



# Everything is Wonderful: Memories of a Collective Farm in Estonia

*Sigrid Rausing*

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*Just like it was taken for granted that houses could be abandoned and slowly decay, so it was taken for granted that people died in prisons, and that it was possible that no-one would really ever know the cause of death. This is the nature of totalitarianism.*

In 1993-94 Sigrid Rausing completed her anthropological fieldwork on the peninsula of Noarootsi, a former Soviet border protection zone in Estonia. Abandoned watch towers dotted the coast line, and the huge fields of the Lenin collective farm were lying fallow, waiting for claims from former owners, fleeing war and Soviet and Nazi occupation. Rausing's conversations with the local people touched on many subjects: the economic privations of post-Soviet existence, the bewildering influx of western products, and the Swedish background of many of them. In *Everything Is Wonderful* Rausing reflects on history, political repression, and the story of the minority Swedes in the area. She lived and worked amongst the villagers, witnessing their transition from repression to freedom, and from Soviet neglect to post-Soviet austerity.

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