

# ***Virulased*, a Multiethnic and Multicultural Community in Ryzhkovo Village, West-Siberia**

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## **Introduction**

Leaving one's motherland has been conditioned by economic, religious, political or other reasons and there is nothing extraordinary in living out-with one's ethnic habitat. Most frequently, Estonia has been departed from for the expanse of Russia. Thus the Estonian community in Russia has the longest tradition and is also the most abundant – according to the data of the 1989 census, the total number of Estonians living in Russia was 46, 390. The Estonian community was mainly formed, during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, from the Estonian emigrants migrating towards the eastern direction. The status of the Siberian Estonians is somewhat exceptional in the background of the whole of Russia. For homeland Estonians, the word phrase *Siberian Estonians* primarily associates with criminals and prison camps or deportations during the years 1941 and 1949. Although the older settlements in Siberia were indeed generated by the expelled persons, the emigrants, however, form the basic part of the Siberian Estonians.

The study of diaspora is topical in today's world and has consistently been in the focus of the interest of population scientists, ethnologists, linguists, cultural anthropologists and others. In Estonia, the study of foreign Estonians, including that of the Estonians living in Russia, has gained momentum particularly during the last decade, albeit, the researches did not have to start from an empty place. Writings on the Estonian settlements in Russia can be found in the press since the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The first surveys were published at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and were used as a basis by all of the later researchers (about what has been done earlier, see, e.g. Viikberg 1997: 28–29, Korb 2002: 152–153).

This current article has developed from my expeditions organised to the habitats of Siberian Estonians during ten years (1991–2000). Within the framework of the project “Ethnic culture in Estonian settlements”,

we worked with the Estonian Folklore Archives' expedition group in Krasnoyarsk and Altai provinces (krais) and in Omsk, Novosibirsk, Tomsk and Kemerovo oblasts; the fieldwork was financed by the cultural and scientific funds of Estonia. By now, the former Estonian settlements have either totally disappeared, become multiethnic villages where Estonians are in a minority, or have solely remained the villages of old people. As a rule, the children and young people do not have a command of their Estonian language (Korb 2001: 171–172, 193). In the majority of cases, we worked in rural areas and interviewed the fellow nationals who mastered their mother tongue – ergo, mainly the Estonians of the older generation. Although mother tongue and ethnic nationality are not coincidental concepts, language undoubtedly is one of the main identifiers of ethnicity. Personally, I regard the informant's way of expression to be of extreme importance and am of the opinion that a dialogue, by way of a mediating language, cannot be sufficiently profound. In order to obtain comparative material, we also interviewed some non-Estonians, with the mediation of the Russian language.

I reached Ryzhkovo, the oldest settlement of Lutherans, for the first time during the collection trip in 1999 and continued work in this location also in the year 2000. The local language and cultural situation significantly differed from other Siberian settlements: if elsewhere, Estonians primarily communicated in the Estonian and/or Russian language, then in Ryzhkovo, four languages (Estonian, Finnish, Latvian and Russian) were confusedly being used and none of these languages seemed to have a prevailing status. All interviewees, the number of women among them being remarkably more sizeable due to the demographic circumstances in the village, were born in Ryzhkovo and had spent there the main part of their lives. Connections between the peculiar ethno-linguistic situation of the village and the oral tradition were perceivable to such an extent that I decided to focus on these issues in this current article.

### **1. Founding of Ryzhkovo, the first settlers**

Ryzhkovo (in the Krutinka (Krutinsky) district in West-Siberia, approx. 220 km north-west of Omsk, founded ca 1803) was the first colony of Lutherans in Siberia. Here, the consolidated name Lutherans is used for the designation of the people with Estonian, Finnish (also Ingrian-Finnish), Swedish, Latvian and German origin, with common religious-cultural background. Researchers are of different opinion with regard to the founders and the exact year of establishing the village. For instance,

Ryzhkovo has been mentioned as the oldest Latvian colony: at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> or the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Latvians, due to resistance, were expelled from manors to Siberia; the settlement was named Rishkovo, after Riga city (Viikberg, Vaba 1984: 147). However, most of all, the Baron Ungern-Sternberg's peasants from Ingermanland, Yamburg county, have been regarded the first settlers of Ryzhkovo, as they had started a rebellion due to inhumane treatment and a fierce tax burden. Following the suppressing of the mutiny, 25 families, i.e. 150 souls were sent to Siberia (Juntunen 1982:352, Viikberg 1988: 284). According to J. G. Granö (1905: 7), some of the peasants from Ingermanland also settled in Siberia with the permission of Tsar Alexander I, after having obtained a positive answer to a relevant petition. The descendants of the Ingrian settlers live in several villages in Omsk oblast and are known by the name of Korlaks (see Korb 1998: 10, 36–37). Researchers V. Zlobina from Petrozavodsk (Petroskoi) and a Finn R. E. Nirvi ascertained that language-wise, these are the descendants of the Izhorians from West-Ingermanland Lower-Luga dialect. The name *Korlaks* has been explained by the scientists as having been derived from the Russian word *горло* and means a throat-cutter – thus a criminal sent to Siberia. Nevertheless, V. Zlobina has later refuted this explanation. Pursuant to her estimation, this name rather comes from the word *кореляк* < *Коре́ла* ('Karelia'). These are said to be the Baltic Finns whose language differs from that of the local Finnish population, including several Karelian elements and in its essentials, is similar to the Izhorian language (Nirvi 1972: 92–95; Zlobina 1972: 89, 92). Izhorians are Orthodox, whereas the Korlaks believe in Lutheranism. According to V. Zlobina, these people might have converted to Lutheranism due to the impact of Finnish clergymen and other Lutherans (Zlobina 1972: 88). The first pastors in Ryzhkovo, e.g. the Baltic German R. J. Walter, actually had no command of the Finnish language (Juntunen 1982: 353), thus it is only possible to speak about the influence of Finnish pastors from the year 1863, when the Finnish Lutheran Church began to take care of the religious life of the prisoners expelled from Finland.

Siberia belonged within the Moscow consistorial region. The Lutheran Church itself was primarily interested in the consolidation of the Lutherans and from the 1820s, Lutheran deportees were consistently being settled in Ryzhkovo: Estonians, Latvians, Germans, and since 1826, the Finns and Swedes expelled from Finland (Juntunen 1983: 11). The Tsar's regulation (1845) appointed Ryzhkovo as the

location of West-Siberian Lutherans, which became the destination point for small-scale criminals, whereas more serious criminals were sent to Upper-Suetuk in East-Siberia (Granö 1905: 9, Juntunen 1983: 95–96).

Due to various circumstances (lack of space, scarcity of arable land), the mother colony Ryzhkovo spun off several new settlements (Bugene, Boyarka – following the 1846 fire, Om settlement in 1861), but Ryzhkovo was permanently being supplemented on the account of newcomers. From the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the population was also enlarged with the help of the emigrants.

Older settlements, being multinational and multilinguistic from the very beginning, remarkably differed from the ethnic villages that were formed during the later period. Even the development of the two older Lutheran settlements, Upper-Suetuk and Ryzhkovo, was not alike. If in the long run, the inhabitants of Upper-Suetuk went over to the Estonian language, then the multilanguage and multicultural character of Ryzhkovo has preserved until today.

## **2. Inhabitants of Ryzhkovo – their number and ethnicity**

The number of inhabitants in Ryzhkovo and its ethnic composition has been constantly altering during the course of time. In 1846, the size of population reached 900; in 1848, following the departure of some inhabitants (mainly Ingrian Finns), approximately 700 persons remained living in the village. After this, the population of the village increased more than twofold in a short period – in 1859, the number of settlers counted was 1653 (Juntunen 1982: 357). The share of Estonians had increased, 52 Estonian, 39 Latvian and 36 Finnish children were studying in the school (Busch 1862: 263; Viikberg 1988: 285). The foundation of the Om settlement significantly alleviated the shortage of space in Ryzhkovo and the amount of the inhabitants in the mother colony did not later reach the 1859 level. In 1880, the number of parishioners in the settlement comprised 1, 420 persons and in 1902 – 1, 185 inhabitants – 235 Finns, the total number of Estonians, Latvians and Russians combined was 950 (Granö 1905: 21). August Nigol the researcher of settlements, gives an approximate number of Estonians in Ryzhkovo to be 500 in 1918 (Nigol 1918: 43); however, he does not present any data regarding other Lutherans. The author lacks any data considering the changes that reflect the interim period of circa 80 years long, with regard to the statistics of Ryzhkovo inhabitants.

The statistics of the 1997 village council gives the estimated size of

the population in Ryzhkovo to be 750, whereas 11 different nationalities have been listed. Now, Russians are the majority ethnic nationality (ca. 400), in smaller amounts, they had been living in Ryzhkovo from at least the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> centuries but the Russians do not form a single community, as they came from various locations at different times. The next ethnic nationalities are the Latvians (ca. 145), Estonians, (ca. 115), Kazakhs (ca. 55), Germans (ca. 20), Ukrainians (ca. 10). In addition, only a few persons represent the Georgians, Armenians, Tartars, Belorussians and Bashkirians. There is no such ethnic nationality as *Finns* registered in the statistics of the village council. When I asked the Ryzhkovo inhabitants about the ethnic composition of their village, the informants provided relatively different answers, but the Finns were mentioned repeatedly. The inhabitants of Finnish ancestry affirm themselves: *Me oleme suomlased, a meid ei kirjutata suomlane*. EFA I 57, 16 (1) < female, b. 1927. [We are Finns but we are not written down as Finns.] According to the data of the Finns in the Om settlement, it was dangerous for the Russian Finns or Ingrian Finns, following World War II or the Winter War, to identify themselves as a Finn and a Finnish name was changed to more Russian-like and the ethnic nationality was noted to be an Estonian (SKSÄ 155, 1991). Although in Siberia, the Finns have added to the local Estonian community, not all Finns were registered as Estonians. For instance, in the demographic statistics of the Orlovka village council, Omsk oblast, 19 persons were recorded as Finns and some Finnish family names had preserved in their indigenous form (Alhonen, Unkuri and others). Similarly to the Finns in Russia, the fate of the Russian Germans has also been problematic, but due to the greater abundance of the Germans and their strong ethnic feelings, the nationality *German* has not disappeared from local statistics. Transitional exchanges of identity or double identity, as a result of political or economic pressure by the country of residence, is relatively frequent in world practice, see, e.g. the Norwegian Kvens (Sulkala 2002: 217).

### **3. The knowledge of Ryzhkovo inhabitants about their ancestors and the first settlers of the village**

The people of the Ryzhkovo village, in comparison with the inhabitants of Upper-Suetuk, where long, elaborated and folklorised stories about the occurrence of their ancestors in Siberia have been preserved in village and family tradition (see Korb 2000: 52–53, 56–57), know relatively little about their predecessors. It was possible to obtain

corresponding reports solely from some elderly persons:

*Minu isaisa Iestimaalt saadeti.* [My father's father was sent from Estonia.] (This reveals the shortening of time, relatively common in stories.)

*Jalad olivad raudades. Kaheksa last olivad, kogu perega tulivad.* [Feet were in chains. There were eight children. There were eight children, they came with the entire family.] CD-0450 (13) < female, b. 1922.

*Tuodi, vai sie isaisa vai tema isa raudades, raudades saadeti siia Siberi. Aga ma ei tia siss, ma küsisin, mis kurja ta tegi. Ta ütles, et ta seda ei tia. No kas ta ei tia vai ei tahtnud ütelda. /—/* [He was brought, either the grandfather or his father, in chains, in chains he was sent here to Siberia. But I didn't know, I asked him, what evil did he do. He said he didn't know. Well, either he didn't know or didn't want to say.] CD-0454 (6) < female, b. 1916.

*/—/ Minu vanaisa isa on Germaaniast saadetud oma isaga, 12-aasta vanane poisikene tuli siia. No siss siin elas ja vottis naise ja ja siss oli vot minu vanaisa.* [My grandfather's father was sent from Germany together with his father, he came here as a 12-year-old boy. Then he lived here and got married and then he was my grandfather.]

– Did he also tell you why he was sent here?

*– No seal ta misle kurja oli teind, siss saadeti siia. Siin saadeti keik, et Siberisse. /—/* [Well, he must have done something bad there, then he was sent here. Everybody was sent here, to Siberia.] CD-0457 (18) < female, b. 1913.

The vague knowledge about their ancestors being sent to Siberia, had indeed preserved in the depths of the memory of Ryzhkovo inhabitants, but the vast majority of the descendants of the deportees are not capable of talking more precisely about this topic. It is possible that the oral memory of the inhabitants does simply not reach to the times of 200 years ago. The offences of the predecessors were generally not comparable with the criminal deeds of the ones sent to East Siberia and therefore, the clan and family stories of Ryzhkovo inhabitants did not leave a deep emotional trace in the memory of their descendants.

The foundation story of the village was also discussed in summer

1997, at the celebration of the 195<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the settlement, and some informants related what they had remembered from this event:

*/—/ Siis algas see Rõžkovo küla. No meil on räägitud, kuda ta algas. Nii kuda siia tulivad elama, saadeti, nuhelti inimesi, tsaar nuhtles inimesi. Enam ta ei jõudand neid ära tappa, meile räägiti nii, ja siis ta rešil niiviisi, et paneb kandalatesse, ja minge kuhu oskate. Ja tulivad, näe, siia Siberisse, siia näe, Rõžkovo tulivad, seda räägivad. Siin oli igavene mets.../—/ [Then the Ryzhkovo village started. We have been told how it started. How they came to live here, were sent here, people were chastened, the Tsar chastened the people. He didn't manage to kill them any more, this is what we were told, and he had decided to chain them and let them go wherever they could. And see, they came here, to Siberia, they came here, to Ryzhkovo, that's what they say. There was everlasting forest here...]* CD-0307 (10) < female, b. 1922.

The descendants of the emigrants often regard it necessary to justify their ancestors' coming to Siberia. Their stories describe difficult circumstances in Estonia and glorify the riches of Siberia. Similar self-justification is also present in the stories of the deportees – their predecessors had become convinced in the better quality of Siberian life and had remained living here after the expiration of their term of punishment:

*A ku tulivad siia, nad tagasi enam keski eivat läind, sellepärast et siin maa oli ia. Vot Lätist, Iestist nad on keik saadetud siia. /—/ Sial na kivega vaja jahtida selle maaga, a siin künna ja tie ja keik kasvab ja keik nii ea ja. Nad olid davolnad, sellepärast see küla nii ruttu, vot nüid kaks tuhat kolmendamal aastal lieleb kakssada aastat. /—/ [And once they came here, no one went back any more, because the land was good here. People from Latvia and Estonia, they've all been sent here. /—/ There they had to fight with stones and the land, but here, you just plough and work and everything grows and everything is so good. They were so satisfied, that's why the village grew so rapidly, well now, at the year two thousand and three, it will be two hundred years.]* CD-0457 (18) < female, b. 1913.

The founders of the village are also being frequently mentioned in the

stories on the origin of people. The knowledge of who has come here earlier or later, shapes the hierarchic relationships in the relevant region (see, e.g. Jaago 2000: 175). The first comer as if seems to have more rights. The main share of the current inhabitants in Ryzhkovo consider the Estonians and Latvians to be the founders of the village:

*Eestlane ja lätlane olivad, no kumb nendest enne oli, seda ma ei tia.*  
/—/ [Estonians and Latvians were there, well, who was the first one of them, I don't know.] CD-0308 (6) < female, b. 1916.

*Siin olliva lätlased ja iestlased. Iesti omad olivad siin puoles, lätlased sial puoles.* [There were Latvians and Estonians here. The Estonians were in this side, the Latvians in the other.]

– But how did the boundary go here? Did it go straight along the streets?

– *Uulitsaid pidi ja-jah. Siin uulits, see oli vahe, ku ütelda see vaheuulits, /—/ kus mina praegu elan. A siinpool oli eestlaste see uulitsa. Ei olnd ju nihuksed, ku nüt on uulitsad, uulitsad olivad talusid täis ja keik vanaaegsed talud.* /—/ [Yes, along the streets, that's right. This street here, this was the line, the so-called intermittent street /—/ where I live now. And this side of the street was of the Estonians. The streets then were not like now, the streets were full of farms and they were all archaic farms.] CD-0450 (7) < female, b. 1922.

/—/ *Esteks iestlaseid oli siin rohkemb. Siis oli lätlased.* /—/ *Ühed iestlased siin otsas elasivad, lätlased sial otsas elasivad. Ja no iesti naise vottis see vanaisa isa.* /—/ [First, there were more Estonians here. Then, there were Latvians. /—/ Some of the Estonians lived in this side and the Latvians lived in the other end. And my grandfather's father married an Estonian woman.] CD-0457 (18) < female, b. 1913.

Still, not all inhabitants of Ryzhkovo are of the same opinion with regard to the first settlers of the village; sometimes, the Russians have also been included within the first settlers:

*Kui meie siin algas meie küla ja kohe meie esimesed inimesed olivad lätlased ja venelased ja suomlased läbi segatud* /—/ [When we here, our village started, and right away, the first people were

the Latvians and Russians and the Finns, all mixed up.] CD-307  
(10) < female, b. 1922

#### **4. Ambiguity of ethnic and religious identity, the term *virulane***

Besides ethnic-linguistic affiliation, one of the factors shaping the identity in Siberia has undoubtedly been Lutheranism, also called *our belief* (see also Jürgenson 2002: 226–227). Religious life has been relatively persistent, despite the fact that pastors were forced to leave the country in the 1920s and in the 1930s, churches were altered into clubs, granaries or were simply destroyed. Since then, mainly elderly women began to conduct ecclesiastic services and baptisms-funerals were carried out in a homely circle, half-secretly. The pressure of official ideology inevitably had to have an impact at least on the younger generation and the ambiguity of identity today is also evidenced by the blending of two different identities – religious and ethnic:

*Me emme ole korlakad, me oleme luterjaanad.* [We are not Korlaks, we are Lutherans.] DV 96 < female, b. 1921.

In older Lutheran settlements of Siberia (e.g. Upper-Suetuk, Ryzhkovo), mixed marriages have been conducted since the early days of these villages. An informant, whose predecessors comprise people of Estonian, Latvian, Finnish and German origin, could not at once define her ethnic nationality.

In Siberia, the blur of ethnic identity is more frequent among the middle-aged and younger generations (a Russian or an Estonian) in blended settlements of Lutherans (e.g. Estonian-Finnish, Estonian-Latvian, Finnish-Latvian):

*Isa oli soomlane, ema lätlane, a ise olen eestlane.* [My father was a Finn, mother a Latvian, and myself, I'm an Estonian.] EFA I 38, 124 (1) < female, b. 1922.

From the standpoint of ethnic identity, it is indeed possible that a person, living in the contact area of cultures, who, at the same time, is often born from a mixed marriage, may identify himself/herself with two or more ethnic groups. Depending on the necessity, they define themselves as the representative of one or the other ethnic nationality. A person born from a mixed marriage can more firmly associate

himself/herself with one ethnic group adhering to one of the parents, for instance:

*Isa oli eestlane, mamma soomlane. Passis mul on eestlane. Sa oled isa-juurikast välja tulnud, sa piad olema nigu tema oli.* [My father was an Estonian, my mom a Finn. In the passport, I'm an Estonian. Once you've come out of your father-roots, you have to be the way he was.] EFA I 57, 5 (1) < female, b. 1922.

In some occasions, the basis for self-determination is rather the close communication circle:

*Pasportis ma olen estonets. Minu ema oli russkaja, isa oli latõs. A ma siin külas elasin, ma ütlen, et olen estonets.* [In the passport, I'm an Estonian. My mother was Russian, father a Latvian. But as I've been living in this village, I say I'm an Estonian.] EFA I 57, 12 (1) < female, b. 1921.

Estonians and Finns are often not being distinguished in Siberia: *A suomlane ja iestlane – need olivad nagu üks.* [Oh, a Finn and an Estonian – they were like one and the same] and when speaking about the latter, a common name *virulane* is being used in Ryzhkovo. CD-0449 (6) < female, b. 1928.

In general, the Estonians acquired the common name *Estonians* only during the 19<sup>th</sup> century national movement; by that time, the older settlements in Siberia had already been established a long time ago. Estonians have also named themselves after their counties, such as the *sakalased* (people in Sakala county), *virulased* (people in Viru county), *harjulased* (people in Harju county), etc. but the deportees in Ryzhkovo originated from various parts of Estonia.

Relying on my earlier experience in Siberia, I know that North-Estonians in Siberia, living in the neighbourhood of Ingrians and Finns, have sometimes called themselves *virulased* (comp. in Finnish *virolainen* 'Estonian'). In the Upper-Suetuk village, the Estonian school of that time was generally called the *Viru school*, and the Upper-Bulanka Estonian village was *Viru-Pulan* (see also Viikberg, Vaba 1984: 220). The first purely Estonian village that outgrew from the Ryzhkovo settlement and was founded in 1861, on the shores of the Om River, was called *Viruküla* by the Estonians (with an official name Revel), and

later, *Vana-Viru* (Staryi Revel). People who left Viruküla in 1914, formed the *Uus-Viru* village (Novyi Revel). These Viruküla villages, now being multinational and multilinguistic, are existent even today.

In Ryzhkovo, the term *virulane* often designates both an Estonian and a Finn, however, elsewhere in Siberia, in the neighbourhood of Ingrians and Finns, *virulane* is the self-name for Estonians. The following names – *virulane*, *Estonian*, *Finn* – can be used in Ryzhkovo almost as synonyms.

The reasons for common definitions with regard to Estonians and Finns may be the similarity of languages, the fact that the Latvians and *virulased* [plural of '*virulane*'] had distinct territories in the village, elaborated throughout the course of time (Latvian and Viru sides), the weaker position of the Finns in the village. The situation where the Finns have, to a certain extent, remained in the shade, may be explained with the following circumstances: 1) As early as at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, J. G. Granö (1905) mentions that the Finns and Ingrian Finns in Ryzhkovo do not regard much of their language and mostly speak in Ingrian dialects, with Russian and Estonian words and sentence structure. 2) They marry other Lutherans. 3) After the end of deportations from Finland, the position of the Finns in the village became weaker as there were only a few newcomers. 4) It was politically less dangerous for the Finns to identify themselves with some other ethnic group.

## 5. Multilingualism of the Ryzhkovo Lutherans

When asking about the language for mutual communication in the village, I relatively often received a response that people can speak four languages:

*/—/ Oskan lätiks haastada, rääkida. Ma oskan lätiks rääkida, i iestiks oskan rääkida, ja veneks oskan rääkida, ja finljandskos ka oskan rääkida. Vot. CD-0455 (16) < female, b. 1921. [I can speak Latvian. I can speak Latvian and I can speak Estonian and Russian I can speak, and I can speak in Finnish. That's it.]*

*No meil on mestnoi sie kiel. Ma ette oskan nella kiel: lätiks, viruks, suomeks ja veneks. Hot huda, no vseh panimaju i znaju. /—/ [Well, the language, it is local here. I can speak four languages: Latvian, Viru, Finnish and Russian. Even if not too well, but I understand and know them all.] CD-0458 (27) < female, b. 1913.*

Bilingualism and multilingualism are always present when people who speak different languages, are in close contact. Linguistic switching is common to a person who has been living in a multilanguage environment since early childhood and similar multicultural societies can also be found elsewhere, for instance, some of the reindeer-herding Sámi people in Norway and Sweden (Lindgren 2000: 23); a part of the last Votic people have been trilingual (Ariste 1981: 64), etc. Such people, living a contact area, have also been considered semi-lingual, as supposedly, they have no proper command of any of the languages – the Russian press of the 1920s–1930s repeatedly expressed relevant opinions with regard to the Ryzhkovo inhabitants. When observing bilingualism and multilingualism, proceeding solely from the communicational situation (see e.g. Oksaar 1999: 13–15), the Lutherans in Ryzhkovo may definitely be considered tri- or quad-lingual.

In the eyes of an informant, the common Latin alphabet may also be the basis for the linguistic unity:

*Nied kield kōik on ühe laada pial: lätlalane, iestlane, suomlane – nendel on kōik ühed tähed.* [These languages are all in the same market: Latvian, Estonian, Finnish – they all have the same letters.] EFA I 57, 3 (11) < female, b. 1922.

Linguists have noted that in the case of language contacts among Siberian Estonians, the Russian (impact of the prevailing great language) and Finnish languages are of greater relevance. The number of people who could speak Russian in the settlements of deportees, was undoubtedly larger than among the earlier emigrants – during penal servitude, it was inevitable to be in contact with this language, and when Russian was made the language of instruction in school education, (1937), the knowledge of the official language became common. Some of the inhabitants also admit: *Russian language is now the first language.* According to linguists, the active presence of a prevalent great language suppresses the small languages in a backward position, thus lessening the social need and interest to reciprocally acquire these languages (Vaba 1999: 539). In several Siberian regions, the situation has indeed developed so that today, Latvians and Estonians communicate by way of the Russian language. With regard to Finnish-Estonian language contacts, the larger extent and intensity of the contacts and the amalgamation of the Finns with Estonians are also estimated to be part of the reasons, in addition to the similarity of languages (Viikberg,

Vaba 1984: 220). As early as at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Johannes Granö (1905: 18) noted the recognisable impact of the Russian and Estonian languages in the speech of the Ingrian Finns and that of the Finns themselves. During the course of time, the Finns became a minority in the settlements and changed over to the Estonian language, for instance, in Upper-Suetuk, which was initially known as a mainly Finnish village.

A special situation was retained in some regions of Siberia, for example, among the Lutherans of the Om settlement villages – even today, the Latvians, Finns and Volga Germans can often speak Estonian, whereas the Estonians have no command of their neighbours' languages to a similar extent. According to J. Viikberg (1997: 38) the compactness of the Estonians and their own-language village society, respected by other minority groups, is of decisive importance in this regard.

However, the language situation among the Ryzhkovo Lutherans remarkably differs from that of the other settlements in Siberia. As a rule, in Ryzhkovo, the older generation inhabitants of Latvian, Estonian and Finnish origin do not use the Russian language in mutual communication and none of the languages spoken in the village has become dominant either. The Lutherans in Ryzhkovo village understand each other's languages thus making it possible for everybody to use the closer native language or to switch over to another language, if necessary. Usually, in communicating with a concrete person, a certain language is being used. For instance:

*Mees on lätlane, a ta minuga rääkis veneks. A meheema rääkis lätiks ja lapsed minuga räägivad lätiks. Ema oli finska jazõka pial, isat ma ei tiagi, viidi 41. aastal sinna na vainu ja sial tema tapeti ära.* [My husband is Latvian, but he spoke Russian with me. And my mother-in-law spoke Latvian and the children speak Latvian with me. My mother was using the Finnish language, I don't know about my father, he was taken to the war in '41 and killed there.] EFA I 57, 22 (1) < female, b. 1933.

The exchange of codes in the language of a Ryzhkovo inhabitant is relatively customary. From the point of view of communication, it does not matter whether the message is being delivered by using one or several languages. Siberian Estonians and probably also the other Lutherans switch more easily to the Russian language when dealing with newer concepts and nowadays problems (see also Viikberg 1989:

203).

The language of Estonians and Finns in Ryzhkovo naturally differs in the cases of various persons, but here these two kindred languages have interwoven more densely than anywhere else in Siberia. It is actually possible to conditionally talk about the so-called language of the *virulased*:

*Ja praegu meie kiel ei voi ütelda, et ta on suome kiel, ei voi ütelda, et ta on viru kiel, misle niukene smešannõi on, no ikka kirjutame virulased, et nigu virulased. /—/ [And now, our language, you can't say it is the Finnish language, you can't say it's the Viru language, it's such a mixture, well, let's write virulased, that it's like virulased.] CD-0458 (27) < female, b. 1913.*

*Meie keel on: ta läheb eesti sonad, soome sonad, ei ole puhas see keel, segatud ära. Siss ütlevagi korlaka. /—/ See on korjatud kiel. Siin on vene ja suome ja iesti vai viru ja keik keiki on pantud kokku. See on nüid tehtud isi, isi omatehtud kiel. /—/ [Our language is like this: Estonian words, Finnish words, it's not clean this language, it's mixed up. That's why they would say Korlak /—/ It's a collected language. There is Russian and Finnish and Estonian or Viru and all this has been put together. This is all self made, it's a self-made language.] CD-452 (10) < female, b. 1916 and male, b. 1933.*

In reality, the Estonian language's position in Ryzhkovo is indeed stronger than that of the Finnish one and we can speak about the Estonian language with a touch of Finnish. The language of the *virulased* has a lot of Finnish words (e.g. *koidan*, *reheline*, *lieneb*, *vaikka*, *mansikka* /berries/, *uuni* etc.) and sentence structure. While the impact of Latvian on the language of the *virulased* could be anticipated due to close mutual contacts, such an influence seems to be relatively modest.

## **6. Specific features in the tradition of the *virulased* in Ryzhkovo**

Folklore is a fairly international phenomenon: types and genres of folklore, plots of stories, short narratives etc. easily overcome state and language borders. Nevertheless, we can still talk about the tradition of a concrete ethnic group. Folklore is one of the basic means through which a human being and a group discovers or creates their identity

(Dundes 2002: 69). Besides the folklore text, the researchers of tradition are becoming more and more interested in the presentation: how is the information being transmitted? In this case, the use of language by the tradition group is not at all unimportant.

In the Ryzhkovo tradition, it is possible to note several specific features, conditioned by the ethno-linguistic situation of the village. As I interviewed the Latvians in Ryzhkovo to a significantly lesser extent and more superficially than the local *virulased* (mainly those whose spouses were from among the *virulased* or who lived in their territory), I can hereby display some of the specific features in the tradition of the *virulased* in Ryzhkovo village.

In Ryzhkovo, healing with words, similar to the general situation in older Siberian settlements, has been preserved and is still viable today, probably also due to the insufficient availability of professional medical assistance. The healers of other ethnic nationalities have been quite frequently attributed stronger healing capacity and greater skills; this fact has been referred to by several researchers of folk belief (see e.g. Loorits 1928: 16jj). *Virulased* in Ryzhkovo consider the healers of Latvian ancestry to be of greater knowledge, whereas the Latvians often look for help from the nearby Russian village or from the *virulased* living in the vicinity. In Ryzhkovo, healing words are passed on to a younger person and, as a rule, in the same language they were once learned. *Virulased* know spells in Estonian, Finnish and Latvian languages as well as in Russian. During the expedition, we managed to record *pistukesõnad* [charms against short sharp sudden pain] and rose spells in Estonian; *lendvasõnad* [spells against a mythological illness believed to be sent by a witch's arrow] and the spells against the illness brought by the wind, both in Finnish; rose spells in Latvian; Russian-language spells against fright, etc. In general, local people are of the opinion that healing charms can also be put into another language without lessening their power or impact. The translation of words was generally not a difficult problem as the inhabitants knew the language of their neighbours.

The Siberians' command of languages, in speech and writing, differs both by villages and persons. The knowledge of the Latin alphabet among the *virulased* in Ryzhkovo was relatively poor and the healing words, apotropaic writings, songs, etc., in Estonian or Finnish-Estonian blended language, have often been written down in Cyrillic.

Finnish names *piru*, *para* are being used, by the *virulased* in Ryzhkovo, as the names for mythological creatures. *Piru* is also used in

shorter folklore pieces, in riddles and sayings. Denoting the joint handicraft evening of girls, both the Russian *vechorka* and the blended Finnish-Estonian *illan istmine* are known. The names of more relevant holidays are used simultaneously in four languages, for instance, the Midsummer Day (St. John's Day) – Latvian *liigo* (liiga), Finnish *juhannus*, Russian *Ivan Kupala* whereas in Ryzhkovo, the Latvian name is most widely spread as the Midsummer Day had been a more significant feast for the Latvians than for the *virulased*. Singing belonged in the tradition of celebrating the Midsummer Day, both among the *virulased* and the Latvians. Often, this grew into a singing competition, however, the *liigo* songs are sung solely by the Latvians. Regarding *liigo* songs, see (*Latviešu tautas...* 1973: 65–66.)

Singers among the Estonians (*virulased*) have willingly included the most pleasant Russian, Finnish and Latvian songs in their repertoire, in addition to Estonian ones – the language has not been an obstacle and some of these songs have already been acquired in childhood. *Kellel miuke viis on: on vene ilusaid ja on iesti ilusaid, ei oska ma nüüd siit selitada.* [Depends on the tune they have: there are beautiful Russian ones and Estonian ones, I can't sort them out.] CD-0305 (5) < female, b. 1916. Evidently, the knowledge of Russian songs spread here earlier and was more general than in the purely Estonian villages in Siberia. The international and borrowed quality of rhymed folk songs enabled joint singing also in a multilingual company – every person in his/her own language.

The knowing of Finnish songs is remarkably more profound in Ryzhkovo than in other Siberian settlements. If in Upper-Suetuk, initially considered a Finnish village, people only remember a couple of song fragments in the Finnish language, then in the repertoire of the Ryzhkovo *virulased*, Finnish songs have a firm place, including a lullaby in alliterative verse, “*Tuudi luudi lasta...*” existent in many variants in an academic publication *Suomen kansan vanhat runot*.

The share of bilingual rhymed songs is larger in Ryzhkovo than elsewhere in Siberia and they do not originate from the later tradition of Estonia, as in the majority of Estonian settlements. The Estonian rhymed songs include songs with switching to the more widespread language in homeland Estonia (Russian, German, Latvian, Finnish and Swedish). Conditioned by the linguistic situation in Ryzhkovo, local people also know songs in Finnish-Russian mixed language, e.g.:

*Lavvantekki posle banju*

*pojat menit naimaa.*  
*A vaskresenje utrom rana poigi uni painaa.*  
[On Saturday, after sauna,  
The boys went to get married.  
But early Sunday morning  
The boys were obsessed by sleep.]  
CD-0305 (13) < female, b. 1916.

which has a purely Finnish language equivalent in the files of rhymed songs in the SKS folklore archives.

In Ryzhkovo, I also recorded a song in Estonian-Russian mixed language:

*Läksin metsa, poidu les,*  
*seal oli karu ja medved.*  
*Läks ta minu üle pia,*  
*tšeres moju golovu.*  
[Went to the forest, went to the forest  
There was a bear and a bear  
Did he go over my head,  
Over my head.]  
CD-0305 (14) < females, b. 1913 and 1916.

It is possible that this song reached Ryzhkovo by way of the Ingrian Finns as the only earlier transcriptions have been done by the academician Paul Ariste, from one and the same songster, presented in Votic-Russian and Izhorian-Russian languages (Ariste 1987: 9).

*Virulased* in Ryzhkovo know the dances, which are more widespread among their neighbours, the relevant dance name was also taken over together with the dance. For example, the description given by Emilia Naarits:

*Meil tantsud enne mis olivad* [The dances we used to have]: *valss, polka, katele poole polka, krakujakk, korobuška, padispaan, tustepp, kikas, kurtu tetsi, svetit mesjats, hoira, läksin pedre, jehal na jarmarku, võidu na retšenku, ma läksin õhtul hilja.* Ryzhkovo inhabitants consider their ability to dance to be of higher level than that of their neighbours and criticise the latter: *Eivat oskanud polkat tantsida, hüppasivad aga paiga pial!* [They couldn't dance polka, they're just jumping on one spot!] CD-0305 (19).

The tradition of Ryzhkovo *virulased* involves, on one hand, the joint tradition of the Lutherans in the village and, on the other hand, however, defines the *virulased* as a separate tradition group.

## Summary

The oldest Lutheran village in Siberia (being approximately 200 years old) has evolved into a multiethnic and multicultural settlement. Village inhabitants, as before, admit the existence of two monolithic ethnic groupings (the *virulased* and Latvians), despite the history of abundant mixed marriages between them. To a certain extent, both groups have also maintained their own territory, and naturally, both parties have been supplemented by newcomers of various ethnic origin. On one hand, we can speak about the joint tradition of the Lutherans in Ryzhkovo, on the other hand, also about the tradition of two ethnic groupings (the *virulased* and Latvians). The relatively weaker position of the Finns in the village has caused the amalgamation of the Finns and Ingrian Finns with the Estonians, nevertheless, Finnish language and culture have significantly replenished that of the Estonians and the joint name *virulased* seems to be fully justified. Constant competing between these two ethnic groups contributed to the longer persistence of the tradition.

## Archive materials

SKSÄ – Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seuran kansanrunousarkiston äänitearkisto

CD – Compact disc of the Estonian Folklore Archives

EFA – Eesti Rahvaluule Arhiivi käsikirjaline kogu [The collection of manuscripts of the Estonian Folklore Archives]

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