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## Right-Wing Radicalism in Finland During the Interwar Period – The Ideology of the Academic Karelia Society Employed as Expansionist Practice in Ingria

### Introduction

During World War II, the population transfer of 63 000 Ingrians, mostly from the German-occupied Ingria located in the Leningrad area, and from Estonia to Finland, was a mission operated primarily by the members of the Academic Karelia Society (AKS).<sup>1</sup> The whole transfer was led by AKS members Pentti Kaitera and Vilho Helanen, who cooperated with many other key actors in the project who were also motivated by the AKS doctrine that was shaped during the interwar period in Finland.

Ingrians were transferred to Finland as a kindred labour force in cooperation with the Germans. Although Germany was the main country responsible for the economic and military expansion of the area west of Leningrad,<sup>2</sup> the Germans and Finns worked together in the region during the war by implementing various illegal and legal means of control<sup>3</sup> explained partly by the ideology of AKS. The Finnish leaders of the transfer were recruited from the civilians because the Finnish headquarters did not want to deal with the process as an armed operation.<sup>4</sup> Germany and Finland's governmental authorities officially accepted the transfer, mostly due to

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<sup>1</sup> Heikki Eskelinen, *Me tahdoimme suureksi Suomenmaan. Akateemisen Karjala-Seuran historia. Tausta, organisaatio, aatteet ja asema yhteiskunnassa 1922–1939*. Werner Söderström Osakeyhtiö, Helsinki 2004, 363.

<sup>2</sup> Alexander Dallin. *German Rule in Russia 1941–1945. A Study of Occupation Policies*. The Macmillan Press LTD, London 1981 [1957].

<sup>3</sup> Outi Kähäri, “Gendered family memory of experienced governmentality – Ingrian women under German (and Finnish) rule in World War II”. *War and Society in the Baltic Region*. Edited by Kari Alenius and Saulius Kaubrys. Pohjois-Suomen Historiallinen Yhdistys, Rovaniemi 2023, 149–179. Available at: <https://www.urn.fi/URN:NBN:fi:oulu-202311283404>. In this article, I analysed, in more detail, the German occupation in the area and the processes related to the transfer implemented by the Finns and Germans from the Ingrians' perspective.

<sup>4</sup> Heikki Roiko-Jokela, “Heimotyötä ja virolaissympatioita”. *Eteläntien kulkija – Vilho Helanen (1899–1952)*. Edited by Heikki Roiko-Jokela and Heikki Seppänen. Atena Kustannus Oy, Jyväskylä 1997, 217; Erkki Tuuli, *Inkeriläisten vaellus: Inkeriläisen väestön siirto 1941–1945*. Werner Söderström Oy, Juva 1988, 89–90; Kähäri 2023.

the labour shortage in wartime Finland and Nazi Germany's need to transfer the local population from the battlefield at the war's end. However, at the grassroots level, the daily interaction in the German-occupied area was largely based on the actions of so-called kinship activists and their assistants who worked independently and had close interactions with the Germans in the Leningrad area and Estonia. Based on the present study, their actions were obviously involved with expansionist ethnic segregation processes outside the Finnish borders.

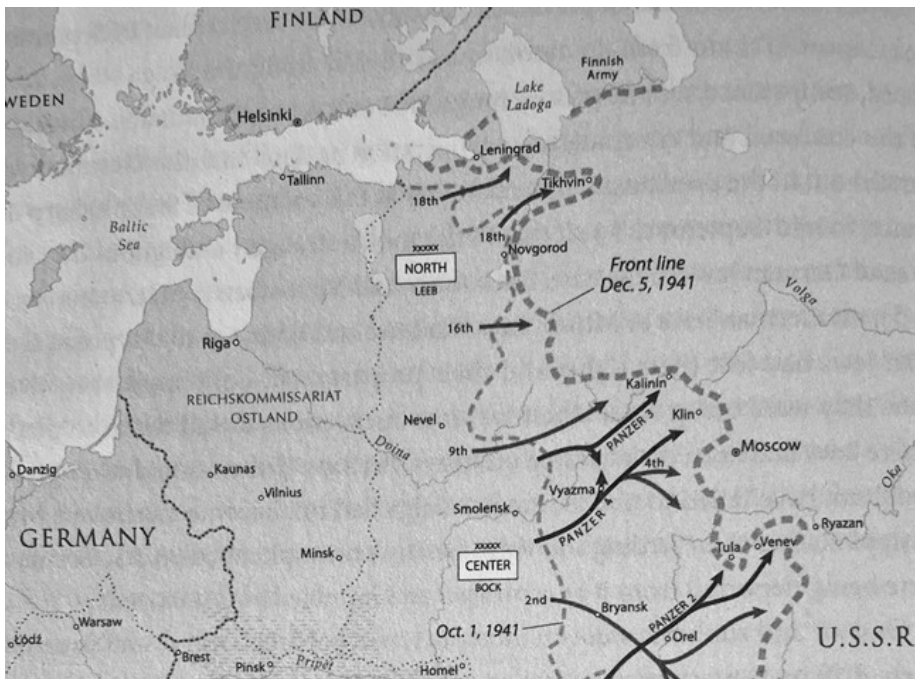


Image 1. The German advance 1 October – 5 December 1941. A photo is taken and modified by the author from Timothy Snyder.<sup>5</sup>

AKS resampled other European right-wing radical, even fascist movements established during the interwar period<sup>6</sup>, which had consequences for its wartime actions. This radicalism was reflected in the territorial expansion related to the questions of race and ultranationalist ideas, often regarded as central features of

<sup>5</sup> Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands – Europe Between Hitler and Stalin*. Vintage, Penguin Random House, London 2015 [2010], 208.

<sup>6</sup> Also Jouni Tili, *Suomen pyhä sota – papit jatkosodan julistajina*. Atena Kustannus Oy, Jyväskylä 2014, 183.

fascism.<sup>7</sup> Specifically, in national socialist Germany, the ideas regarding *Lebensraum*<sup>8</sup> and the politics called *Heim ins Reich*<sup>9</sup> were based on the belief that all people of the same ethnicity should live in the same nation-state. These politics also included excluding practices for people who did not belong to the right ethnicity from the nation-state's perspective. Seemingly, similar kinds of ideas were in the Finnish actors' expansionist geopolitical visions and their work implemented in World War II regarding the ideas of Greater Finland and the transfer of the Ingrian population from the German-occupied area to Finland.

The history of extreme nationalism related to the practices of national inclusion and exclusion outside the Finnish borders in the German-occupied area in World War II has not been researched from a critical perspective.<sup>10</sup> For instance, Reetta Kallanne has interpreted AKS members' reports written in the German-occupied area from the perspective of religious discourse by paying attention to rhetorical elements and argumentation<sup>11</sup> without deeply considering how the local people actually received the political right-wing activism—although some Finnish actors repetitively reported about the local people's reactions in various and detailed ways.

This study aims to familiarise the reader and me with the visions and realities of Ingria and Ingrians among the right-wing movement AKS before and during World War II. I look at how AKS was established after Finland gained independence and how the movement was reshaped during the interwar period. Further, I critically explore how the ideology of AKS was employed as an 'expansionist practice' in German-occupied Ingria and Estonia in World War II, which is empirically at the core of my study.<sup>12</sup> In more detail, I ask how the ideology of AKS shaped during the interwar period was reflected in the thoughts, feelings, and actions of the AKS member, priest Jussi Tenkku, as described in the diaries he wrote during his wartime journey to Ingria. The data is collected from Jussi and Liisa Tenkku's book *Inkeriläisiä siirtämässä: Jussi ja Liisa Tenkun päiväkirjat 1943–1944*<sup>13</sup> and are based

<sup>7</sup> Kevin Passmore, *Fascism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press, Oxford 2014, 9–14.

<sup>8</sup> In English, *living space* followed the ideas of German expansionism.

<sup>9</sup> Meaning ethnic Germans living outside the nation-state of Germany should come "back home to the *Reich*".

<sup>10</sup> On the Finnish activists' actions among kindred people in Ingria, cf. Toivo Flink, *Kotiin karkotettavaksi: inkeriläisen siirtoväen palautukset Suomesta Neuvostoliittoon vuosina 1944–1955*. Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, Helsinki 2010; Reetta Kallanne, "Uskonto keskitysleirillä: Suomalaisen hengellisen toiminnan ja uskonnollisen diskurssin roolit inkeriläisten parissa Kloogan keskitysleirillä toisessa maailmansodassa". *Vuosikirja*, Volume 112, 2022, 76–106.

<sup>11</sup> Kallanne 2022, 80.

<sup>12</sup> Some other studies on Ingrian social history related to the transfer and the process's aftermath have been rather open-minded towards AKS's radical ideology that was implemented in Ingria. See, e.g. Flink 2010.

<sup>13</sup> In English *Transferring Ingrians: Jussi and Liisa Tenkku's diaries 1943–1944*.

on the original written diaries of Jussi and his wife, Liisa Tenkku, published by the Finnish Literature Society (SKS) in 2008. Jussi, member of AKS, and Liisa, member of the Lotta Svärd organisation and the Karelia Society of Academic Women<sup>14</sup>, participated in the population transfer of Ingrians from the German-occupied area to Finland in 1943 and 1944. Juho, or Jussi, was born in 1917 in Nivala to a farming family from Central Ostrobothnia. He finished his studies and became a priest in 1941 and married an Ostrobothnian woman, Anna-Liisa Simojoki, who was a music lecturer at the teacher training institute.<sup>15</sup>

This study considers Jussi a presenter of AKS ideology in the context of interwar and war. Thus, my aim is not to understand his writings as part of his biography but as a sample reflecting the thoughts, feelings, and actions that were grown and shaped by the socially and politically radical organisation AKS during the interwar period and then put into practice in the transfer operation. Later, Jussi was critical of how that religiously and politically motivated AKS ideology was put into practice for military purposes during the war. After the war, he experienced a spiritual crisis, finished his career as a Lutheran priest, and concentrated on philosophical research instead.<sup>16</sup> Thus, my study targets the AKS ideology presented in Jussi's wartime diaries—not him and his biography as such. The analysis of the researched diaries is based on the aim of my research—to look at how Jussi's writings in World War II presented the ideology of AKS. Thus, the AKS ideology, as known in previous research, formed the interpretative framework for my study.

My study shows that the Finnish AKS priest studied in the article embraced the given ideology, which was often reflected in his writings and other practical work. The analysis illustrates that AKS ideology was employed as an expansionist practice in the German-occupied area of Ingria in World War II. The AKS activists built a racially unified national community beyond the borders of the Finnish nation-state according to the radical right-wing, even fascist thoughts that had been shaped during the interwar period. The national reunification of kindred people in the Leningrad area included ultranationalist ideas and territorial expansion related to race-related questions with the Germans' assistance. The processes of national inclusion and exclusion were specifically present in ethnic segregation of the local people conducted by the Finnish AKS activists in the German-occupied area. The practices

<sup>14</sup> In Finnish *Akateemisten Naisten Karjala-Seura* (ANKS).

<sup>15</sup> Mikko Salmela, *Tenkku, Jussi*. Kansallisbiografia-verkkojulkaisu. *Studia Biographica* 4. Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, Helsinki 1997. <http://urn.fi/urn:nbn:fi:sk-s-kg-007244> Accessed 27.3.2024.

<sup>16</sup> On essential changes in Jussi Tenkku's attitudes regarding the interplay between Christian religion, the morality of politics, and military operations after the war, see, e.g. Tilli 2014, 260–262. He later considered that the church should not be involved with any social system because all these systems would change in time, depending on circumstances. Thus, Tenkku considered that the 'kingdom of God' could live in capitalist as well as socialist and communist societies. On his career as a philosopher, see Salmela 1997.

of remaking the national community reflected the idea of setting kindred people free from the enemy state representing the ‘antichrist’ and connecting them to the national body by gathering them together and returning to the ‘fatherland’. However, my study’s data reveals that the local people’s attitudes towards ‘national reunification’ implemented by AKS members were partly critical, specifically at the end of the war. Clearly, many local Finno-Ugric individuals, families, and communities did not understand and support the ideologies of AKS nationalists who spread politically and religiously motivated ‘high Finnish culture’. AKS nationalists also represented a military authority who cooperated with the occupier in the context of war.

Diaries are specifically worthy of study as case studies, for instance, in political and historical research in which censorship or the lack of sources has made studying social history or traditional political history somewhat difficult.<sup>17</sup> In the context of my study, I identified information related to the essential forms of the writer’s *social reality* and the specific characteristics of the texts<sup>18</sup> that constantly emerged in the thoughts, feelings, and attitudes in the social events represented in the diaries. After that, I presented specific sequences from the diaries, illustrating well how the AKS ideology was implemented. I made a detailed qualitative analysis of the sequences in relation to contextualisation based on the ideology. I considered—although critically – what was central to the writer’s experience in making sense of what he encountered in a foreign land with the ‘kindred people’ during the war. I organised the diary data into a synthesis of loose thematic categories based on close reading<sup>19</sup> and a detailed interpretation of Jussi’s diaries that were relevant to ideological topics already cherished among AKS during the interwar period. I situated the AKS activists as Jussi to the cultural, economic, and political climate of the time<sup>20</sup> while underlining that this ‘climate’ was not accepted or understood by all Finnish citizens of that specific period. However, when researching the ideology of AKS implemented into practice during World War II through *personal diaries*, which always include the intimacy aspect, paying specific attention to a research topic’s historical context is ethically essential.<sup>21</sup> Thus, I contextualise the transfer of the Ingrian population—as it was experienced as a mission among AKS activists—as a continuation of the right-wing radicalism that was shaped among the patriotic intelligentsia during the

<sup>17</sup> On analysing diaries in political and historical research, see Andy Alaszewski, “Researching Diaries”. *Using Diaries for Social Research*. Introducing Qualitative Methods. London: SAGE Publications Ltd, London 2006, 24–45. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9780857020215>.

<sup>18</sup> Andy Alaszewski, “Analysing Diaries: Numbers, Content and Structure”. *Using Diaries for Social Research*. Introducing Qualitative Methods. SAGE Publications Ltd, London 2006, 84–111. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9780857020215>; author’s italics.

<sup>19</sup> In Finnish *läihiluku*.

<sup>20</sup> On general ethical consideration regarding contextualisation, see, e.g. Anu Koskivirta and Satu Lidman, “Historioitsija eettisten valintojen äärellä”. *Historiantutkimuksen etiikka*. Edited by Satu Lidman, Anu Koskivirta and Jari Eilola. Gaudeamus, Helsinki 2017, 11–25.

<sup>21</sup> For a more detailed contextualisation of the transfer, see, e.g. Kähäri 2023.

interwar period in Finland. Simultaneously, in the context of my previous studies on the oral history of the oppression experienced by displaced Ingrian Finns<sup>22</sup>—also reminisced by their descendants<sup>23</sup>—my obligation is to make the power relationships between the AKS activists operating in Ingria representing the authority of the Finnish government and the local people more visible.

### The Establishment and Reshaping of the Academic Karelia Society in Finland During the Interwar Period

During the last decades, AKS has been the object of study among historians<sup>24</sup> and sociologists<sup>25</sup>. Notably, some historical studies have been funded or published by AKS-related associations, which may have impacted the circumstances for these studies.<sup>26</sup> During recent years, theses concerning AKS have been published in Finland and Sweden, indicating that AKS is still an interesting political movement for young scholars to study.<sup>27</sup> However, I find exploring the actions of AKS during the interwar period and World War II somewhat difficult because AKS destroyed their official archives and proceedings in the autumn of 1944 after World War II. AKS, like other organisations based on radical kinship ideology, was abolished as a ‘fascist’ and anti-Soviet political movement according to Article 21 in the peace treaty Finland made with the Soviet Union.

<sup>22</sup> Outi Kähäri, “Kyllä mäkin muistan, kun ne Valpon miehet kävivät”. Ruotsiin pakenneiden inkeriläisten arjen turvattomuus jatkosodan aikaisessa ja jälkeisessä Suomessa”. *Vähemmistöt muuttajina. Näkökulmia suomalaisen muuttoliikehistorian moninaisuuteen*. Edited by Miika Tervonen and Johanna Leinonen. Siirtolaisuusinstituutti, Turku 2021. Available at: <https://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-7399-10-1> Accessed 5.5.2024.

<sup>23</sup> Kähäri 2023; Outi Kähäri, “Postmemorial Work of Moral Valence – A Study of the Resistance Practices of Ingrian Descendants”. *Memory Studies*, 2024, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/17506980241255068>

<sup>24</sup> E.g. Eskelinen 2004; Mikko Uola, *AKS:n tie – Akateeminen Karjala-Seura isänmaan ja heimoaateen asialla*. Minerva kustannus Oy, Helsinki 2011.

<sup>25</sup> E.g. Risto Alapuro, “Students and national politics: A Comparative study of the Finnish Student Movement in the interwar period.” *Scandinavian Political Studies*, 1973.

<sup>26</sup> For instance, *AKS:n tie – Akateeminen Karjala-Seura isänmaan ja heimoaateen asialla*, edited by Mikko Uola, was published by the Society for the Academic Karelia Society, *Akateemisen Karjala-Seuran Perinneyhdistys ry* in Finnish. Moreover, the central study on AKS, *Me tahdoimme suureksi Suomenmaan. Akateemisen Karjala-Seuran historia. Tausta, organisaatio, aatteet ja asema yhteiskunnassa 1922–1939*, written by historian Heikki Eskelinen, was largely funded by the Club 22, *Kerho 22*. See Eskelinen 2004, 12.

<sup>27</sup> E.g. Eemil Hautamäki, *Vastavoima ja viha: fasismin aate ja käytäntö Akateemisen Karjala-Seuran äänenkannattaja Suomen Heimon kirjoituksissa 1934–1939*. Kandidaatintyö, Oulun yliopisto, Oulu 2022. Available at: <https://urn.fi/URN:NBN:fi:oulu-202212153784> Accessed 6.5.2024.

Also, private archives of AKS members, including sensitive information, were destroyed even decades after the war.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, AKS utilised the practices and rules of conspiracy during Finland's struggles towards its independence, and AKS members employed these practices even later in their actions.<sup>29</sup> Thus, their activity, from the movement's genesis, included operations that were not documented or archived. Thus, private archives, journals—specifically *Suomen heimo* published by AKS—and memoirs became essential sources for studying the history of AKS and its members. The lack of sources highlights that many of AKS's political, social, and practical actions were not mentioned to be dealt with in public. Still, AKS is not widely known among the large public in contemporary Finland, although its meaning in Finnish history as a cultural and political movement is remarkable inside and outside the borders of the Finnish state.

During the interwar period, the student movement in Finland was extremely nationalist.<sup>30</sup> The main issues AKS dealt with related to kinship activism, the question of the Finnish language, and the armed defense of the young state, which should be nationally cohesive.<sup>31</sup> AKS was mainly established by the young students involved with the efforts to build Greater Finland while emphasising the nationalist idea of territorial expansion. AKS became popular in Finland after the so-called kinship wars<sup>32</sup> in Estonia, the Karelia region, and Ingria<sup>33</sup> in 1918–1922 after Finland gained independence.

Many of the foundational members of AKS had voluntarily fought in the mostly unsuccessful kinship wars and were personally involved with the kinship question. Thus, AKS was built on many political failures, such as the Treaty of Tartu. AKS activists fought in the wars to unite kindred people. Their ideology was based on Fennomaniac national ideas and they were also deeply disappointed in political parties, politicians, and the Finnish nation.

The foundational idea of AKS was related to anti-Russian and anti-Soviet ideology, which was supposed to be uniting force for the Finnish people who were expected to make sacrifices for the state unity—the fatherland—because of the shared threat of Soviet Russia.<sup>34</sup> In 1923, in the ceremony where the AKS flag was celebrated, one of the foundational members of AKS, Elias Simelius-Simojoki, talked about the contrast between the 'black hate' and 'blue-white love' in which the hate was

<sup>28</sup> Eskelinen 2004, 26–27.

<sup>29</sup> Eskelinen 2004, 81.

<sup>30</sup> E.g. Vesa Yrjö Vares, "From allies to opponents. Conservatives facing fascism in Finland in the 1930s." *Scandinavian Journal of History*, Volume 46, Number 2, 2021, 224–247.

<sup>31</sup> Uola 2011, 13.

<sup>32</sup> *Heimosodat* in Finnish.

<sup>33</sup> Mikko Uola, "Johdannoksi". *AKS:n tie – Akateeminen Karjala-Seura isänmaan ja heimoaатteen asialla*. Edited by Mikko Uola. Minerva kustannus Oy, Helsinki 2011, 7.

<sup>34</sup> Alapuro 1973, 125.

sacred because of its counterpart: the sacred love of the nation.<sup>35</sup> In 1924, the main mission of AKS was articulated in new ways. The association aimed to establish a strong national feeling and active love towards the Finnish nation among the whole society and push forward awareness and empathy towards kindred people in Karelia and Ingria.<sup>36</sup> The bourgeois and right-wing circles, in particular, supported the ideas of AKS.<sup>37</sup> Specifically from 1926, many Finnish-speaking students were under the control of AKS, and its impact on the high educational institutions was growing.<sup>38</sup>

The greatest problem presented during the so-called populist period in AKS concerned achieving the ‘great future of the Finnish race.’<sup>39</sup> The first solution for the race issue was ‘national reunification’<sup>40</sup>, a popular interest widely shared in right-wing circles in the twenties. The class struggles were planned to be eliminated, and social conditions improved.<sup>41</sup> The national reunification’s main target was to unite right and left political movements in Finland to further face the task of setting kindred people living outside Finland free and fighting against the old persecutor.<sup>42</sup> The second solution was for the Finns to shape a ‘high Finnish culture’.<sup>43</sup>

During the economic depression in the 1930s, right-wing movements rose to power in many European countries, and European and fascist and semi-fascist ideologies also became popular in Finland. Due to radical and violent political actions of the right-wing Lapua movement<sup>44</sup> (1929–1932), communists and trade unions were eliminated from the political realm.<sup>45</sup> The right-wing People’s Patriotic Movement (IKL)<sup>46</sup> was founded in 1932 to preserve the Lapua movement’s heritage after it was forced to finish its radical activism. Thus, right-wing radicalism continued to flourish among the educated class, and IKL started to work in close cooperation with AKS.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Eskelinen 2004, 164.

<sup>36</sup> Eskelinen 2004, 129.

<sup>37</sup> Alapuro 1973, 125.

<sup>38</sup> Alapuro 1973, 125.

<sup>39</sup> Alapuro 1973, 125.

<sup>40</sup> *Kansamme eheytyminen* in Finnish.

<sup>41</sup> Alapuro 1973, 125.

<sup>42</sup> Eskelinen 2004, 127.

<sup>43</sup> Alapuro 1973, 125–126; Among the Finnish-speaking educated class, the Swedish-speaking educated class was excluded.

<sup>44</sup> *Lapuan Liike* in Finnish.

<sup>45</sup> Alapuro 1973, 127.

<sup>46</sup> *Isänmaallinen Kansanliike* (IKL) in Finnish; also, some other organisations, such as *Inkerin liitto*, established by Ingrian refugees in Finland in the 1920s, cherished the kinship ideology and were in contact with AKS members. For more on this organisation, see Flink 2010. Although some Ingrian refugees were active in kinship organisations in Finland, I consider that radical kinship ideology was not ‘mainstream thinking’ among Ingrians outside the Finnish borders. Moreover, it was popular among a relatively small Ingrian intelligentsia in Finland.

<sup>47</sup> Alapuro 1973, 129.

In the 1930s, according to sociologist Risto Alapuro, AKS became an ideologically fascist or semi-fascist political movement in Finland.<sup>48</sup> Although some historians have considered Alapuro's interpretation impacted by his professional background as a sociologist and the 1970s left-wing political atmosphere,<sup>49</sup> I stand with his analysis concerning AKS's ideological radical changes in the 30s, mainly because I found these radical ideologies in the empiric data produced during World War II. Specifically, AKS's ideas of national unity as an entity where the working class was supposed to be conquered for the fatherland<sup>50</sup> became close to populist ultra nationalistic tendencies, which were typical in fascism and the national socialism in the 30s.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, AKS, as many other like-minded movements in Europe at that time, was highly critical towards parliamentarism, democracy, and liberalism because these did not consider the national aspect effectively enough.<sup>52</sup> These political changes occurred while the Soviet Union became stronger politically and Hitler rose to power in Germany. Seemingly, some ideological fragments of Nazi Germany were attached to AKS, which was reflected in the extremist thinking in, for instance, the central vocabulary of AKS.

The ethos of the brotherhood, the ritualistic culture of the organisation, and the strict organisational practices bound AKS members. The practices of the leadership began following the ideas of the leader principle, *Führerprinzip*, in 1934.<sup>53</sup> The leader principle specifically implemented in Nazi Germany included the idea of executive authority above the written law, referring to the political and ideological dictatorships of the leader(s). Although AKS was already, to some extent, a militarist organisation after its establishment,<sup>54</sup> I consider that these leadership principles strengthened its militarist character in the 1930s, which was presumably meaningful later in the wartime operations implemented in cooperation with Nazi Germany.

The right-wing political movements in Finland in the 1930s have more recently been called 'proto-fascist' movements.<sup>55</sup> In conceptualising proto-fascism, a political

<sup>48</sup> Alapuro 1973, 125–126.

<sup>49</sup> E.g. Uola 2011, 7–8.

<sup>50</sup> In Finnish *Työväestö on voitettava isänmaalle* was one of the heraldry phrases of AKS originating from Fennomania. See Kaarle Sulamaa, "AKS:n ideologia – Heimoaatetta, aitosuomalaisuutta ja kansankokonaisuuden tavoittelua". Edited by Mikko Uola, *AKS:n tie – Akateeminen Karjala-Seura isänmaan ja heimoaatteen asialla*. Minerva kustannus Oy, Helsinki 2011, 41–42.

<sup>51</sup> On populist ultranationalistic ideas related to fascism, see, e.g. Passmore 2014; some Finnish historians understand Finnish national socialism as totally separated from the German version of national socialism, see, e.g. Eskelinen 2004, 232. However, based on recent studies, there was much interaction between German and Finnish intelligentsia during the interwar period.

<sup>52</sup> Tilli 2014, 183.

<sup>53</sup> Eskelinen 2004, 170.

<sup>54</sup> Eskelinen 2004.

<sup>55</sup> Sami Koskelainen and Titus Hjelm, "Christ vs. Communism: Communism as a Religious Social Problem in Finland's Proto-Fascist Lapua Movement in the 1930s". *Journal of Historical Sociology*, Volume 30, Number 4, December 2017, 768–788.

movement ‘predates and usually contributes to the emergence of fascism in a given country, sometimes by evolving into a fascist movement. Proto-fascist, in this sense, is sometimes used interchangeably with semi-fascist, quasi-fascist, and borderline fascist. The term proto-fascism is also used in a slightly more general sense to refer to any political movement whose activities make the emergence of fascism more likely.’<sup>56</sup> Although Finland has never been a fascist state as such,<sup>57</sup> I consider that many radical right-wing political movements, such as AKS, made great societal efforts following the proto-fascist ideologies before the war, which took ideological forms in practice during World War II, with the cooperation of national socialist Nazi Germany.

The concept of ‘national community’ related to the German term *Volksgemeinschaft* began playing a crucial role in AKS ideology before the war.<sup>58</sup> According to Alapuro, in Nazi Germany, *Volksgemeinschaft* meant ‘a racially unified and hierarchically organised body in which the interests of individuals would be strictly subordinate to those of the nation, or Volk.’ Clearly, contemporary German national socialism had impacted the ideology of AKS because AKS also adopted the German National Socialists’ terminology. The passion for ‘organic unity’ reflecting the idea of the ‘national body’ replaced the preliminary idea of reunification at the national level.<sup>59</sup> In the 1970s, Alapuro argued that the rise of fascist thoughts after the populist period in AKS was activated due to cultural and other interaction with Germany. Germany and Finland’s interaction during the interwar period has also gained attention in more contemporary studies. For instance, the political and cultural contiguity between Nazi Germany and Finland in various ways before and during the formal alliance in the 1940s affected Finnish academic culture.<sup>60</sup> Moreover, Finnish priests increasingly visited Germany in 1940 and 1941, and German theological leaders visited Finland, which was essential from the perspective of information sharing regarding military and political strategies between Finland and Germany by the actors of the churches.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>56</sup> On proto-fascism, see <https://www.britannica.com/topic/protofascism>.

<sup>57</sup> See, e.g. Oula Silvennoinen, “‘Home, religion, Fatherland’: movements of the radical right in Finland.” *Fascism*, Volume 4, Number 2, 2015, 134–154.

<sup>58</sup> Alapuro 1973, 130; Cf. shaping *Volksgemeinschaft* in Interwar Germany, see, e.g. Moritz Föllmer, “The Problem of National Solidarity in Interwar Germany”. *German History*, Volume 23, Number 2, April 2005, 202–231.

<sup>59</sup> Alapuro 1973, 130.

<sup>60</sup> Ilona Salomaa, “‘I devote myself to the fatherland’: Finnish folklore, patriotic nationalism, and racial ideology.” *Finland’s Holocaust: Silences of history*. Edited by Simo Muir and Hana Worthen. Palgrave Macmillan UK, London 2013, 69–94; on scientific cooperation, see, e.g. Niilo Pesonen, *Voi voitettuja: pitkän elämän varrella muistiin merkittyä*. Tammi, Helsinki 1992.

<sup>61</sup> Jouni Tilli, *Suomen pyhä sota – papit jatkosodan julistajina*. Atena Kustannus Oy, Jyväskylä 2014, 37–38; Eino Murtorinne, *Veljeyttä viimeiseen saakka. Suomen ja Saksan kirkkojen suhteet toisen maailmansodan aikana 1940–44*. Suomen kirkkohistoriallinen seura, Helsinki 1975. Available at: [https://www.skhs.fi/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Murtorinne\\_Veljeytt%C3%A4-viimeiseen-saakka.pdf](https://www.skhs.fi/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Murtorinne_Veljeytt%C3%A4-viimeiseen-saakka.pdf) Accessed 9.8.2024.



Image 2. The leader of AKS, Rauno Kallia, giving a speech in Oulu in the 1930s. Photo: The Finnish Heritage Agency.

In the 1930s, communism had already become a central religious social problem in the Finnish right-wing political movements in which the Lutheran faith was key to protecting the Finnish nation.<sup>62</sup> Thus, Finland was a religious state resisting anti-religious communism. Notably, in the 1930s, Finland was considered ‘the most Lutheran country in the world’, where the largest group among the members of parliament were priests.<sup>63</sup> Nationalism and the Lutheran faith became largely intertwined.<sup>64</sup> Thus, the moral interplay between the religious themes and politics was not a specific phenomenon in Finland during the interwar period.

Christian piety was considered a solution to godless communism, and religion began playing a crucial role in political activism, while hatred towards various groups such as Jews, communists, Russians, and Swedish speakers grew in the 1930s. Many AKS members used the Bible and religious proverbs to interpret and legitimise their radical right-wing activism and political actions.

### **Implementing the Aks Ideology in World War II: Building a Racially Unified National Community in Practice**

When Finland proceeded on the battlefield during World War II, propaganda was courageous, including high hopes of conquering Greater Finland, also the area of Ingria.<sup>65</sup> The war was widely considered a holy crusade against the antichrist among politically powerful spiritual and military leaders in Finland. The holiness of the war was also a central reason why the alliance with the national socialist Germany

<sup>62</sup> Koskelainen and Hjelm 2017.

<sup>63</sup> Vares 2021, 240.

<sup>64</sup> Tilli 2014.

<sup>65</sup> Roiko-Jokela 1997; Tuuli 1988.

was accepted among the Finnish intelligentsia.<sup>66</sup> The dreams regarding the national reunification of kindred people cherished in AKS seemed, at first sight, to come true. According to members of AKS, the Ingrians living on the other side of the Finnish border in the Soviet Union had, over the centuries, held their cultural heritage and maintained the ‘pure’ Lutheran faith among the Slavs.<sup>67</sup> One of the central missions of AKS was to help kindred people such as Karelians and Ingrians outside Finland who had suffered from the Soviet repression targeting the Finno-Ugric people. To ‘stand for’ them, AKS planned to conquer all the lands of Karelia and even a part of Ingria in the Leningrad area. Finno-Ugric people were considered ‘a suffering Christ’ behind the Eastern border, and the Soviet Union appeared to be the pre-mansion of hell on Earth, led by Joseph Stalin, ‘the scourge of God’s wrath’.<sup>68</sup> This discourse was, of course, related to the oppression and ethnic persecution of Ingrian Finns in the Soviet Union, for instance.<sup>69</sup>

Moreover, the AKS members considered that Ingrian Finns were endangered among the Russians because they were under threat of being Russified. Thus, the AKS activists propagated and ‘enlightened’ the local people in Ingria through educational practices, letters, radio programs, and newspapers. Finnish propaganda was led by the Finnish Commission, which was led by AKS member Vilho Helanen.<sup>70</sup> In the *Inkeri* newspaper, the director of population transfers, Pentti Kaitera, liked to remind displaced Ingrian people of their responsibilities. According to Kaitera, Ingrians had to voluntarily adapt to the Finnish societal order and conduct sacrificial work for the country. Kaitera emphasised that although some Finnish laws formed restrictions on Ingrians as foreigners, in all the most important matters, the Ingrians had been equated with the Finns. Kaitera’s and other kinships activists’ talks and writings in the *Inkeri* newspaper have later been considered propaganda.<sup>71</sup>

### *Processes of National Inclusion and Exclusion: Ethnic Segregation Along With Preaching Among Local People in Ingria*

According to Jussi’s diary, his work as a priest in occupied Ingria and Estonia was to be mainly related to church services, baptism, religious gatherings, and establishing

<sup>66</sup> Tili 2014.

<sup>67</sup> Ville Nordlund, *Pohjoisen viinitarhan poliittinen profeetta – Elias Simojoen poliittisuontoinen raamatunkäyttö vuosina 1922–1940*. Pro gradu. Helsingin yliopisto, Helsinki 2019. Available at: <http://urn.fi/URN:NBN:fi:hulib-201908273350>. Accessed 6.5.2024.

<sup>68</sup> Elias Simojoki, Palava pensas: Elias Simojoen puheita. WSOY, Helsinki 1943; Nordlund 2019.

<sup>69</sup> See, e.g. Anni Maria Reuter, “Kansamme pirstotaan”: Inkerinsuomalaisten karkotukset ja diaspora Neuvostoliitossa 1930-luvun kirjeissä kuvattuna”. *Historiallinen aikakauskirja*, Volume 118, Number 1, 2020, 5–19.

<sup>70</sup> Roiko-Jokela 1997, 224–231.

<sup>71</sup> Flink 2010, 127–129.

Sunday schools and ecclesiastical order.<sup>72</sup> However, as an AKS activist, he worked in many politically active propaganda missions and military operations, which the analysis will illustrate. He considered that the local Finns in Ingria lived outside the national community in the ‘crossfire’ of different kinds of ideologies and nationalities, such as Russians, Estonians, and Germans.<sup>73</sup>

The analysis of the diaries shows how the national reunification of kindred people in the Leningrad area was based on the activists of AKS ‘re-making national community’, based mostly on the earlier ‘dreams’ originating from ideology shared in the right-wing association in the interwar period in Finland. This was illustrated in how Jussi wrote about his enthusiasm regarding the saving of kindred people on his way to Ingria: “My heart is thrilled with the idea that I am on my way to Ingria of which liberation we dreamed in the school and student unions.”<sup>74</sup> In practice, the ‘liberation’ of kindred people was illustrated in the processes of national inclusion and exclusion in which mostly Ingrian Finns, Izhorians, and, in some cases, Votic people were segregated from the residents who were regarded as ethnic Russians. Remaking this national community outside the borders of the Finnish state had already planned in the AKS ideology during the interwar period. Although the ideology of kindred people was not clearly considered a practice of unifying racially accepted individuals to the ethnically unified nation ‘*Volk*’, the practices of remaking the national community reflected the idea of setting kindred people free from the enemy state and connecting them to the national body by gathering them together and bringing them back to the ‘fatherland’. Jussi and his co-workers were involved with the ethnic segregation processes in Ingria, which were often blurry<sup>75</sup> and sometimes hardly based on official agreements with the Germans.

*In the Kattila district, there is no one, like Major Sperling, to take care of German affairs. He would have looked after the interests of the Ingrians, even if there were hardly any Finns in Hatsina. Here, the Germans do not know the special regulations concerning the evacuees and the agreements between the states, and it is difficult to get them sympathize with the transfer. The technical performance of the transfer and the agreements between the states are strange to me. I took the necessary papers from the folders and familiarized myself with them. While Sirkiä stayed in Kattila to segregate the*

<sup>72</sup> Tenkku and Tenkku 2008, 44.

<sup>73</sup> Tenkku and Tenkku 2008, 33.

<sup>74</sup> In Finnish *Sydäntä sykähyttää ajatus, että olen matkalla Inkeriin, jonka vapautumisesta olemme nähneet unia koulussa ja osakunnassa*; Tenkku and Tenkku 2008, 20.

<sup>75</sup> On blurry processes during the transfer, see also Kähäri 2023.

*Finns from the Russian transports, and I left by car to organize the Finnish and Izhorian transports.*<sup>76</sup>

15.11.1943 Komsekina, Konnunkylä

According to Jussi's report, it seemed the Germans acting at the grassroots level in wartime actions were unfamiliar with the AKS ideology behind the transfer and the ethnic practices regarding the segregation processes. In contrast, Jussi and his Finnish colleagues were unfamiliar with the official transfer protocol; however, they selected Ingrian Finns and Izhorian people from Russians—a practice based on the AKS ideology of kindred people and the Finnish race. The main mission of the Finnish AKS activists was to gather Finno-Ugric people for the transfer, although they hardly knew about the 'agreements between the states.' The Finnish actors are represented as an ethnically uniting force, gathering all the possible [suffering] members of the national community.

Typically, AKS members, such as Jussi, acted like legal authorities in the German-occupied area, using politically and religiously motivated reasoning to make the local Finno-Ugric people favourable to the transfer. For instance, at the beginning of the transfer, the Finnish AKS activists and individuals near the AKS ideology spread the religious message and the spirit of AKS in the Lutheran confirmation festivities celebrated with Ingrians in the villages.

*[Katri] Korhonen and [Albert] Hämäläinen and his wife had come to the confirmation ceremony in the Niemi's truck, on which we sang hymns and Finnish hymns while driving through Russian villages. I believe that the AKS's march<sup>77</sup> and Kytösavun aukeilla mailla<sup>78</sup> never echoed in these lands before.*<sup>79</sup>

13.6.1943 Hatsina

<sup>76</sup> In Finnish *Kattilan piirissä ei ole ketään majurin Sperlingin tapaista saksalaistan asioita hoitamassa. Hän olisi valvonut inkeriläisten etuja, vaikkei Hatsinassa olisi ollut juuri ketään suomalaisia. Täällä saksalaiset eivät tunne evakuoitavien erikoismääräyksiä ja valtioiden välisiä sopimuksia, ja käden käänteessä on vaikea saada heitä asialle edes aktiivisesti myötämielisiksi. Minulle ovat siirron teknillinen suoritus ja valtioiden väliset sopimukset outoja. Otin mapeista mahdolliset tarvittavat paperit ja tutustuin pääpiirteittäin niihin, Sirkiän jäädessä Kattilaan eroittelemaan suomalaisia ryssäläistransporteista, ja minä lähdin autolla järjestämään varsinaisia suomalais- ja inkerikkotransporteja; Tenkku and Tenkku 2008, 235.*

<sup>77</sup> The song and lyrics of AKS March in Finnish are available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k5CJv1s6FmY> Accessed 6.5.2024.

<sup>78</sup> The song and lyrics of *Kytösavun aukeilla mailla* (known also as *Vilppulan uhrien muistolle*) are available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TTeUXh009IU> Accessed 23.9.2024.

<sup>79</sup> In Finnish *[Katri] Korhonen ja [Albert] Hämäläinen vaimoineen olivat tulleet konfirmaatiotilaisuuteen Niemen kuorma-autolla, jonka lavalla lauloimme virsiä ja suomalaisia lauluja ajaessamme venäläisten kylien läpi. AKS:n marssi ja Kytösavun aukeilla mailla eivät ole tainneetkaan aikaisemmin näillä mailla kaikuakaan; Tenkku and Tenkku 2008, 93.*

These writings illustrated how Jussi's preaching in confirmation ceremonies was intertwined with spreading right-wing nationalist ideology, such as by singing songs that included resistance towards the historical Russian persecutor as well as clearly political messages based on the extreme right-wing ideology and culture related to building Greater Finland with other politically like-minded Finnish people. In many contexts in different parts of Ingria, the diaries illustrate well how the Lutheran services were utilized to shape the local people's political opinions and to stimulate their willingness to leave their homes to 'repatriate' to Finland. Lutheran churches and other public and private spaces were used to preach the 'gospel of Greater Finland' and racial reunification to the local people. The 'home' of all Finno-Ugric people



Image 3. Vilho Helanen, the head of the transfer commission, giving a speech for the Ingrians in favour of the transfer to Finland in the Lutheran church in Kupanitsa. A photo is taken and modified by the author from Roiko-Jokela 1997, 229. The original photo: The Finnish Heritage Agency.

in Ingria and Karelia had already been ideologically and politically built and established during the interwar period. In AKS ideology, suffering Ingrian Finns, Votic, and Izhorian people desired to become members of the national body – the national community that would become racially unified. However, according to the ideology concerning the national body, the members of the body seemed to be hierarchically organised in various ways in different periods.

Before the transfer, a German authority, Major Jaening, told Jussi that Ingrians were the most civilised, trustworthy, and purest population in the occupied area.<sup>80</sup> Specifically after his arrival to Ingria, Jussi made

<sup>80</sup> He talked about 'material' when referring to Ingrians, in Finnish *aines* – an instrumental way of referring to the subordinate local people; see, e.g. Tenkku and Tenkku 2008, 31.

enthusiastic notions of some Finnish families based on their positive attitudes and supporting actions towards the Finnish state.

*I also visit the agronomist Lohi's home where they share the strong Finnish national spirit. During the Winter War, many people prayed for Finland and sent us economic support.<sup>81</sup>*

4.4.1943 Narva

As the sequence from the diary illustrates, the positive writings concerned Finnish Lutheran residents in Ingria who had been politically, economically, and religiously active in supporting Finland during the wars, for instance. Jussi also appreciated Ingrian Finns' national feelings and expressed interest in Finland. However, Jussi's diaries also show how disappointed AKS activists were in the local population in many ways, specifically at the end of the transfer when kindred people were unwilling to leave their homes after the Germans had given the evacuation order. Many local people resisted the 'national reunification', specifically in the second phase of the transfer, by fleeing to the forests<sup>82</sup> and pretending they were ethnically Russians.<sup>83</sup> Jussi wrote that he continued his 'preaching' related to evacuation after the Lutheran ceremonies. His attitude was paternalistic, specifically towards orthodox Izhorian women who often resisted the transfer operation in a variety of ways.

*After the [Lutheran] service held in Komsekina a couple of weeks ago, the Lutherans of Komsekina have no longer doubted the evacuation. On the other hand, old Izhorian [Orthodox] women still didn't really understand their situation and didn't want to pack their belongings. I had to preach to them for a long time. Men began to understand their own best. But women are hopeless. Even though the evacuation order had already been given, they couldn't take it seriously.<sup>84</sup>*

15.11.1943 Komsekina, Konnunkylä

<sup>81</sup> In Finnish *Käyn myös agronomi Lohen kotona, jossa vallitsee voimakas suomalais-kansallinen henki. Talvisodan aikana rukoiltiin Inkerissä paljon Suomen puolesta ja lähetettiin avustusta; Tenkku and Tenkku 2008, 32. On national feelings, see also e.g. Tenkku and Tenkku 2008, 158.*

<sup>82</sup> Tenkku and Tenkku 2008, 193, 233, 235, 242, 250, 280.

<sup>83</sup> Tenkku and Tenkku 2008, 242.

<sup>84</sup> In Finnish *Pari viikkoa sitten Komsekinassa pidetyn jumalanpalveluksen jälkeen eivät Komsekinan luterilaiset ole enää epäilleet evakuointia. Sen sijaan Pärspään inkerikkoeukot eivät vielääkään oikein tajunneet tilannettaan eivätkä tahtoneet laittaa pakettejaan. Minun oli pitkään puhuttava heille järkeä. Miehet alkoivatkin ymmärtää oman parhaansa. Mutta naiset ovat toivottomia. Vaikka evakuoimiskäsäky oli jo annettu, eivät he jaksaneet ottaa sitä todeksi; Tenkku and Tenkku 2008, 236.*



Image 4. Ingrian migrants being transferred to the trains in Hatsina's Warsaw station. Photo: Antti Hämäläinen 1943, the Finnish Heritage Agency.

The diary reveals repeating ethnic and gender differences concerning the local people's attitudes towards the 'national reunification' implemented by the AKS activists. Clearly, many local Finno-Ugric individuals, families, and communities did not understand and support the ideologies that had spread to the Ingrian villages.

Moreover, the enemy of national unity and solidarity<sup>85</sup> were the Ingrian ways of forming communities like kettles.<sup>86</sup> Jussi's diaries condemned Ingrians for their 'cattle spirit'<sup>87</sup> and 'group thinking'<sup>88</sup>. The cattle spirit of Ingrians seemed to be the opposite of the morally accepted national unity and solidarity typical among AKS members.

*The Russian and Ingrian nature is hard to understand without considering the strange village communities. People are thinking and acting "according to the cattle spirit". [– –] Belonging to the village community has forced people*

<sup>85</sup> In Finnish *kansallinen yhteishenki*.

<sup>86</sup> In Finnish e.g. *Saman kylän omien on "päästävä parveen"*. See Tenkku and Tenkku 2008, 246.

<sup>87</sup> In Finnish *laumahenki*. See, e.g. Tenkku and Tenkku 2008, 36–38.

<sup>88</sup> In Finnish *joukkoajattelu*. See, e.g. Tenkku and Tenkku 2008, 229.

*to act as villages. However, it has not developed real solidarity but the cattle spirit.*<sup>89</sup>

8.4.1943 Jaama

From the perspective of the AKS activist, it seemed culturally, socially, and morally more valuable to have responsibilities and make sacrifices for the (imagined) nation<sup>90</sup> that was related to the idea of reunifying kindred people than to have responsibilities and make sacrifices for the village community or other smaller communities (e.g. family).

### *Religious Anti-soviet Thought in Practice: Russians as Opponents of Christ*

In World War II, anti-Russian and anti-Soviet thought was cherished among most of the Finnish people because of the ongoing war. In wartime thought, the idea of a fundamental enemy was natural. However, in the AKS ideology, the ‘Russian communist’ represented one who was supremely evil in a religious and spiritual sense. Thus, partly ideologically derived hatred towards communists and Russians in the Leningrad area was based on religiously motivated thought originating from the AKS circles in the interwar period. For instance, Jussi, following the ideas of AKS, considered that people who treated the Finnish actors in Ingria by rejecting ways were impacted by the communists<sup>91</sup>—thus, the antichrists, the opponents of Christ.

*Mari [Virolainen], Sirkkiä and [Pekka] Savolainen had visited in Kukkoinen a few days ago. However, they had received a cold reception. I heard in the other villages that some antichrists had visited in Kukkosii.*<sup>92</sup>

29.11.1943 Ust-Luga

Antichrists here referred to the persons or things considered supremely evils or fundamental enemies. Also, the antichrists impacted kindred people who resisted leaving their homes and thus resisted the uniting thoughts and actions of the AKS

<sup>89</sup> In Finnish *Venäläistä ja inkeriläistä luonnettakin on vaikea ymmärtää ottamatta huomioon omalaatuista kyläyhteisöä. Ihmiset ajattelevat ja toimivat "parvessa". [...] Kylän yhteisöön kuuluminen on pakottanut toimimaan kylittäin. Se ei ole kuitenkaan kehittänyt yhteishenkeä, vaan laumahenkeä*; Tenkku and Tenkku 2008, 38.

<sup>90</sup> On imagined communities, see Anderson, Benedict, *Kuvitellut yhteisöt – Nationalismin alkuperän ja leviämisen tarkastelua*. Vastapaino, Tampere 2020 [2017].

<sup>91</sup> Typically Russians.

<sup>92</sup> In Finnish *Mari [Virolainen], Sirkkiä ja [Pekka] Savolainen olivat joku päivä sitten käyneet Kukkoisissa. He olivat kuitenkin saaneet kylmän vastaanoton. Kuulin toisissa kylissä, että Kukkosissa oli käynyt antikristuksia*; Tenkku and Tenkku 2008, 253.

activists. These people were unwilling to sacrifice for the ‘fatherland’. According to the AKS activists, the godless Soviet Union and its religious and spiritual enemies threatened the morally acceptable and ethnically ‘right’ national community and fatherland—the state of Finland. As illustrated here, religiously motivated political thought was essential in Jussi’s actions in Ingria, representing the AKS ideology shaped during the interwar period.

Moreover, Jussi felt the Russification of the Ingrian people was ‘*heart-breaking*’.<sup>93</sup> He constantly evaluated ‘Russian customs’ in his diaries as something negative, although these customs were typically harmless cultural habits<sup>94</sup> often reflecting—according to my interpretation – the collective values typical in the Russian society, responsibilities following the principles of social and familial care, the common ways of survival in the context war, and Stalinist repression. However, these ‘Russian habits’ were highly undervalued among the Finnish activists because these customs seemed to disturb their politically and religiously motivated actions related to the population transfer in the German-occupied area. However, the Russified kindred people—although impacted by the antichrists—were considered to belong to the fatherland forming the national body, causing some dissonance in the minds of AKS activists.

### *Representatives of the ‘High Finnish Culture’*

The close reading of Jussi’s diary reveals how the Finnish actors in the Leningrad area in World War II considered themselves representatives of the ‘high Finnish culture,’ standing above the culture of the local people in the hierarchical order of Finno-Ugric people. In spreading this culture, Jussi travelled from village to village, often in difficult circumstances, to share the Finnish schoolbooks targeted to Ingrians.<sup>95</sup>

*I walked with my books over twenty kilometers through Kolkanpää to Harkkola and back here. The fact that the books have finally been distributed without wasting a single liter of Finnish state gasoline brings some relief to my gypsy*

<sup>93</sup> Tenkku and Tenkku 2008, 240.

<sup>94</sup> These habits related to religious customs regarding burying, for instance. See, e.g. Tenkku and Tenkku 2008, 119.

<sup>95</sup> Tenkku and Tenkku 2008, 215.

*life. Every Soikkola schoolchild has received a great Haavio reading book. Maybe it will have meaning in the long run.*<sup>96</sup>

22.10.1943 Vääräoja

Jussi was relieved that he managed to distribute the schoolbooks, which included educational, religious, and philosophical ideas that were popular in the Finnish educational system then. During World War II, Martti Haavio's book specifically targeted Ingrians and their cultivation towards the morally and culturally high Finnishness.<sup>97</sup> AKS activists who were typically highly educated considered themselves representatives of this high Finnish culture among the local, often 'primitive' kindred people who rarely had similar possibilities to educate themselves. Thus, one of AKS's main missions was to shape the great future of the Finnish race by spreading high, superior Finnishness among the 'Finnish race'. However, specifically those local people belonging to the 'Finnish race', according to the AKS ideology that resisted the aims of AKS activists was often understood as primitive<sup>98</sup>—attached to the land or soil, which implicitly seemed to be something opposite to that which was modern, rational, sophisticated, and developed—the high Finnish culture.

*I explained that coming to Finland is voluntary, but now it would be wiser to leave. Later, however, there will be an evacuation for them as well, but then they will no longer be able to get to Finland. My speech was useless. I pitied these poor creatures, who will bitterly regret their decision after a few months. Primitive people are not able to think so far ahead.*<sup>99</sup>

2.12.1943 Soikkola, Otsove

<sup>96</sup> In Finnish *Kävelin kirjojeni yli parikymmentä kilometriä Kolkanpään kautta Harkkolaan ja takaisin tänne. Jonkinlaista kevennystä mustalaiselämäni tuo se, että kirjat on viimeinkin jaettu tuhlaamatta litraakaan Suomen valtion benssiiniä. Jokainen Soikkolan koululapsi on saanut käteensä mainion Haavion lukukirjan. Ehkäpä sillä on jonkinlainen merkitys pitemmän ajan kuluessa*; See Tenkku & Tenkku 2008, 206. On sharing these books, see also Tenkku and Tenkku 2008, 187–188, 220.

<sup>97</sup> On Haavio's schoolbook, see Leena Koski. *Hyvän lapsen kasvattamisen ideaalit – tutkimus aapisten ja lukukirjojen moraalisen kosmologian muutoksista itsenäisyyden aikana*. Dissertation. University of Jyväskylä, Jyväskylä 2001, 60.

<sup>98</sup> The concept primitive, *yksinkertainen* in Finnish, was used constantly in Jussi's diaries, specifically towards the local women. See, e.g. Tenkku and Tenkku 2008, 214. Also, the terms 'childish' and 'uncivilised' were used in the same manner. See, e.g. Tenkku and Tenkku 2008, 190, 195.

<sup>99</sup> In Finnish *Selitin, että Suomeen tulo on vapaaehtoinen, mutta nyt olisi viisainta lähteä. Myöhemmin tulee kuitenkin evakuointi heillekin, mutta silloin he eivät enää pääse Suomeen. Puheeni oli turha. Sääliksi kävivät ihmisraukat, jotka muutaman kuukauden kuluttua katkerasti katuvat päätöstään. Luonnonihmiset eivät kuitenkaan jaksa ajatella kovin pitkälle*; Tenkku and Tenkku 2008, 256. See also Tenkku & Tenkku 2008, 250–251.

In his diaries, Jussi often considered himself a watcher of Ingrians' interests, superior to those who presumably belonged to lower or non-educated class and who often were—as showed earlier—impacted by the Russians and Russian society, which was a negative quality. Jussi evaluated especially orthodox Izhorians—who nevertheless were regarded as Finno-Ugric people of the Finnish race—with disrespect.

*Izhorians are incredibly low in the intellectual level and take an extremely suspicious stand to everything which is unfamiliar.*<sup>100</sup>

3.12.1943 Otsove

Moreover, he also represented gendered hierarchies between real Finnish women, i.e. Ingrian Finns living and Izhorian women, regarding their intellectual skills.<sup>101</sup> Jussi's writings illustrated how specifically women expressed their resistance towards politically and religiously orientated AKS activists. However, many middle-aged men were in the army; thus, the local people living in the occupied area were mostly women, children, and older people. Jussi often evaluated the women as oddly emotional—a typical way to make intellectual distinctions between rational and irrational people.

*Hardly anywhere do rumors run as strongly as in this large village. I held the meeting in the evening under the light of an oil lamp. The men seemed to understand the situation, but the women couldn't get over the idea that I was an instigator. To my astonishment, the only Lutheran woman in the village, whose husband had been killed by the partisans, and whose home I have often spent the night, called me overwrought a false prophet, quoting the Book of Revelation.*<sup>102</sup>

26.11.1943 Koskinen

The extract from Jussi's diary shows that his political, religious, and other ideological thoughts shared among kindred people in Ingria were understood and rejected in the context of politics and the Christian faith, which intertwined with traumatic war-related experiences. Being judged as the 'investigator' and the 'false prophet' of the

<sup>100</sup> In Finnish *Inkerikot ovat henkiseltä tasoltaan ihmeen alhaalla ja tuntevat äärimmäistä epäluuloisuutta kaikkea vierasta kohtaan*; Tenkku and Tenkku 2008, 258.

<sup>101</sup> Tenkku and Tenkku 2008, 225–226.

<sup>102</sup> In Finnish *Tuskin missään huhut vallitsevat niin voimakkaasti kuin tässä suuressa kylässä. Pidín kokouksen illalla öljytuikun valossa. Miehet tuntuivat ymmärtävän tilanteen, mutta naiset eivät päässet irti ajatuksesta, että olen villitsijä. Hämmästykseni kylän ainoa luterilainen nainen, jonka miehen partisaanit olivat tappaneet, ja jonka kodissa olen usein yöpynyt, alkoi suu vaahdossa ilmestyskirjaan vedoten säättää minua vääräksi profeetaksi*; Tenkku and Tenkku 2008, 250–251.

Book of Revelation made it clearly visible that his AKS-related mission in Ingria was somewhat unsuccessful. It was a journey full of social and personal contradictions, highlighting the fact that the mission in Ingria the AKS members envisioned and dreamed about during the interwar period turned out to be quite different from what was planned.

At the end of the operation, Jussi considered that the whole operation was based on love, although they were also motivated by selfish reasons.<sup>103</sup> After the war, he could reflect on the AKS mission in Ingria; he wrote to his wife Liisa that he now considered that the national ideology has come to an end. He began pondering that the national ideology had caused the war and divisions<sup>104</sup>, which presumably mirrored his slight remorse regarding the politically and religiously motivated transfer and his capability of critical self-reflection as a diary writer.

### **Conclusion: The Ideology of Academic Karelia Society Employed as Expansionist Practice in Ingria**

AKS activists such as Jussi Tenkku categorised and segregated local people for the population transfer in Ingria according to the hierarchic kinship ideology based on the thoughts, feelings, and actions rooted in the Finnish right-wing association that was established and shaped during the interwar period. The transfer of Ingrians from the German-occupied Leningrad area to Finland reflects the practice of gathering kindred people from their concrete homes to their ‘ethnic home’ as a process of national reunification. These processes illustrated well the logic of racial and ethnic inclusion and exclusion in the German-occupied areas in World War II, not only by Germans but other national actors—as Finnish AKS activists—who cooperated with the Germans in these processes of ethnic segregation. The study shows how the Finnish AKS activists were constantly involved with evaluating ethnicity and race among the local people in Ingria, although some studies have more recently highlighted that the Ingrians were not racialised in the German-occupied area.<sup>105</sup>

Following the ideology of AKS, the ‘reunification’ of the Finno-Ugric people was hoped to be a ‘national reunification’ for the sake of the Ingrians and the whole Finnish nation-state. However, the local people often condemned national reunification because they preferred to decide their own fates. Some Ingrians were

<sup>103</sup> Tenkku and Tenkku 2008, 218.

<sup>104</sup> Tenkku and Tenkku 2008, 288.

<sup>105</sup> For example, Reetta Kallanne stated that Ingrians were not racialised in the descriptions of Finnish actors in the German-occupied area. See Kallanne 2022, 95. However, this study shows that the local people were targeted to the processes of ethnic segregation and racially motivated evaluations by the AKS activists, which was typical in the whole German-occupied colonised area. On this, see, e.g. Dallin 1981.

positive, but many were critical towards AKS activists like Jussi, who considered oppositional local people as primitive, lacking the ‘right’ understanding.

Specifically, the second transfer of Ingrians based on the ‘repatriation agreement’ signed by the allies, Germany and Finland, in Riga on 6 October 1943<sup>106</sup> reflected expansive nationalism typical of colonialism in the border areas of Finland<sup>107</sup>. This kind of historical colonialism in border areas has recently raised more attention in Finland.<sup>108</sup> From this perspective, right-wing radicalism in Finland during the interwar period and the ideology of AKS was employed as an expansionist practice in Ingria. When looking at the theory of colonialism as a critical frame of reference and an approach to the radical nationalistic control the Finns practiced—who were often AKS activists—I understand that part of the local population became colonised. Many kindred people were ethnically segregated and forcibly or semi-forcibly<sup>109</sup> integrated into an expansionist national community based on race. Ingrians, including Finns, Izhorian, and Votic people living in Ingria, were transferred from their homes to an often culturally and geographically distant ‘fatherland’ through a process that reminded me of the folk reunification of kindred people, which had already been ideologically and politically planned during the interwar period in AKS. According to Ania Loomba, colonial practices are related to the expansion, where the colonisers conquer the lands of the colonised people and intervene in the culture and society of the colonised people in a way that include segregation based on race, religion, nationality, and gender.<sup>110</sup> The present study illustrated the segregation practices, including positive and negative evaluations related to ethnicity, race, nationality, religion and gender.

## Discussion

World War II offered the Finnish AKS activists an outstanding opportunity to advocate their ideology in the German-occupied area, in cooperation with the Germans. Foundational ideas of AKS related to religiously and politically motivated anti-Russian and anti-Soviet ideology were naturally implemented into the context of war. The religiously motivated political propaganda that was established and shaped in AKS during the interwar period was closely intertwined with the ‘Word of God’ and ‘preached’ in holy places (e.g. churches) and intimate spaces (e.g. homes of

<sup>106</sup> Dallin 1981, 281–282; See also Kähäri 2023.

<sup>107</sup> *Rajasetukolonialismi* in Finnish.

<sup>108</sup> E.g. Sami Lakomäki, Janne Lahti and Rinna Kullaa, “Johdanto: Suomi kolonialismin ja rajasetujen risteyskohdissa”. *Kolonialismi Suomen rajaseuduilla*. Edited by Rinna Kullaa, Janne Lahti and Sami Lakomäki. Gaudeamus, Helsinki 2022, 17–31.

<sup>109</sup> On forced and semi-forced population transfers in this context, see also Kähäri 2023.

<sup>110</sup> On colonialism, see Ania Loomba, *Colonialism-postcolonialism*. Routledge, London 1998.

Ingrian people) in World War II. Members of AKS, like Jussi Tenkku, seemingly considered themselves representatives of the ‘high Finnish culture’, specifically when evaluating many Ingrians as primitive people. The idea of the expansive high Finnish culture had already been built in the 1920s in the AKS circles.

Ingrians were often evaluated as ‘helpless’ in circumstances of war, and some were willing to migrate to Finland. However, surprisingly, specifically at the end of the war, AKS activists faced much resistance towards the population transfer to Finland among the local people. This fits well with what we know about the second transfer based on forced German evacuation from the previous studies. AKS activists like Jussi thought Ingrians—meaning Finns, Votic and Izhorians—naturally belonged to the Finnish ‘national community’, the *Volksgemeinschaft* of Greater Finland. This formed the key element in AKS ideology before the war in the 1930s when the Soviet Union strengthened politically, and Hitler came into power in Germany. Moreover, Stalinist repressions that escalated in the late 1930s made it clear to AKS activists that the Finnish state body could organise and racially unify the Finno-Ugric people. However, the interests of individuals living beyond Finnish borders seemed to be subordinate to those representing the core of the nation.

The transfers of Ingrians can be understood as the aim to build the ‘great future of the Finnish race’ by transferring the Finno-Ugric people—who, regardless, were Soviet citizens—from outside the Finnish borders and into the fatherland. The operations fit well with AKS’s efforts to build Greater Finland by an expansionist population policy based on ‘race’. The transfer of the Ingrian people was a method of bringing them to the national communion. It was a process of national reunification already widely imagined as a religiously and politically motivated ideology in AKS during the interwar period. The population transfers as a part of national reunification were processes that can be fully understood only by the actions of religiously and politically radical AKS activists practicing the right-wing ideology, which had fascist attributes. The study indicated that building the Finnish national community and striving for national reunification included and required practices of ethnic segregation implemented by the AKS activists. These historical processes could also be better considered in contemporary discussions and practices related to racialisation and racism in Finland.