

Nüüd huuga, tehas, vili, nurmel vooga,	Jetzt tose, Fabrik, Getreide, woge auf dem Feld,
Sirp, lõika, alasile, haamer, lõõ!	Schneide, Sichel, schlag auf den Amboss, Hammer!
Nõukogu elu, tuksu võimsa hooga,	Sowjetisches Leben, pulsiere mit mächtigem Schwunge,
Too õnne rahvale, me tubli töö!	Bringe dem Volke Glück, unsere tüchtige Arbeit!
Me Liidu rahvaste ja riike seas	Unter den Völkern und Staaten unserer Union
Sa, Eesti, sammu esimeste kindlas reas!	schreite du, Estland, in der standhaften Reihe der Ersten!
Kui kants sa seisad vastu loodepiiri	Wie eine Feste stehst Du gegen die Nordwestgrenze
Ja toeks sul Vene rahva tugev hõim.	Und Dich stützt der starke Stamm des russischen Volkes.
Ei suuda punatähe võimsaid kiiri	Des Roten Sterns mächtige Strahlen kann
Me rannalt kustutada ükski võim.	Von unserer Küste keine Macht zum Verlöschen bringen.
Lipp lenin-stalinlik, meil lehvi eel	Wehe uns voran, Banner Lenins und Stalins,
ja juhi sa meid õitsengu ja õnne teel.	Und führe uns auf dem Wege der Blüte und des Glücks.

SUMMARY

A Miserable Bungling? The Creation of the Estonian SSR Anthem 1944/45

In the 1930s, Joseph Stalin led an internal revolution in domestic policy of the Soviet Union reclaiming the Russian heritage for the socialist state. In the years of World War II, the world revolution idea was largely discarded. All this required legitimisation in the form of new symbols. Therefore, the *International*, regarded as the state anthem, was replaced in 1943 by a new lyrical symbol, the Soviet anthem, which was both acceptable for the Kremlin and highlighted the unity of the USSR. Whereas the *International* used

to be the anthem of the Union, now all Soviet Republics had to compose their own “national” anthem, with strongest emphasis on main motifs, like the special role of the Russian people, their old-established friendship with the republican titular nation, and needless to say, the personal importance of Lenin and Stalin in world history.

In early 1944, Soviet relations with Western allies as well as other foreign policy factors and domestic policy needs urged the creation of anthems of the Union Republics. One main reason was that since the founding of the United Nations was on the agenda, Moscow planned to force through the membership of all Soviet Republics. Therefore it was deemed necessary to expand their “sovereignty”: the creation of a “national” anthem for every single Union Republic served the purpose of demonstrating to the rest of the world that their “sovereignty” had increased.

The Estonian SSR anthem committee began their work in February/March of 1944 in Leningrad, led by Johannes Vares-Barbarus. All poets and composers residing in the Soviet rear at that time were involved in composing the anthem. The new anthem „Jää kestma, Kalevite kange rahvas“ (Endure, heroic people of Kalevs) was written by Johannes Semper and composed by Gustav Ernesaks, and approved by Estonian SSR Party leader Nikolai Karotamm. The anthem was officially enforced in the summer of 1945.

It is remarkable that, until the enforcement of the official anthem of the Estonian SSR, the anthem of the Republic of Estonia, effective between the two World Wars, was not condemned, and in fact even used in late autumn of 1945 and afterwards at several public events. The creation of the anthem of the Estonian SSR coincided with the so-called transition period, when the struggle against “bourgeois nationalism” was taking its first steps and the period of independence had not yet been completely disapproved. The anthem, as a Soviet symbol, remained in place in the Estonian SSR until the restoration of Estonia’s independence.