

Tallinn: A map of provisional territory

Peter Hasdell

Tarkovsky's film *Stalker*, speaks of the zone, an area where the normal rules of society do not apply. Presently the emergence of wasteland or wilderness type 'zones' – not unlike those alluded to in *Stalker* – in former east bloc cities is linked to the dissolution of the Soviet Union. With particular reference to the emergence of 'zones' in former Soviet built areas in Tallinn, Estonia, the text focuses on ground as physical and cultural and ideological expression. Considering how this undergoes almost tectonic displacements when subject to large-scale geographical, political and ideological changes, manifesting large-scale disruptions, and shifts locally within Tallinn's urban fabric.

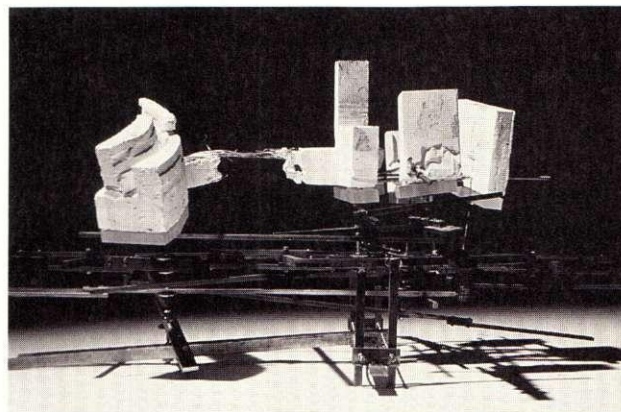
Stalker, described as "the soul's landscape, after confession"¹ tells of journey through an area called the 'Zone'. The zone, a desolate and spare post-industrial wasteland but otherwise ordinary looking terrain, is full of traces of a departed humanity. Empty factories, disused infrastructure, echoic halls, and fields full of decaying, rusting machinery. The zone was formed by an unknown and unspecified celestial event, thought to be a meteorite collision. Creating a condition on earth where normal rules do not apply, where the earth's estrangement from itself has occurred, leaving in its wake a liminal² zone. The zone is understood in these terms as the landscape after such a soul-less existence, with all the detritus of the abandoned optimism of the industrial age. Within the zone is an inner sanctum termed the 'room' in which a golden sphere grants subconscious wishes to those who manage to find the room. Those who seek the zone and room's secrets require the service of the stalker to avoid the pitfalls of the zone. It is the stalker's 'profession' or destiny to lead a writer and a scientist³ through the traps and the twilight landscape of the zone to the 'room'. As Turovskaya has written:

The world of the *Stalker* in its ordinariness, with its laconic, pared-down simplicity, is a world reduced to such a tense singularity that it almost ceases to be an 'external' world, appearing instead as a landscape of the soul, unburdening itself by confession.⁴

The film in its twilight reduction of essences and its 'tense singularity' forms a masked critique of the Soviet Union. Referring obliquely to the film's director Andrej Tarkovsky's disenchantment of scientific rationality. A critique of the scientific folly and impossibility of massive structuring and social programmes set up by the Soviets, not to mention the proliferation of the cold war through military might.

Tarkovsky's *Stalker*, was filmed during the Soviet times in the harbour area of the city of Tallinn in Estonia. An area effectively 'off limits' during this period for the average citizen to the extent that Robert Harbison has said that it seemed as though the city was not a maritime city during the 1970's⁵. The proximity of the Soviet Union to the West and the fact that the area was one of the USSR's major military harbours meant that the area became a no-mans land. Filmed as a spare, desolate but almost familiar landscape, the spaces *Stalker* depicts have naturally enough, resemblances to the harbour areas of post-Soviet Tallinn today. *Stalker* in these terms seems to have premeditated the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the resulting post-industrial landscape that remains in cities like Tallinn. In Tallinn, many formerly Soviet controlled areas bear legacies of this age, leaving behind hollowed out caverns, industrial wastelands and infrastructure at a scale that is unimaginable, and largely unfillable in the newly independent Estonia. In post-Soviet Russia and the former republics, the state run factories and industrial complexes now are deserted, their functions and machinery have rapidly disappeared leaving voids, and holes in their cities. What remains around such complexes and former state machinations are the housing projects and the inhabitants of 'zones' similarly caught within a twilight existence remaining as ghostly reminders of the former USSR. These 'zones' one can postulate, are analogous to the Soviet military or research cities that did not appear on maps at the time, cities that were effaced and unnamed in the pursuit of science, the cold war or ideological concerns. The apocalyptic end of the 'scientific' age of the Soviets as Turovskaya tells us in the form of a moral or

ironic tale comes with the nuclear reactor disaster in the city of Chernobyl in 1986. An event that transformed the city into a ghost area effaced from the map as a no-go area off-limits to most people but inhabited by 'stalker' like figures who cannot leave this 'zone'.



Gareth Morris: Model of a hinge and armature showing the shifts, displacements and rotations between the old town and the Viru hotel on the main Soviet square.

Ideological transformations in the states of the Soviet Union during its existence resulted in massive displacements, disruptions and transformations in various republics, their landscapes and cities. These are evident as large-scale quasi-geographic forces that have acted on specific localities, manifested as raw urbanity and over-scaled buildings whose order and *raison d'être* are often elsewhere from the sites where they are built. In post-Soviet times the extent of these transformations are becoming apparent only now. Tallinn, like other former Soviet cities is no exception to this phenomenon, being massively changed in demographic and social make-up as well as in urban form during the Soviet years; its whole cultural and physical landscape was radically altered during this time. The city in context of the newly independent Estonia carries these legacies. In this transitional state, formerly certain territories and their boundaries become uncertain. The conditions of territory and ground as well as maps of these territories, thought of as issues of land ownership, citizenship, culture and urban fabric do not hold the same sense of stability as they did formerly. As well

referents of stability, actual or ideological no longer hold sway, and cultural and national origins become re-written and re-constructed as authenticity. Areas of the city in which Soviet progress and modernity were played out and represented as the 'new city' become traces of a forgotten order, and become excluded politically and socially from having any role to play in post-Soviet Estonia. New 'zones' appear whose topographies; codes, territories and changed boundaries are of unknown quantities. These are 'zones' for which the older Soviet maps are no longer valid tools for navigation and the Estonian equivalents have not yet been plotted and charted reliably.

The representations of territories in maps bear traces of the ideologies behind their inceptions and of their contexts. However maps in these terms are fickle, they dissimulate their fictive aspects and simulate objective veracity, a faithfulness to a territory that claims to only represent what is already present as a scientific abstraction of reality. Reading a map buys into these criteria, yet as an outsider in a new city one can easily be misled by the map. What is not shown becomes as important as what is represented. In this uncertain context this text makes two readings of the territory that is woven through the city of Tallinn. This is considered in the context of post-USSR Estonia focussing on specific late-Soviet remnants in the city and their relationship to ideas of territory thought of as conditions of ground.

1. The reconstruction of ground

The city of Tallinn has a particular quality of heterogeneity reminiscent of a sedimented stone. In various areas of the city just outside of the old medieval town one can find in one city block a fragment of the heterogeneity of the city as a whole. Next to a brand new Finnish built office building you might find a decrepit timber building with peeling paint and overgrown trees, an Russian Orthodox church, a Soviet built pre-cast concrete building and an Estonian modernist or Jugendstijl building from the 1930s. Each city block a microcosm of the city as a whole, a complex history that can be read as traces of the various influences that the city has undergone. With its Hansa origin and centre, Tallinn's development over time has been variously influenced by the Danish, the Germans, the Swedish (who have each contributed cultural and built layers to the medieval core of the city) and the Tsarist Russians in the 19th century (for example the Kopli peninsula, an enclave

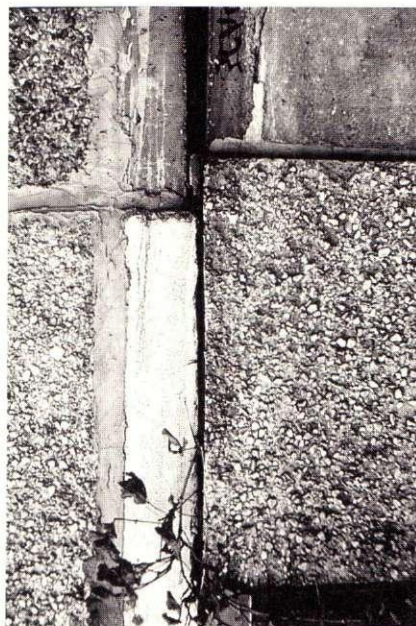
isolated and distinct from both the medieval and the modern city, characterised by timber housing and an older Russian population), and in recent times, by 40 years of Soviet rule (evident in massive modern expansions outside the city centre comprising of industry, institutions and suburbs). Each have contributed various aspects to the city, layers or rings of growth that have sedimented around the core of the city, adding to the impression that Tallinn, as with other Scandinavian cities is rock-like in appearance. In these terms the city is a geological city firmly rooted to the ground on which it sits, conveying the sense of having been ever present, of having always existed or of having grown out from the rock. This characteristic is quite distinct from those found in St. Petersburg, for example, where the ephemerality and insubstantial nature of a city built on a river delta as an apparition by Peter the Great fails to give a similar sense of permanence, despite that the city generally belongs to the same region.

Tallinn's landscape milieu comes from its geological substratum. Sited on the northern edge of a bed of limestone where Estonia meets the Gulf of Finland. Estonia is cut off from the more glaciated Finnish lands by a large geological fault that runs East-West to St. Petersburg, a distinct landform covering the whole of Estonia, extending westwards from Narva on the Russian Border. A specific condition of ground, defining landscape and territory in Estonia, the limestone is crucial for understanding critical aspects of identity and context of Tallinn. In terms of national identity, a parallel can be drawn in the way for example that the Finnish landscape composed of thousands of lakes has become a part of a national identity, mythologised as a giver of specific national characteristics, both architecturally and culturally. Limestone⁶ fulfils a similar role in Estonia as the lakes and forest in Finland. Linking landscape, urban fabric, the particular siting of Tallinn and construction material both as stone and as cement. The medieval city centre sits on an outcrop of limestone that is strategically and defensively sited. Its medieval city walls are located where the outcrop meets the flatter hinterland. Limestone is used for the city walls and is present in many older buildings in some form undoubtedly for reasons of expediency. Key public buildings in the centre such as the town hall have utilised it as both a structural and expressive feature that works to ground the buildings into their context.

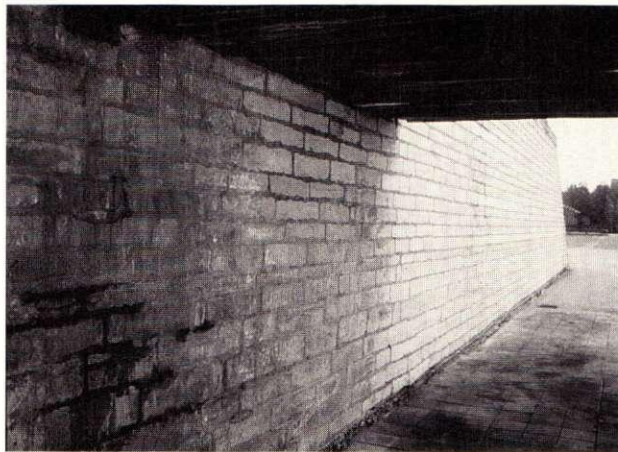
During the brief 10 year period of Estonian independence of the 1930s "limestone functionalism"⁷ emerged in the work of Herbert Johanson and others whose buildings are characterised "by a clear geometrical composition and a harmonious usage of material, in which constructive and architectural functions mingle."⁸ Johanson's Fire Services building of 1939 articulates clearly a modernist language, built however in limestone bricks that catch light and weather in a way that is contrary to the cleanliness and sharp lines of the European modernity. The peripheral modernism of Estonia remains relatively unknown in the west. It is one that is not necessarily a reaction to tradition, and is not white, structurally pure and functional. Rather, as with other Nordic countries modernism becomes more textural, linking to a specific context with the natural materials of the place as an issue of national identity deriving more from a craft or Jugendstil tradition than a technological and modernising concern. In the case of Tallinn it is as if the softer limestone has invested architecture with an emotional quality tying buildings specifically to place. The weathering and staining of the material, the effect under northern light, not to mention the softening of the forms over time suggest this. These factors are intrinsically linked to the brief period of Estonian independence in which issues of national identity come to the forefront, expressed within specific public buildings. The nature of this expression can be read in these terms as political, and may be seen retrospectively as an attempt to distance the architecture of the previous occupation of the country from the expression of the newly independent Estonia of the 1930s. As well attempting to construct or re-establish a linkage to conditions of ground and landscape and the 'originary' basis of the city. Limestone within this context however serves as a spurious embodiment of the wish for authenticity in Estonian architecture. Meaning that the desire for authenticity linked to issues of national identity therefore can be understood as fictive or paradoxical when the fact that the city and its origin have grown out of factors that are not particularly Estonian, there having been no Estonian nation state prior to this time. But instead the city origins are the gradual accumulation differences from Russian, Hanseatic, Danish and Germanic influences that have built up the city over time.

In more recent times limestone was used as a cladding element to some large Soviet built official buildings such as

the Linnehall Sport Palace and the City Library. Characteristically and significantly this was not used as structural elements as in the period of Estonian Independence, but more superficially as façade, appearance and public face, notionally referring to the historical fortifications that used to be in the area. The use of limestone takes the form of cladding a thinness or veneer applied to monumental concrete framed buildings that reorder the fabric of the city to Soviet ideological concerns. Thereby deflecting attention away from the medieval centre that provided the foundation stone for an Estonian national and architectural identity and towards the peripheral and industrial areas in which Soviet programmes could be well effected. These buildings, although often designed by Estonian architects, nevertheless were part of the architectural systems and production machinations of the Soviets.⁹ However these and other Soviet buildings of this era are not without qualities and architectural merit, particularly when the buildings sit within a civic context, given in part by the detail use of limestone. It is rather the newly built housing areas and associated infrastructure, which bear the clearest ideological expressions without deference to the city fabric.



Yiorgos Athanassiou : Detail of Soviet built concrete wall.



Asif Iqbal: Detail of Soviet built limestone wall.

If limestone was the grounding and expression of Estonian national identity then concrete in its mass production and system built components serves a similar role in terms of ideology for the Soviets in Estonia. The immense scale requirements of Soviet systems, housing areas, industrial zones, infrastructure and planning measures required the use of factory scale building processes, leading to building types named 'House nr. 5' or '1-317' or '1-464'¹⁰ that were developed in the Housing Construction Plant. The technological processes that transformed the limestone raw material into industrialised building components effectively removed and generalised the specificity of the limestone as a building material. Speculatively, this may allow the relationship between the centre of the city as repository of Estonian culture and periphery as site of Soviet interventions to be read. Due to the inherent relationship between the limestone and cement, this is an intertwined connection that can be read in terms of place, materiality and technology. Therefore the relationship between the softer use of limestone in civic buildings (both Estonian and Soviet) and typical Soviet system built concrete apartment blocks is significant in these terms. As is the relationship between the limestone landscape that characterises Estonia and the massive concrete planning impositions built during the Soviet years that overlay this and sever the links to ground and context. On a detail and specific level this can be understood as the ubiquity of concrete and the specificity of limestone, an ideology of materials that generally reflects the distinctions between the two systems. A specificity that highlights the differences of the ideological, social and economic systems that characterises the

city under its different guises, showing the distinction between a material concern under the Estonian system and the use of mass, both physically and spatially under the Soviets.

Tallinn, in post Soviet times attempts to reconstruct a new identity culturally and architecturally, in ways similar to those employed during the 1930's. Reacting apparently against the Soviet system built concrete structures, architects in Tallinn in part design using anything but the systems of the Soviets. In the changing practice of architecture the sudden rise of clients and commissions for privately owned houses, or the building of new private institutions and churches reflect the Estonian rather than the Russian culture, despite that the city is composed almost equally of both cultural groups. The change in status of the profession from Soviet state-run large-scale offices to private practice has also led to some major impacts on the development of the city. In this context Soviet built areas have by and large been left untouched save the construction of car parks for the growing numbers of cars on the roads, and attention has been focused on the areas of Tallinn which have been historically predominantly Estonian. An indication of a desire for authenticity as a material basis for culture, akin to the limestone that is site specific that forms the foundation of the city, constructed as a basis for expression of a national identity.



The new Estonian Methodist Church in Tallinn showing the limestone base and steeple under construction. Designed by Künnapu and Padrik Architects.

The new Estonian Methodist Church by Künnapu and Padrik Architects (due for completion 1998) located on the Narva road, is part of a competition-winning plan by Künnapu and Padrik for the re-vitalisation of the eastern edge of the Sadama harbour area in Tallinn. In implementation the plan partially connects the city back to the harbour. The Estonian Methodist Church is a key feature of this plan, anchoring symbolically and physically the connection of the city and the sea. The church encloses a school, community facilities and the chapel itself that occupy the horizontal base of the building on two floors. Architecturally the two key elements of the building are composed of a two-storey horizontal plinth of concrete clad in limestone topped with a canted steel-framed angular steeple of irregular shape above the main chapel. The steeple appears to be slipping off the plinth in a manner almost autonomous from its more earthly base. The form of the steeple is vaguely reminiscent of Corbusier's church of Saint Pierre, Firminy-Vert, and the pyramidal chapel roof at La Tourette.

The building, apart from its architectural merit is interesting in two ways. Firstly that it indicates a cultural shift of post-Soviet Estonia in the re-emergence of religious institutions. The campaign of the Soviet Union against religion in the Baltic States was launched in 1957, as the church represented a threat to the state. This, as Misiunas and Taagepera have written, aligned with the anti-nationalism initiatives that sought to repress nationalism in the Republics. During the following years churches became in essence deconsecrated from their cultural and religious status and transmogrified into the cultural apparatus of the state, concert halls, libraries, museums. Secondly because the building refers obliquely to a language that seeks once again to link to the specific context and relationships of Tallinn. In this way the building contrasts two strong forms that seemingly correspond to and suggest relationships to the ground or landform of Tallinn as a horizontal landscape plateau and the old town as a hill or rock-like form.

2. Represented Ground

Petersburg streets possess one indubitable quality: they transform passers-by into shadows¹¹

The heavily symbolic Linnehall near Tallinn harbour, a palace of culture and sport designed by the Estonian architect Rain Karp for the Soviet Olympics of 1980, bears the

traces of ideological shifts and the disappearance of the USSR more strongly than most other buildings in the city. Its singular purpose and its monumental characteristics are a reminder of the former ideological impositions and distortions on the city fabric. The Linnehall was built in Tallinn's harbour area adjacent to the city centre, and the city's only real direct connection to the water until recently. In post-Soviet times it has become shunned by the Estonian proportion of the population who regard it as something of an embarrassment, becoming the unofficial cultural centre for the Russian community in Tallinn. A large flat Mayan pyramid structure about half the area of the old town that is neither building nor landform but both at the same time. Walking up the enormous promenade of the Linnehall takes several minutes, during which a sense of diminution occurs. The building cannot be comprehended in a way that captures the immensity of the edifice. Perception and the field of vision become narrowed and fragmented, such that details and textures become heightened. One's attention is drawn to the holes in the pavement, the rusted lamps, the weathering pattern on the surface, the sea erosion of the limestone cladding on the north end of the building becomes evident rather than the form of the building.



Asif Iqbal: Photograph taken from the platform level of the Linnehall looking south back towards the old town.

From the massive abstractions that ideology incompletely and unevenly exacted in monumental forms like the Linnehall, a dilemma becomes evident in the irreconcilability of the scale of the plan and its details. The architect whose role

was structured under the state desire or requirement for an ideological presence, a monumental form, or a need for planning on a mass scale, was caught in an apparent paradox or inherent problematic of symbolic and ideological form. Evident between the ideological scale and what could be termed the social contract of the architect in providing for the users on a detail scale. The manifestation of this paradox gives rise to a sense of displacement and disjunction, experienced in the unease with which humanistic concerns and scale mesh and are manifested within an ideological form.

The limestone cladding on the Linnehall seems to embody this dilemma, as surface, applied façade and detail. A flattening out of form occurs and scale referents become carried only by image and symbol. Space in these terms becomes abstracted, idealised and monumentalised, subsumed as a part of Soviet ideology. The landscape ceases to be the support and ground of the building is instead incorporated into the structure as an artificial landform. The physical ground becomes displaced twice, once spatially as landform and secondly as the surface of the ground represented by the limestone cladding. The significance of appearance of mass and solidity and representation linked to political power and ideological concerns of the Soviets is exemplified in an anecdote recounted by Slava Glazychev, (director of the Moscow based A.U.E architecture and urbanism institute). Glazychev's anecdote allows a comparison between the Linnehall and St. Petersburg:

There is a famous anecdote, about St Petersburg in the beginning of the 19th century when there was an official command to paint the doors of important buildings to look like oak. The command was strictly put into fact. They were painted oak because the superficiality making orders as a symbolic or religious gesture was more important.¹²

The physicality of substance and ground desired by the Estonian 'limestone functionalists' is replaced under the Soviets by its representation. An image of materiality, akin to the role of surface and the necessity for appearance in St. Petersburg (a city that desired to appear more physical and real than it perhaps was), that has displaced the physical nature of the ground.

The centre of Tallinn is sited strategically on an outcrop of limestone sandwiched between the sea and a lake. Moving

eastwards the limestone rises up to a plateau that extends without relief to the hinterlands. On the plateau the Lasnamäe housing area, (formerly The Red October Route) was built by the state architects (M. Port, M. Meelak, I. Raud, O. Zemtsugov) during the 1970s–80s, but remains unfinished. Built as a linear extension of the city, a monotony of housing blocks are sited either side of an enormous incomplete road now called Laagna Mäe cut into the limestone plateau making up this sleeping suburb of a scale that both dwarfs and distorts other areas of the city. Halfway through the area, the road ends and the cutting in which the road sits continues for a further distance, evidence perhaps of failed monumental intentions. Just over the horizon, on axis with the road the chimney of a power station aligns with the incomplete road. With relatively few cars per capita until recently, the road was conceived of as symbolic rather than functional. The traces of the road will remain as scars cut into the land, that will remind of the delirium of the Soviet plan long after the system built houses have fallen into wrack and ruin. The ground in this case, apart from the road, provided a tabula-rasa on which the machinery of house production could unroll its mass produced housing blocks.



Asif Iqbal: Photograph looking east down the 'Red October Route' showing where the Soviet built road remains incomplete.

The Lasnamäe housing programme was built using Soviet type pre-cast concrete apartment blocks, similar to those that have changed the face of other Soviet or former Eastern Bloc cities. The apartment blocks are virtually indistinguishable from each other, save for individuals who may have filled in one balcony in an attempt to gain an extra room. The blocks are placed in abstract geometric patterns, disregarding any shifts of orientation to maximise light, climate or view. At times they are placed expediently leaving the blank end walls obliquely framing an empty corner. Into

such corners are dropped small timber kiosks, points where a resident might meet another that stand in for an absence of public spaces, facilities and social services¹³. The area is massively over-scaled, poorly built and serviced, with few of the planned centres, facilities and modern complexity that Port and his colleagues had proposed in the original scheme¹⁴. Footpaths and public facilities do not exist or occupy left over spaces from spaces adjacent to the road that has been appropriated as an impromptu market. Schools for example are extremely crowded and run double shifts.

The apartment buildings have a 'just landed' quality, having little articulation between the ground and the building, almost none of the ground works and public space provisions have been carried out with the result that the buildings seem as if they have been displaced from somewhere else. In this way the ground is only the place that supports the building, losing all its other culturally laden and particularity. Instead it has become a non-specific, placeless receptacle for the blocks. This occurs to such an extent that the relationship between the ground as place and the buildings as participants in a specific city has been replaced or rather displaced by an approach that was technologically, expediently and ideologically driven from elsewhere than the site or city concerned. Characteristic of many similarly planned housing areas in the Soviet Union since the Stalinist period,¹⁵ although exacerbated in the later period of the 1970s and 1980s, expediency led to massive compromises. On many blocks in the Lasnamäe area, concrete panels are barely weather proof and the individual apartments barely inhabitable. Weather seeps into the badly finished and sealed panels causing concrete cancer, spalling, ice fractures, damp and rust. Anecdotes concerning the quality of these newly finished buildings are rife:

Parents would move into a brand-new apartment before children, to fill draughty cracks, adjust doors and windows and to make sure the porch would not fall down.¹⁶

Any intentions of improving the standard of living conditions appear at this point to have become dominated by ideological concerns that privileged and prioritised the Soviet Unionising of Tallinn itself. Concrete system built components and the necessary machinations and factories are thus the vehicle for mass production, expediency and the tool for ideology in this context, becoming removed

from concerns of ground and context and in the process distorting the local economy of means. Concrete in this context takes on a representational role enmeshed within the Soviet system instead.

Statistically the number of houses in Tallinn barely matched the amount of houses demolished during the Second World War; housing during this period was still said to be alleviating the shortage, estimated to be only approaching the pre World War II level by the end of the 1970s. The immense scale of such projects as Lasnamäe that deal with masses of people forms a statistical landscape that can be measured, plotted and spread:

From the former total area of dwelling houses of 2,430,000 sq. m only 1,264,000 sq. m were left after the war. At present, the total floor-space of the apartments has grown to 6,500,000 sq. m, which makes 15.5 sq. m per resident ... Every year, 240,000–250,000 sq. m of total floor-space are built in Tallinn, i.e. about 10 apartments per 1,000 inhabitants.¹⁷

The statistical landscape this makes is one that provides few clues for navigation, location and specific place. Inhabitation becomes a numeric function in the worst of cases, flattened out to the lowest common denominator, the datum of an ideological existence. A scale disjunction between these intentions and manifest results in the form of mass housing emerges. This gap between the ideal and the manifest afflicts the Soviet plans of the time, appearing to be motivated not by altruistic reasons but by ideology of resettlement.

As with other cities in the former Soviet Republics, Tallinn was subject to State controlled modernisation and resettlement programmes as late as the 1980s. This period as Misunas and Taagepera inform us historically coincided with a period of increasing industrialisation and urbanisation. In various Soviet programmes, large numbers of Soviet citizens and Russian nationals were relocated to the Republics:

Relentless Soviet industrialisation plans ignored the shortage of indigenous manpower, or possibly even used this opportunity on purpose to bring in Russians.¹⁸

Similarly Baltic people were relocated to various parts of the Soviet Union:

At times, such colonisation seems to have become a goal in itself rather than a means of industrialisation. In particular it made little economic sense to deport Baltic farmers to Siberia, and then import Russian labour to the Baltic cities.¹⁹

The landscape of these changes thus was not motivated necessarily by expansion but by ideological change at a base level. Tallinn's peripheries in these terms have served as reception zones for such change, in ways that have at least doubled the physical size of Tallinn. A factor that over the past forty years has greatly modified the demographic and social matrix of Tallinn, to the extent that it now has almost 50% of its inhabitants who are 'Russian' or of Soviet origin.²⁰ As the social and physical environment was put into a flux within the machinations of the Soviet state, collective and individual emotions were similarly stirred:

This flux made social, cultural and linguistic integration difficult, the more so since the Russian immigrants often expected the Balts to integrate with them.²¹

This is a factor that has given rise to powerful and at times dangerous collective emotions on both sides to the extent that by the 1960s immigration had become:

... a major irritant to national feelings, the more so since the immigrants often received the scarce housing for which the local people had waited for years. At times the Russian newcomers would simply invade newly finished apartments, and no local functionary would dare to evict them and risk being accused of nationalism.²²

Lasnamäe is one such reception zone in which the majority of the population is of Russian or former Republic origins. Currently this implies that, given an inclination to Estonian nationalism in the newly independent Estonia, still the other half of the population remains disenfranchised in terms of citizenship and in terms of the city. The inhabitants are caught in a condition of limbo; they belong neither to the Soviet Russia they once knew, nor to Estonia. Certain areas such as Lasnamäe become microcosms of the former USSR, a non-existent entity rather than having any intrinsic connection to Tallinn.

In such areas, as a legacy of the Soviet immigration and re-settlement, many inhabitants do not speak or read Estonian. In 1992 the new Estonian government passed laws on

Estonian citizenship, based on the 1939 law of the previous period of Estonian independence. Under this law all residents who lived in Estonia before 1940 and their descendants were automatically granted citizenship. This effectively excluded all Soviet immigrants from this period to the present day. These inhabitants were required to pass a residency requirement and an exam on the constitution and laws in Estonian. Since 1992 90,000 people have become naturalised from a possible half a million or the third of the population who were Soviet immigrants or their descendants:

Pavel was born in the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic 44 years ago. His parents from [were] from Smolensk ... Now apart from a bit of black market money changing, Pavel is unemployed: most of the jobs he could apply for require him to speak Estonian. Nor does he have the vote, because although he has a residence permit he has not applied for Estonian citizenship – he knows he would fail the stiff language test.²³

Recently the Russian government has complained about language based discrimination in Estonia. And the country has come under pressure from the international community especially in context of its desire to join NATO and the EU. In such cases therefore, let alone the enormous emotive content of such changes, it becomes apparent that huge parts of the city become disenfranchised, not represented within the structures of the city. This in Tallinn may account for approximately 30% of the city, making these parts of the city unrepresented entities.

These characteristics, as Glazychev informs us, come in part from age-old Russian patterns of urbanisation, both during the industrialisation and preceding this. Patterns that arose as types of borderlands outside the limits of authority, or planned, integrated structures. Industrialisation, for example was born in an intermediary environment called Sloboda which was:

... a kind of unregulated settlement or development, a no-man's land. It didn't belong to the town authorities, they didn't see it, it was not written into their structures. It didn't belong to the region around. It was in-between, on the border. This border of existence is most important because it was self-regulated, and self-irregulated, with a very special understanding and notion. At any time the house could be

torn down by the authorities, people could be thrown out, or re-settled, or put in another place. So why should one bother to build something permanent? The rules to the existence of this *Sloboda* were temporary.²⁴

The *sloboda* with its liminal existence induced a sense of impermanence, of not being settled and therefore was without foundations, roots, connections and place. It existed nowhere and yet could exist everywhere and furthermore its endurance was limited, and was conceived temporally. The *Sloboda* tradition carried over during Soviet times in huge industrial settlements on the edge of existing settlements. Border settlements that were basically dormitory regions filled with structures that were temporary. Glazychev alludes to the conditions of the *sloboda* as a profound unease and a lack of stable referents felt within the soul of the inhabitant:

Nothing to lean on, for sure. That's my interior, my small belongings. Why should I bother with what is over there. It doesn't belong to me, I can be thrown out any moment, and I can re-settle any moment.²⁵

A no man's land, *Sloboda* were supposed to survive for 15 years, and in reality many of these temporary settlements exist still. The temporary becomes enshrined as an integral part of urban planning during the Soviet years, both the promise and poverty of the socialist state. The idealisation and the utopia of the Soviets also appear in a way that resembles an archetype pre-existent in the Russian psyche according to Glazychev. If anything, Glazychev alludes to the Soviet regime as an extension of these more fundamental and historically bound impulses. As if Soviet Russia attempted only to quell the Russian collective condition of flux and instability, in which the "environment is my moveable belongings"²⁶ with a greater scheme of utopia. Explaining that this phenomena is one that impels people to be nomadic, unsettled and that until Krushchev was a condition variously exacerbated by the state, by the military and any organisational structures generally.

In planning, the representational and formal characteristics of Lasnamäe, despite being designed by Soviet trained Estonian Architects form a part of the Soviet planning systems that in part inadvertently refer back to pre-Soviet Russian models. Very generally the checkerboard Russian

urban planning pattern dating from the times of Peter the Great is a form of planning conducted irrespective of topography and aspects of place. As Glazychev tells us, this is a pattern that equally applies to the Lasnamäe area as it does to many Russian villages:

For instance in one charming town, where a lot of wooden structures have still been preserved, no attention was paid to the large inclination on the main square, about six metres higher on one side than the other. Nobody bothered. It was written and done.²⁷

Explaining further that this stems from the geographic quality of Russia and the impermanence, Glazychev writes: "We never had a real urban tradition. There was no citizenship". Only the presence of a unified state that attempted to be the organisational structure connecting huge disparate spaces. The immensity and geographic vastness of Russia and during its time the Soviet Union had the effect of causing a flux of people across this surface an 'immeasurable flatland', leading to massive migration or a 'running away' tendency. The attempts at official organisation tried to structure the flux of people and to and organise them into urban-type settlements, no matter how temporarily. Planning therefore within Russia and to some extent the Soviet Union, was a provisional solution enacted as a means of controlling the flux of people:

[planning] was re-organised in the modernistic style into linear patterns after Peter the Great as an aggression towards the urban environment that destroyed the traditional Russian villages para-democratic tradition. In the 18th and 19th centuries, the villages were rebuilt by decree, by military command, and turned into linear patterns that were easier to handle. These strong authorities tried to handle the situation in a semi-despotic Eastern way. The urban planners made a grid. Never especially bothering about local landscape, the relief or whatever. They were written on paper signed by the Tsar personally and sent to the place.²⁸

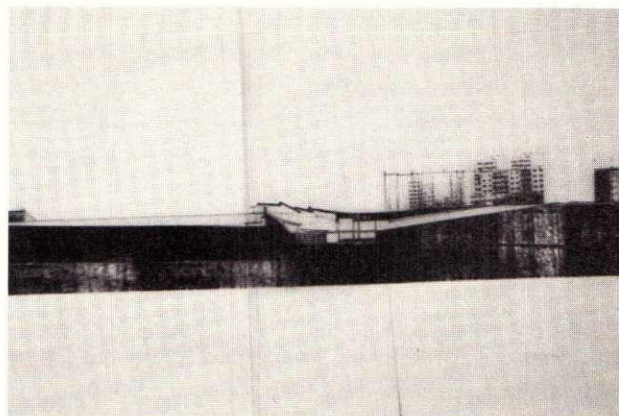
Acting in this way, planning systems had not so much to do with the natural growth of a city and more to do with the control and image of order. In these terms the severance of the links between the ground and the urban structures placed upon it are inherent consequences of this process. The Lasnamäe housing bears witness to this and can therefore be seen as

more related to the Soviet systems, the Russian archetype of planning than to the systems of the Baltic countries.

Akin to a piece of Soviet Russia, or a Moscow suburb landed in Tallinn, built to accommodate the late phase of state directed migration on a massive scale to the republics on the scale of approximately 150,000 inhabitants, Lasnamäe is now a shadow town. Its supporting state-run industry has disappeared, the largely 'immigrant' population do not hold the ideological role of territorial pioneers that they used to. The 'shadow' existence of the mainly Russian inhabitants of the areas, the uneasy presence of former Soviet Union remnants and traces is similar in effect to the description of the landscape in *Stalker* that Turovskaya describes as the 'landscape of the soul', an inner emotional landscape. The comparisons between such a territory and the zone described by Tarkovsky are powerful. Referents in these areas are not given as stable entities any more but rather require new maps whose contours are changing at every moment.

3. The zone

Just before Narva, the night train from St. Petersburg stops at the Russian border. Some minutes later at this newly established international border the Estonian customs do likewise, concerned by the threat of influx of contraband or dubious émigrés from the east. In the space of the night, the distance travelled between these two controls implies the still disputed border between Estonia and Russia. Overlapping territories, indistinct borders and a fifty-year old dispute that has existed since Estonia's first independence and one that emerges again in recent times. This territory was claimed or appropriated by Stalin under the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (RSFSR) in 1945. More recently the Estonian government has issued passports to some Estonian speakers in disputed areas, causing Russia to accuse Estonia of attempting to annex Russian territory²⁹. But whilst the 'zone' of disputed territory is made obvious from looking at the differing maps of the Russians and Estonians, other related 'zones' are not as clear. Narva for example is a city technically within Estonia where the vast majority of people are of Russian descent, yet are do not speak Estonian, a necessary requirement for Estonian citizenship. Citizens exist in a no-mans land, and the 'zones' have been internalised in this context as contradictions within inhabitants. As they exist in specific parts of Tallinn such as Lasnamäe.

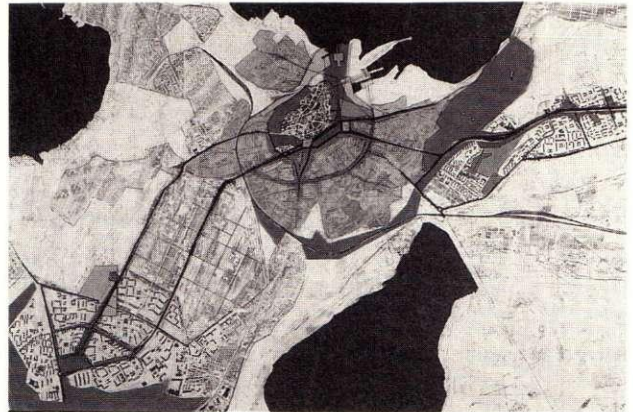


Asif Iqbal: Section of a proposed new multi-functional hall for the unfinished road cutting on the 'Red October Route' in Lasnamäe.

In Tallinn, an apparent absence of Russian books, other than popular literature sold in the Station seems to be conspicuous. In a second hand bookstore, there is amongst the various categories of books a shelf marked 'Propaganda'. Books on this shelf included a book on city planning during the Soviet Regime showing the monumental schemes for the Olympics and for the new Housing areas of the re-settled Russians during the 1970's and 1980's. Other works on national identity from the brief period of independence in the 1940s, that until six years ago might have been censored are now in an adjacent shelf marked history. A fine line exists in this bookshop between the ideological, propaganda and history in these terms become a matter of interpretation. One book in the propaganda section on Estonian architecture and planning under the Soviets, entitled *Nõukogude Eesti arhitektuur* by Mart Port shows the plan of Tallinn as idealised by the Soviets, with the major new housing suburbs. The map like the Soviet map from the 1980 Olympics shows Tallinn as a city whose streets are boulevard like, with no trace of the harbour edge, drawn as if the sea had not existed. The Soviet maps of the territory³⁰ are conspicuous through the absence of the sea edge as a natural boundary. In effect this was the case, as large tracts of the coast until recently were largely off-limits, meaning that the city had little relationship to the water, this being discouraged generally and in some places prohibited by the Soviets. Military zones; submarines and warships filled the sea edge of Tallinn instead. Additionally the city plan is

idealised with key streets and parts of the urban fabric shifted and rotated³¹ in order to provide an image that aligns the major Soviet monumental axes and building achievements, yet in the process becoming a map that is no longer representing the city of Tallinn. One could say that rather it is a map of the ideology of the Soviets.

A recent map reveals Tallinn how it is presently or actually, the Hansa core of the city a tight labyrinth of streets, hills and walls, and around this radiate the more recent Soviet built monumental axes, housing and industrial areas. Traces of actual monumental axes in the city remain as incomplete reminders, which do not correspond to the idealised ones of the Soviet map. Two different versions of the same city are represented in these maps which bear little resemblance to each other. Arguably these may be construed as the vagaries of cartographic conventions, however despite this it could be said to reveal the idealisation of the city within the differences of ideological representation. Even the Estonian map, although topographically accurate, one presumes, has as its focus the authenticity of Estonian-ness at its core. The map of Tallinn therefore is focused on areas that are not littered with Soviet remnants but which claim a lineage to what is Tallinn proper. The old town with its Hanseatic core is the centre of the city rather than the Soviet modern areas. Even the names given by the Soviets have reverted or have been reinvented as Estonian. The Russian population in Tallinn therefore, without necessarily having recourse to the Estonian language of this map remain outside of this represented territory, this map. Conversely the Soviet version of the same city refers to a place that no longer historically exists, its status and its names refer to a system of representation belonging to an ideological structure that has vanished, leaving only a residue in the form of areas such as Lasnamäe.



Ulrike Steven: Map of Tallinn showing the medieval core of the city with the outer rings of the city and the finger-like housing developments of the Soviets. Part of Lasnamäe is located at the lower right hand corner.

Between these two readings the zone emerges, a provisional and emotional topography in which liminal bodies³² inhabit. In the context of this text this leads us to suppose that there exists a type of sub-stratum of emotions that characterise a particular city, but one that often speaks about the larger concerns that may be geographic, not visible, of a different order. These emotions are manifest as desires or fears and other complex reactions that build up and lead to change of a city. Tallinn has become over time and still is the intersection of two territories that are not isomorphic with each other. Between these exist rupture, gaps, displacements, and erasures out of which the 'zone' emerges.

Effectively the stalker is an embodiment of the map of the territory of the 'zone'. However the map he would embody would not be Cartesian or cartographically based on scientific rationale, but rather one that works more by ruse, trope, deception and the understanding of inner workings of the soul.

I am lost, I cannot live in Russia, nor can I live here.³³

Peter Hasdell

is an architect and senior lecturer at the University of East London. He has studied at the University of Sydney and the Architectural Association in London. He is involved in an own practice with Ana Betancour, is currently investigating industrial wastelands and transformation in the northern countries and is a senior member of Chora Institute for Architecture and Urbanism, London.

Notes

1. Maya Turovskaya, *Tarkovsky, Cinema as Poetry*, Faber and Faber, London, 1989, p105
2. "If our basic model of society is that of a 'structure of positions,' we must regard the period of margin or 'liminality as an interstructural situation ... [that] indicate[s] and constitutes transitions between states. By 'state' I mean here 'a relatively fixed or stable condition'..." Victor Turner, *The Forest of Symbols, Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*, Cornell Uni. Press, Ithaca, 1967, p 93
3. During the Soviet years writers and scientists held specific fascination for the Soviets, dividing the conscience of the USSR in as much as Scientists were not generally seen as a specific political threat whereas writers and their possibility of free expression were. In Estonian terms one could generally say that the scientific arrived with the Soviets whereas the writer has a longer tradition. See Misuinas and Taagepera, *The Baltic States: years of dependence*, C. Hurst & Co., London, 1983.
4. Turovskaya, op-cit., p109
5. From a seminar with Robert Harbison, for Diploma Unit 2, University of East London, October 1996, see also 'Splendid Isolation', *Building Design Magazine*, London, June 23 1989
6. Limestone is formed over millions of years through the gradual accumulation and consolidation of seashells from small spherical grains that contain a nucleus, a grain of sand or foreign particle around which deposition has taken place: limestone through transformation via crushing and burning becomes an essential ingredient in cement
7. Liivi Künnapu, *Estonian Architecture: The building of a Nation*, The Finnish Building |Centre, Helsinki, 1992, p37
8. *ibid.*, p37
9. In post Soviet Estonia, the practice of architecture is, obviously different. The former USSR system of state run offices of 1000 architects have disappeared, and whilst smaller semi-independent offices have existed for a number of years before the dissolution of the USSR, the role of these is different now, as is the scale and construction material base. According to Vilen Künnapu, working under the Soviet system basically limited them to the use of concrete, in its various guises, whereas now it is possible, although expensive to import newer, composite materials, structural glass, Finnish and Swedish cladding systems, and the like.
10. Künnapu, op-cit., p52
11. Andrei Bely, Petersburg, penguin books, 1983, p22
12. Slava Glazychev, AUE, Moscow: Introduction lecture, June 1994. AUE is a new independent research institute based in Moscow.
13. See Künnapu, op-cit. Refer to p 52, concerning earlier housing areas by the Soviets in which the promised centres and facilities were also never completed, for example in Mustamäe also designed by Port during the 1960s.
14. Mart Port, *Nõukogude Eesti arhitektuur*, Kirjastus <Perioodika>, Tallinn, 1983, see pages 16a –16h for images of the proposed scheme which, whilst still monumental has a higher ambition than the realised project. Whether port was a pawn of the ideological system under which he worked or not is unclear. Port wrote in the late sixties: "Will they exist without stores and barber shops? They will. How about trash-collection points a thousand feet away? They will carry it. Hoisting baby carriages up a narrow stairway to the fifth floor? They'll do it. No Laundering facilities? They'll manage. But lower the room temperature by 10° C? They'll start complaining... that's the survival threshold." In *Sirp ja Vasar*, 13 June 1969 in Misuinas and Taagepera, p213
15. "Mart Niklus was first arrested in 1958 for sending abroad photo's of shoddy construction and of a radio-jamming station, and a year thereafter was sentenced to 10 years in a labour camp for 'agitation and the spread of anti-Soviet propaganda'." Misuinas and Taagepera, op-cit., p256
16. *ibid.*, p213
17. Gustave German, Tallinn, Kirjastus "Eesti Raamat", 1978, text by M Port in chapter entitled 'The New Town'
18. Misuinas and Taagepera, op-cit., p 186
19. *ibid.*, p104
20. *ibid.*, p108, "In the early 1960s, the net immigration rate speeded up appreciably, amounting at time to almost 1% of the existing population per year. Actually many more came, but many also left every year"
21. *ibid.*, pp186–187
22. *ibid.*, pp186–187
23. Jon Henley, 'Estonia Freezes out its Russians', *The Guardian Newspaper*, February 1997,
24. Glazychev, op-cit.
25. *ibid.*
26. *ibid.*
27. *ibid.*
28. *ibid.*
29. In 1994 Russia began construction of a series of border posts along the Soviet-era border between Estonia and Russia, exacerbating the issue as Russian troops were withdrawn from Estonia.
30. When the Soviets left Tallinn, they took with them many of the maps of the area.
31. I acknowledge the work of Gareth Morris, whose diploma work investigated and mapped out the distinctions between these different maps and their ideologies in the "Urban Tectonics: Cut, Tolerance and Displacement" Diploma Unit 2 studio in the University of East London during 1996–97 organised and taught by myself with Signy Svalastoga. The unit work concentrated on Tallinn, using the terms cut, displacement and tolerance as tools to investigate and uncover urban conditions. The programme aimed at the development

of architectural propositions as hinges or armatures that could manifest a tolerance for their urban context and vice-versa, considering the use, materiality and physical nature of their context.

32. Liminal Bodies describes a condition often latent between a territory and an organisational form acting on that territory impelling transformation. This is a term the author coined as part of his research and teaching at the UCL, Bartlett School of Architecture, 1996.
33. Andrey Tarkovsky, Time within Time, Faber and Faber, London, 1994, p325. Tarkovsky defected to the west but was torn between the west and the east during his later years.