Finno-Ugrian children’s camps started in August 1991. The camps, whose intended purpose was the promotion of the native languages, ran into a snag when the children quickly found that they could all communicate in Russian—a practice copied from previous generations. Nonetheless, the camps have continued.

In 1992 two overarching organizations were formed to complement the Cultural Development Fund. The Association of Finno-Ugrian Peoples, founded in Izhar (Izhevsk), Udmurtia, included only the eastern Finno-Ugrians. The Consultative Committee of Finno-Ugrian Peoples (CCFUP), founded at the First World Congress of Finno-Ugrian Peoples on 1–3 December in Syktyvkar, also included the western Finno-Ugrians.

Valerii Markov, head of the Committee for the Revival of the Komi People (later renamed the Executive Committee of the Komi People), vice-chair of the Komimu parliament, and most recently an elected deputy of the Russian State *Duma*, became the chair of the CCFUP, which is headquartered in Helsinki. The CCFUP secretariat consists of Markov, representing the Russian Federation, and three coordinators who represent the western Finno-Ugrian countries: Merja Hannus, secretary-general of the Finnish-Russian Friendship Society; György Nanofszky, department head in the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, formerly ambassador to Russia; and Andres Heinapuu, manager of the Information Center of the Finno-Ugrian Peoples and former Estonian member of parliament. The main task of the secretariat is to prepare for CCFUP meetings, and this task rotates among member nations. All Finno-Ugrian nations have representatives in the CCFUP, except the Saami, who have plentiful

external contacts, and the almost fully assimilated Votians of Leningrad province.

The founding of the Association of Finno-Ugrian Peoples and CCFUP completed the formal framework needed for cooperation within the Russian Federation and worldwide. The years 1991–1992 saw a peak of joint events focusing on creative artists, libraries, theater, storytelling, dance, youth sports, students, and folk healers. Most were not repeated. Liberation euphoria gave way to the sad discovery of how little could be implemented by a social body that had atrophied under the Soviet regime. The worsening economic conditions in Russia limited financial resources. Activists also shifted from festivals and conferences to more mundane work on native language education and other development of infrastructure.

The essential elements of cooperation continued. The year 1995 witnessed the following: the Third Conference of YAFUP (Syktyvkar); the Fifth Finno-Ugrian Folklore Festival (Kudymkar); the Fifth Children's Camp (Mariel), with 270 children from nearly all eastern Finno-Ugrian areas and also Nenetsia (both the Nenets and Iamal-Nenets Autonomous Districts); and a meeting of Finno-Ugrian textbook writers (Finland). Journalists formed the Association of Finno-Ugrian Journalists in Ioshkar-Ola, but it has shown few signs of life since. The fact that several events were in their fifth year showed their staying power and improvement in quality and organization.

The Second World Congress of Finno-Ugrian Peoples took place from 16 to 21 August 1996 in Budapest. The 277 non-Hungarian participants ranged from members of parliament and journalists to scholars and artists. However, the unwieldy size of this event meant the organizers were unsure of just who was attending. One observer stated, "Unfortunately, the Hungarians were unable to detect how many of them were delegates, how many observers and how many guests."⁶ The Third Congress is to take place in December 2000 in Helsinki. In the meantime, the Cultural Development Fund organized an international conference on "The Finno-Ugrian World in the 21st Century" in the spring of 1998 in Ioshkar-Ola.

A chronology of 45 cooperative events from 1989 to 1993 compiled by Igor' Sadovin of Ioshkar-Ola highlighted Mariel's leading role (13 events) in this area; Udmurtia was a respectable second (eight); while Hungary (six), Estonia (five), and Finland (four) played a supporting role, as did the St Petersburg region (four).⁷ There also was activity, some of it highly important, in Komimu (three). Karelia and Khanty-Mansia made little effort (one event each), while nothing occurred in Mordovia. These small numbers are subject to considerable random fluctuation, but they tend to agree with this author's general impressions about the energy levels of various eastern Finno-Ugrian nations.

All this cooperation has been mainly at the level of public organizations. The republic's governments, dominated largely by Russians, play an ambiguous role. There has not been any gathering of government representatives of the Finno-Ugrian republics as such. However, like the central government in Moscow, they have supported financially some of the activities, such as the First World Congress, so as

to maintain some control and good public relations. All eastern Finno-Ugrian republic and autonomous *okrug* leaders attended the Second World Congress, leading to confusion over who represented national interests: ethnic leaders or the ethnically Russian administrators. Thus the Khanty and Mansi deferred to the ethnic Russian governor, Aleksandr Filipenko, of their 98% non-indigenous district as their delegation leader.

This confusion extends to the CCFUP. The representatives of the various peoples are designated by public organizations or governments. The latter range from a high-ranking official of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the local boss of the Komi-Permiak District. Russian administrators are not the proper representatives of non-Russian interests, but excluding them completely would affect adversely genuine representatives when it comes to such issues as funding.

Foreign Relations of the Eastern Finno-Ugrians

A republic and its titular nationality have subordinate relations with Moscow, but some contacts with the other republics in the Russian Federation have elements of foreign relations. The Mariel-Chuvashia dispute over the Volga water reservoir, which produces electricity in Chuvashia while flooding basements in the town of Tsikme (Koz'modem'iansk) in Mariel, is reminiscent of the Hungarian–Slovak dispute over the damming of the Danube. There are inter-republic treaties, such as the economic treaty between Mariel and Tatarstan. Sometimes *ad hoc* cooperation among a group of republics emerges. Thus, at the start of the Russian military aggression in Chechnia, Chuvashia initiated a decree refusing to let local youth serve in the theater of war, a policy that many other republics adopted, including Udmurtia and Mariel among the Finno-Ugrians.⁸

Ethnic organizations, so intent on Finno-Ugrian cooperation, seem to have little contact with their non-Finno-Ugrian counterparts in neighboring republics. In part this may be due to perceptions of superiority among their Turkic neighbors. Moreover, the latter are in demographic and political control of their republics of Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, and Chuvashia, which is not the case of the Finno-Ugrians in their titular republics.

Both ethnic organizations and the governments of the republics have been involved in relations with countries outside the Russian Federation. Mariel, Komimu, Udmurtia, and belatedly also Mordovia have cultural–educational cooperation agreements with Hungary. Mariel and Komimu have similar links with Estonia, although Mordovia has not responded to Estonia's proposal. In 1994 Udmurtia proposed an agreement that was unacceptable to Estonia and then lost interest even before learning of Estonia's objections; since 1997 the two have expressed cautious new interests in contacts.

The absence of Karelia from the above lists is striking, especially given its proximity to Finland. Hungary and Estonia may be absent in deference to Finland,

yet Finland seems to have only two general agreements on Finno-Ugrian cultural cooperation, signed with Moscow rather than the individual republics. A partial exception is Finland's, Sweden's and Norway's cooperation with the Karelian Republic, the Nenets Autonomous District, and Murmansk province within the framework of the Barents Euro-Arctic Region (BEAR). The international Arctic Council accords a consultative vote to the Saami Council and the Association of Northern and Far-Eastern Peoples of Russia, which includes the Nenets, Khanty, and Mansi.

The pattern is slightly different in terms of official visits, limited as they are. The first foreign head of state to visit the eastern Finno-Ugrian republics was Hungary's President Árpád Göncz. During a state visit to Russia from 20 June to 4 July 1993, he spent all but three days making visits to Komimu, Udmurtia, Mariel, Mordovia, and Khanty-Mansia. Two successive Finnish presidents have visited Karelia. The highest-ranking Finnish official figures to visit the Finno-Ugrians east of Karelia have been the speaker of the Finnish parliament and several individual ministers. Given Moscow's attitude toward Estonia, visits by Estonian officials have been limited to members of parliament.

The first eastern Finno-Ugrian head of state to visit the West was Mariel's president Vladislav Zotin, himself an ethnic Mari. In May 1992, he was accorded full honors as head of state in recently independent Estonia but was treated as a private person in Finland. Finnish attitudes may have shifted slightly when Martti Ahtisaari became president. He received Komimu's ethnic Russian head of government, Iurii Spiridonov, in March 1995, and Mordovia's ethnic Moksha president Nikolai Merkushkin, who headed a delegation from the republic in February 1997. The Karelian president also visited Finland. However, none of these was considered an official state visit. Visits to Estonia have been limited to the ministerial level.

On 28 June 1992, the Russian Supreme *Soviet* approved of Finno-Ugrian parliamentary cooperation and participation in the First World Congress of Finno-Ugrian Peoples, but the follow-up to this has been nil. At the Ninety-First Conference of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), held in Paris on 21–26 March 1994, the Estonians, Finns, and Hungarians formed a Finno-Ugrian group. They proposed to the Russian IPU delegation the holding of a joint discussion on the condition of the Finno-Ugrians of the Russian Federation at the following IPU Conference to be held in Copenhagen, with participation by the eastern Finno-Ugrians. The discussion did not materialize.

The contacts of eastern Finno-Ugrian organizations with their Hungarian, Finnish and Estonian counterparts are numerous, direct, and through the CCFUP. With the help of the Hungarian ambassador to Moscow, the CCFUP also achieved consultative status at the United Nations Permanent Committee for Minority Rights in 1994. As its representative, Nina Nesterova voiced support for creation of a permanent Indigenous Peoples' Forum at the UN during the fifteenth session of the Indigenous Peoples Work Group in Geneva in July 1997.⁹

Another international outlet is the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO), founded in The Hague in 1990 in support of the efforts of minority peoples worldwide to gain independence or meaningful autonomy. As of 1997, its 50 members ranged from Tibetans and Hawai'ians, to Chechens and the Skånians of southern Sweden. From within the Russian Federation, three nations are represented in the UNPO by their republican governments: Tatars, Sakha, and Ingush. The Finno-Ugrians, in contrast, are represented by their national congresses or unions: Komi, Mari, Udmurts, and Ingrian Finns. Erzia and Moksha have attended UNPO events as observers.

The eastern Finno-Ugrians' limited knowledge of Western languages, in particular English, constricts their ability to establish contacts. Indeed, many still seem to believe in the worldwide superiority of Russian. In foreign contacts, Finno-Ugrian identity often is imbedded in a broader *rossiiskii* (politically Russian) identity, somewhat like those Scots or Welsh who also feel British, the recent pro-autonomy referendums notwithstanding.

The Eastern Finno-Ugrians and the Internet

Until recently, only Finns and to some extent also Estonians from among the Finno-Ugrian peoples could boast of per capita computer usage that was competitive with global standards. Now, the eastern Finno-Ugrians studying in these countries are enabling their republics to make important advances in this respect compared with many neighboring Russian provinces. This also highlights the students' realization that modern technology and high culture do not always originate in Moscow. Their contact with kindred Finno-Ugrian states also increases their self-esteem. On the internet the students have begun to write their native languages in Latin script—a step indicating their determination to join the European mainstream.

A seminar on “Internet in the Finno-Ugrian Information Space” was held in Tallinn on 10–13 April 1997, with participants from western Finno-Ugrian countries, Karelia, Komimu, Mariel, St Petersburg, and the sizeable Mari diaspora from Bashkortostan. It was organized by the Information Center of Finno-Ugrian Peoples (known by the Estonian acronym SURI), initiated in May 1996, and headed by Andres Heinapuu. The seminar led to the formation of a CCFUP Work Group of Media and Information.

The eastern Finno-Ugrians are jumping on the IT highway. For instance, from September 1997 onward SURI has had its own website, including a list of the members of the CCFUP and its quarterly newsletter *Uralic Contacts*, published since late 1996. Moreover, the individual Finno-Ugrian ethnic groups are also attempting to disperse information about themselves, through homepages and mailing lists, on official and unofficial personal levels.¹⁰

Instead of the customary Cyrillic, some Mari internet texts have appeared in the Latin script, using an orthography inspired by Hungarian. The broader question of

whether or not to switch the current Mari Cyrillic alphabet to a Latin-based one first surfaced around 1990, but at that time it was shelved due to the financial cost of conversion and the difficulty of introducing an unfamiliar alphabet to the entire population. Now the internet offers another possibility of gradually introducing it, starting with the most reform-minded Mari youth, for whom the Latin alphabet is familiar through their knowledge of western European and often western Finno-Ugrian languages. This approach turns the question of whether to shift alphabet into an individual decision. The Latin alphabet has the additional bonus of being linked to a prestigious goal—computer literacy. It remains to be seen whether or not some other Finno-Ugrians will emulate the Mari.

In 1996 in one of this author's university courses at the University of Tartu, where Estonians and eastern Finno-Ugrians were enrolled in roughly equal numbers, most Estonians said that they felt at ease with computers, in contrast to their eastern classmates, who, although they had taken the obligatory introduction to computers, still were hesitant about using computers. It is now exhilarating to receive electronic mail from them and to see others experiment with Latin scripts in their mailing lists—a long distance traveled in a short period of time.

Relations with Hungary

Given the disparity in size, the lesson that Hungary and its past teach the eastern Finno-Ugrians is limited. The Hungarian experience merely confirms the obvious, namely that under more favorable circumstances, a linguistically Finno-Ugrian population can grow to 10 million, can develop a vigorous modern culture, and, when in a position of strength, can use it to oppress others. Hungary's assimilation policies in the 1800s differed only from the tsarist or Soviet Russian ones by the lack of religious or ideological aspects: Jews and others who mastered the Hungarian language were accepted as Hungarians.

In Hungary, intellectual interest in other Finno-Ugrian peoples dates back to the 1700s. In the 1930s the USSR cut off contacts and, all too often, the lives of eastern Finno-Ugrians suspected of even thinking of such contacts. Even after Hungary became a Soviet satellite, officials permitted few scholarly expeditions. Since 1988, interaction has exploded, highlighted by the above-mentioned visit by President Göncz in 1993.¹¹

The main channel of interaction on Hungary's side is the Culture and Education Ministry, which signed the aforementioned cultural–educational agreements with its Komi, Mari, Udmurt, and Mordovian counterparts. The first-ever visit to Hungary by a Khanty-Mansi folklore group took place in 1990, followed by two groups from Mordovia (1993), and one Udmurt folklore collective (1994). The Hungarian Ethnographic Museum featured an extensive Finno-Ugrian exhibition in 1996. Various music groups from Russia participated in a Finno-Ugrian traditional music festival in Szeged (August 1996).

Other ministries and agencies also have established direct contacts. In particular, the Finno-Ugrian departments at various universities have arranged exchanges of students and faculty. In 1991 the first two students from Khanty-Mansia came to study in Hungary, and a Hungarian scholar went to help establish a folklore archive in Khanty-Mansia and remained there for many years.

As mentioned, the Seventh World Congress of Finno-Ugristics was held in Hungary in Debrecen in August 1990, and the Second World Congress of Finno-Ugrian Peoples took place in Budapest in August 1996. The Third Congress of Finno-Ugrian Writers convened in Eger in August 1993. Szombathely Pedagogical University organized a conference of Finno-Ugrian university presidents in September 1993, plus refresher courses for historians and political scientists. Debrecen city government offers eastern Finno-Ugrians two scholarships to study Hungarian each summer at the university there. Similar courses are offered at Szombathely.

On the non-state level, the Reguly Association was founded in 1991, named after the first Hungarian scholar to visit the eastern Finno-Ugrians in the mid-1800s. It organizes yearly Kindred Peoples' Days and aims at making their traditions and cultures known to the Hungarian public. A lack of funds hampers its activities.

What has been Hungary's impact on the individual eastern Finno-Ugrian areas? The strongest emotional tie is with the Khanty and Mansi, whose languages are the closest to Hungarian. However, the small number of Khanty and Mansi, who together number no more than 30,000, impedes their ability to maintain meaningful contacts. An album of photos accompanied by poems by the Khanty activist Agrafena Sopochina was published in Budapest in 1995, while folk artists and students frequently visit Hungary. Given the enormous disparity in conditions, one wonders how much of their Hungarian experience these select few can apply back home. A permanent Hungarian political or cultural presence in Khanty-Mansia seems unlikely.

Despite the cultural agreement, no Hungarian activity within Mordovia seems to take place. With Karelia, there is not even an agreement on paper. Regarding the other three republics, observers differ in their evaluations of Hungarian involvement. The Hungarian language has been available at Komi State University since the early 1990s. A Komi-Hungarian Friendship Association was founded in 1996. A play by President Göncz, "Stone upon Stone," has been in the repertoire of the state theater in Syktyvkar since 1993, though in Russian, rather than in Komi translation.

According to Csúcs and Mayer, Udmurtia is the main focus of Hungarians.¹² The Hungarian language has at times been available at Udmurt State University, where a lecturer from Hungary worked from 1994 to 1997. A Russian translation of a monograph by Péter Domokos on the History of Udmurt Literature was published in Izhar in 1993. The Hungarian-Udmurt Friendship Society, founded in 1995, seems to be the only one of its kind in Hungary. It has been active and even initiated Udmurt Culture Days in 1996. Not only have Udmurts performed in Hungary, but

both the poet Sándor Kányádi and a Hungarian folk group reciprocated by traveling to Udmurtia. An anthology of twentieth-century Hungarian poetry is in preparation in Udmurtia, but it will most likely appear in Russian rather than in Udmurt.

By some accounts, Mari–Hungarian contacts pre-date the crumbling of the USSR and have remained the strongest.¹³ Ioshkar-Ola even had a city district named after the Hungarian city of Szombathely, because it was a Hungarian project built with a Hungarian workforce in the 1970s. The Marii El–Hungary Association was the first of its kind in the eastern Finno-Ugrian lands. Formally established in 1992, it actually harks back to the USSR–Hungary Friendship Association’s Mari section, established in the early 1970s. A Mari–Hungarian–German dictionary was published in 1997 in Hungary, based on materials collected from Mari POWs in Hungary during the First World War. Szombathely Pedagogical University has employed a Mari lecturer since 1994, but it is not clear whether any Hungarian is formally taught in Mariel.

The Hungarian Culture, Science, and Information Center in Moscow seems to play a remarkably active role in bringing the eastern Finno-Ugrian cultures to the attention of the Russian majority. Figurative arts exhibitions, concerts, and folklore displays abound at the center, with possibly the most emphasis placed on Mordovia. The Hungarian Embassy in Moscow encourages business contacts, but their scope seems limited.

These modest activities represent a quantum leap compared with the extremely limited contacts prior to 1988. The question is whether they will continue to expand once the novelty of exotic folklore and short-term visits wears off. The number of year-long stays in the opposite country may be the most significant indicator. Even today, few eastern Finno-Ugrians seem to study in Hungary, apart from summer courses, and there have been no Hungarians enrolled in courses outside of Moscow and St Petersburg.

Relations with Finland

Finland has had periods of confrontation and accommodation with Russia, its larger neighbor. On the one hand it has reason to be satisfied with the two major periods of accommodation, although the first in the 1800s was eventually terminated by the Russian side, and the post-1945 period of “Finlandization” had some undesirable side effects. On the other hand, without the confrontation of the Winter War, Finland most likely would not have had the opportunity to “Finlandize,” but rather would have been reduced to a Soviet republic, as happened to Estonia. A detailed study of several aspects of Finland’s history might give some hints with regard to defining an optimal mixed strategy toward Moscow which may provide some lessons for the eastern Finno-Ugrians. Finland’s handling of its formerly dominant Swedish-speaking minority also offers a positive example of a policy of bilingualization to both the eastern Finno-Ugrians and the Russians living in the Finno-Ugrian

republics. In contrast, Finnish age-old behavior toward the Saami has little to be proud of, except recently.

In contrast to Hungary, which is distant from eastern Finno-Ugrians in terms of both geography and language, Finland is linguistically and geographically close to the Ingrian Finns, Karelians, Izhors, and Vepsians. Other eastern Finno-Ugrian groups are more distant from the Finns. Scholarly and educational contacts with the former were appreciable before the First World War, when Finland was part of the tsarist realm and these neighboring peoples were considered similar to Finns. The Finno-Ugrians east of Karelia are as remote from the Finns as they are from the Hungarians.

While any territorial claims remain taboo, even regarding the lands Finland lost in 1940–1945, Finland’s immigration law treats the Ingrian Finns the same way that modern Germany treats members of its large diaspora. They have the right to “return” to Finland, even though their ancestors left Finland more than three centuries ago and mainly from areas ceded to the USSR in 1940–1945. The privilege does not extend to eastern Karelians or Vepsians.

The *perestroika–glasnost*’ relaxation began in 1988, when a Finnish university invited a lecturer in the Erzia language to visit Finland.¹⁴ In the aftermath of the First Finno-Ugrian Writers Conference in Mariel, talk arose in Finland of initiating a Finnish–Mari Friendship Society, but instead, the M. A. Castrén Society was founded in January 1990, named after a nineteenth-century linguist, to handle contacts with all Finno-Ugrian peoples. In contrast to Hungary’s Reguly Society, the Castrén Society has become a major conduit of information exchanges between the Finns and the eastern Finno-Ugrians, possibly because the Finnish state authorities prefer to channel their support indirectly. The Castrén Society handled the Second Uralic Literature Conference in Espoo in 1991 and the initiation of a student exchange program with Mariel and Mari Culture Days in Finland in 1993.

From 1994 onwards, Finnish state funds have been available from the budget, based on a parliament-approved “Program for Support of Russia’s Finno-Ugrian Peoples and Their Cultures.” The program is administered by a council (SKONK) in close cooperation with the Castrén Society and the Ministry of Education. Two official agreements with the Russian Federation preceded its initiation.

The main emphasis of SKONK is publishing native-language textbooks, mainly primary-level readers and history books, and on providing scholarships for study in Finland and also Estonia at both student and faculty levels. By 1997, about five Karelians and 15 other eastern Finno-Ugrians had scholarships in Finland, and this number has grown significantly over the years. SKONK has also supported dictionary compilation and the native language press. It supported the release of a 150-page popular book by Kaisa Häkkinen and Seppo Zetterberg, *Finland Yesterday and Today* (1997), in the Erzia, Komi, Mari, Moksha, Udmurt and Russian languages. The Castrén Society was also one of the organizers of a conference in Moscow on 29 November 1997 on “Finno-Ugrian Peoples in Russia: Yesterday,

Today—But What About Tomorrow?”

For years the Finnish Ministry of Education has sent abroad Finnish-language instructors as part of the Finnish government’s policy of language promotion, and with the opening of Russia it has been possible to reach the eastern Finno-Ugrians. A teacher from Finland has worked continuously in Petroskoi (Petrozavodsk), the capital of Karelia, while such instructors work or have worked in Saransk, Ioshkar-Ola, Izhkar, Syktyvkar, and also Tver’ (serving the Tver’ Karelians). There have been some interruptions, however, as various local conditions have forced some eastern Finno-Ugrian universities to put Finnish language programs on hold. In the 1990s, Helsinki and Turku Universities kept up a joint rotation of Erzia, Moksha, Mari, Udmurt, and Komi lecturers.

Folklore performance, exhibition, and seminar exchanges between Finland and the eastern Finno-Ugrian groups are numerous. One of the highest state-level visits has been that of the Finnish Minister of Education to Mariel in 1994. Finland’s relations with the eastern Finno-Ugrians may be lower key than Hungary’s, but there is more substance in terms of financing. The Consultative Committee of the Finno-Ugrian Peoples has its headquarters in Helsinki—and more precisely in the rooms of the Finnish–Russian Friendship Society, which also supplies secretarial help. A major impediment to interaction is language—even fewer Finns than Hungarians know Russian, and few eastern Finno-Ugrians outside of Karelia know Finnish or English.

Karelia and the nearby Finnic populations remain a special case.¹⁵ Since the fall of the USSR, economic interaction has become not only a goal but a modest reality. Finnair flights to Petroskoi started in 1994; the Nordic mobile telephone network has been extended across the border; and rail connections are being built. A fluid frontier zone, somewhat analogous to the US–Mexican *frontera* may loom. Yet, this is interaction with a Karelia where the Finnic component has been reduced to a mere 12% by Russian in-migration mainly during the Soviet period.

Further east, Finland may focus on Komimu, which has a similar northern location, leaving the more southern and eastern areas to Hungary and Estonia. As the Finno-Ugrian specialist, Riho Grünthal has stated: “For a Finn a visit to linguistic kin in Central Russia offers above all the satisfaction of cultural curiosity. For a Finno-Ugrian from Russia, however, contact with linguistic kin is an attempt to find solutions to his numerous ethno-cultural and economic problems.”¹⁶ The relationships are obviously asymmetric. The “kindred peoples” activities, if left to dominate, could impede Finland’s more direct interaction with its Russian Karelian neighbor. Thus in future, some of Finland’s programs in this latter region could be better left outside even the Castrén Society and SKONK to organizations such as the Finland Society, which deals mainly with Finns abroad, or to various specialized ethnic associations, such as the Ingrian Finnish Union, the Karelian Union, the Karelian Educational Society, and the Tver’ Karelians’ Friendship Society.

Saami Relations

Of the approximately 50,000–60,000 Saami, most live in Norway and Sweden, and some in Finland. Only about 3% live on the Kola Peninsula of the Russian Federation. In recent decades, Nordic attitudes toward the Saami have improved, and a worldwide Saami Council, founded in 1956, has gained some recognition. A common literary standard has been agreed upon since 1978 for the predominant Northern Saami language in all three Nordic countries.

The Kola Saami Association was formed in 1989 and has joined the Saami Council. Contacts with western Saami have expanded, ranging from cultural and herding advice to political organizations. Debates continue whether to join the Latin-script Northern Saami standard or try to maintain the Cyrillic-script Kildin variety that dominates on Kola. Even apart from the difference in script, the spoken Kildin Saami language is more distinct from Northern Saami than Estonian is from Finnish. The languages are not mutually intelligible, but given that few Kola children can speak Saami the issue may be moot. Courses in Northern Saami in Murmansk and the inland settlement of Lovozero have taken place for several years now.

Relations with Estonia

Compared with Hungary and Finland, Estonia should be less foreign to the eastern Finno-Ugrians and more of a role model because of its small population and shared 50-year history of direct Soviet rule. Many Estonians have come to know Russian, which makes communication with eastern Finno-Ugrians feasible. The Estonians also know Soviet practices and mentality and exhibit them more than they would like to admit. What one million Estonians have achieved in terms of national culture might just be feasible for half a million Udmurts or Mari, whereas Finland's and Hungary's populations of five and ten million, respectively, put comparisons in a different sphere.

The Estonian experience in terms of the development of a literary language and the nation's situation as an interface between two neighbors offer further insights. Estonian began with two literary standards, which fused only in the 1800s. The same problem bedevils and weakens most eastern Finno-Ugrian languages—Mari, Komi, Mordvin (Moksha and Erzia), Karelian, and Khanty. The way Estonians overcame their linguistic division may offer ideas, though not a blueprint, to the eastern Finno-Ugrians. The development of Estonian also profited from the competition between the Catholic Poles and Lutheran Swedes in the 1600s, and between the Lutheran German upper class and the Orthodox tsars in the 1800s. Such competition made “worthless peasant souls” valuable, and both sides tried to offer religious literature in Estonian. As the Turkic Tatars, Bashkorts (Bashkirs), and Chuvash on the Volga acquire more clout, the Finno-Ugrians might look for opportunities offered by the Russian–Turkic interface.

Thanks to the Soviet occupation, Estonia's contacts with the eastern Finno-Ugrians actually increased between 1950 and 1980. In particular, a number of eastern Finno-Ugrians did graduate work in linguistics at Tartu University, under the guidance of Paul Ariste (1905–1990). They established personal contacts, which, once sanctioned, grew rapidly and continue to this day.¹⁷

In Estonia, the Fenno-Ugria Foundation plays a role analogous to the Castrén Society in Finland.¹⁸ Founded in 1927, mainly for interaction between Finland and Hungary, and closed down by Soviet occupation in 1940, it resumed its activities in 1991. Member organizations include appropriate departments at universities, colleges, museums and the Academy of Sciences, as well as friendship organizations (Estonian–Hungarian, Estonian–Saami) and minority associations (Ingrian Finnish, Mordvin, Hungarian). The Estonian–Mari Association involves both local Mari and interested Estonians. An Academic Kindred People's Club, first founded in 1920 and shut down during Soviet occupation, re-emerged in the university city of Tartu in 1997. The Information Center of Finno-Ugrian Peoples (SURI) branched off from Fenno-Ugria in 1996.

Part of Fenno-Ugria's sparse budget comes from government funds. It organizes the yearly Kindred Peoples' Days as well as various folklore events and visits. Along with universities, it helps eastern Finno-Ugrian exchange students to adjust. In 1996 the Estonian-language *Fenno-Ugria Infoleht* (Finno-Ugrian Information Newsletter) began to include several pages of abstracts in English, including a listing of future events—some five events per month, including functions from Hungary to Udmurtia. In October 1996, this became a separate quarterly, issued by SURI both in English and in Russian: *Uralic Contacts/Ural'skie Kontakty*. It also includes texts of documents and abstracts of relevant articles in Estonian-language journals.

Since hosting Mariel's president in 1992, government-level interactions have been more subdued. An Estonian parliamentary delegation, headed by the parliament's vice-chair, visited Mariel in March 1996. Moscow bears some grudge against Estonia for contributing to the break-up of the USSR, and while it has not blocked all contacts, many Estonian researchers and activists have been denied visas.¹⁹ In particular, since November 1995, Fenno-Ugria director Jaak Prozes and the CCFUP coordinator Andres Heinapuu have consistently been refused entry, which has hampered cooperation.

Fortunately, eastern Finno-Ugrian students have kept coming to Estonia. The first 40 Mari and Udmurt students arrived in 1992. As of 1997, there were about 100, studying linguistics, rural engineering (as stipulated by the home republic in some cases), and journalism, and gradually discovering fields like social sciences. Cultural agreements came into force first with Mariel and later with Komimu. Despite the lack of a formal agreement between Udmurtia and Estonia, Udmurt students also arrived early on. Mordovia's Ministry of Education signed an educational cooperation agreement with the Estonian Mordvinian Association in 1996, but few students have come to Estonia. Estonia insists that potential students should know the

republic's titular language, which, at least in one case, caused disappointment to the Russian-speaking leaders of the republic when they discovered that their own children did not qualify for what is meant to be a Finno-Ugrian endeavor. Nonetheless several students have slipped through who do not know their ancestral language. After 1997 the numbers have been decreasing, though the flow continues.

The eastern Finno-Ugrian students in Estonia have published a joint occasional magazine, lately under the name *Vita Studiosi*. The fifth issue in 1997 included Estonian-language writings by Komi, Udmurt, and Mari students, and Mari-language contributions, some in standard Cyrillic and some in experimental Latin scripts. One of the latter preferred the English approach to transliteration while the second used the Hungarian format (sh, ch, zh, etc., compared to s, cs, zs, etc.).

A major Finno-Ugrian event in Estonia was the Sixth Finno-Ugrian Folklore Festival in July 1997. It started in Tartu, but then purposefully spread out so as to expose the eastern participants to rural and small-town Estonia, which is more in line with their own home surroundings. The performers were a mixed bag. Kauksi Ülle, head of Fenno-Ugria's Tartu branch, said, "We can request a specific authentic ensemble, but it can happen that what we get is a not very authentic group from the [republic's decision maker's] cousin's home village. The Estonian organizers could not afford to pay the travel costs and hence could not assert their choice. ... Besides the one-third [that is made up of] "cousins", there still is another third that is quite authentic, and another third whom the Estonian experience might motivate to become so."²⁰

The Ninth World Congress of Fenno-Ugristics in Tartu in August 2000 brought together hundreds of scholars from east and west. It seemed more focused on linguistic and folkloric issues than the previous congress in Jyväskylä, with history and current issues little in evidence. The flags of the eastern Finno-Ugrian peoples and the Saami flew in front of the main university building, along with the state flags of the scholars participating.

Impressions of Mari, Udmurt, and Komi Students in Estonia²¹

Despite Estonia's exposure to Soviet practices, exchange students from eastern Finno-Ugrian ethnic groups feel very much out of place and find it easier to befriend local Russians than Estonians. One reason is that they are all fluent in Russian and hesitant in Estonian, but they also find most Estonians puzzlingly cold. A 1996 sociological inquiry of 50 Mari students gave the following results.

Only 65% wrote in Mari, and 6% spoke it very poorly by their own estimate. Mari literature was read frequently by 22% and never by 18%. Their best friends in Estonia were also Mari (80%) or Russians (18%). Daily interactions occurred mainly with Mari (90%), but also with Russians and Estonians on an even basis (45% each). Interaction with Estonians never occurs for 7% and with Russians for 12%. When asked if they would return to their homeland after graduation, about 50% were

definite that they would, 40% were hesitant, and about 8% did not want to.²²

The problems they voiced were multiple. At the top of the list was chaotic scholarship payments from the home republics, problems with residence permits, and university offerings different from requirements back home. Also noted was a lack of knowledge of foreign languages, poor integration into Estonian society, and false information about Mari and Estonian history and the situation of Russians in Estonia. Slow mail and haphazard newspapers from their homeland, weak Mari language knowledge on the part of some fellow students, and a lack of student associations through which they could meet were further annoyances.²³ Many lamented the lack of interest in them from their home republics, except for the unhealthy interest from the Mariel federal security services (FSB, the successor to the KGB).

The lack of fitting in is obvious. But even without fully adjusting to Estonia, the students tended to delay their return home. A budding radio journalist found it hard to accept that during his summer employment back home in Russia he had to write out his entire script in order for it to be censored by the editors and then read by a special announcer. At Tartu Radio in Estonia, he had become used to broadcasting directly from his own notes, with no prescreening. Another student was shocked when upon her return to Izhdar, Russian officials and bystanders upbraided her for speaking Udmurt with a friend in public places. Such language suppression occurs in Udmurtia, but in Estonia she was used to speaking Udmurt with friends in the streets of Tartu. Still another student observed that in Estonia underlings dare voice opinions different from those of their superiors. He wondered why it was not so back home.²⁴ “Wherever you look [in Tartu], the eye enjoys it. The streets are so clean. Everywhere people are polite, and—I’m ashamed to admit it—it makes me wonder: have they formally studied the art of intercommunication? I guess not; politeness is internalized. And I often think: why can’t it be so in Russia?”²⁵ Western visitors to Estonia may have a reverse impression, because there tends to be a geographical gradient in such things, from the Atlantic to the Urals. Yet this is a moot point when evaluating eastern impressions. Will the eastern Finno-Ugrian students who have studied west of Russia later be fruitful contributors to their home societies, provided they return, or will they be misfits? Perhaps they will exhibit both tendencies simultaneously.

Conclusion

The question of reintegrating into one’s native culture after a foreign exchange applies to all foreign contacts. Even the intra-federation cooperation of eastern Finno-Ugrians, though in a more diffuse form, upset the Russian-dominated *status quo* and could bring quite a backlash against the perceived “uppity natives.” Yet the *status quo* itself is unstable—witness the crumbling of the USSR.

In the 1990s, eastern Finno-Ugrian ethnic groups developed foreign relations and cooperation with surprising speed and strength, given that just a few years earlier the

authorities ruthlessly suppressed the slightest trace of such cooperation. An inspection of the topics and issues shows that the main focus of foreign relations was cultural and educational, and they extended to social and political spheres only in so much as they overlapped with the cultural sphere. Economic aspects hardly existed, unless one includes limited Finnish investment that went more to St Petersburg than to Karelia. The eastern Finno-Ugrians attempted to rebuild cultural and educational institutions, crushed in the late 1930s, within an all-Russian socioeconomic and political framework that they hardly could influence. At best, they could slightly affect their republics' autonomy and the non-Russian stake in it.

Could the cultural endeavors, if successful, expand to political goals beyond republic autonomy? For this to happen, it would take a broader change more fundamental than the collapse of the USSR, given Finno-Ugrian location and demography. Moreover, how do the eastern Finno-Ugrian cultural strivings, including Finno-Ugrian cooperation and foreign relations, matter to the world at large? They contribute to establishing a new, more stable constellation in the Russian Federation, one no longer based on centralization, oppression, and fear but genuine federalism, tolerance, and rule of law, without which "democracy" remains an empty word. The results are by no means guaranteed. Precisely because of their weakness, the eastern Finno-Ugrians are playing the role of the miners' canary. Should this canary suffocate, Russian democracy is in serious trouble.

NOTES

1. For a short overview of Finno-Ugrian languages and peoples, including statistics and a map, see Seppo Lallukka's article "Finno-Ugrians of Russia: Vanishing Cultural Communities?" in this special issue. For a longer version, see Rein Taagepera, *The Finno-Ugric Republics and the Russian State* (London: Hurst, 1999). The history of the interactions of Finno-Ugrian peoples may be found in Sirkka Saarinen, "The Myth of a Finno-Ugrian Community in Practice," in this special issue.
2. Further details and sources for this section are given in Taagepera, *op. cit.* See also various issues of *Uralic Contacts* and *Fenno-Ugria Infoleht*. I thank Ott Kurs, Seppo Lallukka, and Jaak Prozes for providing me with various kinds of information. My greatest thanks go to Andres Heinapuu for his detailed comments on a draft of this article.
3. Heikki Leskinen, ed., *Congressus Octavus Internationalis Fenno-Ugristarum*, Vols. I and II (Jyväskylä, 1995).
4. Later an Association of Finno-Ugrian Literatures was formed, headed in the late 1990s by the Estonian writer Arvo Valton.
5. Indigenous place names and constructs are used here, followed by the Russian ones, if different, in parentheses. Some, like Izhkar (Izhevsk) have begun to appear in such contexts as multilingual tourist brochures. To avoid tiresome repetition of "republic" and "autonomous *okrug*," forms like "Khanty-Mansia" are used when possible. In line with contractions like "Bangladesh" (officially "Bangla Desh"), "Mariel" (Mari Land) is used, and also "Komimu" (Komi Land) for the Komi Republic. [Mordvin is used to describe the Erzia and Moksha collectively, though it is recognized that some people find this term

- offensive. An alternative, “Moksherzian”, has not been widely accepted by either group, though it does have certain proponents—The editors].
6. *Uralic Contacts*, No. 2, 1997, p. 7.
 7. Igor’ Sadovin, “Khronika nauchnoi i kul’turnoi zhizni finno-ugorskogo mira 1987–1993 g.,” *Finno-ugrovedenie*, No. 1, 1994, pp. 153–159.
 8. Further details and sources for this section are given in Taagepera, *op. cit.* See also *Uralic Contacts* and *Fenno-Ugria Infoleht*.
 9. Sándor Csúcs and Rita Mayer, “Ungari ja soome-ugri väikerahvad,” in *Hõimusedemed* (Tallinn: SURI, forthcoming); Also, *Fenno-Ugria Infoleht*, No. 3, 1997.
 10. These sites can be found at (www.suri.ee), (www.suri.ee/coco.html), and (www.suri.ee/uc), respectively. As usual, the Mari have excelled at promoting themselves in hyper-space; (www.mari.su) is a good place to start. To sign up for a Mari mailing list, a message can be sent to majordomo@cc.jyu.fi stating “subscribe marij <your e-mail address>.”
 11. This section is based on Csúcs and Mayer, “Ungari ja soome-ugri väikerahvad.”
 12. *Ibid.*
 13. In A. S. Efremov, N. N. Isanbaev, and S. S. Sabitov, eds, *Vengerskie uchenye o Mariiskom krae i narode* (Ioshkar-Ola: Mariiskii nauchno-issledovatel’skii institut, 1990), especially the chapter by I. S. Galkin, “Iz istorii vengersko-mariiskikh sviazei,” pp. 3–17.
 14. A main source for this section is Riho Grünthal, “Soome suhted Venemaa soomeugri-lastega 20. sajandi lõpul,” in *Hõimusedemed* (Tallinn: SURI, forthcoming).
 15. See the chapter on Karelia co-authored by Ott Kurs in Taagepera, *op. cit.*, pp. 100–146.
 16. Grünthal, “Soome suhted Venemaa.”
 17. These contacts, for example, helped to expose the local police murder of Khanty activist Prokopi Antonovich Sopochin in March 1993, because an Estonian folklorist happened to be visiting at the time and was able to involve the foreign press. See Piret Tali, “Kuidas Siberis hante tapetakse,” *Postimees* (Tartu), 29 April 1993; also Taagepera, *op. cit.*, pp. 9–12.
 18. Refer to its internet pages at (haldjas.folklore.ee/ugri/fu/).
 19. This author also numbers among those repeatedly denied a visa.
 20. *Postimees* (Tartu), 23 July 1997.
 21. Twice, in 1996 and 1997, this author taught a special course for the eastern Finno-Ugrian students at Tartu University, encouraging them to submit short pieces to their native-language press back home, while also handing in Estonian-language versions for comments. I invited them to my apartment and summer cottage and received counter-invitations to their dormitory rooms. They were a friendly group with limited city skills and hence limited initiative. On two occasions they asked me for emergency travel money to return home and to attend a seminar in Hungary, funds that they later duly repaid. Those dependent on payments from their home republics have at times been in dire straits. Help from the Castrén Society was invaluable; it has now been replaced by Estonian state funds.
 22. Jaak Prozes, “On the Situation of the Finno-Ugrian Students in Estonia,” *Fenno-Ugria Infoleht*, No. 2, 1996, pp. 10–12.
 23. *Ibid.* The latter complaint illustrates limited initiative: they tended to wait for someone else to organize them.
 24. From course papers and conversations.
 25. *Vita Studiosi*, No. 5, 1997, p. 6.