

Ethnogeographic metamorphosis of East Karelia during the 20th century

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Introduction

The Finnish-Russian struggle over East Karelia is one of the forgotten conflicts of Eastern Europe. Despite its 108 years under Russian rule, and unlike it the case of the Baltic states that are closely related to it, Hungarian scholars usually do not view Finland as a part of Eastern or „East-Central” Europe. Despite its more prosperous Cold War history, Finland’s pre-1945 history more common features with the rest of Eastern Europe than most Hungarian scholars usually realize. Besides the red-white civil war of 1918, the issue of Eastern Karelia is also a typically Eastern-European story. Eastern Karelia, populated by Greek-Orthodox Finns under heavy russification policies in imperial Russia, was in the spotlight of Finnish romantic nationalism throughout most of the 19th century. After the Russian revolutions, it became a clash point of Finnish territorial aspirations on one hand, that were based on ethnogeographic principles, as well as on the right of self determination, and Soviet assimilation policies on the other hand - a typical Eastern-European ethnic and territorial conflict. An other issue that makes East Karelia special is that there was one of Europe’s most intensive assimilation and settlement policies that already started during the inter war period, but reached its peak in the 1960s. Due to this, East Karelia, once a homogenous ethnolinguistic area of Karelians, became an overwhelmingly Russian territory by today, with only a rapidly assimilating small Karelian minority, living in scattered pockets throughout the republic.

The stabilization of historical political boundaries in the region

The area that forms Finland, the Republic of Karelia, as well as Murmansk, Archangelsk, and Lenigrad oblasts of Russia today, was a homogenous Finnic linguistic area in the early medieval times. It was bordered by the ancient Scandinavians in the West, the ancient Slavs in the South, and the Permians in the East.¹

The political, socio-cultural, and religious boundaries of the region were formed later by the struggle between Russia and Sweden. By the 12th century the tribes living in the southwest of present day Finland became the vassals of Sweden and the ones around Lake Ladoga and Lake Onega the vassals of Novgorod. From these strongholds the Russians started their expansion to the North and to the West, while the Swedes to the North and to the East, both sides mobilizing their Finnic vassals for these aims as well. From the mid 13th century, present day Eastern Finland became a war-thorn frontier between the Swedes and the Russians. Between 1191 and 1240, four wars were fought in this area, in which the Finnic vassals of both sides took part against each other. After the decades of war, the political border was settled at last by the the 14th century, for the first time by the Treaty of Nöteborg in 1323. The border run near the present day Russian-Finnish boundary, roughly along the Vyborg-Savonlinna line. On the Swedish side of the border, the most significant fortification was Viipuri/Viborg by the Gulf of Finland, while on the Russian side Korela, later known as Käkisalmi/Kexholm by Lake Ladoga.²

A less known episode is that the Russians have only manage to subjugate the group of Karelians living by the White Sea much later, only in the second half of the 14th century. This Karelian duchy, extending from the Kem (Vienan Kemi) river in the west to the Northern Dvina (Viena)

¹ uralica.com: Finno-ugric Distribution in 13-14AD

² Homén 1921, p. 106.-111.

river in the east along the coast of the White Sea was isolated from the Karelians around the Ladoga and Onega lakes by a belt of sparsely inhabited taiga. Ancient Russian sources call this land „Zavolochia”, the land „beyond the forest belt”. This group of the Karelians had intensive contact with the Norwegians by maritime trade until the 13th century. Norwegian sources call this area „Bjarmia” or „Bjarmaland”, and consider it as an independent kingdom. The last time when Norwegian sources mention a king of Bjarmia is 1216. Russian-Novgorodian sources call Zavolochia their vassal for the first time in 1265, but wars between the Russians and the White Sea Karelians were fought as late as the 14th century. The last time when the White Sea Karelians managed to defeat the Russians was in 1342, but the lower reaches of the Northern Dvina river was a scene of fierce fighting as late as 1364-1365. The area was pacified at last by the end of the 14th century.³

So, by the mid 14th century, the Russo-Swedish border was settled in the area, determining the sociocultural and religious partition of the region for the coming centuries, up to today. The Treaty of Teusina in 1595 basically confirmed this border, but settling the line further in the North.⁴

From this point, until the 20th century, only two major changes occurred. One of them was the Treaty of Stolbova that transferred Western Karelia around Lake Ladoga, as well as Ingria to Sweden. The only major premodern politically motivated population resettlement in the region happened in connection with it. Due to religious discrimination, masses of inhabitants who were Finnish-speaking, but Orthodox in faith escaped from the transferred provinces to Russia that gave them asylum. Most of these refugees settled in the region of Tver, and became the Tver Karelians, a distinct ethnic group that successfully maintained its language and identity until the 20th century. The fled Orthodox population was replaced by Lutheran Finns who soon became to form the majority in both Western Karelia and Ingria. This was the birth of the double meaning of the name „Karelia”. On one hand, Western Karelia, North and West of Lake Ladoga as well as on the isthmus between the lake and the Gulf of Finland, inhabited by a Finnish-speaking population with a Scandinavian social structure and Lutheran religion, and on the other hand Eastern Karelia extending from the Ladoga and Onega lakes to the White Sea and the Kola peninsula, with a population who were Finnish speakers as well, but had a Russian style social structure, and Orthodox religion.⁵

The second significant change happened after the Great Northern War of 1700-1721. After the war, the tsar Peter the Great annexed Ingria and Western Karelia. The transformation was caused not by the annexation though, but the different Russian treatment of the two provinces. In Western Karelia, Russia left the Scandinavian social structure and the population intact, while in Ingria, the new capital, Saint Petersburg was founded, and heavy Russification began.⁶ So while in the east the border between Eastern and Western Karelia was the sociocultural boundary between East and West, at the same time in the south the border between Western Karelia and Ingria started to fill the same role. This sociocultural boundary remained intact until 1940, regardless of political changes in the region.

Karelians, Vepsians, and the Kola Sámi

Ethnocultural relations between the Finns and the Karelians can be compared to three Southeast European examples: The Czechs and Slovaks, the Croats and Serbs, and the relations of standard magyars to the Csángós of Moldavia. Similar to the Czech-Slovak and Croat-Serb linguistic relations, it is a subject of debate if Karelian is only a dialect of Finnish, or a language on its own. The two languages form a continuum of dialects, where the easternmost Finnish dialect, the Savonian, and the neighbouring North Karelian dialect are closer to each other, than the former to

³ Homén 1921, p. 108.-109.

⁴ Homén 1921, p. 112.

⁵ Homén 1921, p. 113.

⁶ Mickwitz 2007, p. 115.-117.

the dialects of Western Finland, and the latter to Karelian dialects along Lake Onega.⁷ Today most linguists consider Karelian a language on its own, but the degree of uncertainty is shown by the fact that the official language of the Karelian ASSR was mostly the standard Finnish, and not the Karelian language.⁸

Similar to Croat-Serb relations the linguistically almost identical Finnish and Karelian population is divided by the sociocultural border between Western and Eastern Christianity that Huntington views as the eastern boundary of the Western Civilization.⁹ While the Finns were Roman Catholic at first, and become Lutheran after the reformation, the Karelians are Orthodox Christians. However, the Finnish-Karelian issue is significantly different from the Croat-Serb one: while in the case of Croats and Serbs, the cultural differences had the most heavy political impact during the 20th century, in the case of the Finns and Karelians, armed conflicts ideologized by religious differences occurred between the 12th and 16th centuries.¹⁰ In this period, Finnish and Karelian parties engaged in actions against each other under Swedish and Russian banners. Despite their common language, in these centuries the Finns viewed the Karelians as „Russians”, while the Karelians viewed the Finns as „Swedes”. Finland made up a large portion of both the area and population of the Kingdom of Sweden, while Karelia had a similar significance within the Republic of Novgorod. After Novgorod was subjugated by Moscow however, the significance of the Karelians in the new unified Russia became marginal.¹¹ At last the imperial Russian conquest of Finland in 1809 closed such hostilities once and for all. Since Finns were the subjects of the Russian tsar as well as the Karelians, from that time hostility became pointless. By the mid 19th century, hostile sentiments between the Finns and Karelians completely disappeared. This period also coincides with the emergence of 19th century ethnocentric nationalism throughout Europe that made the Finnish intelligentsia to discover the Karelians, and start to view them as fellow Finns who were artificially broken away from the bulk of the nation by the political borders. Despite its negative consequences, the 1809 Russian conquest of Finland provided ideal political frames for this. The two ethnic groups that were the subjects of two great powers hostile to each other, and divided by an „iron curtain” were in this period the part of the same empire, and divided only by an internal administrative boundary.

Finnish-Karelian relations have become similar to the Czech-Slovak one during the 19th century. Similar to the Czechs, the Finns as citizens of the Grand Duchy of Finland, also had a political identity of a nation on their own. The Karelians however, had no such identity, lacked an own nobility and urban elite, and were integrated to the Russian society as deeply, as the Slovaks to the Hungarian society.

The demographic balance between the Finnish and Karelian population, however, was disturbed during the 19th-20th centuries, due to the rapid Russification of the Karelians. While the Czechs and Slovaks both represent a population of several millions of people now as well as during the 19th century, compared to the Finns, the demographic significance of the Karelians were steadily decreasing for centuries by now. The Swedisation of Finns from the beginnings a slow and limited process from the beginnings, and was at first stopped, and then soon reversed after 1809. Due to this Lutheran Finns are dominant in almost all those areas now, where they were five hundred years ago. The Russification and the decline of the Karelian linguistic area however, was a steady process from the medieval times up to our days. In the 15th-16th centuries, the Karelian linguistic area (including the Izhorians and the Vepsians) extended from the present day Estonian border in the west, to the Northern Dvina River and Archangelsk in the east, and the Beloye Ozero in the south, covering a larger geographic territory than the size of contemporary Finnish linguistic area.¹² By the early 20th century however, it shrunk to the western half of the area of present day Republic of

⁷ Taagpera 1999, p. 110.

⁸ Laine 2000, p. 10.-11.

⁹ Romsics 1998, p. 30.

¹⁰ Homén 1921, p. 110.-113.

¹¹ Tägil 1995, p. 218.

¹² uralica.com: Finno-ugric Distribution in 15-16AD

Karelia. By the end of the century, even that homogenous linguistic area broke up to scattered pockets. The balance between Finns and Karelians become 10:1 by the beginning of the 20th century, and then 100:1 by the end of the century.

Due to this process, relations between the Finns and Karelians became similar to that of standard Magyars and Csángós by today, where on one hand, there is a nation forming an independent country, while on the other hand, there is a small, rapidly assimilating ethnic group with a weak identity, only linguistically related to it.

The Kola Peninsula is the Northern neighbour of Eastern Karelia. In fact, this region is the Russian section of Lapland, and the Kola Sámi are distinct from the Scandinavian Sámi especially due to their Orthodox Christian religion, same as the difference between Karelians and Finns. Regarding its history, we would have reason to call this area „Karelian Lapland” as well, since many of the medieval and early modern Russian expeditions exploring this area were made up by Karelians.¹³

An interesting ethnic group is formed by the Tver Karelians. After the Treaty of Stoblova in 1617 masses of Orthodox Karelians have escaped from Swedish-conquered Western Karelia and Ingria, to avoid religious persecution. The Russian government settled most of these refugees in the region of Tver. Here they managed to sustain their identity until the 20th century. In the beginning of the century the number of Tver Karelians was in fact one and a half times as much, as the number of Karelians living in Eastern Karelia. Due to extremely intensive assimilation, however, they have almost completely disappeared by the end of the century.¹⁴

Last but not least, we shall mention the Vepsians as well. The Vepsians are the native Finno-Ugric ethnic group southwest of Lake Onega, their traditional territory extending from the southeastern part of eastern Karelia deeply into the neighbouring Russian regions. Their language is different from Finnish by such a degree that unlike Karelian, it is with no doubt a language on its own.¹⁵ The Vepsians are an ethnic group distinct from the Karelians, who are probably the descendants of the pre-Russian Finno-Ugric indigenous population of the present day Saint Petersburg-Tver-Vologda triangle.¹⁶

Turn of the 19th-20th centuries

The „Karelia fever”

During the 19th century, the interest in Eastern Karelia was growing in Finland. In the age of European ethnocentric nationalisms, it became natural that the Finns have started to view the Karelians as members of their own nation. The interest was especially stimulated by the fact that Lönnrot collected most of the Kalevala in Eastern Karelia. The interest towards Eastern Karelia took different forms. It encouraged the society of the autonomous Grand Duchy of Finland, to try to help the Karelians, who lacked any kind of such autonomy, to protect their Finnic identity against further Russification. Non governmental projects tried to establish a Finnish school system in Eastern Karelian areas for this purpose. As a reaction, the Russian Orthodox Church took steps to expand the Russian school system in the region. An other form of the „Karelia fever” was the idea of Greater Finland. Similar to contemporary ethnically based unification projects, such as the Czechoslovak, or the Yugoslav concept, the idea of Greater Finland advocated the annexion of Eastern Karelia and the Sámi Kola Peninsula by Finland. Besides the ethnogeographical facts, the demand was also supported by geographical arguments, since a new border attaching the Gulf of Finland, Lake Ladoga, Lake Onega, and the southernmost tip of the White Sea would have resulted in a Finnish state mostly bordered by seas and lakes, and connected to Russia only by three narrow isthmuses. (One between the Gulf of Finland and Lake Ladoga, the second between Lake Ladoga and Lake Onega, and the third one between Lake Onega and the White sea.) This geographical

¹³ Homén 1921, p. 30.

¹⁴ Viires and Vahtre 1993, The Karelians (<http://www.eki.ee/books/redbook/Karelians.shtml>)

¹⁵ Viires and Vahtre 1993, The Veps (<http://www.eki.ee/books/redbook/veps.shtml>)

¹⁶ Wiik 2008, p. 318.-319.

argument viewed Eastern Karelia and the Kola Peninsula as areas attached to Finland, and separated from Russia even by natural geography.¹⁷

Ethnogeographical conditions in Eastern Karelia at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries

In the beginning of the 20th century the eastern boundaries of the Karelian linguistic area was the river Svir, Lake Onega, river Vyg, and the White Sea. Even this boundary was a result of centuries of decline though. In the 16th century, the eastern boundary of the Karelian linguistic area was the Northern Dvina River, and due to this, it was directly neighbouring the Nenets and Komi-Zyrian linguistic areas. In this period, only the mouths of the Onega and Northern Dvina rivers have represented Russian speaking pockets in the region.¹⁸ Of course, these conditions did not have much political significance at that time, since in that age, religion and feudal ties were more important factors determining someone's identity, than language was. From that point of view, Orthodox Karelians were viewed as Russians. Karelians had a key role in the medieval Russian colonization of the far north, as well as in Russian campaigns against Swedish Finland and Northern Norway. Contemporary sources however, seldom make distinction between Finnic and Slavic members of such expeditions.¹⁹ In the following centuries the lands along the Northern Dvina and Onega rivers as well as the Southeastern shores of the White Sea have become russified.²⁰ So, by the beginning of the 19th century, the linguistic area shranked to what is the Republic of Karelia today. East of this line only the Onega peninsula in the White Sea remained as a larger Finnic speaking pocket. Then, during the next one hundred years, by the beginning of the 20th century areas around Lake Onega have become Russified, as well as the Onega peninsula,²¹ and also significant parts of coastal areas now on the western side of the White Sea.²²

At the turn of the century, Eastern Karelia consisted of four uyezds of two governorates. Kem uyezd of the Archangelsk governorate in the north, and Povenets, Petrozavodsk, and Olonets uyezds of the Olonets governorate in the south. The most important account of ethnogeographical conditions of that time was the Russian census of 1897. Accordingly the ethnic composition of the four uyezds was as following:

1. Ethnic composition of the four Uyezds of Eastern Karelia in 1897 (Homén 1921, p. 126.)

	Karelian	Finnish	Veps	Russian	other	total
Olonets	28532 71,35%	581 1,45%	13 0,03%	10794 26,99%	70 0,18%	39990 100,00%
Petrozavodsk	17643 22,13%	837 1,05%	7271 9,12%	53516 67,14%	445 0,56%	79712 100,00%
Povenets	13106 49,68%	190 0,72%	5 0,02%	13036 49,41%	44 0,17%	26381 100,00%
Kem	19236 54,35%	161 0,45%	9 0,03%	15926 45,00%	60 0,17%	35392 100,00%
total	78517 43,27%	1769 0,97%	7298 4,02%	93272 51,40%	619 0,34%	181475 100,00%

According to the census, Karelian and Russian-speaking areas were separated by a clear linguistic boundary at this time. In Kem, Povenets, and Petrozavodsk uyezds, the western half of these provinces was homogenous Finnic linguistic area, while their eastern territories were Russian. In

¹⁷ Laine 2000, p. 3.-6.

¹⁸ uralica.com: Finno-ugric Distribution in 15-16AD

¹⁹ Homén 1921, p. 30.

²⁰ Homén 1921, p. 113.

²¹ Laine 2000, p. 5.

²² Homén 1921, p. 113.

Olonets uyezd, there was a similar north-south divide, with Finnic in the northern, and Russian in the southern part of the uyezd.²³

As usual, the two politically motivated participants did not accept the same statistics. While the results of the 1897 census were the legitimate statistics for the Russians, the Finns did not accept those. The Finns pointed out that in the 1897 census, anyone who could speak Russian, could have easily been registered as a Russian, and that on the local level, even Russian authorities have admitted that the real ethnic composition can be different from the results of the census. So, instead of the census, the Finns took the results of 1907-1908 surveys as guidelines to determine the true ethnic composition of Eastern Karelia. These indicated a significantly higher number of Karelians and Vepsians in the region. The surveys, however, give exact ethnic composition only for the parishes of Kem uyezd, and for the other three uyezds, they only note if a parish was Karelian, Russian, Veps, or bilingual, and that if it was bilingual, then which language formed the majority, and which one formed the minority, or whether they were equally represented.²⁴

So, if we want to estimate the ethnic composition of Eastern Karelia, according to these surveys as well, we have to rely on such inaccurate figures, and the results should be treated in aware of that.

Lacking more accurate figures, we can view the population of homogenously Karelian or homogenously Russian parishes as exclusively Karelian or Russian, while in multilingual parishes with a local majority and local minority language, we can estimate the local majority language as 80% of the population and the minority language as 20% of the population, and at, but not least, in multilingual parishes with no clear majority, we can make an estimate of 50-50%. According to this method, regarding the survey of 1907-1908, for Olonets uyezd, we would get 76.4% Karelians, 16.9% Russians, and 6.7% Vepsians, for Petrozavodsk uyezd 57.4% Russians, 22.7% Karelians, and 19.9% Vepsians, and to Povenets uyezds 51.9% Karelians and 48.1% Russians. Regarding the whole of Eastern Karelia, we can get an estimate result if we summarize the estimated figures of these three uyezds, and we add the more exact survey results regarding Kem uyezd (66.34 % Karelian, 33.66% Russian) as well. Like this, for the total 217.000 population of Eastern Karelia in 1907-1908, we get 102 000 Karelians, forming 47% of the population, 92 900 Russians, forming 42.8%, and 22 100 Vepsians, forming 10.2%.

Since statistics accepted by different, politically motivated participants can be significantly different from each other, we can regard the differences between the figures of the Russian census, and figures based of Finnish estimates as limited and moderate. The difference is limited regarding the total proportion of Karelians (43% vs. 47%) as well as regarding their proportion in Petrozavodsk, Povenets, and Olonets uyezds (21/23%, 49/52%, and 71/76%). There is a significant difference however, in the case of Karelians in Kem uyezd (54% vs 66%) and in the total number of Vepsians, who formed only 4% of the population according to the Russian census, but could have numbered more than 10% according to the Finnish statistics.

²³ Homén 1921, p. 130.

²⁴ Homén 1921, p. 126.-129.

Map 1. The four uyezds and the linguistic boundary in the early 20th century (Source of data shown: Homén, 1921)



Such anomalies are usually explained by the presence of high numbers of multilingual people, or people with multiple identities. In the case of the Vepsians and Kem uyezd, we can find this phenomenon at both. The Vepsians have reached an advanced state of Russification by the beginning of the 20th century, so that in the inter war period, their number according to Finnish estimates was almost double of that according to the official Soviet censuses.²⁵ In Kem uyezd, the Karelian coastal inhabitants along the shores of the White Sea were in a similar situation, and the population of bilingual coastal parishes made up not less than 32% of the total population of the uyezd.²⁶ Regarding the Vepsians, a good example is the Olonets uyezd. The census of 1897 registered only thirteen Vepsians in the uyezd. A 1902 survey, however estimated half of the 6 109 inhabitants of Vaasheni parish to be Vepsians. That would have meant more than three thousand Vepsians only in that single parish of Olonets uyezd.²⁷

Ethnic composition of the population of the Kola Peninsula at the turn of the 20th century

In the mid 19th century, the Kola Peninsula was one of the most sparsely populated corners of Europe, where population density was significantly lower even than the average of Lappland. In 1858, the area of 140 000 square kilometers had 5 200 inhabitants altogether,²⁸ what meant one inhabitant in every 28 square kilometers. Out of this, about 1 700 people 32.7% of the population were Sámis, who populated the vast inner wilderness of the peninsula, as well as its northern and eastern coastal areas.²⁹ 500 inhabitants, mostly Russians lived in and around Kola town,³⁰ while the remaining 3 000 inhabitants were made up of the Karelian and Russian fishing villages on the southern, White-Sea coast of the peninsula. The Sámis, living mostly of hunting and reindeer herding, consisted of 10-11 distinct groups that spoke related, but not identical languages. Out of these, four were located at the Kola Peninsula: The Akkala or Babinsk Sámi around lake Imandra, the Skolt or Notozero Sami in the western third of the peninsula, the Kildin Sámi in the central areas, and the Ter Sámi in the east.³¹ In the mid 19th century, the area showed the character of a typical Lappland wilderness.

The first major demographic changes have occurred at the peninsula in the second half of the 19th century. In 1868 the Russian government decided to populate the sparsely populated area. The settlers were granted privileges regarding taxes, military service, and trade activities.³² As a result, an intensive influx of settlers to the area started. Most of them were Russians and Karelians, but due to the granted privileges, lot of Finns and Norwegians appeared as well. Most of the settlers have settled on the northern coasts that were sparsely populated until then, but where fishing at the Barents Sea was a suitable form of living. As a result, by the end of the 19th century, the population of the Kola Peninsula doubled.³³ As for Eastern Karelia, for the Kola Peninsula we can also see different figures provided by the Russian census of 1897, and different figures provided by other contemporary surveys. The main source of inaccuracy here is also that segment of the Karelian ethnicity that was in an advanced state of Russification. The Russian census of 1897 registered them as Russians, while other surveys as Karelians. To make things more unclear, between 1897 and 1914 not only the influx of Russian settlers was constant, but also the influx of Finnish, Karelian, and Norwegian settlers, so in these years, the exact percentages of each ethnic group could have been changing from year to year. Regarding the extremely low population density of the Kola Peninsula at that time, even the arrival of a group of settlers small in absolute numbers, could cause a significant change in the statistics. The census of 1897 registered 9 291 inhabitants in the whole

²⁵ Viires and Vahtre 1993, The Veps (<http://www.eki.ee/books/redbook/veps.shtml>)

²⁶ Homén 1921, p. 129.

²⁷ Homén 1921, p. 126.-128.

²⁸ Luzin, Pretes and Vasiljev 1992, p. 3.

²⁹ Viires and Vahtre 1993, The Kola Lapps (http://www.eki.ee/books/redbook/kola_lapps.shtml)

³⁰ Luzin, Pretes and Vasiljev 1992, p. 3.

³¹ Pennanen and Näkkäläjärvi 2002, p. 35

³² Viires and Vahtre 1993, The Kola Lapps (http://www.eki.ee/books/redbook/kola_lapps.shtml)

³³ Luzin, Pretes and Vasiljev 1992, p. 3.

area. According to the census, out of this, there were 5865 Russians (63%) 1724 Sámis (19%) 1056 Finns (11%) 256 Karelians (3%) more than 200 Norwegians (2%) and even 117 Komi-Zyrians who came from the region of the Pechora River (1%).³⁴ The inaccuracy and uncertainty around the number of Karelians however, can be seen from figures provided by the expedition of Romanov and Rosakov two years later, in 1899. This survey studied the population of the Northern coastal areas of the peninsula, the so called Murman coast, where the bulk of the settlers have settled. According to the census, there those settlers who were not Lutheran Finns and Norwegians, were almost exclusively Russians. The survey by Romanov and Rosakov however, found a significant Karelian population in these settlements. This may be an evidence for the practice that those acculturated Karelians who were Orthodox Christians, well integrated into the Russian society, and could speak Russian, were registered as Russians by the official census. This time, the Kola Peninsula consisted of six districts. The northern coastal area formed the „Commune of Murman settlers”, most of the inner areas the „Kola Lapp commune”, the eastern part of the peninsula was the Ponoï district, while the ancient fishing settlements of the White Sea coast in the south were divided into three parishes: Umba, Kuzomen, and Tetrina. Out of this six, the survey by Romanov and Rosakov studied the population of the Murman coasts. Excluding the towns of Kola and Alexandrovsk (today’s Polyarniy) in the section of the coast west of Kola Fjord they registered 1405 inhabitants, around the Kola Fjord itself 261 inhabitants, and in the eastern section of the Murman coast 460 inhabitants, what means altogether 2 156 inhabitants in the Murman district, excluding the two towns. The ethnic composition of the population is given not by individuals, but by families. According to the survey, the 2 156 inhabitants have consisted of 439 families, and the ethnic composition of those was the following.

2. Ethnic composition of the population of the Murman coast according to the 1899 survey of Romaniv and Rosakov (Homén 1921, page 31.)

Number of families	Russian	Finnish	Karelian	Norwegian	Sámi	other	total
Eastern section of the coast	77 75,49%	1 0,98%	21 20,59%	0 0,00%	2 1,96%	1 0,98%	102 100,00%
Kola-fjord	8 12,90%	44 70,97%	1 1,61%	5 8,06%	3 4,84%	1 1,61%	62 100,00%
Western section of the coast	34 12,36%	139 50,55%	54 19,64%	27 9,82%	17 6,18%	4 1,45%	275 100,00%
total	119 27,11%	184 41,91%	76 17,31%	32 7,29%	22 5,01%	6 1,37%	439 100,00%

So if we assume that the number of people by families was the same in all ethnic groups, than this would mean 901 Finnish, 554 Russian, 374 Karelian, 159 Norwegian, 108 Sámi, and 30 other inhabitants in this district. We can see that the number of Finns and Norwegians is about the same as according to the census, the number of Karelians however, is significantly different. In this district, where, according to the census, almost everyone who were not Finns or Norwegians, were almost exclusively Russians, this survey registered 119 Russian, and 76 Karelian families. The survey registered one and a half times more Karelians only in this single district, as according to the census the total number of Karelians was on the whole peninsula. This means that two out of five „Russians” on the Murman coast were in fact Karelians. If we assume that the situation would have been the same in the whole peninsula, we could get surprising conclusions. Since those other parts of the peninsula that were favoured by Russian settlers besides the Murman coast, had stronger ties with Karelia even before (the White Sea coasts for example), its not unrealistic to assume that the situation in these areas was not different from that on the Murman coast. For the year 1897, instead of 63%, this would mean only 38.52% Russians on the Kola Peninsula, followed by the Karelians as the second largest ethnic group making up 27.46%, followed by 18.56% Sámis and 11.37% Finns.

³⁴ Homén 1921, p. 31.

So, we can not exclude the possibility that at this time, the combined number of Finns and Karelians on the Kola Peninsula exceeded the number of Russians. Of course, this is a highly uncertain question, but we have few reasons to assume that the practice of the census was different in the other parts of the peninsula than on the Murman Coast, and the 1899 survey alone proves that the actual number of Karelians was much higher than according to the census.

Besides this anomaly, the survey is also important regarding that it clearly shows the contemporary cultural character of the region, absolutely different than what we can find there today. It is a striking information that on the Murman coast, what is today known mostly as the stronghold of the Russian nuclear submarine fleet, the Finns, Karelians, Norwegians, and Sámi altogether made up 72.53% of the population. This means that the Murman coast of those times had an ethnocultural character much more Finno-Scandinavian, than Russian. If we view it from a linguistic point of view the mutually intelligible Finnish and Karelian languages were the languages of 59.97% of the population, while Russian of only 26.06%. From a religious-cultural point of view, Lutheran Finns and Norwegians made up 49.9% of the population, what means that the area had as many Lutheran inhabitants, as Russian-Orthodoxs.

It is also important to note that Finnish migration to the Kola Peninsula was not an isolated phenomenon in the late 19th century, but part of a wider migration tendency. From Northwest Finland, and the neighbouring Tornedalen region of Sweden, several waves of Finnish migrants have fled to the arctic coasts of Norway during the 18-19th centuries, so the migration of the Kola Finns can be viewed as an eastern offshoot of this process. The number of these arctic Finnish migrants was as high, as making up a significant portion of the population of Finnmark province, the „Norwegian lappland”. Their number there was 13.3% of the total population in 1845, 19.9% in 1854, and peaked at 24.2% in 1875. In the neighbouring province of Troms, numbers for the same years were 3.2%, 7%, and 7.7%. After the peak in 1875, due to Norwegian assimilation policies, their number started to decline. In the year 1890, it was 20.2% in Finnmark, and 3.7% in Troms and in 1900, 13.8% in Finnmark, and 2% in Troms.³⁵ Regarding these facts, we can say that the Kola Finnish community, forming 42% of the population of the Murman coast and 11-12% of the Kola Peninsula, was an organic continuation of the Finnish settlements in the neighbouring Norwegian provinces. In the beginning of the 20th century, Finnish fishing villages formed a continuum from Tromsö to present day Murmansk.

The number of Kola Finns and Kola Norwegians were increasing throughout the following decades. By 1910, the Murman coast had 3020 inhabitants, about 50% higher than at the time of Romanov's and Rosakov's expedition a decade ago, but no detail is available about their ethnic composition. There are some available details from 1918, provided by a Finnish estimate, made by W. Olin and T. Itkonen. These details however, are incomplete, from the three sections of the Murman coast, they only describe two, the Western section, and the Kola fjord. Details of the Patsjoki-Pasvik River's region however, around the Finnish-Russian-Norwegian triple border are also included. Figures by this estimate show 400 people around the Kola fjord (except the towns), 74% of them Finns, 25% Russians, 1% Sámi, 1900 people on the Western section of the Murman coast, 68.5% Finnish, 13.1% Sámi, and 16.8% Russian, and in the region of the Patsjoki/Pasvik river 290 Sámi, 200 Finnish, and 75 Russian inhabitants. Many people of the Patsjoki area's Finnish settlers used to work on the Norwegian side of the border. This survey also does not mention the Karelians, found in great numbers by Romanov and Rosakov in 1899. Perhaps they were among the Russians as usual. An other strange phenomenon of this estimate is the almost complete absence of the Norwegian community that was described as strong and numerous by all the other surveys and censuses. We don't have any further guidelines about the possible explanation for this phenomenon. Besides these two anomalies however, we can state that the 1918 estimate shows the same ethnocultural character for the region, as the 1899 and 1897 figures.

Not only its ethnocultural character, but also the settlement structure of the Murman coast was completely different than how we know it today. The region, today dominated by Soviet era closed

³⁵ Niemi 1978, p. 49.-70

towns and military bases of the Russian navy, was the country of tiny arctic fishing villages one hundred years ago. The survey by Romanov and Rosakov in 1899 registered forty inhabited locations on the Murman coast, out of this forty, the size of thirty being smaller than ten households, five between ten and twenty households, and only five larger than twenty households. The Murman coast one hundred years ago was by both ethnocultural and social terms more similar to the neighbouring Norwegian provinces than it is now.

In the central areas of the Kola Peninsula, there was still an overwhelming Sámi majority at that time. The Kola Lapp commune, covering most of the interior, had 1997 inhabitants in 1910, out of whom 88.4% were Sámi, 8% Russian, 2% Komi-Zyrian, and 1.5% Finnish. In The Ponoï district, covering both the eastern coasts of the Peninsula and the eastern section of the interior out of a total population of 524, the number of Sámis was 350.³⁶

In the three parishes of the White Sea coasts of the peninsula, the total number of inhabitants was 4668, mostly Russians.³⁷

Summary of the state at the turn of the century

Summarizing demographic figures from the turn of the 19-20th centuries, we can state that according to the contemporary attitude of ethnocentric nation-building, Finnish territorial aspirations regarding the area were well founded. Not only the number of Karelians was similar to the number of Russians in Eastern Karelia, but areas with a Karelian majority were separated from predominantly Russian areas by a clear linguistic boundary. In this period, even the Kola Peninsula had significant Finnish, Sámi, Norwegian and Karelian communities, whose combined number was close to that of the Russians. The population of the Kola Peninsula was also extremely low at that time, therefore making less significance compared to Eastern Karelia, as we can see by the compared demographic table based on the Russian census of 1897:

3. Ethnic composition of the five uyezds of East Karelia and the Kola Peninsula according to the Russian census of 1897 (Source: Homén, 1921)

	Karelian	Finnish	Veps	Sámi	Nrwegian	Russian	other	total
Olonets	28532	581	13	0	0	10794	70	39990
	71,35%	1,45%	0,03%	0,00%	0,00%	26,99%	0,18%	100,00%
Petrozavodsk	17643	837	7271	0	0	53516	445	79712
	22,13%	1,05%	9,12%	0,00%	0,00%	67,14%	0,56%	100,00%
Povenets	13106	190	5	0	0	13036	44	26381
	49,68%	0,72%	0,02%	0,00%	0,00%	49,41%	0,17%	100,00%
Kem	19236	161	9	0	0	15926	60	35392
	54,35%	0,45%	0,03%	0,00%	0,00%	45,00%	0,17%	100,00%
Kola	256	1056	0	1724	200	5865	190	9291
	2,76%	11,37%	0,00%	18,56%	2,15%	63,13%	2,04%	100,00%
total	78773	2825	7298	1724	200	99135	809	190766
	41,29%	1,48%	3,83%	0,90%	0,10%	51,97%	0,42%	100,00%

These ethnogeographic conditions however, as we will see from the next parts of this work, were radically changed by Soviet resettlement and assimilation policies of the following decades.

Aftermath of World War I – Civil war, revolt, Finnish intervention, formation of the Karelian ASSR

³⁶ Homén 1921, p. 32.-33.

³⁷ Homén 1921, p. 32.

After the Russian revolution of 1917, the reaction of the Karelian population was divided. Some – mostly in Petrozavodsk and Olonets, more integrated into the Russian society - sided with the Russian party of the peasants, the SR-s, while others, mostly in Kem and Povenets provinces with a stronger ethnic identity and stronger Finnish influence chose ethnic self determination and autonomy as their main goal. As soon as 1917, in the village of Uhtua in Kem uyezd, a provisional Karelian national assembly was formed. It declared the autonomy of Eastern Karelia, and issued a provisional constitution. This constitution declared Karelian as the official language of the new autonomous entity, and demanded the redistribution of land, the transfer of state owned lands and forests to the parishes, as well as an independent Karelian Orthodox diocese.³⁸ By 1918 the assembly of Uhtua went as far as demanding secession from Russia, and union with Finland.³⁹ After the fall of imperial Russia, the idea of Greater Finland was raised to the agenda of government politics as well. In the early spring of 1918 conditions became controversial. On one hand, the Red-White civil war in Russia would have provided the great chance for Finnish territorial aspirations aiming Eastern Karelia. On the other hand, a Red-White civil war started in Finland as well, and that had the opposite effect.⁴⁰ At last, General Mannerheim, the leader of the Finnish Whites issued his famous order of the day, the „Sword Scabbard Order”. In this, he stated that he would not put his sword back to its scabbard until Eastern Karelia was liberated from Russian yoke.⁴¹ The Finnish civil war did not even end yet, when in March 1918, the operation by Finnish White irregular units, called „White Sea Expedition” crossed the border into Kem and Povenets uyezds. Soon they brought most of the Karelian speaking areas of Kem and Povenets uyezds under their control. By April, however their situation begun to deteriorate. The central powers signed the Treaty of Brest Litovsk with Soviet Russia, which made the end of German military help for any Finnish aspiration beyond the line of control fixed in that treaty. Perhaps due to to this, the Finnish government hesitated to officially get involved into the conflict, and refused to send the regular army to help the irregular units. The chances of the White Sea Expedition were also undermined by the events of the Russian civil war. The Kola Peninsula was occupied by a weird military formation, the so called Murman Legion. This force was under the command of British officers, sent by the British government, and landed on the Kola Peninsula by the British navy, to help the Russian Whites in the civil war. Its personnel, however was extremely complex. Besides subjects of the British Empire, large part of its personnel consisted of Serb veterans of World War I, Red Finns who escaped from Finland after their defeat in the civil war, White Russians, and even some Karelians favouring the powerful Russian peasant party, the SR-s. The Legion started to push southwards along the Murman railway, facing the Russian Reds. The Britons however, did not only view the Russian Reds as their enemies, but also the Finns, whom they considered to be the allies of Germany. This resulted in a bizarre situation in Eastern Karelia: Three different forces, each of them fighting against both the other two. The Murman Legion, the White Sea Expedition, and the Russian Reds. The Russian Reds retreated, and in the lands left behind by them, the Finnish White Sea Expedition, and the British Murman Legion finally crossed each others way at the White Sea port town of Kem (Vienan Kemi in Finnish), with the Finns arriving from the west, while the Britons arriving from the north. The battle at Kem was won by the Britons, so the Finns retreated west to Uhtua. The Murman Legion pushed the Russian Reds back beyond Sorokka by the summer of 1918, and the Finns back to the border by October. The White Sea Expedition failed, by the end of the year, only two parishes, Repola and Porajärvi were in Finnish hands. In these, a referendum was held, where their population voted in favor of joining Finland, and the Finnish regular army occupied them after this event.⁴² Next month World War I ended. This again made circumstances more favourable for Finland regarding Eastern Karelia. From this point, for the Russian Whites and the entente the Russian Reds became the enemy and Finland was not viewed as one any longer.

³⁸ Tägil 1995, p. 226.

³⁹ Taagpera 1999, p. 107.

⁴⁰ Parrot 1992, p. 143.-144.

⁴¹ www.mannerheim.fi Eastern Karelia

⁴² <http://en.academic.ru/dic.nsf/enwiki/341340> Viena Expedition

This made possible the improvement of relations between Finland and the Russian Whites. Mannerheim hoped to make a deal with the Russian Whites, to get Eastern Karelia and the Kola Peninsula in exchange for helping them to win the Russian Civil war. Since Saint Petersburg, (Petrograd) was easily approachable from the Finnish border, Finnish help for the Russian Whites could have been strategically vital if such agreement could have been reached. As the first step for such a joint assault on Red Petrograd, and annexion of Eastern Karelia, Mannerheim built up an irregular force much larger and better trained than the previous one, and in the summer of 1919 sent them beyond the border. This time, the Finnish irregular force did not attack in the north, but in Olonets uyezd, along the coast of Lake Ladoga. Also negotiations were started with the Russian Whites about a possible deal regarding Eastern Karelia, and a joint offensive against Red Petrograd. The Russians were however hesitating about making the deal, and failed, to provide a sufficient force against Petrograd. The Finns were hesitating as well. The Senate of Finland, led by Svinhuvsvud, turned against Mannerheim, and started to oppose the deal, because they did not trust the Russians. They were afraid that in case of a White victory in the Russian civil war, the rebirth of tsarist imperial Russia would have not only made the fulfillment of any such deal impossible, but perhaps even the independence of Finland would have been questioned in the name of the Russian imperial ideas. Due to the resistance of the Senate, the irregular expedition in Olonets was again deprived from help by the regular Finnish army, and the Russian Whites also failed to deploy forces for an offensive. After these events, Mannerheim cancelled plans for the operation against Petrograd, and called off the Olonets Expedition as well.⁴³ Finnish attempts of 1918-1919 to annex Eastern Karelia have failed. By the end of 1919, only Repola and Porajärvi were still in Finnish hands. The Finnish-Soviet border at last been fixed by the Treaty of Tartu in 1920. According to this treaty, Finland returned Repola and Porajärvi to the Russians, who in exchange gave Petsamo on the Murman coast, with a strip of land connecting it to Finland. As a result, with the exception of Petsamo, the new Finnish border was the same as the border of the Grand Duchy of Finland. The treaty also included a guarantee by the Russians, to grant territorial autonomy for Eastern Karelia. That soon came into effect by the formation of the Karelian Autonomous Oblast.⁴⁴

This solution however, was insufficient for the Karelians. In the fall of 1921, after the Russian civil war ended by a complete victory of the Reds, and the Soviet government stabilized its power, so there wasn't any chance for a successful Finnish action any longer, the Karelians have started a rebellion and guerilla war against Soviet Russia, once again, this time much more intensive than in 1918-1919. The Karelian rebels were again joined by Finnish volunteers, and by the beginning of winter they successfully brought most Karelian speaking areas under their control. Despite their efforts, among the changed international circumstances, they didn't have any chance for victory. After a few months, by the beginning of 1922, Soviet troops have defeated the rebellion, and occupied the area again.⁴⁵

The conflict had demographic consequences as well. After the failure of the rebellion of 1921-22, 11 239 Karelians have fled to Finland.⁴⁶ This number is not big by absolute measures, but means a large number of people compared to the Karelian population. Their total number in Eastern Karelia was 78 517 people according to the Russian census of 1897⁴⁷, and was 100 781 according to the Soviet census of 1926.⁴⁸ This means that the refugees formed as much as one tenth of the total Karelian population, a significant demographic casualty.

After the failure of the rebellion, the Soviet leadership expanded the degree of autonomy. From an Autonomous Oblast, they raised it to the level of an ASSR of the Russian Federation. This act on the other hand, paradoxically weakened the influence of Karelians in the entity. When raising it from AO to ASSR, the Soviet leadership also attached large, predominantly Russian Speaking areas

⁴³ www.mannerheim.fi Eastern Karelia

⁴⁴ Taagpera 1999, p. 107.

⁴⁵ Taagpera 1999, p. 107.

⁴⁶ Nygard 1996

⁴⁷ Homén 1921, p. 126.

⁴⁸ Vaba and Viikberg 1996, Karelians

to it. Before its enlargement, borders of the Karelian AO followed mostly the linguistic boundary between Karelian and Russian speaking areas. Before the enlargement, the Karelian AO had an area of 115 000 square kilometers, and a population of 147 000 people, 58% of them Karelians.⁴⁹ After the enlargement however, its area had grown to 146 000 square kilometers,⁵⁰ and its population to 264 000 people, while the proportion of Karelians dropped to 38%.⁵¹

The inter war period

The Karelian ASSR in the inter war period

The Karelian ASSR was the scene of two opposing tendencies at the same time during the inter war period. On one hand, Finnish Reds who fled from Finland after their defeat in the civil war, played a key role in the leadership of the ASSR, borrowing an increasingly Finnish character to its political elite in the first decade of the inter war period. On the other hand however, especially during the Stalin era after 1928 massive Soviet resettlement policies have flooded the ASSR with mostly Russian migrants, significantly decreasing the proportion of Karelians in the population.

The Soviet census of 1933 registered 12 000 Finns in the republic.⁵² Until the Stalin era purges of 1937-1938, the political elite of the Karelian ASSR consisted mostly of these Red Finns, with Edward Gylling, an economist professor from Helsinki being the head of the republic.⁵³ Surprisingly, their attitude was to prepare circumstances for the unification of Finland and Eastern Karelia under a communist leadership. Their aim was to create a Finnish communist model state that can serve as the core of a future communist Greater Finland, when a communist revolution becomes possible in Finland itself.⁵⁴ As a similar aim, Gylling also planned the Karelian ASSR to become a model for a „Soviet Scandinavia”.⁵⁵

In the NEP era, Gylling's vision seemed to be viable. At that time, the Karelian ASSR enjoyed a significant economic autonomy, and that made a boom in the forest industry possible. After the end of the NEP, in the Stalin era however the economic autonomy of the ASSR was withdrawn.⁵⁶ The cultural aim of the Gylling administration was the Finnishization of the Karelians, as a preparation for a communist Greater Finland in the future. A clear sign of this vision was the fact that besides Russian, not Karelian but standard Finnish became the second official language of the ASSR, and Karelian was viewed only as the local dialect of Finnish.⁵⁷

At the same time, the mass resettlement of Russians into the republic by the Soviet authorities was going on. This resettlement tendency was so massive that even despite the influx of Finnish Reds from Finland, and the growing Finnish cultural influence among ethnic Karelians, the proportion of Russians were radically increasing within the population. Between 1926-1933, 98 000 people were resettled into the Karelian ASSR from other parts of the Soviet Union, and at least 70 000 of them were Russians.⁵⁸ The construction of the Baltic-White Sea canal had a key role in these resettlements. The construction of the canal was made by prisoners of GULAG camps established in the area, and of those who survived, many have settled inside the ASSR after their sentence expired.⁵⁹ Due to this resettlement process, the proportion of Karelians in the republic dropped from 37% to 23% between 1926 and 1939.⁶⁰

⁴⁹ Taagpera 1999, p.108.

⁵⁰ Taagpera 1999, p. 108.

⁵¹ Vaba and Viikberg 1996, Karelians

⁵² Laine 2000, p. 14.

⁵³ Taagpera 1999, p. 108.

⁵⁴ Tägil 1995, p. 227.

⁵⁵ Laine 2000, p. 7.-8.

⁵⁶ Laine 2000, p. 10.

⁵⁷ Laine 2000, p. 10.-11.

⁵⁸ Laine 2000, p. 14.

⁵⁹ Taagpera 1999, p. 109.

⁶⁰ Viires and Vahre 1993, The Karelians (<http://www.eki.ee/books/redbook/Karelians.shtml>)

Finnish dominance in the leadership of the ASSR was ended by the great purges of the 1930s. As a signal for the beginning of the purge, the Soviet leadership accused the leaders of the Karelian ASSR with burgeoise nationalism. During the purges 3000-3500 people from the ASSR, mostly Finns were killed. In the leadership of the republic, Finns were replaced by Russians, and from 1937, the use of the Finnish language was marginalized as well. Besides the increasing dominance of the Russian official language, in the Karelian speaking areas Finnish was replaced by the written form of Karelian language.⁶¹

The purges have eliminated most of the Finnish elite of the ASSR. Even Gylling himself was arrested, and his fate remains unknown even today.⁶²

We can summerize the inter war history of Eastern Karelia as controversial. On one hand, as an AO at first, and an ASSR after that, Eastern Karelia enjoyed a wider range of autonomy than ever before. On the other hand however, with the proportion of Karelians in the area dropping from 37% to 23%, the area also faced a more massive influx of Russian settlers, than ever before.

Demographic metamorphosis of the Kola Peninsula during the inter war period.

In contrast with Eastern Karelia, the transformation of the ethno cultural character of the Kola Peninsula not only started, but mostly been completed within the inter war period. The influx of Russian settlers taken a character different from the settlers in imperial Russia. While settlers in the imperial Russian era, were mostly employed in the agrarian sector, working in their own farms, and large number of Finns and Norwegians among them, Soviet era settlers in the inter war period were mostly employed in the industrial sector by state owned enterprises, and the influx of Finns and Norwegians ceased, with besides the Russians, Ukrainians and Belarussians becoming two significant ethnic group among the settlers. As in Soviet history in general, the NEP era before 1928, and the Stalin era after that were two significantly different periods in the demographic history of the Kola Peninsula as well. In the years of the NEP, economic priorities were to develop already existing industries in the region, such as shipping, fishing, and forest industry, therefore somewhat resembling the spontaneity of the imperial era. Influx of settlers as well as fishing and shipping was managed by the Murmansk Industrial and Transportation Colonization Combine. In these years, between 1914 and 1929, the population of the peninsula was doubled, growing from 14 000 to 27 000 inhabitants, a similar rate of increase, than what as usual in the imperial era.

The Stalin era introduced radical changes in these trends. The Murmansk Industrial and Transportation Colonization Combine was dissolved, and the economic development was managed directly from Moscow. The forced industrialization typical of the Stalin era was the main guideline of economic development in the Kola Peninsula as well. The rate of population influx increased as well. Mining became the main field of development. Soviet geologists have discovered enormous deposits of phosphate, copper ore, iron ore, and nickel ore in the mountains of the interior. Due to this, in the interiors held intact by previous settlers, and functioning as a save haven for the indigenous Sámi so far, now Stalin era mining towns started to appear from nothing, one after the other. During the 1930s, 220-250 thousand people have settled on the Kola Peninsula, a vast majority of them being Russians. This means that the population newly settled into the area within one decade numbered ten times as much, as the total population of the area in the beginning of that decade. This huge mass of people mostly consisted of people targeted by forced resettlement, such as kulaks, urban intellectuals, as well as convicts of GULAG camps in the area, who have settled there if they managed to survive until their sentence was expired. A main center of forced resettlements was the newly founded phosphate mining town of Kirovsk. By 1932, 20 000 people were settled there, who were not allowed to leave the environs of the town in 1935-36, in the area between Murmansk and Lake Imandra, 10 000 GULAG prisoners were working.⁶³

⁶¹ Tägil 1995, p. 230.

⁶² Taagpera 1999, p. 108.

⁶³ Luzin, Pretes and Vasiljev 1992, p. 4-5.

By 1940, the population of the Kola Peninsula reached 318 000 inhabitants.⁶⁴ Out of this, 2000 people were Sámi,⁶⁵ while the combined number of Finns and Norwegians was about 7000.⁶⁶ As we can see ethnocultural as well as social character of the Kola Peninsula dramatically changed by resettlement policies during the inter war period. The Sámi, Finns and Norwegians, who consisted 32% of the population in 1897, formed only about 3% by the end of the 1930s. The last act in the history of the Kola Finns and Norwegians became their forced resettlement in 1940. As part of Stalin's campaign to clean the border areas of "foreign elements" on the 23th of June 1940 Lavrenty Beria ordered the deportation of Kola Finns and Norwegians. Members of these two ethnic groups were resettled in the interior of the Soviet Union. The number of deportees in this action was 6973 people.⁶⁷

By the elimination of Finns and Norwegians, the Sámi remained the only sizeable indigenous minority in the region, but compared to the total population of the peninsula, multiplied by the influx of settlers, they consisted only 1%. The transformation of the ethnocultural character of the Kola Peninsula was mostly completed by the end of the 1930s. From a sparsely populated wilderness with strong cultural ties to Scandinavia, it became a predominantly Russian, urban, Soviet style society with mining and the armed forces determining the main guidelines of development.

Short lived territorial autonomy in the Tver region

Territorial autonomy was granted to the Tver Karelians only for a short period, between 1937-1939. In 1937, a Tver Karelian National Okrug was formed. Its area covered 5 500 square kilometers, with a population of 163 000 people, 53.7% of them being Karelians. This also meant that 58% of Tver Karelians was living inside the Okrug, and 42% outside it. This short lived autonomy was suspended in 1939, and also banned the public use of Karelian language and publication of Karelian materials in the region.⁶⁸ The future of Tver Karelians from this point became an extremely rapid assimilation, even by Soviet standards. The number of Karelians outside the ASSR (a vast majority of them being Tver Karelians) that was 147 219 in 1926, dropped to 27 693 by 2002.⁶⁹ Regarding the fact that neither the Tver Karelians nor their area was the subject significant resettlement policies, this dramatic decline shows an unusually rapid assimilation tendency.

Summary of the inter war period

During the inter war period, the vision of joining Eastern Karelia to Finland was still popular in that country.⁷⁰ Soviet resettlement policies of this era however have seriously undermined the demographic bases of these Finnish aspirations. Especially the character and significance of the Kola Peninsula changed. While at the turn of the century it had an extremely small mixed Russian-Sámi-Finnish population, with a marginal demographic significance compared to Eastern Karelia, by the end of the year 1940 it became to have an almost exclusively Russian, Ukrainian and Belarussian population of a size almost as large as the population of the Karelian ASSR itself. In the early 1900s, by the partition of Eastern Karelia along the linguistic boundary, joining most of that province as well as the Kola Peninsula to Finland would have been possible without including a significant Russian population. By the end of the inter war period however, the new demographic significance and ethnocultural character of the Kola Peninsula made any such solution impossible.

⁶⁴ Luzin, Pretes and Vasiljev 1992, p. 5.

⁶⁵ Vaba and Viikberg 1996, Sámis or Lapps

⁶⁶ Poljan 2001, Тотальные превентивные депортации советских немцев, финнов и греков в 1941–1942 гг.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Taagpera 1999, p. 139.

⁶⁹ Vaba and Viikberg 1996, Karelians

⁷⁰ Laine 2000, p. 7.

A possible solution fitting the new circumstances was the proposal of the Kuusinen agreement that would have given most of the Karelian linguistic area to Finland, while keeping the Kola Peninsula for Russia.

Consequences of World War II

Since the aim of this work is an overview on demographic tendencies in Eastern Karelia, events of World War II are only mentioned as much as they have affected that issue. From this point of view we can focus on three main events.

One was the Kuusinen agreement, never coming into affect that in case of a successful sovietisation of Finland, would have given most of the Karelian linguistic area to it in exchange for the strategically and economically most important part of Western Karelia.

The second important event was the Soviet annexion of Western Karelia. The entire Finnish population of that region fled to Finland after the annexion, were replaced with mostly Russian and Belarussian settlers by the Soviet government. This event also contributed to the further Russification of Eastern Karelia as well.

The third event was the temporary Finnish occupation of large parts of Eastern Karelia during World War II., also meaning the last attempt to join the area to Finland.

The Kuusinen agreement

The idea of uniting Eastern Karelia with Finland appeared in government politics for the last time during World War II. Surprisingly, this time at first it was not suggested by Finland, but by the USSR itself, of course among special circumstances. The premis of this proposal were Finnish-Soviet negotiations preceeding the Winter War of 1939-1940. Before the war, the USSR negotiated about its territorial demands with Finland.⁷¹ As it is widely known, these negotiations failed, and in the fall of 1939, the Soviet Union invaded Finland. After the war started, in the city of Terijoki, the first Finnish town to be occupied by the Soviet army, a pro Soviet puppet government was formed under the leadership of the Red Finn Otto Ville Kuusinen, calling themselves the government of the Democratic Republic of Finland. At the beginning of the war, Moscow expected a quick collapse of the Finnish resistance, and a scenario similar to what happened in the Baltic states. Led by these expectations, the Soviet government quickly signed an agreement with the Kuusinen government regarding the future border between the Democratic Republic of Finland, and the Soviet Union. According to this agreement, the USSR would have gained all its territorial demands in Western Karelia, and in exchange would have given most of the Karelian linguistic area to Finland.⁷² This was a generous offer towards the proposed future Soviet Finland, but after the Baltic scenario failed regarding Helsinki, the Soviet government did not have any kind of such generous offers towards the existing independent Finland.

The Soviet annexion of Western Karelia

As it is widely known, the Finnish-Soviet war of 1939-1940 ended with a limited Soviet victory. The victory was limited, because Moscow could impose a Soviet style government over Finland, but was still a victory, since Finland had to give most of Western Karelia to the USSR. Western Karelia, annexed by the Soviet Union after the Treaty of Moscow in 1940, was a smaller area than Eastern Karelia, but had a much higher population density. At the time of the annexion it had a population of 400 000 Finnish inhabitants. Not Orthodox Karelians, but predominantly Lutheran Finns. This population almost entirely fled to Finland after the annexion, and the Soviet government replaced them by mostly Russian settlers. During World War II, Finland managed to temporarily regain control over the area, but the ceasefire of 1944 and the Treaty of Paris in 1947 reinforced the

⁷¹ Tanner 1957, 29. old.

⁷² Taagpera 1999, 108. old.

border of 1940, so most of Western Karelia remained the part of the Russian SFSR.⁷³ Large parts of the annexed Western Karelian territories were attached to the Karelian ASSR. Though the entire Finnish population of these territories fled, the Soviet leadership still viewed this enlargement of the ASSR as the unification of the Sovietized parts of Finland with the Karelian ASSR. In this spirit, for a short time between 1940 and 1956, it was risen to the rank of an SSR, a member republic of the Soviet Union on its own right, and not part of the Russian SFSR. Its name was changed to Karelo-Finnish SSR, to express the inclusion of Finnish lands, and therefore the assumed new character of the republic. The aim of this move may have also to prepare the administrative structure of the USSR for the future annexion of additional Finnish territories, or perhaps Finland itself. By these changes, the official status of Finnish language in the republic was restored, and the head of the republic once again became a “Red Finn”, Otto Kuusinen.⁷⁴

Finish occupation of Eastern Karelia 1941-1944

In 1941, Finland joined the German invasion against the Soviet Union, to retake the lost Western Karelia. Advancing Finnish troops have not only retaken Western Karelia, but also pushed deeply into Eastern Karelia, occupying large parts of it. Once again, for the last time, the issue of the annexation of Eastern Karelia became part of the political agenda. Finnish authorities have started to prepare the occupied territories for future annexation. They treated the Karelians, Finns, and Vepsians as Finnish citizens, introduced Finnish school system in the area, and even the Lutheran church started a mission to convert as many Karelians as possible. These aspirations faced quite a few problems however. The retreating Soviet troops have evacuated many of the local inhabitants, and only half of the population that remained there, was Karelian, Vepsian, or Finnish. The Finnish authorities have interned many of the ethnic Russian inhabitants from the area. In 1944 the Soviet army retook Eastern Karelia, and occupied Western Karelia again as well.⁷⁵

After 1945

Eastern Karelia after World War II

After World War II, the enlargement of the Karelian ASSR almost exactly reproduced the results of the 1923 scenario. As the emerge from Karelian AO to Karelian ASSR expanded the degree of autonomy, the change from ASSR to SSR did the same as well. On the other hand, by the attaching of new, predominantly Russian areas, the influence of Karelians decreased in both cases. At first, from 58% to 37% by the first enlargement in 1923, then from 37% to 23% by the influx of Russian migrants in the inter war period, and finally from 23% in 1939 to 13% in 1959 by the addition of the Western Karelian territories, emptied by Finns, and resettled by Russians, as well as a newer wave of Soviet immigration.⁷⁶ As a paradox, the two cases of legal ascend and enlargement of the Karelian autonomous entity in fact marginalized the Karelians within the republic, changing their proportion from 58% in the early 1920s to 13% by the late 1950s. After the demographic marginalization of Karelians, in 1956 the republic was again put back to the rank of an ASSR within the Russian SFSR. The privileges enjoyed due to the status of an SSR have ceased to exist, and Finnish language became marginalized again. Regarding Karelian culture, the benefits of the territorial enlargement have gone, while its disadvantages, the changed ethnic composition remained. After demographic marginalization, from this point begun the political marginalization as well of the Karelians and Finns within the Republic. In the inter war period, though the proportion of Karelians in the republic decreased due to Soviet resettlement policies, their absolute number was growing. Among other reasons, this tendency was perhaps also a result of the “Red Finn” leadership in the republic before the mid 1930s. After World War II however, even the absolute

⁷³ Day 1993, p. 61.

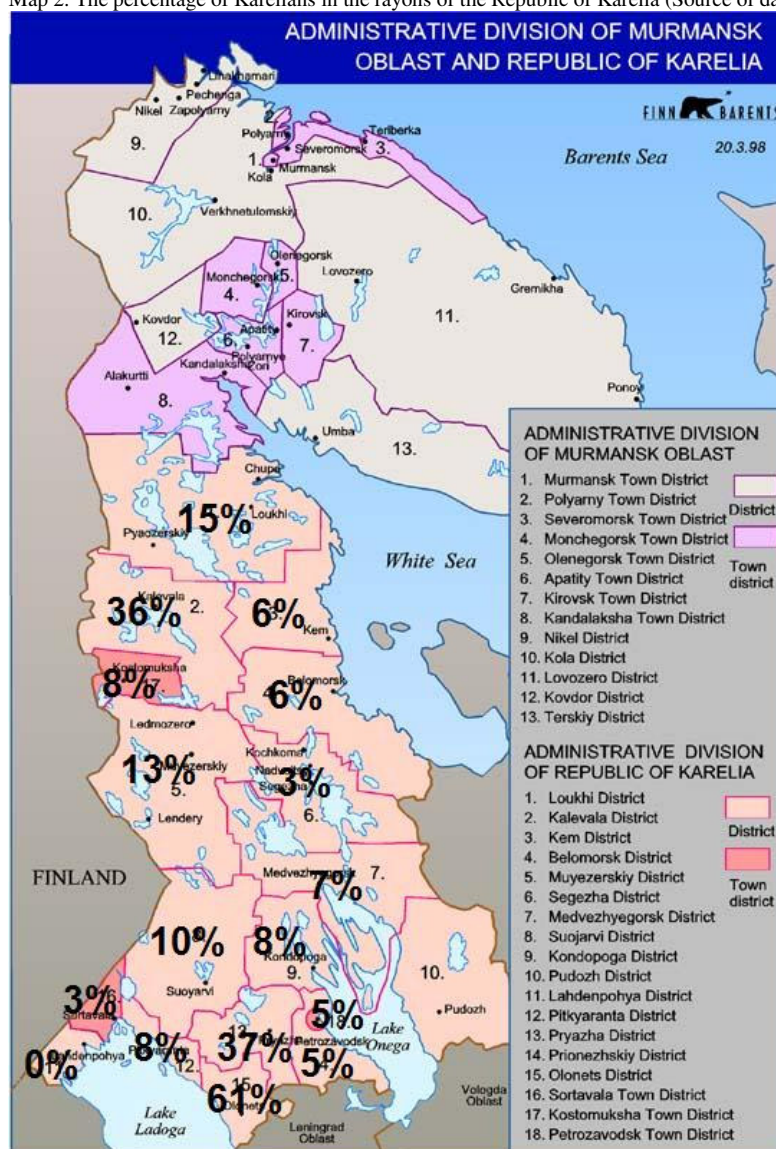
⁷⁴ Taagpera 1999, p. 109.

⁷⁵ www.mannerheim.fi Eastern Karelia

⁷⁶ Viires and Vahre 1993, The Karelians (<http://www.eki.ee/books/redbook/Karelians.shtml>)

number of ethnic Karelians started to decrease, due to strengthening assimilation and Russification.⁷⁷ The affects of the removal of the “Red Finn” leadership were temporarily limited by the SSR status between 1940 and 1956 after that period however assimilation became more and more rapid. According to some estimates, one third of those who registered themselves as Karelians at the census of 1959, have declared themselves as Russians in 1970.⁷⁸ Assimilation was accelerated by the 1965 decision of the Soviet leadership to eliminate “perspectiveless” villages. As a result of the decision, villages that were declared to be perspectiveless, were eliminated, and their population was removed to larger settlements. This wave of elimination of villages had serious consequences regarding the structure, lifestyle, as well as language, culture, and traditions of rural Eastern Karelia.⁷⁹ In 1970, the proportion of Karelians was only 12%, in 1979 it was 11%, in 1989 10%, and by 2002 it decreased to 9%. From an entity with a solid Karelian majority of 58% in 1920, the republic become a predominantly Russian area, where Karelians became a marginal minority. The Karelians have also not only become a minority regarding the republic as a whole, but also in certain regions of the republic, where they formed an overwhelming majority, homogenous linguistic areas before. These changes are well illustrated by the results of the Russian census of 2002. In 2002, ethnic composition of the rayons of the republic was as below:

Map 2. The percentage of Karelians in the rayons of the Republic of Karelia (Source of data shown: Органы местного самоуправления)



⁷⁷ Tagil 1995, p. 228.

⁷⁸ Anderson and Silver 1983, p. 461-489.

⁷⁹ Органы местного самоуправления

4. Ethnic composition of the population of the rayons of the Republic of Karelia, according to the Russian census of 2002. (source: Органы местного самоуправления)

	karél	finn	vepsze	orosz	belarusz	ukrán	egyéb	összesen
Belomorsk/Sorokka	1451 6,05%	145 0,60%	18 0,07%	19564 81,51%	1438 5,99%	641 2,67%	746 3,11%	24003 100,00%
Kalevala/Uhtua	3820 35,94%	86 0,81%	6 0,06%	4925 46,34%	1045 9,83%	344 3,24%	402 3,78%	10628 100,00%
Kem/ Vienan Kemi	1201 5,81%	188 0,91%	19 0,09%	17031 82,34%	1135 5,49%	600 2,90%	511 2,47%	20685 100,00%
Kostomuksha/Kostamus	2424 8,01%	293 0,97%	45 0,15%	23269 76,92%	1233 4,08%	1606 5,31%	1380 4,56%	30250 100,00%
Kondopoga/Kontupohja	3574 8,02%	1192 2,67%	190 0,43%	35919 80,57%	1815 4,07%	750 1,68%	1142 2,56%	44582 100,00%
Lahdenpohja	348 2,12%	115 0,70%	21 0,13%	13525 82,51%	1067 6,51%	703 4,29%	612 3,73%	16391 100,00%
Louhi	3071 15,26%	171 0,85%	20 0,10%	14366 71,37%	1397 6,94%	626 3,11%	477 2,37%	20128 100,00%
Medvezhyegorsk/Karhumäki	2523 6,57%	293 0,76%	48 0,13%	31599 82,31%	1922 5,01%	955 2,49%	1048 2,73%	38388 100,00%
Muyezersky/Muujärvi	2155 13,02%	275 1,66%	27 0,16%	9610 58,05%	2972 17,95%	724 4,37%	793 4,79%	16556 100,00%
Olonets/Aunus	16402 60,67%	277 1,02%	29 0,11%	8748 32,36%	719 2,66%	459 1,70%	400 1,48%	27034 100,00%
Petrozavodsk/Petroskoi	13527 5,08%	7383 2,77%	2715 1,02%	218182 81,97%	7081 2,66%	6255 2,35%	11017 4,14%	266160 100,00%
Pitkäranta	1926 8,08%	645 2,71%	84 0,35%	17405 73,00%	2109 8,84%	743 3,12%	932 3,91%	23844 100,00%
Prionezhsky/Äänisenranta	925 4,97%	583 3,13%	159 0,85%	14998 80,65%	935 5,03%	464 2,50%	533 2,87%	18597 100,00%
Pryazhe/Prääsä	6715 36,85%	1141 6,26%	84 0,46%	8408 46,14%	938 5,15%	454 2,49%	484 2,66%	18224 100,00%
Pudozh/Puutoinen	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	27538
Szegezha/Sekee	1688 3,37%	558 1,11%	65 0,13%	40708 81,33%	3626 7,24%	1435 2,87%	1974 3,94%	50054 100,00%
Sortavala	1126 3,16%	411 1,15%	72 0,20%	28774 80,83%	3083 8,66%	1098 3,08%	1032 2,90%	35596 100,00%
Suojärvi	2463 10,25%	282 1,17%	38 0,16%	16311 67,88%	3111 12,95%	784 3,26%	1039 4,32%	24028 100,00%
Veps national volost	n.a.	n.a.	1202 34,41%	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	3493

Regional differences within the assimilation tendencies are well illustrated by the different degrees of change in the territory of the four old uyezds:

5. Ethnic composition in the area of the four old uyezds today and one hundred years ago (Source: Homén 1921, and Органы местного самоуправления)

		Karelian and Finnish	Veps	Russian, Belarussian, Ukrainian, and other	Total
Kem	1897 census	19393 54,79%	13 0,04%	15986 45,17%	35392 100,00%
	1907 estimate	28022 66,34%	0 0,00%	14220 33,66%	42242 100,00%
	2002 census	12850 12,16%	108 0,10%	92736 87,74%	105694 100,00%
Povenets	1897 census	13296 50,40%	5 0,02%	13080 49,58%	26381 100,00%
	1908 estimate	17184 51,90%	0 0,00%	15927 48,10%	33111 100,00%
	2002 census	7492 7,14%	140 0,13%	97366 92,73%	104998 100,00%
Petrozavodsk	1897 census	18480 23,18%	7271 9,12%	53961 67,69%	79712 100,00%
	1908 estimate	21739 22,68%	19100 19,92%	55028 57,40%	95867 100,00%
	2002 census	27184 8,17%	4266 1,28%	301382 90,55%	332832 100,00%
Olonets	1897 census	29113 72,80%	13 0,03%	10864 27,17%	39990 100,00%
	1908 estimate	34915 76,30%	3100 6,77%	7748 16,93%	45763 100,00%
	2002 census	24535 54,22%	113 0,25%	20607 45,54%	45255 100,00%

Regarding the ethnogeographical metamorphosis of the Karelian ASSR, three regions can be mentioned as special cases. The first are those Western Karelian territories that were attached to the Karelian ASSR (or Karelo-Finnish SSR between 1940 and 1956) after their Soviet annexion. Almost the entire Finnish population of this region escaped to Finland after the annexion, and they were replaced with predominantly Russian settlers by the Soviet government. Today this area is approximately covered by four rayons of the Republic of Karelia: Suojärvi, Pitkäranta, Sortavala and Lahdenpohja. The Russian census of 2002 registered 99 859 inhabitants here, what is slightly more than the half of the pre-war Finnish population. Among them, 76 015 (76.12%) were Russians, 9370 (9.38%) Belarussians, 5863 (5.87%) Karelians, 3328 (3.33%) Ukrainians, 1453 (1.46%) Finns, 215 (0.22%) Vepsians and 3615 (3.62%) of other groups. The fact that the ethnic composition of the republic was changed even more in favour of Slavic groups, is well illustrated by these figures. The presence of close to 6% Karelians however shows that to a certain degree, Karelians have also participated in the repopulation of the area. From the roughly 1500 Finnish people of the region, a community that is equivalent to less than 1% of the pre-war Finnish population of the area, we can not know how many of them are descendents of Finns who have stayed despite the evacuation, and how many of them are descendants of “Red Finns” from other parts of the republic, and Ingrian Finns from the Saint Petersburg area. Regardless of their origin, the Finnish community in total represents only a tiny fragment of the population today.

The second region of special interest are the backwoods in the northwest of the republic, along the Finnish border. These areas constituted the continental interior of the old Kem and Povenets uyezds, and are now mostly covered by Kalevala and Muyezerzsky rayons today. Perhaps throughout the whole republic, this area was the subject of the most dramatic changes regarding its ethnic composition. One hundred years ago, this area was regarded as the most resistant part of Eastern Karelia, stubbornly preserving its language, traditions, culture and identity, as well as strong ties with Finland. In the 19th century, Lönnrot collected the songs of the Kalevala here, and in the years after World War I, this area was the stronghold of movements and armed resistance demanding autonomy, independence, or union with Finland. Today, Kalevala and Muyezerzskiy rayons cover about the same area, as five old parishes of this region: Uhtua, Vuokkiniemi, Jyskyjärvi, Rukajärvi, and Repola. According to the figures of 1907-1908, these five parishes had a total population of 13 000 inhabitants that entirely consisted of Karelians.⁸⁰ In 2002, the population of the area was 27 000, out of this however, only 22%, 6 000 people were Karelians.⁸¹ The Karelian population decreased not only regarding its proportion, but even in absolute numbers, to less than half of its number one hundred years ago. Based on the conditions one hundred years ago, one could have assumed such a geographically isolated, ethnolinguistically homogenous area, directly attached to the Finnish border, and having strong political traditions of separatism to have better chances resisting assimilation than other parts of the republic. Statistics however show the opposite, an assimilation process that was even more rapid than the average. This is illustrated by the rate of decrease of the absolute number of Karelians in this area. In 2002, about 66 000 Karelians were living in the republic⁸², what means decrease by 35% compared to the estimated Karelian population of 102 000 people in 1908. Regarding the Karelian population of Kalevala and Muyezerzsky rayons, the rate of decrease in the same period was 54%. While Karelian population of this area consisted 13% of the total Karelian ethnicity of the four uyezds, in 2002 it was only 9% of Karelians in the republic. Decline is obvious in all aspects, in the proportion of Karelians in the population of the area, as well as their absolute numbers, or their proportion within their own ethnic population. Massive Soviet resettlement policies are marked by the introduction of a large Belarussian minority. In 1907-1908, in the region there were almost no Belarussians at all. In 2002 however, they constituted 15% of the population, a number close to that of the Karelians themselves (22%). In Muyezerzsky rayon, what was a homogeneously Karelian area in 1908, the number of Belarussians even exceeded the number of Karelians in 2002.⁸³ Russification was much faster in the southern parts of these backwoods (Muyezerzsky rayon today, Repola and Rukajärvi parished in 1908) than in the northern part, in Kalevala rayon (the old parishes of Uhtua, Jyskyjärvi and Vuokkiniemi). From almost 100% in 1907-1908, the proportion of Karelians decreased to 36% in Kalevala, while 13% in Muyezerzsky.⁸⁴

The city of Kostomuksha/Kostamus, founded in 1970 and installed right in the middle of the backwoods, between Kalevala and Muyezerzsky rayons, only strengthened this tendency. The municipality covers the area of the old parish of Kontokki that had 2 000 Karelian inhabitants in 1907. In 2002, the municipality had 30 000 inhabitants, more than the combined population of Kalevala and Muyezerzsky rayons, and out of this population, only 8% were Karelians.⁸⁵ If we add Kostomuksha to the two rayons, we get an area with a total population of 57 000 in 2002, out of whom only less than 15% were Karelians, 1% were Finns, 66% Russians, 9% Belarussians, and about 5% Ukrainians.⁸⁶ The ethnocultural character of the region was radically transformed by Soviet resettlement policies during the second half of the 20th century. This process also had an affect on the demographic balance within the north-south geographical distribution of the Karelian

⁸⁰ Homén 1921, p. 128.-129.

⁸¹ Органы местного самоуправления

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

ethnicity itself. Within this ethnic group, the demographic balance shifted from the north to the south. According to the Russian census of 1897, and the estimates of 1907-1908, 41-45% of the Karelians was living in the two northern uyezds, Kem and Povenets, and 55-59% in the two southern uyezds. In 2002 however, only 28% of Karelians in the republic were living in the territory of the former two northern uyezds, and 72% in the south. Kalevala rayon preserved the most of the old character of the backwoods, but the combined number of Karelians, Finns, and Vepsians is under 40% even in that rayon.

The third region of special interest is the region of Olonets/Aunus. Demographic tendencies of this region seem to have been exactly the opposite of the northern backwoods. Today's Olonets rayon covers an area slightly smaller than the old Olonets uyezd.⁸⁷ Out of the old Olonets uyezd, the old parishes of Tulemajärvi, Vieljärvi and Vaasheni are not part of Olonets rayon today. Excluding these parishes, the approximate area of today's rayon had 31 000 inhabitants in 1908, out of them 26 300 (85%) were Karelians, and 4 700 (15%) Russians. Today, Olonets rayon 27 000 inhabitants, 16 400 (61%) Karelians, 8 700 (32%) Russians, and 2000 (7%) of other groups.

Unlike the population of the backwoods of Kem and Povenets rayons, Finnish authors of the early 20th century viewed the Karelians of Olonets as population in an advanced state of cultural Russification⁸⁸, and despite a clear Karelian majority, the proportion of Russians was higher here, than in the backwoods. The area is geographically predestinated to strong Russian influence, with strong ties to Saint Petersburg and Novgorod, and since the Soviet annexion of Western Karelia, it does not even share a common border with Finland. If one could have assumed a stronger resistance to assimilation tendencies in the backwoods, rapid Russification could have been assumed regarding the region of Olonets. Statistics, however show exactly the opposite of that. Even though, the proportion of Karelians have decreased from 85% to 61%, they still form the majority of the rayon's population, and this decrease is also much more limited, than the decrease in the backwoods, where the proportion of Karelians dropped from close to 100% down to beyond 15%. The lack of growth of the total population in the area shows that Soviet resettlement policies have not affected this region as much as other parts of the republic. While the population of Eastern Karelia tripled, and population of the backwoods quadrupled during the 20th century, the number of inhabitants of this area remained the same as one hundred years ago. In 2002 the proportion of the two emblematic groups of the resettlements, the Belarussians and Ukrainians was 9% and 5% in the backwoods, while only 2.7% and 1.7% in Olonets rayon. Today Olonets is the only rayon with a Karelian majority. From an area viewed as one in the state of advanced Russification one hundred years ago, the area of Olonets became the last stronghold of Karelian language and culture by today. Further research would be necessary to explore the reasons of different tendencies regarding the backwoods on one hand, and the region of Olonets on the other. It is clearly visible even in the statistics that Soviet resettlement efforts were intensive in the backwoods, while they ignored the Olonets area. If the reasons for more intensive resettlement efforts were purely economical, caused by the lower population density of the backwoods, or political motivations, such as separatist political traditions of the backwoods as well as their geographic location as a border region have also had a role is hard to decide.

Demographic tendencies on the Kola Peninsula after 1945

As it was demonstrated in the chapter about the inter war period the transformation of the ethnocultural as well as social character of the Kola Peninsula was rapidly completed within one decade in the 1930s. By the deportation of Finns and Norwegians in 1940, the Sámi remained the only significant non-Russian indigenous group in the area. Due to the mass influx of Soviet settlers however, even the number of the Sámi decreased to less than 1% of the total population, down from 30-40% one hundred years before. The decades of the Cold War did not bring any significant change after that, only reinforced the new conditions that were formed in the 1930s. From the

⁸⁷ not Olonets governorate, but Olonets uyezd within the governorate

⁸⁸ Homén 1921, p. 115.

decades of the civil war, we can mention two significant new tendencies. One was the increasing presence and influence of the Soviet armed forces, with larger and larger areas under their administration. The other was the forced relocation of many of the Sámi population within the Kola Peninsula.

The concentration of Sámi nomads to permanent settlements started with the collectivization campaign in the inter war period. The scattered nomadic population was resettled into a handful of villages, also functioning as administrative centers. The 1960s however, brought a change even regarding these villages. Many of them, such as Chudzyavr, Chalmny-Varre, and Voronya, were eliminated, and their population was moved to Lovozero, the largest Sámi settlement. This way, the bulk of the Sámi population was concentrated to Lovozero, and large parts of the interior of the Kola Peninsula were emptied.⁸⁹ The increasing militarization of the Murman coast was also a tendency of the same period. First naval bases on the Kola Peninsula were founded during the imperial times, in 1916, but these were not too significant yet. The Northern Fleet gained its future significance only in the 1950s. After the Western section of the Murman coast was depopulated by the deportation of Finns and Norwegians in 1940, new closed cities under the administration of the armed forces were founded in the emptied area.⁹⁰ Around 1989, not less than nine Soviet naval bases were functioning on the northern coasts of the Kola Peninsula, while eleven airforce bases were functioning in the interior of the the peninsula.⁹¹ The influx of Soviet settlers continued during the cold war as well, especially into the port city of Murmansk, the closed cities of the military, and the mining towns of the interior. Between 1940 and 1989, the population of the peninsula increased from 318 000 to more than one million inhabitants. The proportion of the Sámi population, still around 2000 people decreased to 0.2%.⁹²

Conclusion

If we can say that demographic tendencies of the inter war period have undermined demographic bases of Finnish aspirations regarding Eastern Karelia, tendencies during the cold war have annulled not only these, but of any kinds of Karelian autonomist efforts as well. While the inter war period radically transformed the character of the Kola Peninsula, after 1945 similar tendencies have affected Eastern Karelia itself. In addition to these tendencies, by the Soviet annexion of Western Karelia, Russian-populated areas came to existence between the remaining Karelian speaking areas and Finland. The Karelian linguistic area that formed a homogenous linguistic area of a size of a country before, fragmented to small pockets and a diaspora after 1945. The three rayons, where Karelians still form more than 20% of the population (Olonets and Prazha in the south, and Kalevala in the north) contain only 40% of all Karelians in the republic, while the remaining 60% lives as a diaspora among Russians throughout the republic. The proportion of Karelians within their own autonomous entity decreased from 58% inside the Karelian AO in 1920, to 9% inside the Republic of Karelia in 2002. The Karelians, starting armed revolts and even a guerilla war in 1917-1922, and not only demanding union with Finland, but even considering statehood on their own, have become a vanishing scattered minority in less than a century.

An absurd part of the story is that Karelians have enjoyed a de jure regional autonomy throughout these decades. Besides resettlement policies, these tendencies were also caused by the enlargement of the entity attaching significant Russian-speaking areas.

Eastern Karelia is an interesting example how a centralized regime is able to eliminate minorities even despite providing them de jure autonomy.

⁸⁹ Viires and Vahtre 1993, The Kola Lapps (http://www.eki.ee/books/redbook/kola_lapps.shtml)

⁹⁰ Luzin, Pretes and Vasiljev 1992, p. 6.-7.

⁹¹ Luzin, Pretes and Vasiljev 1992, p. 2.

⁹² Viires and Vahtre 1993, The Kola Lapps (http://www.eki.ee/books/redbook/kola_lapps.shtml)

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