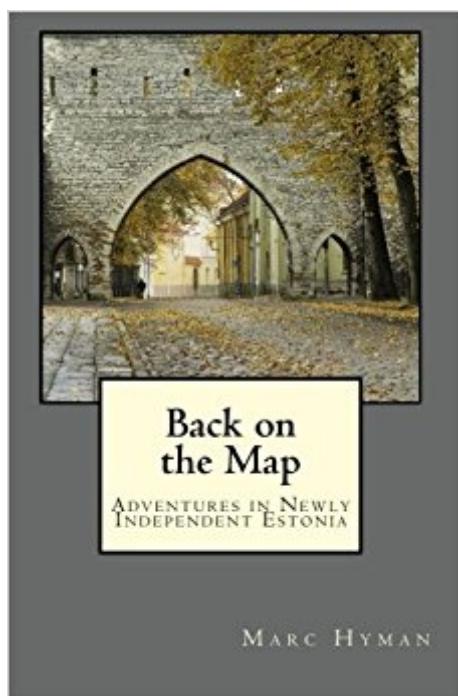


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Back On The Map: Adventures In Newly-Independent Estonia



Synopsis

The year is 1992. The smallest of the former Soviet republics has recently regained its freedom following a half-century of repressive occupation. Estonia is back on the map. So what happens now? This evocative memoir vividly captures the frantic yet optimistic spirit of an extraordinary moment in time, providing a detailed and moving account of daily life in a country undergoing dramatic change just a year after the collapse of the Soviet empire. In these pages you'll become immersed in this tumultuous period and come to know a remarkable succession of real people--Estonians and Russians, students and teachers, capitalists and Communists--as they struggle to rebuild their lives and make ends meet in a collapsing economy while working to reinvent their battered nation. The author, recruited to teach at the first private business school to be established in the former Soviet Union, candidly recounts experiences that are by turns grim, hilarious, and poignant.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Marc Hyman lived in Estonia for five years. During this period he taught accounting, finance, and economics for the Estonian Business School and for Concordia International University Estonia (now International University Audentes), provided consulting services to Hansabank, North Estonian Bank, Raebank, and Virumaa Commerce Bank, and served as Tallinn Bureau Chief for The Baltic Observer (now The Baltic Times) and as Managing Editor of The Baltic Business Leader. He currently teaches accounting and business at Cascadia Community College in Bothell, Washington, is a member of the University of Washington's Baltic Studies Roundtable, and blogs about Estonian issues at estoniaonthemap.com. His accounts of day-to-day life in the newly independent Baltic

States and Russia have been published in Crosscurrents, Yours Truly, and Europe Today. He lives in Seattle with his wife and son.

Lightweight and not as much about the people and culture as I'd hoped, but as a shallow look at life in Estonia after the fall of the USSR it's all right. There isn't much on the topic out there, unfortunately. Hyman's writing is clear, but he sounds young and naive and spends more time describing the obvious than what make Estonia distinct from other countries.

It probably helps if the reader has some personal connection to Estonia, but it's still a wonderful read, even if you've only ever heard the name of the country. Since the book was published only in 2009, the pervading thought one gets in reading it is how far the country has come since 1992 and how smart/lucky has Estonia been in achieving what it has. It's awesome to have somebody reminding you this. It's also awesome that there is no arrogance in the book, no oh-my-stupid-little-brothers attitude foreigners so often display. Hyman's style is personal and he seems genuinely fond of the people he has met. Genuinely fond of Estonia. One can't not love that.

Marc Hyman's book is a well written account of the life in Estonia in 1992. Reading it made me realise how quick we are to forget certain things and get used to new ways and standards. All this current talk of economic recession etc. would probably have seemed very different, had we heard it then. :) The times when we all knew well the word "forbidden", never knew if there will be hot water from the tap today and had distinct Wrigley's shops for fancy things like "foreign" bubble gum, seem to be quite a different world, another planet even. It's good to recall and get better perspective for our present day and ways of life. Besides that, it's also interesting to learn a bit about the beginnings of our great financial institutions and how the young founders worked and partied. I'd even go so far as to recommend this book to be included in the list of compulsory reading material for Estonian schools (though an Estonian translation would perhaps be in order then).

Prior to reading this book, I knew nothing whatsoever about Estonia. Marc Hyman helped me identify the country, understand its history, and fall in love with its people. It is important to bear in mind that the setting for this book is 1992. As I understand, there have been considerable changes since then. Nevertheless, there is a timeless quality to Mr. Hyman's description of the newly independent Estonia. Additionally, the author has a great, dry sense of humor. What a lovely book!

Reading Marc Hyman's account of a year in Estonia was truly a pleasure. The situations that Marc describes as a traveller to Russia and this former Soviet Union Republic are told wonderfully and with great humor. Marc's description of the personalities he encountered, the national character of Estonians and the changing times during which he was living in Estonia are insightful and delightful. I would highly recommend this book to anyone traveling to the region or interested in finding out what it is like to live in a country where you don't speak the language. Well done!

Back on the Map is a wonderful story about the start of a new country and the hopes and aspirations of its people. The author has a very easy to read style that made you feel you knew each one the people he met. I would highly recommend the book and definitely for anyone traveling to the Baltic region!

An easy, fun to read first hand account of life in Tallinn in the early 1990s. Having spent time there myself recently, it was nice to read about what life was like then and Marc's teaching and personal adventures. The one constant ... the people of Estonia are awesome!

Awesome book! Brings back fascinating memories for me, as I had the great pleasure of teaching at Concordia International University Estonia with the author, Marc Hyman, in 1995-1998. Thanks, Marc, for a terrific publication!!

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