Border Karelia through rose-coloured glasses? Gazes upon a ceded territory

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Abstract

Border Karelia is the former heartland of the Finnish-Karelian Orthodox culture. It has also been regarded, along with Viena Karelia, as a mythical place, the last reserve of the 'original Finnish' Kalevala culture. After the Continuation War ended in 1945, Finland was forced to cede Border Karelia to the Soviet Union. It was then populated with citizens from other parts of the Union, and became for 45 years inaccessible for Finns. In post-war Finland the ceded Karelia gained a new nostalgic aura, while the Soviet (Russian) attitude towards the territories was largely determined by political constructions and 'Soviet nationalism'. The present Border Karelia is a rather poor Russian territory, characterized by a multifaceted identity and heritage. Remnants of prewar cultural landscapes, villages and buildings are still evident. They arouse concern and emotions amongst Finns and pre-war inhabitants touring the area, but there's currently also an increasing interest among the Russians in the history and pre-war reality of the territory. The article discusses the concept of built heritage in relation to these different identities, and the uses of the Karelian past. The main objective of the research is to find a means to unite presentday Finnish and Russian interests regarding the maintenance and use of the heritage.
The Karelian question or Karelian issue (Finnish: Karjala-kysymys) is a dispute in Finnish politics over whether or not to try to regain control over Finnish Karelia and other territories ceded to the Soviet Union in the Winter War and the Continuation War. Despite the name “Karelian question”, the term may refer also to the return of Petsamo, ceded parts of Salla and Kuusamo, and four islands in the Gulf of Finland. Gazes upon a ceded territory. Netta Böök Helsinki University of Technology. Abstract. Border Karelia is the former heartland of the Finnish-Karelian Orthodox culture. After the Continuation War ended in 1945, Finland was forced to cede Border Karelia to the Soviet Union. It was then populated with citizens from other parts of the Union, and became for 45 years inaccessible for Finns. In post-war Finland the ceded Karelia gained a new nostalgic aura, while the Soviet (Russian) attitude towards the territories was largely determined by political constructions and ‘Soviet nationalism’. The present Border Karelia is a rather poor Russian territory, characterized by a multifaceted identity and heritage. Remnants of prewar cultural landscapes, villages and buildi 2004). Border Karelia through rose-coloured glasses? Gazes upon a ceded territory. Fennia 182: 1, pp. 33–45. Helsinki. ISSN 0015-0010. Border Karelia is the former heartland of the Finnish-Karelian Orthodox culture. It has also been regarded, along with Viena Karelia, as a mythical place, the last reserve of the ‘original Finnish’ Kalevala culture. After the Continuation War ended in 1945.