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ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIETY IN SOVIET ESTONIA, 1960–1990

An Intimate Cultural History

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Tallinn University and

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Environment and Society in Soviet Estonia, 1960–1990

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Abstract: Russia's twenty-first-century military aggression has inspired calls for rethinking the Soviet era and its aftermath – for drawing attention to decolonizing efforts within the (former) USSR and to Russia's colonial practices and imperial aspirations. At the same time, the present era of anthropogenic climate change urges us to consider the global and planetary implications of local actions. This Element combines these two scholarly impulses to consider Soviet-era Estonian society between the 1960s and the 1980s: it investigates how natural environments and social ideas and circumstances were intertwined in fundamental ways, and it emphasizes local agency over homogenizing strategies of Soviet rule. Estonians cared deeply about their local environments, but they also took inspiration from environmentalist works of global importance. Various aspects of Estonian environmental thought and practice are analyzed as tied to local, intimate environments, as impacted by Soviet/Russian colonial rule, and as connected to the global circulation of ideas.

Keywords: Estonian SSR, environmental studies, Soviet Union, multiscalarity, decolonization

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