A quarterly scholarly journal and news magazine. June 2010. Vol III:2
From the Centre for Baltic and East European Studies (CBEES)
Södertörn University, Stockholm

REVIEW. Lennart Samuelson on Andrei Zubov's new textbook

BALTIC WORLDS

balticworlds.com

GUDRUN PERSSON
Communism – society of lethargy

PHILIP HANSON
Alexander Zinoviev and the lost realm of happiness

JUKKA GRONOW & SERGEI ZHURAVLEV
Catwalk in Russian

MARGARETA TILLBERG
Industrial design as competitive strategy

POST-STALIN RUSSIA
under the magnifying glass

features & commentaries

RUSSIAN ARMY / OKSANEN / SCANDINAVIAN BRONZE AGE / PHOTO EXHIBITION IN POTSDAM / ILLEGAL LOGGING

Landscape symposium
How to recapture a lost vision

Echo Temple in Haga Park, Stockholm-Solna. PHOTO: LET IDEAS COMPETE – HTTP://FLIC.KR/P/2QJUHA

ON SEPTEMBER 13, the Committee for the Gustavian Park, an independent Swedish group of specialists in ecology, urban planning, garden history and restoration, will be hosting a closed 3-day international symposium on the National Urban Park of Stockholm under the heading "The Management of a Lost Vision". Though protected by law in Sweden's Environment Act this unique park area remains threatened by exploitation. Recently, however, a new focus has been directed towards maintenance, restoration, and even reconstruction, especially concerning the three Gustavian (i.e. late 18th century) parks: Bellevue, Haga, and Tivoli, all designed by the architect Fredrik Magnus Piper. The symposium's main objectives are to review the plans and problems of the area in relation to the international discourse on garden restoration, to address specific questions about maintenance, restoration, reconstruction and enhancement of the above-mentioned parks, and to discuss their historical importance and "the Gustavian vision" from an international perspective. The event is held under the auspices of the Swedish Academy; the Swedish Academy of Fine Arts; the Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities; the Academy of Agriculture and Forestry; and the Swedish Academy of Sciences. European and Swedish experts on garden restoration and representatives of the gardens around Brunnsviken and of the County Council of Stockholm will be attending.

See further reporting on page 4.

Baltic Worlds news is good news

BALTICWORLDS.COM continues to develope. We are now also publishing conference reports on the website under "What's up".

Soon we will put up a report on the Second Global Helsinki Chemicals Forum in May, and this summer we will report on the large Eurasia ICCEES-conference to be launched in Stockholm. If you have attended an interesting conference, you are welcome to write a short report in English and send it to bw.editor@sh.se. Follow our Style Guide, available on the website. Reports, once we've reviewed them, are posted in the order in which we receive them. Don't forget to send an author portrait picture and a brief bio. By contributing an Internet article, you become part of the growing group of BW contributors presented on the website.

THE TAB "WORK IN PROGRESS" is another bit of fresh news on the net. A chapter is now available from a forthcoming historiographic dissertation that analyzes the creation of the concept of the Baltic Sea region and describes when and why the sea-based community has been at times seen as strong, at times weak. Comments are to be expected.

BalticWorlds.com complements the journal. On the site you can subscribe to the magazine and comment on the articles in BW.

Next issue:
Focus on Poland

Kaliningrad identity – a sensitive issue?

IN 2005 AND 2007 Södertörn University conducted two seminars in collaboration with the Russian State Immanuel Kant University in Kaliningrad, Russian Federation, under the collective heading *Kaliningrad Identity*. The broad focus of the seminars encompassed lectures, workshops, cultural events, and study visits. Participants included about one hundred people from Russia, Sweden, and other countries around the Baltic. Emphasis was placed on a discussion about Kaliningrad as an undisputed part of Russia, with a location as an exclave to the motherland but also an enclave within the European Union.

The two seminars have now been summarized in a single volume, *Kaliningrad Identity — Crucial to Democracy and Development in the Baltic Sea Region: A Seminar Report* (Baltic and East European Studies 12, 2009. Thomas Lundén, Gunnel Bergström & Lise-Lotte Nilsson, eds.). The front cover, by freelance writer and artist Alexander Popadin, presents a humorous drawing of a Kaliningrader's identity, with one foot in the East Prussian past and one in the USSR, but with a red heart in Russia and an equally red tongue. The booklet contains several articles with various links to Kaliningrad, its Soviet history, and its role in Russian foreign policy, as well as its unique geopolitical, financial, and cultural position.

The instigator of the seminars was Gunnel Bergström, Slavicist, freelance writer, Swedish lecturer at the university in Kaliningrad from 2004 to 2006, and a driving force behind attempts to understand Kaliningrad's unique nature and Russian identity. In October 2009, Ms. Bergström traveled to Kaliningrad with some copies of the newly published booklet. Upon her arrival she was denied entry, her visa was canceled, and she was forbidden to travel to Russia for five years. Unofficially, these actions were taken because of her anti-Russian seminars.

The booklet may be requested from CBEES, attn: Thomas Lundén, Södertörn University, 141 89 Huddinge, Sweden, or thomas.lunden@sh.se

BALTIC WORLDS
→balticworlds.com

Sponsored by the Foundation for Baltic and East European Studies

contents

The next issues of BW are scheduled to be published in September 2010, and December 2010.
Contact BW at bw.editor@sh.se.
Subscription is free. More information at www.balticworlds.com.

Printed by: Wassberg+Skotte Tryckeri AB, Stockholm.
ISSN 2000-2955

Eurasian perspectives

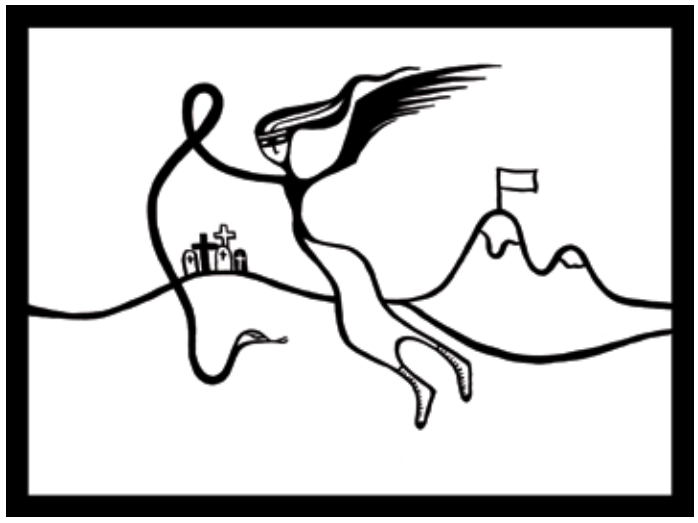


ILLUSTRATION: KATRIN STENMARK

For a long time progress was viewed from an Atlantic angle. It was in Western Europe, with its colonial, later imperial, offshoots in America that sustained economic growth took root as well as the habit of thinking in terms of dynamics and change as something normal. The status quo came to represent decadence, an absence of civilization. People as different as Karl Marx, Max Weber, Norbert Elias, yes, even a W. W. Rostow, reflecting on society, could very well have agreed – if they had sat down and reasoned with one another – about the superiority of the Western cultural sphere and its natural leadership role.

They were all modernists and Eurocentrists – or possibly Atlanticists.

In works written in his autumnal years, social anthropologist Jack Goody does what he can to demolish such a way of looking at things. He calls the viewpoint teleological. It aims to explain why a certain type of civilization, connected to the market economy and private acquisition of production surplus, could triumph only in certain types of societies – societies that, on top of everything else, conquered a large part of the rest of the world. The rule there was an unwillingness to change, a fear of technology and newfangledness.

HOWEVER, GOODY SAYS, most recently in *The Eurasian Miracle* (2009), this way of viewing progress ignores the fact that advanced cultures, though totally different, have succeeded each other on the Eurasian land mass for all of recorded history. The constancy of Chinese civilization could in itself deserve an explanation – that it retained its advantage over the classical antiquity and Middle-Ages of the West and, even when the initiative was lost during the late Ming dynasty, enjoyed enormous wealth!

Sinologist Jonathan Spence has reminded us of this. "Silk production and porcelain manufacture", he writes, "had an illustrious history in China and continued to be made to the highest standards, exceeding anything available elsewhere in the world. Hosts of artisans were skilled in metallurgy, jade carving, lanterns and lacquer ware, along with the production of more prosaic goods such as tea, salt, cotton, pottery and household furniture. Hydraulic engineering was a major preoccupation due to the massive burdens of silt carried by China's major rivers and canals, and the need for constant dredging, diking and drainage." (*Return to Dragon Mountain*, 2007)

Even the flower cult we spend time with in our daily lives has Asian origins, according to Goody, who has written a book about it (*The Culture of Flowers*, 1993).

IN COMPARISON WITH a good deal of this, both Africa and America have existed in historical backwaters, the consequence being – says Goody – that they never benefited from the creativity caused by the growth of cities during the Eurasian Bronze Age.

Shouldn't one simply ask oneself whether it isn't in the very character of modernity to be in motion, even geographically? Before Paris became a center for learning, Baghdad was a center for learning. When people from the north came to Sicily in the 11th century, the Arabs were already there, and the invaders adopted many of the Arabs' customs. Several of the countries around the Baltic Sea today have significant Muslim minorities who are instigating new cultural patterns there. Goody talks of shifts of focus. No one has a predetermined destiny; the tangent of history is constantly changing direction.

And no one can count on any permanent advantage.

To escape fate – shift focus! To avoid self-pity – look skyward!

The National

Moreover, he hath left you all his walks,
His private arbors and new-planted orchards,
On this side Tiber; he hath left them you,
And to your heirs for ever, common pleasures,
To walk abroad, and recreate yourselves.

(William Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, Act III)

The citizens of Rome listen, spellbound, to Marc Antony's funeral oration for Julius Caesar. Upon learning that the slain dictator willed his gardens and parks to the people, the crowd is freed from its inhibitions and runs wild. At least, Shakespeare imagined it could have happened that way; even Elizabethan London had room for a sentimental yearning for green areas, which already then were associated with primordiality and inner harmony. In short, we cannot escape our nature, neither the one that surrounds us nor the one found within. No matter how much city people indulge in the romance of the pavement, the need persists to be able to stretch one's legs in a wooded glade or along a beach, and inhale a pinch of healthy air worthy of the name.

As is well known, humans have their origins in nature and claim to periodically wish to return to it. Historical circumstances have placed obstacles in the way, but the ties remain significant even in the setting where nature might seem most remote – the vulnerable and almost completely artificial modern metropolis. Only on journeys into space are the ties completely cut, but most depictions of fictitious space travel take it for granted that the need is met to some extent by accompanying green plants or even entire gardens. The ties between human culture and nature go back to the beginning of time, as is well known. At the site of the oldest monument we know of to date, the place called Göbekli Tepe, in what is now southeast Turkey, people chose to create a sculpture park of sorts by erecting T-shaped stone pillars – some over three meters tall – about eleven thousand five hundred years ago. The purpose of this almost inconceivable physical feat in a culture lacking metal tools or permanent homes remains unknown, but in line with the standard dictum that whatever archaeologists do not understand they define as cult-related, the general interpretation of researchers for now is exactly that: an aspiration to communicate with higher (or lower) powers. Many of the monoliths bear carved reliefs of the surrounding fauna: lions, wild boar, foxes, scorpions. Indeed, the oldest culture is a mirror of nature. Once humans domesticated some of the fauna and designated the remainder as wildlife, the process of domesticating nature itself began.

Ever since cities were first built, their inhabitants have had a need to escape, at least for a short period, to recuperate away from the crowds, the noise of traffic and the insalubrious air. At first this was not a problem other than on the individual level; nature ruled and was accessible everywhere beyond the city walls or limits, and often enough even within them. As more and more cities were built, in the early cultures of the Near East, structured greenery in the form of enclosed gardens emerged as the most desirable environment imaginable, known in the Avestan language as *pairi daeza*: paradise was a garden. Parks and gardens gradually increased in scope. The world's first would-be national urban park, the spectacular party facility *Domus aurea*, was located in central Rome in an area cleared following the devastating Great Fire of Rome (64 AD), though it failed to meet this criterion as it was reserved for its owner, the emperor Nero, and his guests. After the fall of the Western Roman Empire, urbanization declined and people prioritized concerns other than parks. As convincingly shown

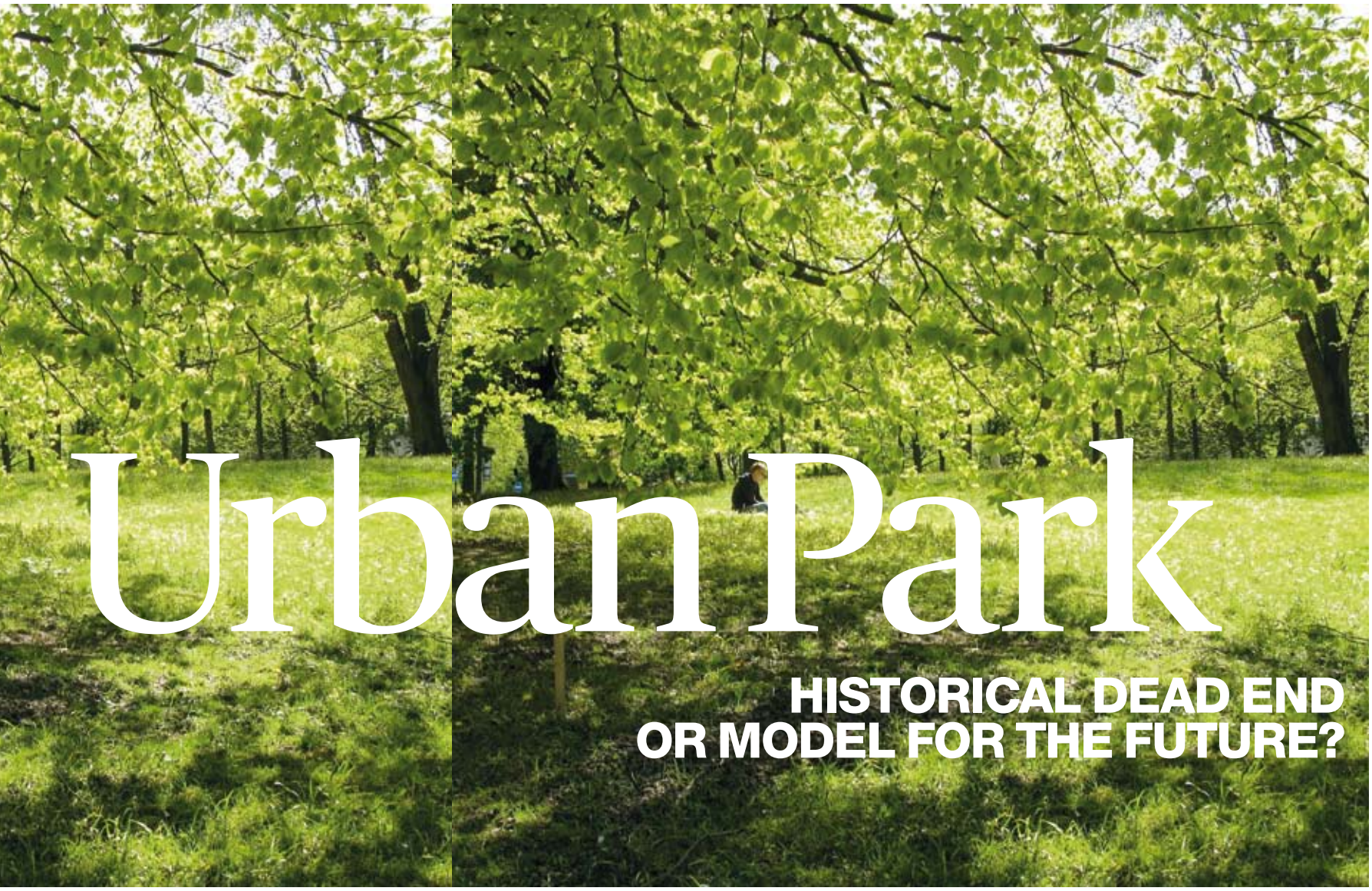


PHOTO: OLGA – HTTP://FLIC.KR/P/4LLHCQ

Urban Park

HISTORICAL DEAD END OR MODEL FOR THE FUTURE?

by British historian Simon Schama, the concept of an (ab)original landscape, Arcadia, where the sound and genuine life was supposedly lived, was preserved and developed during the Renaissance (as were so many other concepts of Antiquity). This landscape of the imagination, which often seemed to have little in common with its counterpart in reality on the Peloponnesus, eventually branched into two lines of thought, involving the wild and the disciplined in life. This relationship was reflected in the physical park world. However, yet one more element was needed: the old Napoleonic soldier Claude François Denecourt (1788–1875) used his extensive knowledge of the terrain in the Fontainebleau forest outside Paris to make a strong contribution to modern man's contact with the more undisciplined side of Arcadia by clearing the first recreational trails in history.

The park may have its cultural roots in the ancient Near East, but the national park has its roots in the United States. The world's first national park was Yellowstone in Wyoming, Montana and Idaho, inaugurated in 1872, followed by Sequoia and Yosemite in California in 1890. However, exactly how these areas would be defined was not crystal clear. Not until 1969 did the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) declare that a national park was "a relatively large area with particular defining characteristics."

If the promised land to the west represents the national park pioneering effort, Sweden is in a solid second place. Explorer Adolf Erik Nordenskiöld launched a proposal to set aside land for a national park in 1880, though Ängsö National Park in Roslagen archipelago, the first of its kind in Europe, did not actually become established until 1909. However, the process did not stop there; an additional eight parks opened in Sweden that same year and the process then continued, leading to today's 29 parks. In other words, it is logical that the national urban park concept was first introduced in Sweden. Or was it? The question is how to designate facilities like the Golden Gate National Recreation Area in San Francisco and Gateway National Recreation Area in New York City, both established in 1972. Possibly they might not be considered proper national urban parks since they both consist of several unconnected areas. But what would they otherwise be called? And then we have the Urban Wilds Initiative in Boston, also with roots in the 1970s. But we were talking about Northern European national urban parks.

One reasonable criterion for a national urban park is that it be located in a city. During the Middle Ages, Renaissance, Baroque, and even the eighteenth century Age of Enlightenment, for the most part parks tended to be under strict private ownership. But things started happening in the 19th century. According to US cultural historian Paul S. Boyer, the history of the public urban park can be divided into three periods: the romantic (1850–1890s); the rationalistic (1890-1950s), and the regenerative (1950s–). Romantic parks often followed the formula of the English countryside park in order to convey expansive and striking vistas. Rationalistic parks can be said to comprise part of the art of social engineering that viewed parks as settings for surrogate human activity, as a type of valve, where people could work out their frustration and anxiety in, for example, a tennis match. Regenerative parks, in light of a fledgling environmental awareness and the oncoming green wave, are viewed as attempts to link awareness of local tradition with ecological awareness and sustainable development. The national urban park can be said to build on all of these models, and more.

Development or obliteration. Did Arcadia arise only after it was ravaged?

PHOTO: BEN* – HTTP://FLIC.KR/P/6MZDMI

Here, Londoners take their leisure outside Kenwood House on Hampstead Heath.

Nature is never far away in Sweden; even in Stockholm's inner city, residents seldom have to walk farther than 300 meters to reach a green space. Stockholm County alone has 27 nature reserves and two national parks, the previously mentioned Ängsö in Roslagen's inner archipelago and Tyresta in Södertörn. The city's green areas also receive diligent use. Landscape architect Thorbjörn Andersson has employed the expression "social sacrament" to describe Swedes' relationship to nature, and in this context cited a Jesuit priest who had long served in Sweden: "On the continent we see God in another person. You Scandinavians see God in nature." In the 2009 competition with 34 other European cities for the designation European Green Capital 2010, Stockholm was selected based on its well-established principles for sustainable development and its stated future goals. Even though the expert panel recommended Hamburg in the first round, the jury chose to reward Stockholm (Hamburg was awarded the distinction for 2011). The jury stated:

> **[Stockholm] has an outstanding, long historical track record of integrated urban management also confirmed by its ongoing credible green credentials. Ambitious plans for the future clearly demonstrate continuity.**

The area known as Kungliga Djurgården derived its name from its having served as the royal hunting grounds during the 16th and 17th centuries. Ulriksdal Palace was established at the north end in the 17th century and further expanded over the centuries that followed. Haga Park (Swedish: *Hagaparken*) originated in the 18th century and many connoisseurs consider it to be one of the foremost examples of the English park style outside the United Kingdom. At the south end of Djurgården a large number of upper-class, architecturally significant villas were built during the 19th century and early 20th century, as was the world-renowned open-air museum Skansen. After many years of encroaching development of inner city green spaces, against the intentions of the Riksdag, a decision was taken in 1994 to protect Djurgården by law, and to connect its north and south ends into a single area that would be granted a unique legal status. In 1995 this area was designated a national urban park with the following words, often-quoted ever since then, from the Chapter 4, section 7 of the Swedish Environmental Code:

> **The Ulriksdal-Haga-Brunnsviken-Djurgården area is a national urban park. New development, new buildings, and other measures shall only be permissible in national urban parks if they can be undertaken without encroaching on park landscapes or the natural environment, and without detriment to any other natural and cultural assets of the historical landscape.**

The same year that the National Urban Park was established, 1995, the Swedish government decided to inventory other potential areas that could conceivably become national urban parks, with the stipulation that the city in question should have a population of about 50,000. After an initial review of seven cities – Gothenburg, Helsingborg, Malmö, Norrköping, Trollhättan, Uppsala, and Örebro – only two areas remained for the final round: Uppsalaåsen–Fyrisån and Älvrummet in Trollhättan. The municipalities involved were tasked by the government to formulate a basis on which to build the parks. However, no decision was ever taken and the matter was dropped.

The Stockholm–Solna

National Urban Park, as it is now known (the previous name "Ekopark" has now fallen out of use) encompasses a total of about 27 km². The park has a wealth of flora and fauna: over 800 different flowering plants, more than 1,200 beetle species and about 100 nesting bird species, to name just a few examples. In addition to being a living environment for insects and birds, its groves of ancient oaks constitute one of the largest concentrations in northern Europe. Many well-known museums are located in the area, including Skansen, Nordiska Museet (the Nordic Museum), the Swedish Museum of Natural History, the Vasa Museum, Prins Eugens Valdemarsudde, and the Thielska Gallery. In addition, Stockholm University, the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, and many other education and research institutions are located within the park limits. The cultural, biological, and social significance of this park is invaluable.

Ownership is a complex issue. The Swedish state owns the majority, but the City of Stockholm, Stockholm University, Solna and Lidingö Municipalities, several property companies, private owners, and others are also in the picture. Approximately 80 percent of the land is cared for by Kungliga Djurgårdens Förvaltning (the Royal Djurgården Administration), which ultimately answers personally to the King. The County Council is tasked with coordinating management and development efforts. A good illustration of the difficulties associated with coordination can be found in the December 17, 2004 County Council report:

> **Experiences from the meetings with Solna and Stockholm as well as Kungl. Djurgårdens Förvaltning indicate that it would be appropriate for the County Administrative Board to assume a better defined role in the work of developing the national urban park. The County Administrative Board is involved as a consultant for large construction and landscaping projects, but has neither the means nor the resources to follow up on each individual construction permit that affects the national urban park. Yet another problem involves plans adopted prior to 1995 which in some cases constitute encroachment upon the parkland and natural environment, and are also detrimental to the natural and cultural assets of the historical park landscape in general. In a few cases the relevant plan areas are also in proximity to important divergent plate boundaries.**

The second to the last line may be a reference to Alba Nova, the university's physics, astronomy, and biotechnology center located on the shore of the bay, Brunnsviken. When the center opened in 2001, it

proved to be considerably more conspicuous than promised. At a WWF seminar in March 2008, Minister for the Environment Andreas Carlgren declared his intention to "empower the County Administrative Board to make decisions on conservation, maintenance plans and development measures, and to assume a coordinating role to maintain protection". However, other stakeholders continued to make themselves heard.

Allow us to make a historical comparison: in the early 19th century the rolling heaths north of London, known as Hampstead Heath at least since the 16th century, became the object of admiration among prominent cultural icons such as poet Leigh Hunt and painter John Constable. At the same time, the London population increasingly made weekend outings to this nature reserve, which in some parts had been over-exploited for other purposes (the high-quality sand that covered the heath was dug up and sold to construction companies). When the owner of the heath announced his intention in 1829 to build both homes and a brick mill in the area, public opinion was ignited and efforts for preservation began. That particular construction proposal never got off the ground, but the landowner did not give up and threats to the heath continued, especially after the 1860 construction of a train station there which greatly increased wear and tear caused by celebrating weekenders. Confronted with the threat of industrial-scale sand extraction in the 1860s, the Open Spaces Society was formed, one of the founders of which was John Stuart Mill. In 1872 the majority of the area was finally acquired by the Metropolitan Board of Works, London's most important government body at the time. The accompanying Hampstead Heath Act declares: "The Board shall at all times preserve, as far as may be, the natural aspect and state of the Heath." Thus the area was saved for the public, at least for a while. The current administrator, the Corporation of London, is now confronted with rising maintenance costs for the enormous park (3.2 km²), and the ravages of overuse are a constant problem. Recognize the pattern?

Meanwhile, on the other side of the Baltic, neighboring Finland had been monitoring developments in Sweden with interest, and decided to adopt the urban national parks concept. In 1999 specific legislation came into force, through an amendment (section 68) to the Land Use and Building Act, which states:

> **A national urban park may be established to protect and maintain the beauty of the cultural or natural landscape, historical characteristics, or related values concerning the townscaping, social, recreational, or other special values of an area in an urban environment.**

Two years after passage of the Act the first park was established. The idea is to gradually create about ten parks throughout Finland, a number that the Minister of the Environment considers to be a maximum. Cities must submit an application and the Ministry of the Environment decides on the matter. The applicant city must meet four criteria:

1. **Content (significant natural, cultural, or park area)**
2. **Extent and interconnectedness (it should be possible for people to get from one urban district to another through the green structure)**
3. **Ecology and continuity (various species can move and interact, and the area in question should not have sharp boundaries with the surrounding countryside) and**
4. **Central urban location (the area must begin in the urban center or its immediate vicinity).**

As of this year Finland has five national urban parks: Hämeenlinna (established 2001), Heinola (2002), Pori (2002) and Hanko (2008); Porvoo National Urban Park will open this year.

Hämeenlinna in Tavastia Proper, about 100 kilometers north of Helsinki, with a population of around 66,500, became a city in 1638. The national urban park was established on January 10, 2001. The park currently occupies 7.38 km². It is dominated by the elongated lake Vanajavesi, which stretches through the city. The center of the park is home to the city's medieval castle with surrounding walls and beaches, as well as its military barracks from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The lake connects these areas via the city park dating from the 1840s with Aulanko's large recreation area and park. When Aulanko was created in 1885, many foreign trees, flowers, and bushes were planted; today it is more of a forest than a park. Part of the forested park is a Natura 2000 site. There is a desire to expand the park with a 1.36 km² field to the northwest, which is dominated by a forested ridge from the ice age. It is also the site of a deep lake and swimming arena that was used in the 1952 Olympic Games.

Heinola in Päijänne Tavastiai, Province of Southern Finland, has about 21,000 residents. Gustav III made the community an administrative center in the region and it gained city status in 1839. The former industrial city's grid is intersected by a broad, tree-lined avenue from 1785. In the mid-nineteenth century a city park was established and a shoreline park was added in the 1890s. Several facilities and interiors from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have been preserved. In addition there are interconnected, elongated municipally owned green areas.

Pori in Satakunta has more than 76,000 residents. The city by the river Kokemänjoki was founded in 1558, though its forerunner on the same site, Ulvsby, gained city status in 1365. The national urban park covers about 9.5 km². The most important cultural elements include the industrial facilities along the north shore of the river, the neo-Gothic Pori cathedral, the neo-Gothic Sigrid Jusélius Mausoleum, the neo-Renaissance city hall, as well as the Pori bridge over the river.

Hanko in Uusimaa has a population of about 9,700 and was founded in 1874. The area of the park covers a total of 630 km² of land and sea. The natural heritage assets largely consist of the diverse seashore and archipelago, including shoals and sandbanks. In addition, the park includes the Natura 2000 sites Tulliniemi nature reserve and bird protection area, as well as parts of the large sea nature protection areas of the Tammisaari and Hanko archipelago and the Pohjanpitäjänlahti bay. The park also includes many smaller nature protection areas with rare and endangered fauna and flora. The built environments include the Boulevard, the old buildings at Korkeavuori (High Mountain) by the Western Harbor, and the residential neighborhood by the Spa Park. The rock carving area at Hauensuoli (Pike's Gut) is a candidate for the UNESCO World Heritage list. Information provided by the Ministry of the Environment also states the following:

> **The decision about the national urban park includes the consent of 95 private individuals or societies. Without this initiative such a representation of the built heritage would not have been possible.**

The coastal town of **Porvoo** in Eastern Uusimaa has approximately 48,000 inhabitants. It is located on an ancient trading site and had gained city status by the 1380s. May 22, 2010 was designated a day of festivities for the grand opening of the national urban park in Porvoo. The park is planned to occupy an area of 22 km², stretching all the way from the national landscape in the Porvoo river valley to the Old Town and onwards toward the manor house environment at Stensböle and Haiko on the west side of the city. A large part of the park is water area.

Experience shows that the national urban park movement contributes to increased employment through tourism and, best of all, increased local pride. Cities that are in line to receive national urban park status include Imatra, Kotka, Kuopio, and Turku, Finland's third largest urban area after Helsinki and Tampere. The cities Forssa, Lohja, Savonlinna, Rovaniemi, Seinäjoki, Valkeakoski, and Vaasa have consulted with the Ministry regarding this matter. In little more than a decade it would seem that Finland will indeed meet its self-imposed quota by a wide margin – an impressive achievement and excellent confirmation of the sustainability of the concept.

In Norway, the Bygdøy peninsula on the west side of Oslo – which includes the Bygdøy Royal Estate and Oscarshall Castle from the mid-nineteenth century – has for many years been proposed as a potential candidate for a national urban park, but to date the Ministry of the Environment has been indifferent to the idea, noting that current environmental and cultural legislation offers sufficient protection. In **Denmark** the first national park (Thy) was established in 2009, with another one (Mols Bjerge) opening this year and more on the way, although it seems that the concept of a national urban park has not yet been considered.

Finland's neighbor to the south, **Estonia**, took a first step in September 2009 toward development of national urban parks. The Devepark project (Sustainable Historic Park Management and Development in Finland and Estonia 2009-2012), coordinated by the Center for Extension Studies at Åbo Akademi University, represents a collaborative effort between Finland and Estonia. Eight Finnish and eight Estonian institutions are participating, in addition to eight non-commercial Finnish and Estonian organizations. The

After tree-felling there is no turning back. Forest-rich Finland became both a parkland and Nokia Land.

Forest meets sea at Hanko National Urban Park.

project is being financed by the European Regional Development Fund's Central Baltic INTERREG IV A Programme 2007-2013 (€ 1.1 million) and participating organizations (€ 0.29 million), for a total project budget of € 1.3 million. The project description on the Devepark website (www.devepark.utu.fi) clearly states the objectives:

> **The aim of the project is to find ways to manage and develop historic parks, gardens and cultural environments in a sustainable way in Southwest Finland and in the Estonian counties of Tartu, Saare, and Jõgeva. The Finnish National Urban Park model will be presented in the project and the signing of the international Florence Charter in Estonia will be promoted.**

Note that the latter is a 1982 preservation agreement for historic gardens within the framework of the cultural heritage protection organization International Council for Monument and Sites (ICOMOS), an addendum to the better known Venice Charter from 1964. No national urban parks are to be found south of Estonia, although the national parks listed below are found in proximity to cities.

Latvia has the 917.5 km² national park Gauja in the north, between the cities of Sigulda (about 16,700 inhabitants) and Cēsis (more than 18,000 inhabitants), established in 1973, and the 381.65 km² Kemeri (established as a national park in 1997) by the Gulf of Riga and west of Jürmala (55,600 inhabitants).

Lithuania has the 82 km² Trakai Historical National Park, which surrounds the small town of Trakai (5,357 inhabitants) 28 km west of Vilnius; the 264 km² Kursiu Nerija (on the UNESCO World Heritage List since 2000) by the coastal town of Neringa, as well as Plateliai in Samogitia, which with its 1,100 inhabitants is the starting point for excursions to Žemaitija National Park. In 2008 the latter received the national Lithuanian tourist organization's prize for excellence.

Poland is home to the 385 km² Kampinoski National Park, which incorporates the Bielany Forest Reserve and is located on the northwest edge of Warsaw by the confluence of the Bug, Bzura, Narew, and Vistula rivers; the 262 km² Kozienice Landscape Park in Masovian Voivodeship and the 76 km² Wielkopolska National Park about 15 km south of Poznań.

Germany: the 805 km² Vorpommersche Boddenlandschaft northwest of Stralsund; Jasmund National Park on the island of Rügen northeast of the same city; the remarkable industrial city park Landschaftspark Duisburg-Nord (conceived by Professor Peter Latz); Fürst-Pückler-Park Bad Muskau in Oberlausitz between Bad Muskau and Legnica (in Poland). While the islands of Neuwerk and Scharhörn at the mouth of the Elbe river form part of the Hamburgisches Wattenmeer National Park and belong to Hamburg administratively, they lie 120 km northwest of the city.

Farther south on the continent, the island of Ada Ciganlija in the Sava river in central Belgrade should make an excellent candidate for a national urban park. To the west in Europe, the Sustainable and Accessible Urban Landscapes (SAUL) collaborative project involving the UK, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, and Germany and financed by INTERREG III 2003–2008 funding, has investigated opportunities for refinement of existing urban green areas (Frankfurt's Grüngürtel and Amsterdam's Noorderpark project). In the UK the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), which advises public authorities and plans for sustainable development in the run-up to the 2012 summer Olympic Games, has launched its Grey to Green campaign, which includes Liverpool's Green Infrastructure Network, along with the nearby Mersey Forest.

In Sweden there is certainly no lack of viable candidates for new national urban parks: besides Uppsala and Trollhättan, Gothenburg (with Änggårdsbergen and Slottsskogen), the historical naval station in Karlskrona (which is already on the UN World Cultural Heritage List) and the Södra Hällarna nature reserve outside Visby on Gotland have all come up for discussion, in addition to the other candidates discussed during the first Riksdag inventory. However, to date absolutely nothing has transpired. Perhaps the experiences from the capital city are a deterrent. Or is there rather a lack of municipal initiative? Areas worthy of protection exist, the national urban park concept is well-established and one would think that the examples from Finland should provide hope and inspiration for the future.

Stockholm faces major transportation policy and urban challenges, largely due to the expected surge in population. Projects include the urban North Link highway; revamping of the lock Slussen that connects Gamla Stan and Södermalm; construction of the North Station area between Stockholm and Solna, as well as construction of the Norra Djurgårdsstaden office and residential area. The latter area borders on the National Urban Park and will impact it. The North Link has already spawned conflict regarding its route through Bellevueparken. Concerning the inflammatory issue about the new design for Slussen, murmurs are being heard about a new Almstrid (a successful civil disobedience movement in 1971 over a subway construction project), only many times worse. Whether the fate of the National Urban Park can engage Stockholmers as deeply remains to be seen, as does the ability of the city's powers that be to live up to the EU's green prize. In all probability the disgruntlement of the former will not culminate in the same actions taken by the agitated Roman masses in Shakespeare's play, who burned the homes of the latter in protest. However, most of the city's residents enjoy and are proud of the local natural resources and any perceived mismanagement risks repercussions on the political front.

On the one hand, it is difficult from the Swedish perspective to counter the impression that the baton for the development of a valuable idea in the area of sustainable development has been handed off to the other side of the Baltic for the foreseeable future. On the other hand, it is hardly constructive to view such a movement as some type of nationalistic contest. Sweden took a bold initiative in attempting the feat of creating a functional national park in the middle of what may be a quite small yet nevertheless international metropolis. Fifteen years later, valuable lessons have been learned, especially due to the commitment and good will ultimately demonstrated by both national and municipal authorities, as well as by independent opinion groups. Finland wisely began at the other end of the scale, choosing a somewhat different legal model and above all allowing local initiative to rule, rather than imposing decrees from above. Here, as well, valuable lessons for the future are to be found. The inevitability of urban development and the unpredictable wheels of progress perpetuate the need to defend urban natural resources. Nevertheless, the national urban park concept is here to stay.

pontus reimers

Editorial consultant with a background as a classical archaeologist and lexicographer. Has worked at the Swedish Institute in Rome – work which included the excavation of the Temple of Castor and Pollux at the Forum Romanum – and at Lund University. Editor in charge of ancient history and archeology at the Swedish National Encyclopedia, later chief editor of Bonnier Lexicon.

ILLEGAL LOGGING
BIRDLIFE AND FLORA THREATENED

Illegal logging is the foremost threat to the survival of forests around the world. The illegal trade in forest resources also means that many countries lose vast amounts of tax revenue, as well as various customs duties and fees. Russia and the three Baltic countries account for the largest volume of illegal exports to the EU countries.

In the OECD estimates the value of the global timber trade is said to be €150 billion per year, ten percent of which is estimated to be illegal in one way or another.

Illegal logging is extremely difficult to stop. Trade in illegally logged timber is an international multi-billion euro industry that branches into over 70 countries, from Brazil and Cameroon to Canada and Russia. Between 30 and 50 percent of all timber exports worldwide are of questionable legality. Behind all of this is an extensive chain of organized crime linking sellers, middlemen, and buyers, all with the capacity to bribe and to falsify documents. The World Wildlife Fund, which has thoroughly studied the illegal traffic, believes that the criminal activity in the forestry industry and timber trade is part of a much greater problem that includes inadequate forestry legislation, poor regulatory control, and extensive corruption.

The EU is one of the biggest importers of timber in the world. Timber for all of the lumber-hungry EU countries comes mainly from the Amazon, the Congo, East Africa, Indonesia, the Baltic States, and until recently, Russia. The legal importation of timber from Russia to the EU countries has significantly decreased in recent times because of the hefty export duties that Russia has imposed. A significant part of timber imports to the EU is estimated to be illegal. Globally, the cost of illegal logging (in part due to lost tax revenues) ranges between €10 billion and €15 billion, with the EU accounting for approximately €3 billion of the total. According to the World Wildlife Fund, Finland, Sweden, and the UK top the list of the 20 EU countries that import timber illegally. A significant part of the importation is indirect, via China. However, timber imported from the three Baltic countries takes a different route. Russia and these countries account for the largest volume of illegal exports to the EU countries, approximately 13 million cubic meters, according to the World Wildlife Fund.

In 2010 demand for timber appears to be greater than ever. Prices are heading for record highs in many places. Lumber mills in Europe are finding it difficult to obtain sufficient raw material, in part because of declining legal imports from Russia due to export duties. The export duties in Russia and increased demand from the EU indeed appear to have led to an increase in illegal logging in Russia. The damage from pests in the vast pine forests of British Columbia probably also has an impact on the situation.

For several years the EU has been engaged in major efforts to create a regulatory framework against the illegal timber trade. Now that the EU is trying to stem or even eliminate the illegal timber trade it is encountering a host of businesses of questionable repute that import timber from the Baltic States and other countries in the former Eastern Europe.

Forest products industrial concerns. These are large groups with their own industries and often with their own large forest holdings.

Forest owner associations, which in turn own lumber mills and other forest products industries.

Independent lumber mills without their own forests that often cooperate via purchasing companies for the supply of their raw materials.

Import agents. These are companies that exclusively buy and sell timber.

Rarely are importers responsible for the entire chain from logging to delivery at the factory gate. They collaborate with shippers and entrepreneurs in the export countries. Sometimes the shippers are subsidiaries or jointly owned by the importer. In many cases the shipping chains are long and complicated. Every level has external political and other interests that must be met in various ways. Considering the size of timber transactions and how much financial gain is possible by avoiding taxes and other fees, as well as the opportunity to log more than actually permitted, it is not strange that a significant portion of both logging and exports are still illegal.

Illegality in these contexts may mean different things: failure to pay taxes, customs duties, fees, logging on someone else's property, logging in conflict with the regulations of the country of origin with respect to quantity or tree species that may be cut.

For at least the past decade the EU has attempted to contend with illegal timber imports by member countries through the EU Action Plan for Forest Law Enforcement,

Conference rooms done in Siberian larch. A Western trend that could give one pause.

ALL PHOTOS: ISTOCKPHOTO

Governance and Trade (FLEGT). The goal is to achieve voluntary bilateral agreements between the EU and timber-producing countries and their companies in an effort to deal with the illegal activities.

In early May 2010, the EU Parliament decided to propose that the EU Commission implement a system requiring EU countries that import timber to observe due diligence in order to ensure that the trade is legal. The EU wants to use the FLEGT system to reduce the scope of illegal trade and reduce the use of illegal timber (it is not illegal within the EU to import illegally produced forest products). And moreover, to reduce illegal clearing in a number of key countries, some of which are on the east side of the Baltic Sea. FLEGT also endeavors to prepare a system with licenses, support for financing, and greater accountability from the private business sector.

Illegal trade in forest products has been going on for decades, but only in recent times has it become a serious problem for society. This trade is now considered to pose a large global threat contributing to the reduction of forests and biodiversity.

But the illegal trade also threatens the rule of law in a number of countries, particularly countries in the former Eastern Europe, which since the collapse of communism have embarked on a problematic journey of replacing the legal system of a dictatorship with a clear legal system free of corruption and injustice.

According to an extensive study by the Faversham House Group, 45 percent of all timber harvested in Bulgaria comes from illegal operations. Permitted logging is exceeded by 1.5 million cubic meters. Similar conditions can be found in the Slovak Republic and Romania.

Of course, the reason that most EU countries, the US, and China all engage in illegal importation is because it is less expensive than legal importation. As in many other areas, such actions destabilize the market, punishing companies that act legally and responsibly, while tempting them to enter a gray zone of illegality.

In countries where illegal logging and trade are carried out there are good reasons to try to bring it under control – partially for moral reasons, but perhaps even more to bring in revenues in the form of taxes and fees which currently benefit parties other than the government.

In the three Baltic countries and Russia, the problem is in part a culture of corruption in general, but also uncertainty and lack of clarity about ownership with respect to forests and logging rights. Most former Eastern Bloc countries have not even determined who is entitled to ownership of the forest that was privately owned prior to nationalization. The enormous forests of Russia are usually leased from the government by various private companies. The extensive corruption found at all levels in Russia makes it easy to circumvent the laws and regulations concerning logging and the timber trade. And of course Russia's recently imposed export duties do not apply to the illegal trade. Imports from the Baltic States region have increased sharply since the early 1990s, especially from Latvia, which has begun to develop a rather well-functioning forest products industry with a clear ownership structure, a prerequisite for legal operations.

Almost 50 percent of the forest land has been returned to private ownership in Latvia. In Russia, however, almost all forest is government-owned and managed by a complex, obsolete bureaucratic machine in which corruption still has a strong foothold.

But even the laws that regulate how and to what extent logging may be carried out in Russia and the Baltic States region differ from provisions found in several developed countries. Consequently, even when Western companies import forest products legally, they may contribute to the depletion of the forests and reduced biodiversity. Countless bird and plant species are threatened with extinction, as are ancient deciduous forests. Moreover, in many cases companies in the West have no idea about the origin of their imports, or how they arrived. The EU is now trying to correct this situation through the FLEGT system.

The EU imports almost exclusively round timber and chips. Western Europe imports these raw materials from Eastern Europe. The importing of milled wood and other added-value forest products is very limited, which is one reason that Russia recently imposed export duties.

The Putin government has recognized the necessity of creating a domestic processing industry and not just exporting raw materials like the former colonies.

Price is not the only reason that countries rich in forests, like Sweden and Finland, import timber. Another reason is that forest conservation efforts in countries like Sweden have been skewed in favor of conifers. The pulp factories' demand for deciduous pulpwood cannot be met at this time without imports. Every eighth log delivered to Swedish pulp factories and lumber mills has crossed the Baltic – this means 15 percent of the raw material. Forty percent of all timber cleared in Latvia goes to Sweden.

Large quantities of timber are cut on land owned by someone else, sometimes even on protected areas, and then sold on the black market. Sometimes logging operations have permits, but take more timber than permitted and fail to declare some in order to escape taxes and fees. Millions of cubic meters are cleared illegally or wind up in a grey zone.

The Baltic States region and Russia have much more old virgin forest than the densely forested Nordic countries. Consequently their forests are particularly attractive to timber thieves. These forests contain vast quantities of extremely valuable trees.

Of course, illicit logging entails considerable revenue losses for communities, affecting all levels due to unpaid taxes, fees, and customs duties. Large sums of money are involved. A few years ago the Russian white-collar crime authority estimated the value of illegal logging at about a billion dollars per year.

Illegal and uncontrolled logging in the former Eastern Bloc also entails a huge negative ecological footprint. Russia and the three Baltic countries still have major natural assets which have been lost in the Central European and Nordic woodlands – and not just tree species, but bird and animal life as well. The white-backed woodpecker, which is almost extinct in the Nordic pine forests, is abundant in the old hardwood forests on the southeast side of the Baltic Sea, as is the black stork, which has not nested on the western shore of the Baltic since the 1950s.

anders hellner
Senior advisor of the Swedish Institute of Foreign Affairs (Stockholm).

Apropos the black stork. Forest conservation in one country cultivates devastation in another.

A European odyssey.
Older than East and West

THE EXHIBITION WINDS its way through the room at the top of the Haus der Brandeburgischen-Preußischen Geschichte. Through apparently simple means – photographs and texts mounted on wooden trestles – one follows the life of "Anna". The course of her life runs from childhood in Königsberg, through Erzgebirge, Potsdam, Berlin, and eventually ends up in Sweden. "The ruptures of the centuries are written in the biographies of the 20th Century: the jerking progression, enormous and violent changes of place, life-threatening border transgressions", Karl Schlögel wrote in his book *In Raume lesen wir die Zeit*. "A European Odyssey" addresses the same observation. War and ideology form the foundation for a condensed history of the movement of the individual through space and time. The central narrative is subjective, but it is free of political and moral reflections. "This person becomes like a pair of glasses. You can follow her, and I can also see that the visitors do just that. They carefully read all the texts in this room. I do not think they would have done so if we had given out general information about the children of Königsberg, or the so-called *Kinderlandsverschickungslager**". So says Hanna Sjöberg, the artist who, together with Dorothea Bjelfvenstam, created the exhibition. It is Bjelfvenstam's life, her memories, texts and photographs, which form the basis of the story.

ANNA WAS ONE of the last Königsberg children and grew up in her grandfather's house. He was a priest and active opponent of anti-Semitism. Her father, a less successful writer in the circles around Thomas Mann, died early on: opposed to the war, he was conscripted into the German Army. In the autumn of 1944 Königsberg was in flames. Anna, 11 years old, accompanied her mother to the train station. She remembers smoke, screams, and confused masses of people. At the last minute, the child got on a train to a *Kinderlandsverschickungslager*. Anna was saved from the bombs and lived in a National Socialist camp for girls in the city of Oelsnitz, in Erzgebirge.

A few blurry pictures of girls lined up for roll call accompany the texts in this part of the story. They are written by the adult person behind the pseudonym, but the events are viewed through the eyes of a child. Parts of the story cannot be translated from German. "Die eiserne Ration" for example. This was a package of raisins and candy sugar that all camp children wore in a leather pouch around their neck. A symbolic last meal for the day when the war would catch up with them – but also: one of childhood's forbidden fruits, encountered in any idyllic memoir. The children pinched some of the sweets, of course. The language becomes recognizable. But at the same time, the story attaches to specific places and identities that no longer exist.

ANNA BECAME A *Hitlermädchen*. Evidently, she was just sent away during the height of the war to a scout camp with fixed routines, bold women leaders, and Nazi overtones. When the war ended she was reunited with her mother and they settled in Potsdam, which became part of the eastern zone controlled by the Soviets. On the way there the child asked, "Mother, is it really true that Hitler was a very bad man?" In the shifts of the war, ideologies literally switched places with each other. And in the child's imagination Stalin replaced Hitler as the friendly uncle at the top. In Potsdam, Anna and her mother learned Russian, and sought a foothold in a society that had not yet come to be. Anna's figure embodies the apparent paradox: she goes from Hitlermädchen to the Free German Youth FDJ. The moral aspect seems, somewhat surprisingly, unnecessary. This is perhaps because Anna's fate, in contrast to the narrator's private charisma, is so manifestly universal. The war of the twentieth century drove children to and fro across various borders, squeezed between the winners and losers, away from parents. Far from all of them were reunited.

In Potsdam, Anna fell in love with a student who wore a white carnation – instead of a red one – on his lapel on the first of May. He was soon persecuted as an opponent of the regime and had difficulty even getting his college certificate. It was not long before the Communist regime also saw Anna as a problem. Together, the young couple moved from

* The evacuation to the countryside of all German youths from areas at risk of aerial attack.

Mother had said that Anna should write a letter to Daddy today. "Dear Dad! How are you? Are you at war? Where is the war? Are there any children? Winter will soon be here and then Grandpa will go sledding with me. For Christmas, I would like to have skis… "

The young BDM leaders, Lieselotte and Eva were responsible for the political education. Such that the children being good and faithful *Jungmädel* would soon get the scarf and the knot. For the Führer, people and the fatherland!

Images and captions published with permission from Dorothea Bjelfvenstam and Hanna Sjögren.

The First World War moved borders. The Second, people.

Potsdam to Nikolassee, from east to west. Anna did not want to live where people could not even go to school in peace, even though the war was over. Eventually, she decided on her own to leave Germany entirely.

The final part of the exhibition begins with Anna's life as an immigrant worker in Stockholm in the fifties, and ends nearly fifty years later. Anna served as a housekeeper during the compulsory years of service before she got her permanent residence permit. She married a Swedish man, a filmmaker, and had children. She received an education, worked as a translator of fiction and a teacher for Swedish schoolchildren. For those who read the material carefully, there are glimpses of GDR's international activities and relations to Sweden. Anna was a dedicated history teacher, who took her Swedish students on a class trip to Potsdam which they very much appreciated. Later she accepted a position for continued training in East Germany, paid by the state. Was she instrumentalized? The question is left open. What is clear is how the individual's movements across borders were politicized, even towards the very end of the 20th century. This of course also occurs today, but the boundaries have shifted.

ON THE FINAL PHOTOGRAPHS, Anna returns to today's Kaliningrad for the first time since 1944, now in the role of a translator. She has come full circle – and the work with the exhibition begins. "It's been a remarkable adventure", said Dorothea Bjelfvenstam and laughs. "The first thing I said to Hanna [Sjöberg] was that I did not want to be exposed. I do not like exhibiting myself, not even in private, and therefore I felt uncomfortable at first. Now I feel a tremendous distance, to the exhibition and to the process behind it. It is not about me, but about someone I hardly know anymore. It is a relief, and it also has something to do with Potsdam."

We have gathered in the Haus der Brandeburgischen-Preußischen Geschichte, it's been a few days since the exhibition opened. "A European Odyssey" has been shown both in Kaliningrad and in Oelsnitz-Erzgebirge. After Potsdam, the project will make a final stop in Stockholm, at Tensta Konsthall. The exhibition itself follows the path of Anna's migration, and changes shape somewhat depending on both the geographical space being dealt with, and as the actual space of the exhibition.

Here in Potsdam, there is more material from that period of Anna's life. In addition, the story has grown, "multiplied" as Dorothea Bjelfvenstam says. Together with Sjöberg, she has managed to track down other people who were in the same camp from 1944 to 1945. The interviews with them are now part of the exhibits. The tentative talks and attempts to remember how it really was are powerful digressions in Anna's story. "The time in the camp in Oelsnitz was like a hole in my life. It was a significant turning point, when Hanna and I went there and visited the city's archives. We assumed that we would see something about the camp, since it had been located there. But we found nothing. And then we found a list, and on the list was my name. Aha, I thought, I have existed here."

Before working on the exhibition, she had always replied that she came from Potsdam, especially when people in Stockholm asked her. "It was so insanely cumbersome to explain: Königsberg, it doesn't exist anymore, and a *Kinderlandsverschickungslager*, what on Earth is that . . . it was much easier to say: I come from Potsdam, Berlin." And Hanna Sjöberg notes: "She is not East or West, she is older than that. It makes all the difference."

IN "A EUROPEAN ODYSSEY", Dorothea Bjelfvenstam is both the author and the subject. But Anna and Dorothea are not the same person. It has been very important, both for Bjelfvenstam, in her private life, and for the artist, Sjöberg, who compares her roll to that of the director. The story has, despite the subjective tone, been impersonalized. A rigorous screening process lies behind the selection of texts and images. The personal dramas have been omitted, and with them the conclusions and lessons that the individual experiences. It is precisely this scarcity that opens up the story, allowing visitors to step inside Anna. One could also say that it elevates her story to art.

unn gustafsson

Freelance journalist (Berlin).

Student life in the fifties, in West Berlin. He got 80 Marks per month remuneration. After deduction of the rent, there was 30 DM left, which could be converted to East money in a shop in East Berlin at a rate of 1:5 in order to be able to shop in East Berlin. Anna earned a little money as an office assistant. Her mother brought turnips and potatoes from Potsdam. Issue: 10 Pennies: a Milkana cheese triangle or a cigarette? Hunger gets on one's nerves.

Anna tried odd temp jobs. As a guide for farmers from northern Sweden who wanted to go to Mallorca, business men on the ferry from Trelleborg to Sassnitz and Berlin. Hated office work. Accommodation in exchange for cleaning.

Anna wanted not only to explain German grammar, but also to give some idea of Germany. Tangible history. "What exactly is a border?" asked the Swedish youths on a school trip. They stayed overnight in Potsdam; met students from the GDR in East Berlin; after that, in West Berlin. "It's just like home here", they said, and were confused.

Common European destinies. What new differences arise when the one between East and West is erased?

PHOTO:

ON THE MEANING OF THE TRISTESSE AND THE LIE

Few saw the dissolution of the Soviet Union coming, except perhaps right before it happened. Since then, a number of experts have claimed that they did in fact foresee the breakup. The fall of the Soviet empire and its causes constitute a historical puzzle that will keep researchers occupied for a long time, and numerous explanations for the breakup have already been advanced: the US vanquished its rival in a war of military spending, the planned economy did not work, the incipient information society played a decisive role, developments in Eastern Europe brought down the empire, the ruthless exploitation of nature and people led to collapse.[1] There may, of course, be an element of truth in most of these explanations: the fall of an empire is an enormous change, an event so complex that no single explanation is likely to suffice. In any case, research on the dissolution of the Soviet Union is still in its infancy.

What is clear is that the Soviet Union dissolved despite having one of the world's largest militaries, a nuclear arsenal on par with that of the US, and an efficient penal system to keep the population in check. A bewildered political regime, the military, and the security police could only stand by and watch the process of dissolution unfold, and the collapse became a reality in just a few short years. The fall of the Soviet empire also took place in the absence of direct influence from any violent event (making the event a historical exception). In brief, the fall of the Soviet empire was *not* the result of a revolution, a coup d'état, *or* a military coup, *nor* was it the result of the empire's having lost a major world war.[2] But then what was it? Can it be described as the result of yet another period of top-down Russian reform? Or should the dissolution of the Soviet Union be viewed as a revolution, comparable to the February Revolution of 1917, or even the Bolshevik seizure of power later that same year?[3] Can the disintegration of the Soviet empire be seen as the result of some sort of Russian apocalyptic tradition in which the desire to "start anew" is the driving force?[4]

THE TRISTESSE EMERGES

The disintegration will be discussed from a somewhat different perspective in this essay. The emphasis here is on an aspect that has to some degree been in the background up to now, but which deserves to be given attention and tested as potentially important factor: *tristesse* in combination with the decreasing level of fear in the society. This paper does not claim to offer any sort of comprehensive explanatory model, but rather seeks to shed light on a generally overlooked element in the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

The *tristesse* in combination with decreasing fear constituted a process that developed over a long time in what can be divided into three phases. Its origins derive from the terror that had long been used in the Soviet Union as a weapon against the people, a tool that was developed to its fullest under Stalin. This led in turn to fear and distrust becoming permanent elements of existence. Writing to Stalin from prison shortly before he was executed, Nikolai Bukharin offered this analysis: "There is something daring and magnificent in the political idea of a general purge [...] People inform on one another, giving rise to an eternal distrust of one another [...] In this way the regime has succeeded in creating a complete guarantee of its existence."[5] One historian recently observed that a silent and compliant population was a permanent consequence of Stalin's domination.[6]

In the next phase the *tristesse*, the listlessness, emerges. The notion is broader than "boredom"; it is the mixture of tedium and resignation that is found in Soviet daily life, the sense of hopelessness.[7] The *tristesse* was the antipode of the inflated proclamations, and grew out of the gap between the public lie, the propaganda, and the Soviet reality. In turn, this gap grew bigger and bigger within the Soviet system. To this must be added the disappearance of fear that became a major factor when Communist Party General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev proclaimed: "We can no longer live like this."[8] The *tristesse* was ultimately the product of a heavy dissatisfaction among both the party leaders and the populace, which, once the fear vanished, appears to have played an important role in the disintegration of the Soviet Union. It had a paralyzing effect on the entire society, and resulted in the failure of the attempts at reform initiated under Khrushchev and Brezhnev. Only after Gorbachev had made it clear

Communism – the theory of gray colors. But was there not also the fear – of blood and red?

ILLUSTRATION: RIBER HANSSON

that the reforms were in earnest did the system fail to implement them and instead break up.

Tristesse as a factor in the breakup of the Soviet Union does not bear solely, or even primarily, upon tangibles. It is the general hopelessness that spread throughout the society, a society in which the younger generation had no prospects for the future. This may seem paradoxical, since it could also be said that the entire Soviet state was obsessed with the future. The watchword was that sacrifices have to be made today to bring about a brighter tomorrow. The investments that were made in heavy industry and defense industries rather than in consumer goods such as food and clothing were one practical consequence of this. Under socialist realism, the culture was supposed to foster future generations of devoted citizens. There are manifold examples, but it was out of just this proclaimed reality, rather than true reality, that the *tristesse* grew. Regimented life in a totalitarian system where everything was determined by the Party ultimately became intolerable once the fear had eased. "We are waiting for change", sang Viktor Tsoi in a popular song from the perestroika years.

Alexis de Tocqueville (1805–1859) made a perceptive observation when, in 1856, he was examining the causes of the French Revolution. He noted that the most dangerous moment for a bad government is when it begins to reform itself:

> **A sovereign who seeks to relieve his subjects after a long period of oppression is lost, unless he be a man of great genius. Evils which are patiently endured when they seem inevitable, become intolerable when once the idea of escape from them is suggested.**[9]

The *tristesse* was evident even early on, at least for two authors, Ilf and Petrov. In 1931 their somewhat classical hero, Ostap Bender, made the following statement in their novel *The Golden Calf*: "During the past year I have developed very serious differences with the Soviet regime. The regime wants to build socialism, and I don't. I find it boring." This was written in the middle of the first five-year plan launched by Stalin, which focused on heavy industry.

Stalin ratified the violent social transformation by proclaiming "socialism in one country", thereby rejecting Leon Trotsky's theory of the permanent revolution and his ideas regarding a constantly evolving worldwide coup d'état. Stalin instead created his own revolution through ruthless terror. Fear became a permanent fixture of Soviet society. Despite the rewriting of history, despite the fact that literature and the arts were regulated with ideological fervor, and despite the fact that the entire system was organized to defend the revolution, it became more and more difficult to win new generations to the cause. Nikita Khrushchev tried to reform the system, and believed that his reform program meant a return to Lenin's principles.[10] Attempting to say at least part of the truth about Stalin was one element of Khrushchev's reforms. It was an attempt to awaken some measure of critical thinking in order to improve the system.

Another element of the reforms was economic decentralization, which was undertaken to increase efficiency and improve the material conditions of the people. Incentives to work were to be expanded without abandoning the planned economy. Khrushchev's attempts to reform the Party and set term limits for functionaries were unsuccessful. His attempted reforms revealed the reason for the inability of the Soviet system to change – its inherent *tristesse*. Sergei Dmitriev, who was a history professor at Moscow University in the 1940s, made the following entry in his journal on March 29, 1961: "Everybody is sick and tired of Khrushchev. His foreign voyages and empty and erratic verbiage have finally reached the state of idiocy. In the public and political atmosphere one increasingly notices the signs of absolute inertia, intellectual vacuum, and a lack of purpose. There are no thoughts, no movement."[11]

However, no less importantly and perhaps paradoxically, what Khrushchev did accomplish with his "thaw" policy was to create a sliver of hope. A hope for something different was ignited for a few years, before the Soviet Union shut down again under Leonid Brezhnev. Fedor Burlatskii, then a young employee of *Kommunist* magazine, recalls his trip to Europe on the steamship Pobeda (Victory): "I swear that this trip affected me more than twenty party congresses. I got to see a culture and a way of life that we could not have dreamed of. Khrushchev opened up the West to us – and that was an incredible event for the entire country."[12]

That hope for something different was quashed, however, when Leonid Brezhnev rose to power, and the next eighteen years were characterized in part by "cadre stability" and growing repression. The sense of resignation spread ever further through the society in those years. All the reforms that were supposed to make the system more efficient proved to be counterproductive. Of course, according to the official statistics, the standard of living and levels of education rose. With its nuclear weapons, global fleet and numerous allies, the Soviet Union was indisputably a superpower. But the fear and *tristesse* led to stagnation (*inertsiia*) throughout the society, and the reverse was true as well. No reforms could alleviate that. Despite the general secretary's exhortations to the people to work, the quality of Soviet production did not improve. It was during these years that the *tristesse* even began to spread in earnest among the top political leadership. It has been referred to as "spiritual sclerosis".[13]

ON THE LIE AND THE LANGUAGE

A life of lies emerged between the propaganda – the proclaimed reality – and the actual circumstances, that is, "the terminological confusion".[14] Changes in the language followed in the wake of the new Soviet government, inspiring, among others, George Orwell, who was one of the first to popularize the term "newspeak". Viktor Klemperer wrote about the use of language by the Nazis.[15] In addition to being a key element in the building of a nation, language is much more. He who controls language controls the thought.

The totalitarian language was intended to serve as a tool of the ideology. The language became a powerful instrument in creating the new state, and was controlled by the Party. The young Bolshevik government was well aware of the importance of language in creating the new Soviet man.[16] The language was suffused with clichés in which nuances or meanings were altered. Words like "peace", "party", "worker", and "peasant" took on their own particular ideological stamps. There were no "innocent" words; they all had their assigned interpretations.[17] Consequently only the socialist countries could, by definition, be advocates of peace, while the "enemies" were imperialists, militarists who compromised the peace. "Our party is the ruling party, and every resolution that the party congress adopts will be obligatory for the entire republic," wrote Lenin in 1921. Words like "party" and "party member" became synonymous with "Communist Party" and "Communist".[18] Members of other parties were referred to as renegades, fellow travelers, social traitors, and bourgeoisie lackeys. The unity of the Party was officially established at the 10th Party Congress in 1921, when the ban on factions was implemented. This unity had to be "hard, iron hard, hard as steel".[19] When the Soviet Union began its exploration of outer space, it was always referred to as *zavoevanie kosmosa* (conquering the cosmos), while the American efforts were termed *osvoenie kosmosa* ("colonization").[20]

Another example is the word "election", which refers to choosing one of a number of alternatives. In the Soviet Union, elections were held with a single candidate, and the purpose of the election was to provide anything but choice. The point was to demonstrate the legitimacy of the government, particularly on the basis of the high level of voter participation (usually 99.8 percent), and to give the populace and the Party workers practice in teaching and propaganda in the service of the Party.

Over time, a linguistic gap developed between the official language, which was full of meaningless phrases, and the language actually being spoken and used by the people.

The totalitarian language is far from a rich one, but rather is exhausted, impoverished, and riddled with clichés. A study conducted in the 1980s revealed that journalists normally used about 1,500 different words to write their articles.[21] Renowned lexicographer Vladimir Dal's dictionary from the 1960s contains roughly 200,000 words while, in the early 1980s, Soviet lexicographer Sergei Ozhegov's version contained about 57,000. The language was filled with pat expressions, and the Party had a monopoly on their interpretation and use in the service of propaganda. As one language researcher put it: "this system of automatic thinking, of mechanical words hypnotizes the mind and paralyzes common sense."[22]

Imre Kertész has distinguished this totalitarian language as something unique to the totalitarian dictators of the 20th century. "With the help of the well-proportioned dynamics of violence and fear, this language", writes Kertész, "penetrates the individual's consciousness and gradually pushes him out of himself, pushes him out of his own life."

The language evolved into a circular model that came to "represent immutability and predictability". It was closed to nuance or any unexpected turns of phrase.[23] The result was a widespread hopelessness, a paralysis that made the system impossible to reform. The Soviet Union began to crack under a way of life that author Alexander Solzhenitsyn characterized as living by lies. In his article "Live not by Lies" (1974) he wrote: "For violence has nothing to cover itself with but lies,

and lies can only persist through violence. And it is not every day and not on every shoulder that violence brings down its heavy hand: It demands of us only obedience to lies and a daily participation in deceit – all loyalty lies in that."[24]

Václav Havel describes a phenomenon similar to the one noted by Solzhenitsyn. A manager at a grocery store hangs a sign in the window bearing the slogan: "Workers of the world, unite!" Why? Not doing so would be tantamount to revolting against the system. Taking the sign down would have had immediate consequences: he would have lost his position and been demoted, his salary would have been reduced, the continued education of his children would have been put at risk, and his workmates would have shunned him. But by putting up the sign, whose words meant nothing, the store manager contributed to the lie in the system, to the maintenance of order in a false system. In brief, he was imprisoned in a dictated existence, with no room to maneuver.

ON THE CONSTITUTION AND RESEARCH

The constitution also reflected the public lie.[25] The constitution of a state governed by law takes precedence over its other laws and ordinances; the letter and, perhaps most importantly, the spirit of a constitution is respected. In the Soviet Union the purpose of the constitution was to serve the Communist Party, and thus the State, in order to create the ideal society. It became one of the Party's tools, an ideological and political document, rather than the fundamental body of law on which a state governed by law rests. Interestingly enough, and in addition to the three major revisions of the constitution, it was subject to constant amendment at various times, and altogether the three Soviet versions were revised more than 50 times. The Soviet constitutions failed to fulfill the purpose of a constitution, which is to regulate and limit the power of the government, to protect the individual from that power, and to provide a framework for the legal system. The constitutions were instead part of the Party's ideological propaganda apparatus, and the Soviet constitution was asserted to be the "world's most democratic" as far back as 1936.

The first constitution, which dates from January 1924, did not mention the Communist Party, even though it was already the ruling government body in the Soviet Union.[26]

Research in the Soviet Union, especially research in history and the social sciences, was particularly affected by the totalitarian language and the ideological strait jacket. When new findings were to be reported, they were carefully packaged in the peculiar forms of the totalitarian language in such a way that they fit into the ideological format. And that particular ideology, Marxism-Leninism, had devastating consequences for the writing of history. As early as 1931, Stalin determined that what was important in writing history was not the sources, but rather a "correct attitude".[27] Decrees were issued on how history had to be presented. The former head of the Russian state archives, Rudolf Pikhoia, describes the many books about the recent history of the Soviet Union that were produced during the Soviet era as follows: "After having read these books, I thought: this is interesting, akin to science, and there are literature and source references. But what country are they about? I have not lived in that country."[28] Furthermore, research that is rooted in received dogma does not generate new knowledge – that was never its purpose – and thus becomes superfluous and uninteresting. The researchers were mired in *tristesse*, even if many of them had good intentions. The bitterness over, as well as insight into, these deficiencies is discernible in the introduction to one of the most recent works on Russian history in the 20th century, which states that the book is an account of facts and people within a context, a story "without impersonal descriptions of 'objective processes' or 'mobile forces'".[29]

Václav Havel wrote of this *tristesse* early on. In his essay "Stories and Totalitarianism" he reveals his thoughts on the consequences of the ideological writing of history: "Totalitarian power brought bureaucratic order into the living disorder of history and thus effectively anesthetized it." He points to the writing of history having been characterized by a well-arranged game of conformities, social formations, and conditions of production. "The tension and thrill in real events were dismissed as accidental and therefore unworthy of the attention of scholarship. History became boredom." This had consequences for people's lives as well.

> **The asthma our society is now suffering from is a natural continuation of the war that intellectual arrogance once declared on the story, on history, and thus on life itself. Boredom has jumped out of the history textbooks and into real life.**

Yet another important element in Soviet society was the attempt to create the new Soviet man: an unselfish, ideologically irreproachable member of society who constantly worked efficiently in the best interests of society: Alexander Zinoviev's *homo sovieticus*. Random chance was not recognized as a factor in people's existence; there was no accommodation for the unexpected or the insightful in a society founded on an ideology that had scientific pretensions. One of the characteristics of the new Soviet man was that he would rise above everyday life; for instance, he would never consider drinking or smoking, the reason being that, in his ideological fervor, he would be too busy building the communist future. This new man never became a reality. Instead, alcohol abuse increased and the birth rate fell (except in Central Asia). And it was a population that spent a lot of its time standing in line.

The Soviet lines in which people spent so much of their time serve to illustrate the *tristesse* as well. These lines were a part of Soviet life from cradle to grave, and even a little longer, since "burials almost always entailed a wait".[30] Standing in line was integral to the Soviet economy, which was a shortage economy. This did not prevent the Soviet line from developing its own dynamic and culture. But it is telling that, despite all the time people spent in them, the lines never served as grounds for extensive criticism of the Soviet system. There was not particularly a lot of conversation in the lines, according to Rubinov, and the sense of powerlessness was intense – but no one denies that they were boring.[31]

ATTEMPTS AT RESISTANCE

The *tristesse* thus evolved into a product of, among other factors, the mendacity of Soviet society, the life of lies identified by Solzhenitsyn. The younger generations had little or no means of influencing their predetermined (by the State) future, and the revolutionary slogans rang hollow. Opposition movements arose out of this now and then, at least in the bigger cities. In the mid-1950s, young people in the big cities began protesting in a somewhat peculiar way, but also in a way that took an obvious poke at the *tristesse* in evidence even then. They wore colorful clothing and listened to (forbidden) jazz music, and went under the name of *stiljagi*.[32] They were tired of the cultural mandates of social realism, and interested in, for example, abstract art. The government's countermeasures consisted of a combination of public hectoring of the movement (with young people from the Komsomol being sent out to cut up the colorful clothes) and repression by the security service. The movement died out.[33]

The *samizdat* and *tamizdat* literature that began to be spread underground represented another countermovement. Typewritten copies of forbidden works by Anna Akhmatova, Osip Mandelstam, Boris Pasternak, Alexander Solzhenitsyn and others were read. This phenomenon did not end until Mikhail Gorbachev lifted censorship and it became possible to start printing the books in the Soviet Union.

The noted dissident movement could also be said to have been a countermovement against the growing *tristesse*. The dissidents were officially painted as advocates of "false" ideas, in contrast to the Communist Party's "scientific truth". They assayed a sort of underground liberation movement. These were people from the big cities who had intellectual interests and, often, networks of former camp inmates, with a knowledge of foreign literature, art, and contemporary liberal ideas.

As they wearied of the lies, top political leaders and members of society began to demand real change.

THE LETHARGY THAT DEVELOPED

Even the top officials ultimately seemed bored, prisoners of their own rhetoric, with no means of breaking free of the slogans, the lies, the decreed existence. From Brezhnev's stagnation period and a few tired attempts at change by superannuated general secretaries, the limit was finally reached. Viewed from this perspective, Gorbachev's reforms can be seen as an attempt to alleviate the *tristesse*. Gorbachev and the other reformers initially diagnosed the Soviet system's problem as follows. In December 1986 Gorbachev noted: "We are plagued by conservatism, complacency, inertia and an unwillingness to live in a new way. [...] And everything will depend on reforming our psychology."[34]

By the mid-1980s, even the mighty armed forces (with a total of some five million men) could be said to have become corrupted by the *tristesse*. Their inability to respond when a private German citizen, Mathias Rust, flew his little sports plane and landed in Moscow's Red Square on May 28, 1987, can be seen as an example. Afterwards, Anatoly Chernyaev described the officer corps as follows in an internal memo: "They are mired

in routine, and serve out their time instead of serving the Motherland."[35] Nor was it unusual for the military to be used by the State for patently non-military activities, such as helping out on the farms at harvest time. Certainly there were parts of the military forces that functioned well, but it appears that even they began to be affected by the growing *tristesse*.

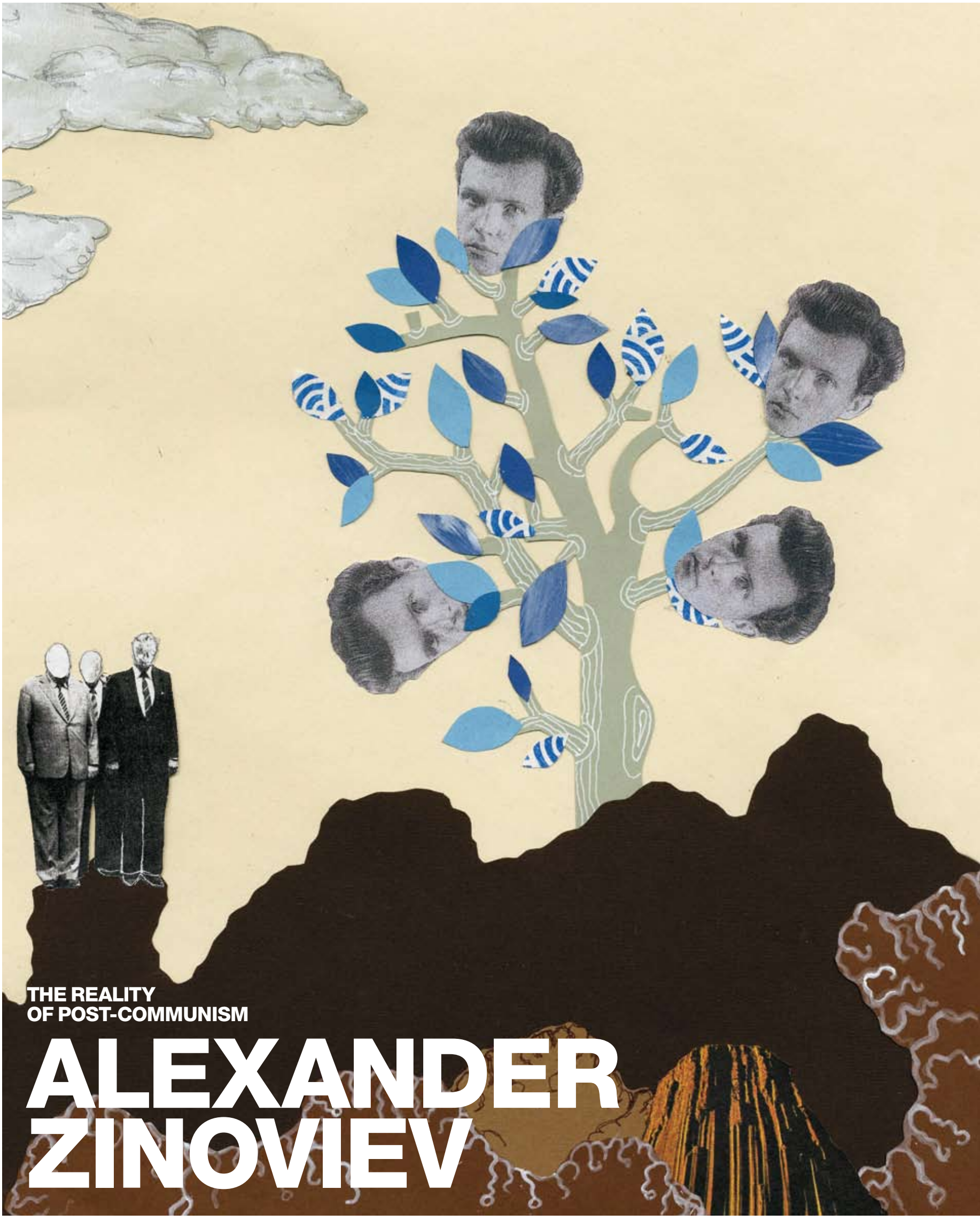
Gorbachev concentrated his efforts mainly in three areas, all of which were intended to lift the country out of its widespread lethargy. First he launched perestroika, the economic reforms that led to the incorporation of a degree of private profit motive into the Soviet plan economy. Then came glasnost, or openness, which made it possible to start publishing books that had formerly been forbidden. Glasnost played an important role in diminishing the fear and then making it vanish entirely. Lastly came *demokratizatsiia*, the attempts to introduce an element of pluralism into Soviet political life. Once these reforms actually started to mean something, the system could not be saved. The gap between the proclaimed reality and the actual state of affairs had grown too great. Or to put it another way: "The more immovable the system appeared, the more it separated itself from its asserted reality."[36] Once the fear disappeared, it became possible to overcome the paralyzing power of the lies and the *tristesse*, and the entire empire fell apart.

How then are we to view the breakup of the Soviet Union? As noted above, various explanations for its dissolution have and will continue to be offered, both internally and externally. The significance of the lie and the *tristesse* has been elucidated here as a complement to other explanatory models. They grew, in a third phase, out of the terror and fear that initially came to be a part of the Soviet system. The Soviet Union was not unique in this regard. Engendering *tristesse* among large segments of their populations appears to be a trait totalitarian systems share.[37] Naturally this does not prevent individuals from occasionally being able to work within the system and find it satisfactory. All writing of history, not just about Russia, is about nuance, seeking out what is particular to each time in order to clarify and explain a broader context. From this perspective, it may be noted that the dissolution of the Soviet Union appears to have depended in large measure on internal factors, where *tristesse* and mendacity, combined with diminishing fear, contributed to the breakup of the empire.

Note — An abbreviated version of this article appeared in *Tvärsnitt* magazine (1:2009), which is published by the Swedish Research Council.

1 The literature in this area is extensive. Some of the earliest works on the subject are listed here: Michael Kort, *The Soviet Colossus: The Rise and Fall of the USSR*, New York 1993; Martin Malia, The *Soviet Tragedy: A History of Socialism in Russia, 1917-1991*, New York 1994; Scott Shane, *Dismantling Utopia: How Information Ended the Soviet Union*, Chicago 1994. Russian research was initially characterized by the publication of large quantities of archive documents and memoirs – valuable sources, but not syntheses. Noteworthy works in the large body of literature that has begun to emerge on the subject more recently include Rudolf Pikhoia, *Sovietskii soiuz: Istoriia vlasti 1945-1991*, Novosibirsk 2000, and Jegor Gaidar, *Gibel' imperii*, Moscow 2006.
2 Gudrun Persson, *Varför föll Sovjetunionen?* [Why did the Soviet Union fall?] Stockholm 2006, p. 6.
3 Vladimir Mau & Irina Starodubrovskaya, *The Challenge of Revolution*, Oxford 2001, p. 32 et seq.
4 Rudolf Pikhoia, *Sovetskii soiuz*, p. 639.
5 Bukharin's letter to Stalin, December 10, 1937, published in J. Arch Getty & Oleg V. Naumov, *The Road to Terror*, New Haven 1999, pp. 556–560.
6 Orlando Figes, *The Whisperers: Private Life in Stalin's Russia*, London 2007, p. xxxi
7 There is as yet no accepted scientific definition for the term, but it has been documented and discussed. An attempt is made here to define the term "tristesse" and then use it as a part of and complement to other explanatory models for the dissolution of the Soviet Union.
8 Gorbachev was quoting the title of a documentary by film director Stanislav Govorukhin.
9 Alexis de Tocqueville, *The Old Regime and the Revolution*, New York 1856, p. 214.
10 One of the best overviews of Khrushchev and his reform policies to date is William Taubman's *Khrushchev: The Man, His Era*, London 2003. An interesting contemporaneous book about Khrushchev was written by Alexander Werth, *The Khrushchev Phase*, London 1961.
11 Quoted in Andrei Zubov, *Istoriia Rossii: XX vek, 1939-2007*, Moscow 2009, p. 364.
12 Quoted in Zubov, *Istoriia 1939-2007*, p. 333.
13 Zubov, *Istoriia 1939-2007*, pp. 503-505.
14 Persson, *Varför föll...*, p. 31.
15 Viktor Klemperer, *LTI: Notizbuch eines Philologen*, Leipzig 1975. The book was first published in 1947.
16 Françoise Thom, *La langue de bois*, Paris 1987, p. 128 et seq.
17 Thom, *La langue*, p. 25.
18 Afanasii Matveevich Selishchev, *Iazyk revolutionnoi epokhi: Iz nabliudenii nad russkim iazykom poslednykh let 1917-1926*, Moscow 1928, p. 98, 193.
19 Selishchev, *Iazyk*, p. 99.
20 Thom, *La langue*, p. 25.
21 Thom, *La langue*, p. 124.
22 Thom, *La langue*, p. 211.
23 Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More*, Princeton 2006, p. 284.
24 The article is dated 1974-02-12. It was distributed underground in the Soviet Union, but published in the West. (A. Solzhenitsyn, *Zhit' ne po lzhi*, Paris, 1975.) It was first published officially in the Soviet Union in 1989. It is currently available on the Internet; cf. http://www.kulichki.com/inkwell/text/hudlit/ruslit/solzheni/solzh_p02.htm. Downloaded 2010-01-14.
25 Gudrun Persson, "Ryssland - på spaning efter en konstitution" [Russia – in search of a constitution] in Anders Mellbourn (ed.), *Författningskulturer i jämförelse* [A comparison of constitutional cultures], Stockholm 2009, pp. 109-122.
26 A constitution was adopted for the Russian Socialist Federal Republic back in July of 1918. It, too, failed to mention the Communist Party.
27 Zubov, *Istoriia Rossii*,, p. 933.
28 Pikhoia, *Sovietskii soiuz*, p. 643.
29 Zubov, *1894-1939*, pp. 5-6.
30 Anatoly Rubinov, *Strasti na kazhdyj den' ili etika i estetika ocheredi*, unpublished, 1990, p. 1. – A special thanks to Lars Kleberg, who generously lent out a copy of Rubinov's essay.
31 Rubinov, *Strasti*, p. 10.
32 Major thanks to Elisabeth Hedborg, who drew my attention to this.
33 The movement appeals to modern Russia, and a film about it that was released in 2008 became very popular. The film, *Stiliagi*, was also awarded a prize for best film of the year.
34 Anatoly Chernyaev, *My Six Years With Gorbachev*, Pennsylvania 2000, pp. 92-93.
35 Chernyaev, *My Six Years*, p. 117.
36 Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever*, p. 295.
37 Ingemar Karlsson & Arne Ruth, *Samhället som teater: Estetik and politik i Tredje riket* [Society as theater: Aesthetics and politics in the Third Reich], Stockholm 1984, p. 21.

The hope for the future that disappeared after the fall of communism. Also gloomy.

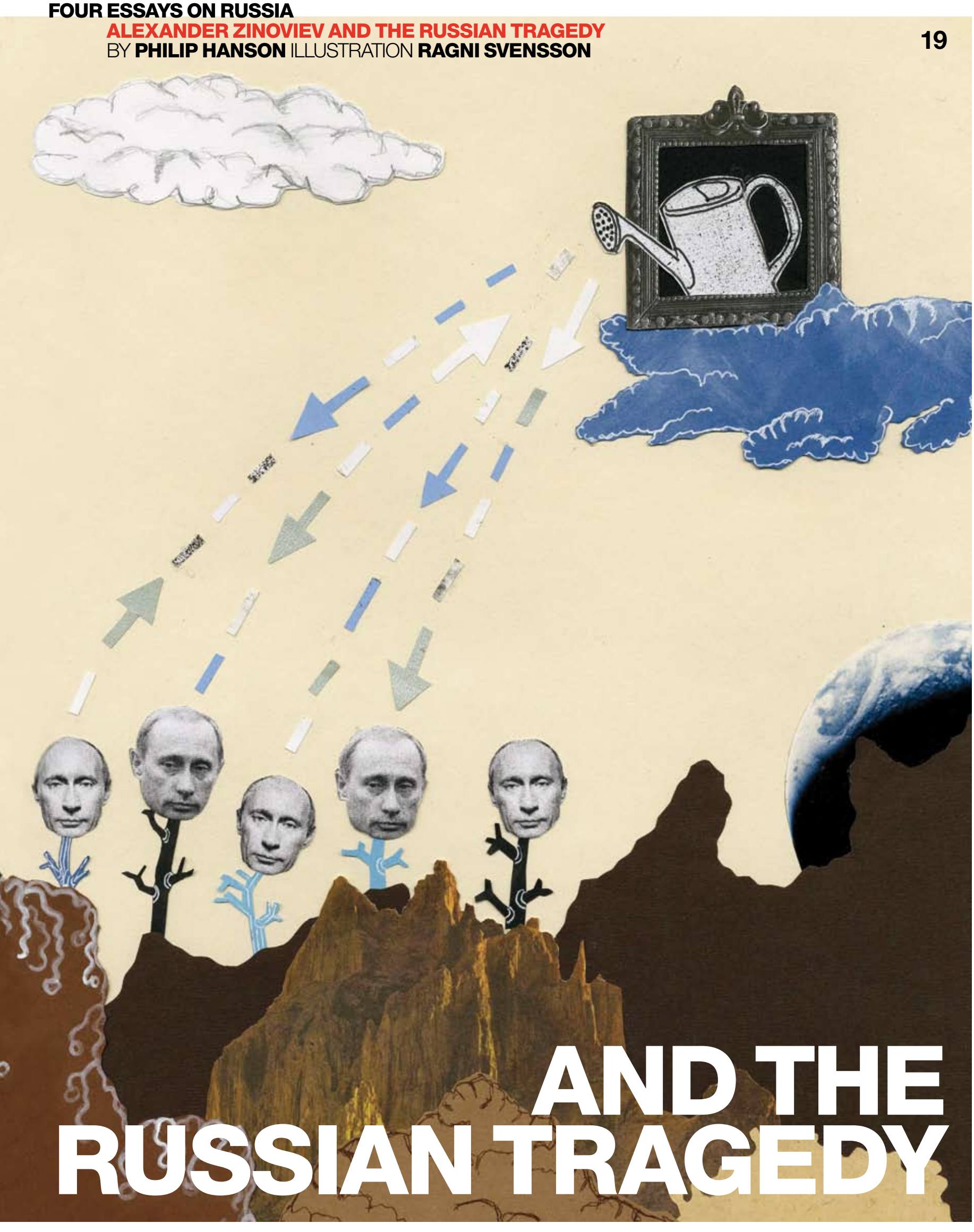


THE REALITY
OF POST-COMMUNISM

ALEXANDER ZINOVIEV

ALEXANDER ZINOVIEV AND THE RUSSIAN TRAGEDY

BY **PHILIP HANSON** ILLUSTRATION **RAGNI SVENSSON**



Twenty years ago I read almost everything Alexander Zinoviev had published. *Yawning Heights* (*Ziyayushchie vysoty*) knocked me for six. The rest knocked me for at least five-and-a-half. Those writings altered my way of thinking about Soviet society. I believe they had a similar effect on many people, both in Russia and abroad.

Zinoviev's ideas fascinated a number of historians and social scientists, while his writing beguiled many readers, including some (not all) specialists on Russian literature. The breadth of his appeal at that time was reflected in the roster of contributors to a book that Michael Kirkwood and I edited: *Alexander Zinoviev as Writer and Thinker*.[1] Those contributors ranged from literary scholars to a member of the German diplomatic service.

Yawning Heights was by far the best known of the early writings. It is set in Ibansk, which somewhat resembles the Soviet Union. A large part of it consists of philosophical and sociological debate among members of the Ibanskian intelligentsia. They are all either disillusioned or very disillusioned with the Ism, the official ideology of the state, but are more concerned with understanding how Ibansk works. In amongst the conversations are passages of exasperated fantasy. *Yawning Heights* is not much like any other book. The combination of imaginative and philosophical fireworks at times recalls Swift or Voltaire, but the resemblances are not close.

Many commentators hailed Zinoviev's earlier writings as anti-Soviet satires. This was not quite right. They were, indeed, full of contempt for the ways in which people operated in the Soviet Union. They were not, however, full of praise for any other social arrangements. True, Zinoviev quite often compared communist society with "civilisation". But this was a rather abstract and possibly hypothetical "civilisation". It was not necessarily located in New York or even Paris. The earlier writings were above all about the Soviet Union. In *Yawning Heights*, what he had to say about Ibansk was only fleetingly about Ibansk in comparative perspective.

Among many other things, Zinoviev in those writings developed the observation that the USSR was an example of popular power (*narodovlastie*), not a regime imposed on the innocent many by the evil few. It may not have had open elections and competitive politics, but it rested on the complicity of the governed. He also argued that the communist social order was robust, and that it was the long-run destination of all of us. Capitalism was, or so Slanderer asserts in *Yawning Heights*, an aberration.

> **[Capitalism] is an anti-social eruption, that is, a temporary and partial victory of the creative I over the stagnant We. But that is a deviation from the norm. […] Capitalism as a western type of society came about through an oversight on the part of the bosses.** (*Ziyayushchie vysoty*, p. 414)[2]

In the years since Slanderer said those words, the aberration has spread and the communist norm has become the exception. The World Bank, the World Economic Forum, Freedom House, Transparency International and other international organisations measure the "performance" of all or almost all the world's countries on "freedom", "governance", "ease of doing business", "competitiveness" and "transparency". Implicit in these scoring systems is the notion that we are all playing the same game: capitalism-and-democracy. Some play it better than others, and some are really rather disgracefully bad at it, but one measuring-rod fits all.

What did Zinoviev make of this new order? After a long gap, I have been catching up with his later work: his post-communist opus. In this paper I will argue that Alexander Zinoviev's post-communist writings tell us about more than one thinker's response to a world turned upside down. They also tell us a great deal about present attitudes in Russia. In particular, they illuminate the attitudes of the Putin-era ruling elite. Zinoviev had, of course, no time for his country's post-communist rulers. But that does not prevent him from inadvertently shining a light on their preoccupations and their reflexes. He was thinking what they are thinking, but more clearly.

What I have to say is based on *Zapad* (1995), *Velikii evolyutsionniy perelom* (1999), *Russkaya tragediya* (2002) and *Rasput'e* (2005).[3] I will begin with a minimally brief summary of Zinoviev's views on the collapse of communism and its aftermath, together with my interpretation of the emotions he reveals about the subject. Then I will look in more detail at what he has to say about the Cold War, the nature of post-sovietism, as he calls it, and why westernisation should be resisted. This leads to some thoughts about arguments of Zinoviev's that chime with those of certain western writers and with anxieties and preoccupations that have been aired by other Russian intellectuals and by the Putin leadership.

My own preoccupation is with what we can learn from these writings about the present attitudes of Russia's rulers. I am not aiming to engage in a debate with Zinoviev on my own account. I cannot, however, resist a sneaky bit of arguing-back: I will conclude with a review of some considerations which he has, in these writings, omitted.

THE GENERAL IDEA, AND ALEXANDER ZINOVIEV'S MOTIVATION FOR EXPOUNDING IT

The theme that runs through the four books is that the collapse of communism was a tragedy. Russian communism had its defects but it did not collapse for internal reasons. The power of the West and the traitorous collaboration of a fifth column in Russia produced this tragedy. Russia is not suited to westernism and will not be allowed to become an equal participant in the new, globalising social system. Globalisation is a new version of western colonialism. The West itself is evolving away from its standard prescriptions of "democracy" and "capitalism", and the merits of those prescriptions are over-hyped anyway. Russian communism could have led the world in a new direction, but was not allowed to do so. The long-run future, however, remains open.

> **The greatest social experiment in human history has ended. Russian communism is dead. In this book I want to describe it as it was when it passed through my brain, my soul, and my fate, and I will be guided by the principle, speak nothing but good of the dead.** (*RT*, pp. 296–7)[4]

Earlier, while still living in Munich, he said that he was moved to write *Zapad* when it became clear that his native land (*Rodina*) had been defeated in the Cold War and had "embarked on the path of shameful capitulation […] and the mindless borrowing of western models" (Z, p. 34).

The motivation is not quite as simple as patriotism, though that looks to be part of it. Zinoviev also argues that in Soviet society being Russian and being Soviet had, for Russians, become inseparable.

> **In addition, communism was so organic for Russia and had so powerfully entered the way of life and psychology of Russians that the destruction of communism was equivalent to the destruction of Russia and of the Russian people as a historic people. […] In a word, they [Western cold warriors] aimed at communism but killed Russia.** (*RT*, p. 409)

Many, perhaps most, people on Earth live in countries whose ups and downs cannot, selfish considerations aside, be taken too much to heart. To confuse the fortunes of Britain or Italy or Denmark with the destiny of the human race would be daft. The fate of Russia, on the other hand, seems to many Russians to be momentous for the world as a whole. That is certainly how Zinoviev sees it.

The fact that sovietism, equivalent for Zinoviev to communism, has ceased to exist, does not reduce its historical importance. "A murdered giant does not become a dwarf, and the dwarf who takes his place does not become a giant." (*R*, p. 57) Russia has been diminished, and not only in territorial extent. In Zinoviev's view this matters to Russian or Soviet patriots; but it also matters more widely because sovietism, for reasons to be set out below, represented an evolutionary way forward for human social organisation. That way forward is, for the time being at least, no longer available.

One other motivation for Zinoviev deserves a mention. To what extent he was conscious of it, I do not know. That motivation is his lifelong conviction that the received wisdom around him is always wrong. When the conventional wisdom changed, he changed against it.

> **The fact is that already in my years at school [in 1938] I became a convinced anti-stalinist. In 1939 I was arrested for speaking against the cult of personality. […] After the death of Stalin [in 1953] I finished with my anti-stalinism. […][It] ceased to make sense, and yielded to an objective, scientific understanding of the Stalin epoch as [that epoch] receded into the past.** (*R*, p. 66)

In much the same way, when the Soviet Union, the Ibansk he had ridiculed, fell to pieces, he finished with his anti-Ibanskism. This did not entail a wholesale reversal of his earlier judgements. He had always de-

clared a sort of attachment to sovietism. In his earlier writings he tore Soviet official claims and Marxism-Leninist ideology to shreds. In his later writings he treats them in just the same way. It is his attitude to soviet reality and its prospects that alters.

His major revisions were of two kinds. First, he shifted to a somewhat kinder view of Soviet society. Second, he amended his projections of the future. And all prophets, if they live long enough, have to revise those.

Zinoviev's intellectual struggles resemble those of earlier Russian writers, but not, on the whole, very closely. There is a pattern of criticism of Russia's rulers, followed by exile, followed in turn by criticism of the West. In this sense, Zinoviev follows the paths of Herzen in the 19th century and Solzhenitsyn in the 20th. What is common to all of them, and also to Nicholas Berdyaev earlier in the 20th, is a profound attachment to something Russian.

For Solzhenitsyn and Berdyaev, however, it is certainly not communism or sovietism. Berdyaev, who considered both democracy and Marxism inimical to personal, spiritual freedom, was concerned with his own version of Orthodox spirituality. It was not a version of Orthodoxy that appealed to the Russian Orthodox church authorities before the Revolution, and his version of personal freedom did not appeal to the Soviet authorities after the Revolution.[5] In being out of sympathy with both the old order and the new in his own country and far from enamoured of any other existing order, Zinoviev recalls Berdyaev. But he is completely unlike him in his determined insistence on his own rationality and his preoccupation with society, not persons.

THE COLD WAR AND HOW RUSSIA LOST IT

A large part of each of the four books is devoted to the Cold War and the eventual collapse of the Soviet Union.[6] The account of that collapse shifts a little over time, with foreign influence being accorded a larger role in the later works.

In *Z* the argument is that the change from the Soviet Union to the CIS was not a transition to capitalism so much as a process within the framework of communism. Well-placed individuals grabbed the whole economy and left little scope for capitalism (p. 181). Zinoviev's implicit definition of capitalism here is not clear. He argues at times that capitalism in the West is turning into something else (*VEP*, pp. 444–50; *R*, p. 143), and at other times that something that he still calls capitalism is part of westernism (*Z*, p. 135). At all events, if he is saying that previously-hidden, informal control over assets in the late Soviet era was converted into formal ownership, his interpretation would have some impressive supporters.[7]

A few years later, in *RT*, Zinoviev is presenting the change rather differently. The Soviet social order did not die from internal contradictions. It was still relatively young and had performed well, for example in World War II. But the West won the Cold War. Even before that it was western influence that led to a particular interpretation of de-stalinisation: that it had to mean a move away from communism. This was not the case. The crisis that had arisen by 1985 could have been dealt with by Soviet methods (*RT*, pp. 208–11).

Between the defeat of the anti-Gorbachev *putsch* in 1991 and the shelling of the Russian parliament in 1993, Yeltsin presided over the final destruction of the communist order (*RT*, p. 184). The West had to provoke the 1991 *putsch* attempt to ensure sovietism was destroyed (*RT*, p. 212). Later, when disorder threatened the westernisation project in the later 1990s, a change of regime was needed: hence Putin. The individual successor could have been someone else; Putin got the job, perhaps through an oversight on the part of Washington. But he was still implementing the westernisation project (*ibid*. and p. 215).

The West forced change on Russia not for the benefit of Russians but to destroy a competitor (*RT*, p. 200). Behind this assertion is a theme that is less evident in Zinoviev's earlier writings: social change as an evolutionary process. He argues that societies, states and economies have been developing into hyper-societies, hyper-states and hyper-economies (*sverkhobshchestva*, *sverkhgosudarstva*, etc). The Soviet system was one such (*VEP*, pp. 434–6), and was ahead of the West in reaching this development (*R*, pp. 63–4). The West has destroyed the Soviet way of life and extended its own influence around the globe. By doing this, it closes down the possibility of another, non-western form of civilisation evolving (*VEP*, p. 433). That notion, that alternative lines of evolution are cut off, presumably rests on an analogy with the evolution of species in nature: that a new species can evolve only under conditions of isolation from what are initially very close relatives.

Zinoviev's discussions of social evolution into hyper-societies are not systematic. He uses the notion of higher and lower levels of development. Thus, the creation of sovietism entailed the creation of a society on a higher level than any previous society (*R*, pp. 59–60). But what puts a society on some supposedly higher level? For Zinoviev it appears to be to do with increased complexity, as in the differences between the amoeba and the cod. In the case of the western hyper-society, it looks as though Zinoviev is pointing to globalisation and the concomitant development of companies and other organisations whose reach goes beyond the nation-state (*R*, pp. 144–7).

For the Soviet Union, the only attributes he adduces as signs of a "higher" level of development are the presence of a planning system, a party apparatus and an ideology (*R*, p. 63). Apparently in 2004 he saw merits in these arrangements that had escaped him when he was writing *Yawning Heights* thirty years before. But who is to say that Gosplan, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and Stalin's *Short Course* – or, for that matter, the complete works of Marx and Lenin – represent a degree of social complexity greater than that of Wall Street, Congress and the Supreme Court? I suspect that the discussion of hyper-society in these later works leads nowhere.

What Zinoviev is more clearly saying is that it is in the interests of western companies and (in some sense) of western states that the world as a whole be made into an environment that is hospitable to them (*RT*, p. 461). It is not a case of evil men plotting evil deeds, but is a development governed by social laws (*RT*, p. 261). Still, internal collaborators played a part (*RT*, p. 303). From 1985 onwards the Soviet and Russian authorities betrayed their subjects (*R*, p. 158). Russian history helped. The de-stalinisers had betrayed Stalin and Stalinism, and the roots of betrayal go further back still.

> **Different nations have different propensities to betrayal. We, Russians, have this tendency to quite a strong degree.** (*R*, p. 157)
> **[…] The population was an accomplice and instrument of betrayal or else remained passive (indifferent) towards it. The majority simply did not understand what was going on. […] [This was assisted by the fact that] the system of power was so organised that the masses of the ruled had lost any social or political initiative.** (*R*, pp. 161–2)

Zinoviev was a one-man paradox factory. He was not enamoured of the Soviet system of power. Yet in these late writings he mourns its passing and depicts the post-soviet social order as grievously limited and without the evolutionary potential of its predecessor.

POST-SOVIETISM AND ITS DISCONTENTS

"Post-sovietism", as Zinoviev calls it, is a hybrid of westernism, sovietism and national-Russian fundamentalism (*RT*, pp. 193–4). The western element is incompatible with the human material, natural conditions and historical traditions of Russia (*RT*, p. 196).

> **Russia will never, under any circumstances, turn into a country resembling, and equivalent in value to, western countries, it will not become part of the West.** (*R*, p. 131)
> **At the same time, they [the liberals who reformed the Soviet Union out of existence] ignored the fact that western models are not a universal blessing for all mankind. These models produced good results only for a small part of humanity, and specifically only for the populations of western countries. For the overwhelming majority of the peoples of the planet they were and remain alien. In this respect the peoples of the Soviet Union were no exception.** (*RT*, p. 411)

In *Z*, first published in 1995, Zinoviev describes westernism (*zapadnizm*) as a civilisation with its origins in Western Europe. It can be traced back to the English and French revolutions (*Z*, p. 49). The countries that are within this civilisation are in Europe and in Europe's offshoots in North America and Australasia. They are populated by *zapadoids*, literally "westernoids", for whom the "I" looms larger than the "We" (*Z*, p.70, repeating Slanderer's thoughts in *Yawning Heights*, cited above). For a *zapadoid*, capitalism comes naturally. For others, it does not. Yes, self-interest is natural and universal, but capitalism isn't (*Z*, p. 68).

In post-Soviet Russia western democracy is being imitated but not implemented. The executive controls the legislature and the courts are hopeless (*RT*, pp. 203–4). At this point the *zapadoid* reader's heart skips a beat: can it be that our man is coming round to a conventional liberal view? Of course he isn't. Adopting these western institutions seriously would not suit Russia. Russia needs a Soviet-style, strong Kremlin and

a dominant presidential party (*RT*, pp. 204–6). This was written in 2001; Putin followed Zinoviev's instructions.

So is the westernisation of Russia failing? No, because the mission of the westernising fifth column is not to make Russia fully part of the West but to make it West-like and (Zinoviev implies) amenable to western wishes. Putin is using communist methods to destroy communism and put in place something West-like, but there is no prospect of Russia living in developed or full westernism (*RT*, pp. 215–6).

Russia's economic reformers and their western mentors reduced the Russian economy to ruins. Privatisation destroyed the Soviet enterprises' labour collectives. These had formed the base of everyday social life and the base of social organisation. Unprofitable enterprises were closed because they were not good for business. Other [by implication] enterprises were destroyed because their functioning did not suit western interests. Unemployment resulted. This was surely not an innocent mistake. Advisers or bosses in the West wanted the collapse of Russia (*RT*, p. 226). The post-soviet economy is still taking shape but it is already clear that Russia has lost economic sovereignty (*RT*, p. 227).[8]

Post-soviet society lacks any vision of the future. Even the Communist Party of the Russian Federation has dropped part of the communist ideology (*RT*, p. 229). Appeals to unite against international terrorism are unconvincing; they are temporary, and American. It would be better to launch an appeal to oppose the wholesale theft that is going on (*RT*, p. 232). Another current ideological line is Russian fundamentalism, including Orthodoxy. Perhaps the next step should be a call to restore the Tsar and the nobility. "The pygmies of the counter-revolution are ready to become princes, counts and barons…" (*ibid.*). Marxism-Leninism proved inadequate, but that is no reason to abandon all secular ideology (*RT*, p. 235).

In short, post-sovietism does not consist of becoming a fully-fledged part of the West. It is and will remain a mixture of westernism, sovietism and Russian fundamentalism, lacking the aspirations and potential which were features of Soviet society.

So this westernisation is unattractive, to put Zinoviev's view of it mildly. What, if anything, is to be done?

THE QUIXOTIC DUTY TO OPPOSE WESTERNISATION

Zinoviev treats westernisation as a powerful trend in global social evolution. In *Z* he develops the idea that the West itself is evolving in a more "communalist" direction, as it supposedly displays a growing role for communal (*kommunal'nye*) as against business (*delovye*) social cells – very roughly, public-sector as against private-sector workplaces (*Z*, 182-8).

In subsequent writings he does not pursue this theme. Instead he stresses the defects of a West that is not embarked on some softening evolutionary process. The West is a global aggressor (*RT*, p. 538). Western civilisation has inflicted more suffering on humanity than communism did (*RT*, p. 394).[9] Islam is resisting westernisation, so it is being attacked (*RT*, p. 259). Terrorism is a threat that the West itself has provoked (*RT*, p. 539).

The United States leads the West so, these days, globalisation, westernisation and Americanisation are interchangeable terms (*RT*, pp. 248–9). It entails the reconstruction of the very foundations of a country's life: of its social organisation, its system of government and its people's mentality. This is not something that is necessarily forced on the recipients, but force is available if required. One western tactic is to create the illusion that rapid westernisation will lead to western levels of abundance very soon. (*R*, pp.125–6).

One reason for regarding this process with dismay is that a unified, westernised planet will be hierarchically organised (implying that Russia and other non-western nations would play only subordinate roles; *VEP*, p. 462). Another is that, even in its heartland, the western social system is seriously defective. Yes, there is democracy in its public life. However, the social cells, the workplaces,[10] are totalitarian (*Z*, pp. 87–91). Zinoviev does not dispute that the West has had political democracy. He argues, however, that democracy is a temporary and limited phenomenon (*RT*, p. 481). Now the West is in the ascendant, having used democracy as a weapon (against communism), it no longer needs democracy and is tending towards a post-democratic phase of development (*RT*, pp. 477–8).

Does anything in the way of a prescription follow from this? As usual, Zinoviev does not advocate anything; not explicitly, at any rate. He observes that the old Russian notion of Eurasianism is absurd: Russia has no chance whatever of leading Asian countries against the US and NATO (*RT*, p.237). It is true that communism is not dead: China is still growing. But Russia is too absorbed within the western system to aid Chinese communism against the West (*RT*, pp. 255, 258).

Zinoviev's conclusions about the future are modest, subdued and generally out of character. Westernisation should be opposed, but in the name of what cause? The words "communism" and even "socialism" have lost credibility. We will simply have to wait and see what the future will bring (*RT*, pp. 541–2).

So Zinoviev is clear enough about westernisation. It is not good news, except perhaps for those who live in the West as he defines it: the United States, Canada, Western Europe, Australia and New Zealand. But he is also lamenting the demise of communism, or at any rate of the S oviet version of it. What is it that has been lost?

THE PASSING OF A WAY OF LIFE

What was so good about communism? In his earlier writings, Zinoviev developed an analogy with flight: communism was like falling, and "civilisation" was like flying: the latter required more effort. "Opting out of the struggle and [...] of moving against the current – falling for a time feels like flight. People in this state do not think of what is to come later, in particular that after the sense of lightness come all the necessary attributes of slave and master…"[11]

In his later writings, Zinoviev does not abandon the vision of communism as a system of subordination.

> **Communism, in short, is the general organisation of a country's population in a system of relations between bosses and underlings – relations of subordination.** (*RT*, p. 342)

He summarises the balance sheet on communism as follows. People earned less than in the West but also worked less. The coefficient of exploitation (effort/income) was higher in the West. In the Soviet Union, most basic demands were met. The system did not bring social justice, but it brought more of it than was provided by the western system. Work was treated as a right and the means of production belonged to nobody; these arrangements led to low productivity and therefore low incomes. Yet "the communist organisation of society suited the great majority of Soviet people, who were inclined by their nature to a collectivist way of life. But they took the good things for granted. They blamed the bad things on communism." (*RT*, pp. 346–9; quotation from p. 349) Later he argues that, yes, Soviet people were indeed discontented, but this did not extend to supporting the destruction of their social order and the introduction of capitalism (*RT*, p. 398).

Production in the Soviet Union was economically less effective than in the West, but socially more effective. Zinoviev explains what he means by "socially more effective": the Soviet system avoided unemployment and "unnecessary production", while central planning kept the system's deficiencies within bounds and was able to concentrate resources on historically important tasks. The Soviet economy functioned less well than the western economy, but it was viable (*RT*, pp. 350–1).

The Soviet Union had the most democratic system of education in the world (*RT*, p. 241). Corruption was limited, partly because so little in the way of material goods was available (*RT*, pp. 146–7). The Soviet Union of Stalin's time was characterised by the highest degree of striving towards the future. This declined later (*RT*, p. 281).

Zinoviev's defence of the old order treats Soviet ideology much as sceptical Roman aristocrats treated the conduct of religious rituals: nonsense, but good for the common people. Marxist ideology's claim to scientific status was unfounded (*RT*, p. 521). There is no chance of restoring its Soviet-era status. (*RT*, p. 229). Nonetheless, the Soviet Union was a hyper-society, and in this respect "50 years or more" ahead of the West, because it had a party apparatus, a planning system and an ideology. (*R*, p. 63) (Here Zinoviev seems to be contrasting 1930s Russia under Stalin with the western beginnings of a "hyper-society" only after World War II. Even so, the "50 years" are more rhetoric than arithmetic.) Sovietism was the peak of Russian history. (*R*, p, 138)

The induced westernisation of Russia led to a loss of party control, an economic collapse and the rise of crime. (*R*, p. 129; *R* was first published in 2005, but the 2009 edition indicates that the section containing this judgement was written in 1993. By 2005 economic recovery was well-established and United Russia was well-embarked on becoming the party of power; crime had become more discreet.)

Russia's fate is deplorable even if it is viewed in long-term perspective because, in Zinoviev's view, it is the West, not Russia, that is exceptional. Capitalism and democracy produce positive results only in the West, with its particular human material. For most of the world, they are destructive. (*R*, p. 131)

Soviet equation of survival: earn less for working less. But leisure time is expensive.

SOME PARALLELS IN WESTERN THINKING

Zinoviev's stance in the 1990s and 2000s was unquestionably that of a Russian nationalist. But his Russian nationalism is not based on any notion of a Russian "ethnos": he says it is social, not ethnic, factors that account for the way people behave (*RT*, p. 237); and he makes fun of Russian intellectuals' claims to a special Russian spirituality (*RT*, pp. 241–2). His motivation comes, in my view, from a kind of Soviet patriotism. It does not follow that he is saying things that only a Soviet patriot would say. On the contrary, several of his contentions are also put forward by writers with little or no connection with Russia or the Soviet Union.

Zinoviev's definition of the West, for example, as Western Europe plus its offshoots in North America and Australasia, may seem quirky. But it corresponds quite closely to that used by the great compiler and analyst of long-term economic growth data, Angus Maddison.[12]

The economic growth literature also contains quantitative studies that conclude that, other things equal, a national heritage of Protestantism and a system of common law are both favourable influences on long-run economic growth.[13] The strength of these findings is debatable, but *prima facie* they suggest that private enterprise and free markets do indeed work better for nations with a particular historical heritage than they do for other nations. This is not evidence for Zinoviev's claim that some (many?) nations, if not managed or coerced from outside, would prefer collectivist economic arrangements; but it is compatible with it.

As for the business of importing – or forcibly exporting – democracy, Zinoviev's scornful disbelief in the whole project has its parallels outside Russia. Consider the following, by Eric Hobsbawm:

> **Democracy and Western values and human rights are not like some technological importations whose benefits are immediately obvious and will be adopted in the same manner by all who can use them and afford them, like the peaceful bicycle and the murderous AK47, or technical services like airports.**[14]

Zinoviev contends that globalisation is a US imperial project. This view is often propounded in the West, even if it is not quite the standard way of describing things. For example, both Noam Chomsky and Niall Ferguson treat the contemporary US as an imperial power, though they disagree fundamentally on its effectiveness and the forces propelling it.[15]

One does not have to be a Russian nationalist or Soviet patriot to take the view that "the most obvious danger of war today arises from the global ambitions of an uncontrollable and apparently irrational government in Washington."[16] Zinoviev's view that "spreading democracy" by armed intervention is a cover for the hegemonic power asserting control for its own purposes is echoed in a more measured and less irritable manner by Hobsbawm:

> **It [the case for an "imperialism of human rights"] is fundamentally flawed by the fact that great powers in the pursuit of their international policies may do things that suit the champions of human rights, and be aware of the publicity value of doing so, but this is quite incidental to their purposes, which, if they think it necessary, are today pursued with the ruthless barbarism that is the heritage of the twentieth century.**[17]

Zinoviev takes a bleak view of the prospects of US or western imperialism: it may not live up to its claims about diffusing democracy and effective capitalist economies but in its drive to subjugate the world it is scoring straight A's. Western authors, even those who are highly critical of US policy, are mostly more sceptical about its success. I will return to this point in the final section. Where Zinoviev really runs short of western intellectual allies, however, is on a predictable issue: the centrality in this whole story of Russia.

On this, however, he has plenty of Russian allies, not just among writers of the past but also among Russian contemporaries.

RUSSIAN ELITE ATTITUDES AND POLICIES IN THE LIGHT OF THE "RUSSIAN TRAGEDY"

Several of those allies are quite highly placed.

The echoes of Zinoviev in Vladislav Surkov's stress on "sovereignty" were noted above. But there is no need to quote the monkey when the organ-grinder is available for citation. The speeches of Vladimir Putin sometimes read as though Zinoviev or, latterly, Zinoviev's ghost had drafted them.

At the Munich Conference on Security Policy in February 2007, having begun by saying that this was an occasion when he could say what he really thought, Putin said:

> **We are seeing a greater and greater disdain for the basic principles of international law. [...] One state and, of course, first and foremost the United States, has overstepped its national borders in every way. This is visible in the economic, political, cultural and educational policies it imposes on other nations. Well, who likes this? Who is happy about this?**[18]

In that speech he also complained about Russia "constantly being lectured about democracy" by people who "for some reason **[...]** do not want to learn themselves".

Making Russia central to the development of a new world order seems quaint to non-Russians. With 2–3 percent of world population and gross product, a declining workforce and a heavy dependence on natural-resource exports, Russia's only claims to influence are its past and its nuclear weapons. Yet the reportedly influential commentator Gleb Pavlovskii wrote in 2007:

> **The main challenge in the contemporary world is clearly American expansion. And no one, I think, except a sovereign, resilient and modernised Russia can contain American expansion...**[19]

Zinoviev would be more pessimistic about the outcome, but he would have applauded the sentiment.

I am not, of course, claiming that Putin and people close to him speak resentfully about US power because Zinoviev put the idea in their heads. The feeling that Russia has been humiliated and the US is too powerful is commonplace in Russia. What I am arguing is that Zinoviev articulated the sentiment more fully than others; he set it out in a grand historical pattern: the evolution of hyper-states and hyper-societies, the identification of Russia with communism and the closing off of a path of social evolution. The notion of hyper-states is not pursued after *Zapad*, but the notion of Soviet communism as a viable evolutionary path closed down by skulduggery underlies all Zinoviev's later writings.

Those writings help us understand some of the stances adopted by the Putin leadership and its advisers. Currently, Russian leaders say a number of things that do not seem to be logically entailed by their claim that the US is dangerously assertive around the world. They deplore the demise of the Soviet Union without deploring the demise of socialism. They maintain that competitive politics and the distancing of the state from the economy are not right for Russia, at any rate for the time being. And they seek to rehabilitate Stalin. In saying these things, they are not, so far as I know, consciously echoing Zinoviev. But Zinoviev helps us to see the connexions between these apparently unrelated positions. He is far from alone among Russian intellectuals in passing from criticism of the Soviet order while it was still in place to nostalgia for it once it was gone. But he makes sense of that paradoxical position more clearly than others.

Putin famously said in 2005 that the demise of the Soviet Union was the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the 20th century.[20] Yet he has exhibited no nostalgia at all for Marxism-Leninism or for any variety of socialism. Some of his Russian critics claim, without revealing any evidence but also without being sued, that he is himself a fabulously wealthy capitalist. Zinoviev's arguments, quoted earlier, that western cold warriors aimed at communism and destroyed Russia, and that Marxism was not to be taken seriously but the Soviet way of life was a viable alternative to "westernism", make this apparently incoherent stance comprehensible.

This links the official reputational resurrection of Stalin in Russia with the latter-day resentment about Russia's weakness. Zinoviev accepts that a defence of the Soviet communist order entails a defence of Stalin. He presents post-stalinist developments as an insidious weakening of the communist order.

It is therefore not really surprising that new teachers' manuals take a positive view of Stalin despite acknowledging his "cruelty and acts of repression". Nor is it surprising that Putin – having already, presumably, approved such teaching materials – publicly endorsed them.[21]

Zinoviev's view of the post-soviet political and economic system in Russia is, naturally, much more sceptical and downbeat: the system is a hybrid, unable to match western capitalism. But in 2001 he wrote that Russia needed a strong, Soviet-style Kremlin (*RT*, p. 206). Putin and his allies have provided exactly that. Their system is a hybrid that they defend as appropri-

ate for Russia. Zinoviev deplored the limitations of an earlier and weaker form of that hybrid. His notion of how it could be made more appropriate for the country was much the same as theirs.

There is one glaring disparity however between Zinoviev's vision of Russia's present state and likely future and that espoused by the Putin leadership. For Zinoviev, Putin, like Yeltsin and Gorbachev before him, is an instrument of Russia's westernisation. He is not a force for revitalising Russia and re-establishing it as a power in the world. One might speculate that Zinoviev, who died on 10 May 2006, could perhaps, with more time, have come to see Putin in a more favourable light. But I doubt it. First, Putin's "vertical of power" and Russia's economic recovery were well established when Zinoviev was still writing (more or less up to his death). Second, Putin has restored only the political, not the economic, side of sovietism. Finally, Zinoviev never had anything good to say about any living leader, and showed no signs of mellowing.

Nonetheless, to the extent that Zinoviev in the 1990s and 2000s could be said to have had a political agenda, Putin has implemented it.

OMISSIONS

Zinoviev's late works illuminate recent and current Russian politics. But they also leave several rather large loose ends: topics and approaches that he might have been expected to address in any account of the collapse of communism.

The first omission is geographical. A large part of the world is simply not visible in these works. Economists like to deal in "stylised facts", so I cannot be too pernickety about other analysts skipping bits of reality. Still, a drama in which the main characters are "the West", meaning Western Europe, North America and Australasia, and the Soviet Union should at least feature a few noises off. What Zinoviev gives us by way of noises off are some passing remarks about China as a surviving communist country with which Russia is highly unlikely to team up against the West, and the generalisation that the non-western world does not stand to benefit from being "westernised", or at least will benefit less than the West does.

Where, for instance, do Poland, Estonia, Brazil, Chile and India fit into this picture? Would they all fare better, or at any rate live more easily, in a collectivist system? If some of their citizens believe that democracy and free markets are good for their countries, are they the victims of false consciousness or do they simply reveal themselves to be part of the *comprador* class?

That is one loose end. Zinoviev also omits any doubts about the West's invincibility. True, he does not say in so many words that the West is now, after the fall of Soviet communism, capable of asserting its control over the whole world. But he strongly implies it. Yet the Bush administration's ambitions for a transformed (westernised) Middle East look even more implausible in 2010 than they did in 2003. So far as Zinoviev is concerned, imperial over-reach, asymmetric warfare and all the other limitations on even a solitary superpower do not exist. If recent armed interventions have been failures or at most Pyrrhic victories for those who led them, what exactly does being a sole superpower amount to? It certainly cannot prevent an ever-larger share of world income being generated outside Zinoviev's West, in Asia.

The third omission is opinion polls. We have rather a lot of opinion survey evidence about what Russians and others in ex-communist countries say about the changes they have experienced. Are the opinion polls so tacky (unrepresentative samples, leading questions) that they are inadmissible as evidence? Or are the opinions expressed simply not worth heeding?

In the boringly conventional belief that people's opinions are important and that at least some opinion polls elicit them quite fairly, I offer the following selected findings from Pew Global Research in 2009, including some comparisons with 1991 poll findings.

Opinions expressed about the fall of communism and its aftermath by Russian citizens, with some comparisons with Ukraine and Hungary, 1991 and 2009 (percent of respondents surveyed).

1. Approve of the change to a multiparty system

	1991	2009
Russia	61	53
Ukraine	72	30
Hungary	74	56

2. Approve of the change to a market economy

	1991	2009
Russia	54	50
Ukraine	52	36
Hungary	80	46

3. Satisfied with life (Russia only)

1991	2009
7	35

4. It is a great misfortune that the Soviet Union no longer exists (Russia only, 2009)

Agree	Disagree
58	38

5. Approve the change to a multiparty system (Russia only, 2009, by selected age-groups)

18–29	65+
65	27

Approve the change to a market economy (Russia only, 2009, by selected age-groups)

18–29	65+
63	27

Source: Pew Global Research, "End of Communism Cheered but Now with More Reservations. The Pulse of Europe 2009: 20 Years After the Fall of the Berlin Wall", November 2, 2009. http://pewglobal.org/reports/display.php?ReportID=267

There is a good deal here that provides grist to the Zinoviev mill. A clear majority of Russian respondents regret the demise of the USSR. Approval of the changes in the system has declined over time, though expressions of satisfaction with life have increased. Those too young to have significant personal experience of the old order are substantially in favour of the new order, while those with the greatest experience of the old order do not share that enthusiasm: perhaps all this shows is that ignorance is bliss.

On the other hand, the proportion of all respondents in favour of the changes remains a half or more in 2009. This is too large to qualify as a fifth column. The determined opponent of the changes has to fall back either on impugning the honesty of the pollsters or, if all else fails, on false consciousness.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this essay was not, however, to pick a fight with Zinoviev. Sadly, it is too late for that. And his defence has already been prepared: "Even a donkey can kick a dead lion", as he said of the de-stalinisers.

These late writings of his lack the disturbing clarity of *Kommunizm kak real'nost'*. They also lack his alternative strength: the polyphony of *Ziyayushchie vysoty*, where different characters get away with saying incomplete or contradictory things because they are different characters.

What the late writings do is set out the grounds for Russian nostalgia for the old order, and the beliefs and attitudes about today's world that spring from that nostalgia. I do not use the word "nostalgia" to belittle the sentiments involved. Soviet communism was a complete and coherent world of its own. It is absurd to claim that this world was wholly evil or that what has replaced it is wholly good. Zinoviev helps us to understand how it feels to have your world dismantled, and how that experience forms many of the attitudes that lie behind Putin's policies. ×

1 Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988.

2 Compare Nietzsche on ancient Greece: "So culture developed in spite of the polis ..." (Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human* (1878), London 1994, p. 227.) Zinoviev's style in his expository works is sometimes reminiscent of Nietzsche's in the way he rambles for a while and then produces a sharp, throw-away remark. Very occasionally, as in this case, they even express ideas that are closely similar.

3 Bibliographic details of these and other writings cited are given in "References" at the end. I will refer to the above four books henceforth as *Z*, *VEP*, *RT* and *R*.

4 He does not of course succeed in adhering to this pious strategy. It is hard to imagine Zinoviev saying nothing but good about anything or anyone. I wrote of him in 1988, "There are two modes of expression which he does not command: the eulogy and the footnote." (Philip Hanson & Michael Kirkwood (eds.), *Alexander Zinoviev as Writer and Thinker*, Basingstroke 1988, p. 163.) He has set me right about footnotes. There is a sudden eruption of them in Z. They do not descend to the sordid pedantry of publication details and page numbers. Still, they cover the waterfront: from Daniel Bell and William Beveridge to Ayn Rand and Adam Smith. At first I suspected the intrusion of a fussy editor, but the footnote citing *TV Hören und Sehen* persuaded me that the references were indeed the work of the master himself. Later writings revert to his Olympian norm: they are not disfigured by footnotes; let alone end-notes.

5 See, among many other works, Berdyaev's *The Origin of Russian Communism*, London 1937.

6 It has to be said that there is a good deal of repetition across the four books. In the form in which I have them – as volumes in the complete collected works (see References) – it is not clear which pieces appeared first as separate articles, though it seems that quite a few did. There are also literal, word-for-word repetitions in these editions. In *RT* pp. 462-77 repeat

Nostalgics have been deprived of something, he who misses something has never owned. Putin appeals to both.

pp. 192-208; 487-98 repeat 208-18; 508-17 repeat 218-28; and 523-37 repeat 228-41. With trivial differences in sub-headings and paragraphing, pp. 435-51 of *RT* repeat pp. 164-79 of *R*. As a member of the international editorial council, I can only plead an oversight on the part of the bosses.

7 For example, Vasilii Naishul, *The Supreme and Late Stage of Socialism: An Essay*, London 1991; Yegor Gaidar, *State and Evolution*, Seattle 2003.

8 This was written and published in 2002. "Sovereign" became a widely-used Putinist adjective several years later. Reportedly, the first usage of the phrase "sovereign democracy" in the Putinist-prescriptive sense for Russia was by Vladislav Surkov in a speech delivered on 22 February 2006 (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sovereign_democracy, accessed 22 December 2009).

9 He does not elaborate on this. One can see that totting up colonial wars and two world wars would give the West a head start. But on a havoc-wreaked-per-annum basis it might be a close-run thing.

10 The workplace collective is the building-block in Zinoviev's sociology. The role of communal existence as the key to understanding communism is developed in his *Kommunizm kak real'nost'*. The view he took at that time of life in a communist collective is summarised in the cover design (painted by Zinoviev himself): two rats simultaneously shaking hands and strangling one another.

11 Aleksandr Zinoviev, "Pochemu my raby", *Zinov'ev*, No 2 (5), 2009, pp. 16-18. The piece is said there to have been written in 1980. It was probably also published then, but the 2009 source does not say where.

12 Angus Maddison, *The World Economy 1820-1992. Analysis and Statistics*, Paris 1995.

13 Sources cited in Philip Hanson, "Barriers to Long-run Growth in Russia", *Economy and Society*, vol. 31:1.

14 Eric Hobsbawm, *Globalisation, Democracy and Terrorism*, London 2007, p. 11.

15 E.g., Noam Chomsky, *Failed States: The Abuse of Power and the Assault on Democracy*, New York 2006; Niall Ferguson, *Colossus: The Rise and Fall of the American Empire*, London 2005.

16 Hobsbawm, *Globalisation* ..., p.48. The government to which Hobsbawm was referring was that of George W. Bush. The Obama administration has not, by early 2010, changed things very much.

17 Hobsbawm, *Globalisation*..., p.7.

18 http://eng.kremlin.ru/speeches/2007/02/10/0138_type82912type82914type82917type84779_118123.shtml

19 "Chego zhdat' ot Putina?" www.lenta.ru/conf/pavlosky of 19 October 2007.

20 http://archive.kremlin.ru/appears/2005/04/25/1223_type63372type63374type82634_87049.shtml. The disgraceful lack of definite and indefinite articles in Russian makes it just possible to translate this as "a very great" rather than "the greatest", but the usual translation fits the sentence better.

21 Henry Meyer, "Stalin Back in Vogue as Putin Endorses History-Book Nostalgia", *Bloomberg*, November 29, 2007.

FURTHER REFERENCES

Alexander Zinoviev, *Ziyayushchie vysoty*, Lausanne: L'Age d'Homme 1976.

Alexander Zinoviev, *The Yawning Heights* (translation of the above), Harmondsworth: Penguin 1981.

Alexander Zinoviev, *Kommunizm kak real'nost'*, Lausanne: L'Age d'Homme 1981.

Alexander Zinoviev, *Nashei yunosti polet*, Lausanne: L'Age d'Homme 1983.

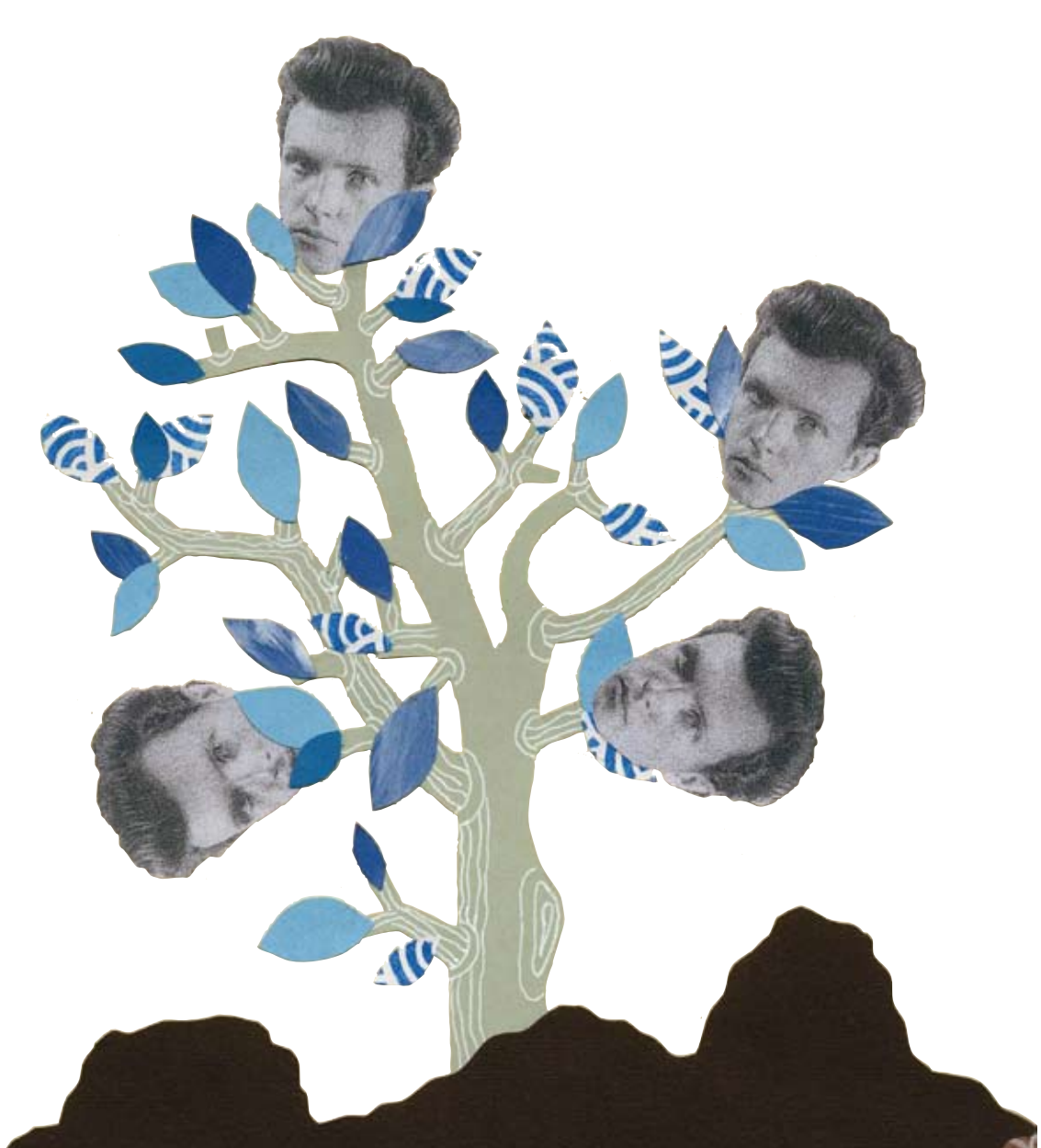
Alexander Zinoviev, *Zapad* (originally published in 1995), in AZ, *Zapad*, Moscow: Astrel' 2008, pp. 31-419.*

Alexander Zinoviev, *Velikii evolyutsionniy perelom* (originally published in 1999), in *Zapad* (op.cit.) 2008, pp. 419-70.*

Alexander Zinoviev, *Russkaya tragediya* (originally published in 2002), in AZ, *Nesostoyavshiisya proekt*, Moscow: Astrel' 2009, pp. 183-548.*

Alexander Zinoviev, *Rasput'e* (originally published in 2005), in AZ, *Nesostoyavshiisya proekt*, Moscow: Astrel' 2009, pp. 7-183.*

* Page references in this article are to these later publications.



FASHION DESIGN AT GUM,
THE STATE DEPARTMENT STORE AT MOSCOW

SOVIET INVESTMENT IN FLAMBOYANCE

SOVIET INVESTMENT IN FLAMBOYANCE

BY **JUKKA GRONOW** & **SERGEY ZHURAVLEV**

Fashion at GUM – a "closed" demonstration of fashion designs to foreign haute couture delegation at the end of the 1950s.

Soviet fashion was institutionalized in the 1950s and 1970s. Hundreds of large and small design organizations were established. Thousands of professional designers and patternmakers were employed. Their numbers increased constantly during these twenty odd years. In the Soviet Union, the state financed all the fashion design institutions, but these belonged to different administrative units or ministries that organized their own networks and structures. In addition to design institutes and fashion ateliers, the ministries set up a great number of scientific institutes and laboratories that laid the foundation for the design and construction of clothes. In the Soviet Union, fashion design, like any field of activity, needed a solid scientific ground.

At least four main administrative systems were engaged in fashion design, the organization of which received their final shape in the late 1960s: the Ministry of Light Industry (fashion design for the purposes of industrial mass production), the Ministry of the Everyday Services (designs for individual sewing or custom-made clothes in the fashion ateliers), as well as the Ministries of Trade and Local Industry. Most important economically were the first two. Here we shall focus primarily on the characteristics of fashion design in the Soviet trade organizations, examining in particular the Fashion Department of GUM, the State Department Store in Moscow.

Contrary to what would have been expected with regard to the highly centralized and planned economic system, no single administrative body existed in Soviet fashion design. The idea of increasing specialization served as an antithesis to strict centralization and motivated new fashion houses as well as ateliers of individual sewing of custom-made clothes. The ministries responsible for providing the population with new and better clothes often referred to the principle of specialization in lobbying for their own administrative interests – and in particular for the necessity of establishing

their own new fashion organizations requiring additional financial resources from the state budget.

In practice, different units acted quite independently. In some creative questions and in their appeal to consumers they often engaged in competition with one another. Under conditions of chronic shortages, however, such competition was of quite limited character. Nevertheless, one should not neglect the reports that testify to strong ambitions among the directors of the units, as well as among the very designers themselves, nor the role of the socialist competition between the fashion houses in achieving the highest results. This tendency of administrative specialization had less positive consequences too, such as the overlapping of functions, parallelism, and the unnecessary waste of the limited financial resources of the state. Despite the great quantities of new designs and great efforts put into promoting fashion, a Soviet consumer could generally not buy the fashionable, higher quality clothes in the shops. Probably more than in any other sector of consumption, the Soviet consumers were dissatisfied with the garment industry and trade.

This raised the question of whether these design organizations really were of any use at all. This theme was openly discussed in the Soviet press and among the experts throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Many quite reasonable measures were suggested in order to improve the situation, some of which were also realized in practice. Often the decisions taken on the governmental level did not have the expected effects because other organizations worked against them. Gradually, the leaders and the planning offices became aware that one could not really regulate such a delicate and rapidly changing sphere as fashion industry with the same administrative directives as was common in many other fields of the Soviet economy.

The search for more effective forms of administration led in the 1960s to the emergence of the so-called main organizations of design which received additional authority and the status of an inter-administrative unit. This was true in particular of the four all-union houses of design under the Ministry of Light Industry, those designing clothes, tricot clothes, shoes, and other leather items. They had the responsibility to study the present and future trends and to help the centrally planned economy cope better with the seasonal stylistic changes of dress. They regularly presented their ideas and results to the fashion specialists at the annual methodical meetings of fashion designers and patternmakers.

At the end of the 1960s, yet another main fashion institute was created which came to have a very decisive role in promoting the unity of Soviet fashion design in the whole country. This was the All-Union Institute of the Assortment of the Light Industry and the Culture of Dress under the Ministry of Light Industry (shorter: VIAlegprom). While the All-Union Houses of Fashion functioned practically autonomously in relation to one another, each one within its own field of specialization (the design of clothes, tricot, shoes, or leather items), VIAlegprom was created to overcome the disadvantage of such a specialization by promoting the design of complex sets of clothing. People did not simply want to wear a fashionable dress or a pair of shoes but wanted to dress fashionably and beautifully as a whole. In order to achieve this result, one had to work scientifically, it was argued: to study and to agree on the present and the future trends of fashion in every aspects, the colors and type of the textiles and other materials (for instance, leather, fur, and others), the style of the dress as well as shoes, hats, underwear, hairdressing, and cosmetics, etc. VIAlegprom gradually left the ODMO, the All-Union House of Fashion Design behind it in the official hierarchy of the Soviet fashion in the 1970s.

The directives of the main fashion organizations and the decisions made during their methodical meetings (shape and contours, style, colors, etc) were only recommendations. They offered the Soviet designers and the patternmakers a kind of general orientation. These recommendations were reinforced by the orders of the Ministry of the Light Industry but they had only a rather formal character. Neither the archives nor the interviews with the former workers revealed any cases where someone would have been punished or reprimanded for not following the recommendations of the center. Soviet fashion design undoubtedly had its own taboos. The fashion designers mostly followed their own professional standards of beauty in their creative activity. The limits of Soviet sexual decency were quite narrow, and some signs, colors and patterns were never even on the table because of their obvious religious or political connotations. The destiny of jeans in the USSR offers a good example of such taboos.

"Look at the jeans I got as a present", L. I. Brezhnev proudly declared with obvious pleasure, turning around and demonstrating like a fashion model the "symbol of the American way of life" which fit his corpulent figure very well. Such a rare scene could be seen in the beginning of the 1970s in the office of the main director of the Moscow State Department Store (GUM) when the artistic director of the Fashion Department, D. B. Shimilis[1] happened to drop in the room: it was obvious not only that the jeans appealed to Brezhnev, but he was also well aware of their obvious ideological connotations. What surprised Shimilis was not the relation of confidentiality which reigned between Brezhnev and the director of this most famous Soviet department store on the Red Square. The Soviet political leadership at the Kremlin regularly visited its "closed" departments[2] and, together with their family members, provided themselves with all the necessary consumer goods and sprang to the services of the designers and other employees of its fashion atelier. What surprised Shimilis more was Brezhnev's highly positive reaction to this comfortable and practical piece of clothing which, until the 1980s, suffered in the USSR from the ideological labeling as a symbol of American imperialism. Therefore, the Fashion Department at GUM, the purpose of which was to design beautiful and practical clothes for the Soviet citizens, could not design domestic Soviet jeans.

GUM – MAIN ATTRACTION AT RED SQUARE

The GUM building was constructed at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries following the example of the best European department stores. Originally it was called "Upper trade rows". During the Revolution and the Civil War it was closed. Its commercial activities started again during the New Economic Policy and went on for a very short time in the 1920s when it received its name State Department Store, or GUM. In the 1930s it was closed again. It wasn't reopened again until after Stalin's death in 1953 on the order of the Government of the USSR. This "reawakening" of GUM was really a sign of its times. Or at least this is how people then understood it. The new leaders of the country who had declared that the problems of consumption would now be prioritized decided to create an "exemplary department store" in Moscow which would offer the best possible goods and commodities with the most progressive forms of trade and service.

It was opened at the very Red Square which, during the Soviet era, had a pre-eminently political status as the main symbol of the Soviet power. It was a festive place, in fact, the holy place of all the important Soviet state rituals. Just 50 meters from the show windows of GUM was the holiest of holy sites, Lenin's mausoleum, behind which many other famous revolutionaries and leaders of the Communist Party were buried in the Kremlin wall. At the Red Square, parades and official demonstrations were organized regularly. The pioneers made their vows and the students had their graduation ceremonies there. It is therefore quite obvious that the reanimation of trade at such a special place was a politically important event and by no means an accident. GUM was meant to become yet another major attraction at the Red Square – the main proof of the achievements of Soviet power in the field of trade and serving of the population.

GUM was the biggest store in the USSR both according to the turnover of products and its number of employees. It was the "main store of the country". At its opening it had three and a half thousand workers; in 1973 its work collective consisted of seven thousand workers. According to the official statistics, 200,000–300,000 people visited it every day, buying 220,000–230,000 items.[3] Muscovites were naturally among its regular customers, but numerous guests from the other republics and regions of the USSR visited it too. The foreign tourists, for whom GUM became one of the main attractions of the capital, were mainly interested in its rich department of souvenirs. The department store had a special status which was kept up mainly because all the consumer goods which, because of limited supply, were the most difficult to find elsewhere, were sent here: This made GUM very attractive to customers. If you could not buy it at GUM it was probably not available for purchase anywhere in the Soviet Union. From 1950 to 1970 GUM sold 70–85 percent of all the better quality consumer goods, or high demand goods, produced in Moscow.[4] Among these, the imported goods became all the more important: for instance, as early

Brezhnev in well-cut jeans. Anachronism or resignation, depends on one's perspective.

as the end of the 1950s they made up over 30 percent of all the fabrics sold at GUM.[5] The department store became notorious among the Soviet population for its long queues, which could stretch up to several kilometers.

THE FASHION ATELIER

Just like the rest of the department store, the Fashion Atelier – or the atelier of individual sewing of clothes, as it was officially called – which opened its doors in the spring of 1954, was thought from the very beginning to be exemplary. It belonged to the category of "lux" and could therefore charge 70 percent more for its services than the ateliers that belonged to the – otherwise highest – first class. All customers who either could not find any adequate clothes in the ordinary shops because of their "deviant" body shape and size or their outstanding taste connected with their striving for a more individual style were expected to turn to the services of the Atelier at GUM. Many members of the cultural and administrative elite of the country were among its regular customers. At the end of the 1950s, this atelier became the methodical center of the system of individual sewing (indposhiva) or custom-made clothes, within the Soviet system of trade. The specialists of trade and fashion came here from all over the country to learn about the most advanced methods of trade.[6]

From 1955 to 1960 the collective of the Atelier GUM consisted of 500 people. At the beginning of the 1960s, it filled up to 60,000 orders a year which, compared to the number of potential customers in Moscow, was not all that much. As everyone knew, those who would have wished to get their clothes sewn here greatly outnumbered the number of orders actually taken. This created chronic shortages and, as was quite common in the Soviet Union, promoted the system of bribes and illegal deals of all kinds.

According to their plans, the male and female salons should receive a certain number of orders every day. However, the principle of having only one single queue for all the customers was soon abandoned in practice. Not only was one's place in line turned into an object of financial speculation, but in addition, the employees of the Atelier had an obligation to fill the orders coming from "people who had special needs". This took place by order of the administration of GUM, the executive committee of the Moscow city administration (Mosgorispolkom), or the Ministry of Trade. According to the directors of the Atelier, it received up to 500 such orders for men's clothing alongside the official queue each year, in both 1956 and 1957.[7] The number of such special orders must have been at least as high in the department for women's clothing.

The salons where the customers' orders were received were supposed to become the real "display windows" of the Atelier. They employed consulting patternmakers who gave advice to the customers about which fashionable designs would fit them best. They also offered advice about the proper fabrics to be used in sewing the clothes. These fashion consultants would, while advising their customers, not only be occupied with the reception and consignment of their orders but also with propagandizing for Soviet fashion and educating the customers in the matters of good

A beach dress designed by L. F. Averyanova. The 1958 GUM fashion album.

The fitting of a fashionable suit at an atelier that was part of "indposhiv", the Soviet system of custom-made clothes, early 1960s.

The leading fashion designers at GUM in the second half of the 1950s. E. A.Tomashevich and E. N. Istomina are the first two from the left, R. A. Singer and L. F. Averyanova, the first two from the right.

When many want what few can enjoy. A society of queues arises when things must cost nothing.

taste. Special display windows with regularly changing designs showed the newest clothes worked out by the patternmakers of the Atelier. Several fashion journals and albums were at the disposal of the customers. From them they could select all the new designs they liked. The comments book at the Atelier included many positive notes but the customers also complained about the "formalism" of the service and of old journals with designs gone out of fashion long ago.

The main reason for the great popularity of GUM was that in its early years the Ministry of Trade gave it the opportunity to select its textiles and other goods from among the best and most fashionable domestic and imported clothes. Unlike all the other ateliers, GUM did not in the beginning sew any clothes from the customer's own textiles. Later this changed under the pressure of the concrete conditions of work. As early as 1964, half the orders were sewn from the customers' own textiles. In the beginning of the 1960s, the Atelier lost its right to get special provisions, textiles, tools and instruments directly from the central stores of the Ministry and had to provide itself with what was available in the regular store rooms of GUM. These provided equally all the other ordinary clothes selling departments with all their goods. They had an equal interest in getting the best-selling fabrics – those in "defitsit" or in short supply – which led to repeated conflicts between them. The directors of the Atelier complained regularly about the bad quality of the textiles available at GUM, the meager variety, monotonous colors. Sometimes only silk was available, at other times wool, etc. However, in general, the quality of the clothes sewn at the Atelier was better than the ready-made clothes sold in the Soviet shops at the time.[8]

The status of "Lux" of the Atelier at GUM gave it many valuable advances compared with the first-class ateliers of the "indposhiva". In these, the norm for clothes that the patternmakers were supposed to fill every month was 60, at GUM, only 32. In the first-class ateliers the monthly salary was 900 rubles per month, at GUM, 1400 (in April 1958).[9] Under these beneficial conditions the patternmakers of the Atelier at GUM had more time to work individually with their clients and to design new clothes according to the wishes of the individual clients. Most importantly, they could sew more fashionable and modern clothes of high quality. Clothes sewn at an atelier of the luxury category had a higher price too. One of the peculiarities of the Soviet system of fashion was, however, that the state in fact subsidized quite heavily custom-made clothes, which made them competitive with – indeed often even cheaper than – similar ready-to-wear garments.

The Atelier had a small experimental workshop that specialized in designing, working out new ideas, and developing finished patterns from the sketches they received from the ordinary patternmakers. Its major task was, however, the adaptation of the more promising and marketable designs which came from the other fashion institutes in the USSR to the concrete capacities of the Atelier at GUM.[10] It was in general not profitable for the patternmakers of the ateliers to experiment with any fundamentally new, fashionable designs. For to be creative one had to ignore the annual plans and quotas and the attendant personal bonuses. As a result, instead of really exclusive and individual service, the clients were after all mostly offered a rather limited collection of more or less fashionable designs worked out by the local patternmakers.

The employees of the Atelier were well aware of these problems. For instance, in one of its regular party meetings in 1955, the confectioner Smorodinova claimed that "the patternmakers of the Atelier are not at all interested in doing any more demanding designs. Neither are they interested in offering their customers new designs from the Fashion Design Department of GUM. They want to do something simpler."[11] The situation did not change for ten years: in 1964 the patternmakers were criticized again at the party meeting for purposefully simplifying the designs and patterns in order to achieve the goals of the plan.[12] "We live with old designs, and the new ones appear very seldom",[13] the same Smorodinova repeated her accusations again in January 1964.

The meetings of the party organization had a critical and open atmosphere. Here, the workers, referring to the opinion of their customers, mostly complained about the low quality of the design at the Atelier. In September 1959, the general director of GUM, Kamenev, was very critical of its work: "The designs we show lag behind real life ... The Atelier does not have a leading role in the design of the new clothes, ..." [14] Even after such harsh criticism, the leaders of the Atelier continued to follow their policy of promoting their own autonomy in the field of fashion design, also in relation to another department of GUM which engaged only in designing fashionable models and which had come into being at the same time as the Atelier.

COLLECTIONS OF COMMANDS

The Department of Fashion Design was established at GUM in 1954 at Anastas Mikoyan's personal initiative. As a long time leader of the Soviet trade he was well known not only as an experienced politician, diplomat, and a lobbyist for the interests of his own ministry, but also as a defender of the transfer into the Soviet system of consumption of the best international experience and perspectives.[15] The founding of the Department of Fashion Design at GUM was one of his experiments. Until then, the big Soviet department stores did not have their own departments of fashion design. As Mikoyan hoped, the Department "should be the first one in the Union, and, who knows, with time, it could become even better than those in the other countries".[16] He was also well known for liking to dress well and for making use of the services of the best tailors in Moscow.

The tasks of the Fashion Design Department were from the very beginning quite unusual for a trade organization and not at all directly related to the regular sale of commodities – the design of clothes, the propagation of fashion and good taste among the populace (for instance, by publishing fashion albums and booklets as well as by organizing regular fashion shows at the demonstration hall), and, finally, the establishment of the trade relations with the textile factories in order to produce new clothes in small series following the designs of GUM. The designers at GUM were expected not only to design male and female clothes, shoes, and hats. They started to create complete seasonal collections consisting of a whole set of 100–150 designs of primarily female clothes. All this was to a great extent reminiscent of the tasks of another main organization of Soviet fashion design, the All-Union House of Clothes Fashion Design, ODMO, which made possible thoughts of the birth of a parallel, competing organization.

Mikoyan continued to be personally interested in the workings of the department. He attended fashion shows, often in the company of other members of the Soviet leadership, like A. N. Kosygin. Mikoyan's son, Vano Mikoyan, who became a famous constructor of airplanes and the director of the firm MIG, was a regularly seen guest at the shows. Mikoyan was among those Soviet leaders who understood that fashion, like culture in general, was an international phenomenon, and consequently he worked hard to promote international cooperation in this area. As early as 1956, the designer L. F. Averyanova from GUM was included in the small delegation of the Ministry of Trade which for the first time headed for Paris in order to study the famous fashion houses there.[17] In Averyanova's own words, the twenty days she spent in Paris changed her ideas not only about fashion and her own profession, but also about life in general.[18] Mikoyan thus succeeded in surpassing his main competitor, the Ministry of Light Industry, which, as we know, the All-Union House of Fashion worked under. The representatives of ODMO visited Paris, the Mecca of International Fashion, only a year later, at the end of 1957.

During the second half of the 1950s, The Department of Fashion Design at GUM was one of the leaders of Soviet design. When the Soviet delegation participated for the first time in the Leipzig trade exhibition in 1957, only two Soviet design organizations represented Soviet fashion: ODMO and the fashion design department of GUM.[19]

The department was located in GUM's main building, a close neighbor of the vividly pulsating life of the sales departments. The "brains" there were placed in two rooms in which the designers and the patternmakers worked separately. The shoe design department also had a room of its own. A small sewing workshop was attached to the fashion department. Its task was to sew prototypes of the new clothes. The best designs were regularly published in fashion albums with large editions or sold on separate sheets with patterns of individual dresses with attending, detailed sewing instructions. The demonstration hall was the "face" of the department for the world outside. The demonstrations started in September of 1954. Models, musicians, speakers, an administrator, and an art instructor (educated as an art historian) all worked in the demonstration hall.

The total work force of the department was not very large, about 70 people in 1954–1955, among them 7 designers and 15 models. In the 1960s and 1970s, the number stabilized to about 90 workers.[20] In 1972, of the 90 (among them 75 women) workers, 50 were occupied in the sewing workshop (tailors, patternmakers and dress constructors, designers), 26 in the demonstration hall, and 9 in the publishing department.

From the professional point of view, the key positions were those of the designers, pattern and dressmakers as well as art instructors. In the 1950s however,

Creativity on command. Difficult to achieve when people become objects of creativity.

specialists in these professions were very rare in the Soviet Union. Therefore, the designer positions were mostly occupied by the ordinary patternmakers or cutters who didn't have the right professional qualifications. It was just as difficult to find experienced dressmakers. For instance, one dressmaker, Mokshina, had just finished some ordinary sewing and knitting courses, and another one, A. Lapidus, had been educated as an airplane builder. She had learned to sew and knit in some short evening courses.[21]

In 1955, there were only six specialists working in all the departments of GUM that had received a higher education. Almost all of them had administrative duties and did not take part in the design of clothes. Only in the second half of the 1960s did the professional level of the cadres improve remarkably due to the recruitment of new workers who had graduated from the Moscow Textile Institution, which became the main educational institute of fashion design in the Soviet Union. The number of the designers increased too. Thus, in 1967 the Fashion Department had twelve designers, and in 1973 fifteen: three in female outer wear, eight in female dress, but only one in each of male clothes, shoes, head gear, and embroidery.[22]

One of the first designers at the department was Lidia Fedorovna Averyanova (born 1916) who came to GUM in 1954. Averyanova quickly became one of the leading designers of female clothes who had a decisive influence on the general style of GUM, called "modest elegance". She had no education as a designer. After returning home from the front, she attended some short sewing courses. Because she was religious, she refused to become a member of the Communist Party. Her "non-party" status did not prevent her from making a career and traveling with the GUM models to many parts of the world.[23] In the 1960s and 1970s, Averyanova became almost a "house" consultant at the "closed" 200th section of GUM. In the event that a client with high status could not make up her or his mind about which dress was right and wanted to consult someone, a specialist from the fashion design department was called upon. Depending on the situation, it could be the artistic leader of the department (D. B. Shimilis, 1960–1976) or one of the leading designers: on female dress, L. F. Averyanova, on male dress, R. A. Singer.

At the end of such consultations the client quite often decided to order an individually designed dress from the Atelier instead of buying a ready-made one. Then the designer turned at once to a patternmaker and took the necessary measures of the client. This was how many of the clothes designed by Averyanova ended up in the closets of the Ministry of Culture E. A. Furtseva as well as of the daughters of the Soviet leaders, Prime Minister Kosygin and the secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSS B. N. Ponomarev.[24] E. A. Furtseva and Ljudmila Gvishiani (Kosygina) also relied on the services of the designers of the nearby ODMO on the Kuznetsky Most Street. In 1954, the recently opened Atelier at GUM employed Yevgenija Nikolayevna Istomina as a designer. Elena Alekandrovna Tomashevich, whose specialty became festive female evening dresses, joined the GUM collective about the same time. Neither of them had any formal education in designing clothes, but they had solid experience

A GUM advertisement by A. M. Rodchenko and V. V. Mayakovsky, 1923.

An evening dress from the GUM collection demonstrated by the model Yana Kokoreva in 1964.

A fashion demonstration at the annual meeting of the Soviet fashion designers of the Ministry of Light Industry at ODMO, the All-Union House of Fashion Design, Moscow, in the 1950s.

Models on the catwalk as ideological superstructure. Window-dressing for the base.

sewing clothes. They had to learn the art of design by doing it. Their colleagues humorously referred to Averyanova, Tomashevich, and Istomina as the "three whales" supporting the whole Department of Fashion at GUM on their backs. They had, in fact, designed the first basic seasonal collections at GUM, which had become a success abroad at the end of the 1950s and gave a firm direction to the future "house style".

Some former designers from the nearby Central Department Store, TsUM, became the first "generation" of designers at GUM. The atelier at the Central Department Store had experience of fashion design from the 1930s. Naum Yakovlevich Katz who became the first director of the fashion department at GUM was among them. He was the only director of a department who was not a Party member. He remained in charge of GUM for ten years. In 1964, Anna Georgievna Gorshkova was nominated to the director's post after N. Ya. Katz, who had become seriously ill and died soon after. In contrast to her predecessor, Gorshkova had no previous experience of fashion design at all. She used to work in the personal administration of GUM – a section which traditionally had strong ties with the KGB and a lot of influence in the store.[25] The nomination of a reliable member of the Communist Party to the director's post was to a great extent motivated by "special control" needed by the employees of the fashion department – the "house" mannequins in particular. They often met foreigners and regularly traveled abroad. In the memories of her colleagues, Gorshkova had rather conservative views about fashion and what constituted proper dress code. She was clever enough not to interfere with the creative questions and left them to the artistic leaders of her department, instead taking care for the most part of the administrative issues. The leading designer of the house, Rubin Aaronovich Singer, was considered for the post of artistic director of the department, but he did not have formal education in art. Singer had emigrated from pre-war Poland. He was one of the leading tailors in post-war Moscow. Being a virtuoso tailor he did not turn down profitable private orders during his time as GUM's main designer of male clothing. The leadership of the department store was fully aware of his unofficial activities. From 1950 to 1960, many Soviet leaders and famous artists were among his clients.[26] Singer worked in the fashion department at GUM until his dismissal due to conflicts with the directors. He then emigrated to the West where he died tragically in a car accident.

During the first six years, the fashion department was totally without any artistic leader because no suitable, qualified candidates could be found. The first one to be nominated to the post was David Borisovich Shimilis. He was a graphic designer educated at the Moscow Textile Institute and worked at GUM from 1960 until 1976. He came to play an important role in its development.

IN SEARCH OF A "HOUSE STYLE"

The Ministry of Trade, headed by Anastas Mikoyan, had great ambitions and expectations to see the Fashion Atelier at GUM, given that it was the law giver of Soviet fashion with its own "house style". The director of the Fashion department, N. Ya. Katz told that he expected to create "a new style of clothes, and consequently new designs and new kinds of clothes".[27] In the middle of the 1950s a lively discussion went on about what kind of a fashion should in fact be created at GUM. The secretary of the Party committee calmed down the most eager spirits by recommending that the designers should "stay on earth" and not to be carried away to the sky. Instead they should orient themselves according to the, after all, very modest conditions of the supply of the raw materials as well as the real demands of the Soviet consumer. Consequently, he understood the style of GUM as a synthesis of four basic elements: simplicity of the form, beauty of design, comfort of the use and cheap prices.[28]

In contrast, many workers of the Fashion department turned up at the party meetings arguing that their "house style" should not be mundane but rather something extraordinary, festive or even "ultramodern". In their support, they argued that such clothes are in great demand now, in particular among the Moscow youth. In the mid 1950s, such a position was in fact the dominating one among the rang-and-file designers. The proponents of the more festive dresses made an extra case of the use of the brilliant Demonstration Hall at GUM – at the time only ODMO at Kuznetsky could boast about anything like it. Beautiful, bright and more festive designs looked much better on the podium than any everyday wardrobe. During the general euphoria of the first years of the Fashion department, many expected eagerly and triumphantly the future competition with ODMO and even with the best Western fashion houses. "This caused many heavy disputes among us. Comrade Singer thought that our designs should compete with the Western things and should be ultramodern", N. Ya. Katz remarked in 1955.[29]

It is obvious that the perspective of the GUM fashion reaching the world standards greatly appealed to the leaders of the newly opened Department store and to Anastas Mikoyan's own ambitions as well. On the other hand, the workers at GUM knew, better than anyone else, the real conditions of their work, the low level of the consumer goods markets and their own material base. Moreover, in 1955 the whole role of fashion in the Soviet Union was quite ambivalent – many ideologists still believed that it was something totally alien to socialism. To many colleagues the call to "ultramodernity" sounded quite adventurous if not scaring. Katz was therefore quite careful and suggested that GUM's "house style" should consist of the simplicity of the construction as well as the functionality and elegance of design.[30] In practice, the designers of GUM worked out both everyday and festive clothes, mostly for the women. On the 19th of July, 1955, the first annual report of the Department was discussed in the extended meeting of the Party committee of GUM with the presence of all the heads of the other departments and sections of the whole big department store. In addition to Katz's oral report the participants were invited to attend a "real" fashion show. The main question that was raised after the demonstration was whether ordinary Soviet citizens could in reality wear all these clothes or did they just have a purely artistic value as unique objects of art? If the second alternative was true, was it really worth the trouble to continue designing such unpractical things? A lot of criticism was directed, for instance, to one of the designs, a festive female dress with ribbons of rosettes which, in the opinion of those present, "hardly any Soviet woman would like to wear".[31] In the absence of any artistic council – this was founded a bit later – or any artistic director, the Party committee took itself the role of the "aesthetic arbitrator". It soon proved out that the taste of the members of the Party committee as well as of some of the heads of the other departments at GUM were often more conservative than the fashion designers' own taste.

During all these years even the best designs of GUM, with some exceptions, remained outside the reach of the ordinary Soviet consumers since they were not profitable enough to the Soviet garment industry to produce in big series. Most of the designs remained at the stage of the sketches and pictures on the paper or, in case they were approved into the seasonal collection, they were sewn in a unique copy to fit the model demonstrating them. In this respect they were not all that different from the fashionable creations of the best Parisian houses of "haute couture".[32] One could think that under these conditions the whole discussion about the "house style" of GUM would have lost it actuality. As a matter of fact, this was not the case. The leadership of GUM continued to emphasize that the adaptation of the designs of GUM into industrial production was after all a political question. Sooner or later the citizens of Moscow could be able to recognize in the streets the superior designs from GUM and become aware of its unique "house style". In this respect the actual numbers produced were thought to be of only secondary importance: "let them (the industry – the authors) take into production just five designs in the year, but such ones which they cannot compare with the designs of the other Fashion houses".[33] In these words the artistic director, D. B. Shimilis declared his own position to the working collective at the end of 1967. He argued that the Department store needed in fact a firm of its own to produce such designs which could not be found anywhere else thus echoing a popular stance among Soviet fashion designers who eagerly propagated the production of small series of fashionable clothes which could be sold in their own "firmennye magaziny" or boutiques.

In 1960-1970 the question of the right proportion in designing, on the one hand, more festive dresses to the seasonal collection and fashion shows and, on the other hand, mundane clothes to industrial production continued to occupy the minds of the designers at GUM. Many continued to claim that the department designed too many expensive, festive clothes and should instead design more "cheap and good clothes" to the ordinary consumer.[34] In 1974 the director of the Department of fashion A. G. Gorshkova criticized her own designers for not paying "enough attention to designing practical clothes, such designs that are near to the life and available to the great majority of our people".[35] In

the 1960s, GUM's "house style" was however more or less firmly established. It consisted of the "utilitarian fashion", which was based, more concretely, on the following principles: to study the modern fashion with great care but with a reservation concerning the use of any "ultra-modern" tendencies, to create comfort in use, as well as simplicity of design combined with moderate prices. Most of all the designs should be fashionable and beautiful too. One should orient oneself not after any "fashion leaders" but rather after the needs of the ordinary Soviet customer. The collections should include all kinds of clothes but with a special emphasis on the design of practical things which can be used everyday at home and at work, in the theater and cinema, while on leisure or engaged in sport.[36]

If we compare these principles with the rules that were in general used in Soviet fashion world during this period there was nothing particularly striking about the GUM's "house" style. It followed loyally the general trends of the Soviet fashion.[37]

The designers were often more eager to design festive collections than clothes to more mundane use. They had very good reasons to deviate from the principle of "utilitarian fashion". In designing clothes for the "high status" international fashion shows "ultra-fashionable" designs, in bright tones and often with expensive additions of fur, were in fact highly appreciated. The "utilitarian" principle was in need of being revised from time to time since the living conditions improved rapidly in those days. Ordinary people had both a wish and a real possibility to dress better, more varied and more festive. Consequently, even everyday fashion changed and became more festive and varied too.

With the increasing differentiation of taste it became more difficult to determine the "needs of the Soviet mass consumer". In the 1960s, the designers of GUM saw how the actual manner of clothing as well as the demand for fashion among the inhabitants of Moscow changed quite rapidly. If GUM wished to orient its fashion towards to demands of the Muscovites it had to raise its standards all the time. This became particularly clear in the 1960s when the amount of the visitors to its Demonstration hall suddenly decreased quite drastically. Many saw the reasons not only in the fact that GUM had, under the increasing competition of all the other, quite numerous fashion organizations, lost its monopoly in demonstrating fashion in the Soviet capital. Evidently, the Soviet citizens had gradually turned into more fashion conscious and critical customers who actively compared the designs at GUM both with the achievements of the domestic and international fashion. The Communist Party and the Government of the Soviet Union soon discovered that they faced an almost impossible task in trying to cope with fashion: the more effort and finances they invested in the promotion of fashionable clothes – and the more complex and many-sided the Soviet system of fashion developed – the more demanding did the Soviet customers get.

Note. — This article is drawn from the forthcoming book by the authors, *Fashion Meets Socialism* (2011). All images are from private collections.

REFERENCES

1 Interview with D. B. Shimilis, May 6, 2008.
2 The Department Number 200 was closed to ordinary customers. It was opened in the middle of the 1950s to provide the leaders of the country well as their family members with the best consumer goods, mostly of foreign origin.
3 3. TsAODM. F.947 (The party organization of GUM). Op 1. D.1.L.1; D.165.L. 49 (later in this article all the archival documents refer to this collection.
4 Ibid. D.12. P.228. The minutes of the 15th meeting of the Party committee at GUM, 1955-04-27.
5 Ibid. D.1. L.46.
6 Ibid. D.44. L.40. The minutes of the Party organization of the Atelier, September 14, 1959.
7 Ibid. D.30.L.99-101.
8 The mother of one of the authors still preserves as a kind of a family relic her winter overcoat which was sewn at the Atelier GUM in the middle of the 1970s. She was very pleased with the designs and materials available as well as with the quality of the service and sewing.
9 TsAODM. F.947. Op.1. D.40. L.70.
10 Ibid. D.1.L.14; D.44.L40. The minutes of the Party organization of the Atelier September 14, 1959.
11 Ibid. D.16.L.153. The minutes of the Party meeting of the Atelier and Department of fashion June 19, 1955.
12 Ibid. D.96. L.79.
13 Ibid. D.96.L.78. The minutes of the Party meeting of the Atelier January 13, 1964.
14 Ibid.D.44.L.42.
15 A. I. Mikoayn was one of the most important union leaders in the entire history of the Soviet Union. After the war, he occupied simultaneously some of the most important positions in the Party and the government. He was the Minister of Trade (from 1953) and the First Deputy Prime Minister (from 1949), as well as a member of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the CPSS (from 1952).
16 TsAODM F.947. Op.1. D.12.L.141. The minutes of the meeting of the Party committee GUM, July 19, 1955.
17 In addition to Averyanova (GUM), the delegation consisted of a member of the Trade center (Torgovaya palata), one delegate from TsUM (the Central Department Store which had a well-known fashion atelier in Moscow as well), as well as a representative of the organization Lenodezhda, which was also engaged in the sewing of custom-made clothes. (Interview with L. F. Averyanova, April 30, 2008.)
18 Interview with L. F. Averyanova, April 30, 2008.
19 A. Vavilova, GUM's own model demonstrated the designs created at its fashion department. (Interview with A. Vavilova, April 30, 2008.)
20 TsAODM F. 947. Op.1.D.34.L.137.
21 D.12.L.143.
22 D.165.L.72; D.110.L.125.
23 Interview with L. F. Averyanova, April 30, 2008.
24 Interview with L. F. Averyanova, April 30, 2008.
25 Interview with A. Vavilova and D. B. Shimilis, April 27, 2008.
26 From the 1950s to the 1970s, many designers of GUM took on extra work in their leisure time with private orders. The income from these deals was often higher than their official salary at GUM. Naturally, no taxes were paid for this extra income. The transfer from the system of "indposhiva" to GUM was in many cases economically not profitable. For instance, Singer had received 3,000 rubles per month in his previous work place in the Atelier of indposhiva whereas at GUM he was paid only 1,400 rubles. An interview with L. M. Lobacheva (Andreeva), April 30, 2008. See also Alik Singer's Internet publication about his father: www.bdm.ru/arhiv/2006/09/84.htm and www.teatr.newizv.ru/news/?IDNews=1251&date
27 TsAODM. F. 947. Op.1.D.121.L.137. The minutes of the meeting of the Party committee of GUM, July 19, 1955.
28 D.12.L.151-152.
29 D.12.L.137.
30 D.12.L.138.
31 D.12.L.141.
32 According to Diane Crane, "haute couture" clothes are within the reach of no more that one thousand women in the world whereas luxury ready-to-wear clothes have a substantially larger market. (*Fashion and Its Social Agendas: Class, Gender, and Identity in Clothing*. Chicago 2000, p. 136.)
33 D.110.L.170.
34 D.110.L.102. This particular citation is from 1967.
35 D.175.L.31.
36 See the minutes of the meetings of the Party organization in 1966, 1968 and 1973. Ibid. D.105.L.160; D.126.L.15; D.165, L.62.
37 An international fashion conference of the socialist countries in 1959 released, for instance, a joint statement according to which it was necessary to respect the aesthetic proportions of the figure and the simplicity of the form in both female and male dress. (N.B. Lebina & A. N. Chistikov, *Obyvatel' i reformy: Kartiny provsednevoi zhizni gorozhan v gody NEPa i khrushchevskogo desiatiletiya* [The citizens and the reforms: Images of the everyday life of townspeople during the NEP period and Khrushchev's decade]. St Petersburg 2003, p. 212.)

Fashionable clothing whets the appetite. Champagne won't suffice.

DESIGN OF ELECTRONIC/ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS IN THE SOVIET UNION FROM KHRUSHCHEV'S THAW TO GORBACHEV'S PERESTROIKA

MADE IN THE USSR

FOUR ESSAYS ON RUSSIA

MADE IN THE USSR

BY **MARGARETA TILLBERG**

In the year 2070, "Made in the USSR will be a brand guaranteeing high quality", dreamed Mikhail Ladur, editor-in-chief of the journal *Decorative Arts in the USSR*.[1] In the early 1960s, the journals of design exuded optimism and confidence. Design, "industrial arts" (*promyshlennoe iskusstvo*), was to re-make the ugly, low-quality products into well-made and appealing ones. To learn from international experience was no doubt of crucial importance; the goal however was to formulate a supremely Soviet brand.

The display of home kitchens at the American National Exhibition in Moscow in 1959 shocked people in the Soviet Union and resulted in the so-called kitchen debate in the media between Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev, and US leader Richard Nixon.[2] The US exhibition showed ideal, fully equipped kitchens with abundant high-tech electrical devices in the service of making the life of the suburban American housewife even more glamorous. Clever propaganda is effective. The US initiative of showing the latest technology for the home shifted the attention from prestigious military displays to the everyday, and thus made the enormous contrasts between the American and Soviet ways of life painfully visible. Showing that it was possible to make women's lives easier with high-tech electrical appliances even made the blessings of space travel seem very distant for visitors to the exhibition, many of whom were lonely mothers from dirty and noisy communal apartments on one of the innumerable Lenin Streets in Leningrad, Asbestos, Stalinsk, or any of the other towns in the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, Khrushchev's public response was: "We too have these things." Despite Khrushchev's public reaction to the enviable American display, he was well aware that, in comparison, his own country fell short.

The average standard of living was much lower in the USSR than in the West. The main output of Soviet industry was military equipment. Goods for personal consumption were constantly in short supply. The production of consumer goods, or *shirpotreb* – the term is a typical Soviet potpourri of abbreviations, literally "goods for broad consumption" – was given low priority. Forced upon the factory directors from above, mostly leftover materials and machines not designed for more important goals were used. The products produced were so unpopular that *shirpotreb* gradually became a swearword. Despite the constant scarcity of just about everything, despite having to wait in line for staple goods, these low-quality products often remained unsold and caused an enormous glut, or *zatovarivanie*. The phenomenon of *shirpotreb* was a result of the elimination of market forces, and without any proper market surveys, neither the consumers nor their needs were identified. What or how much was to be produced was left utterly to chance or the caprice of those in power. The postponement of happiness in the wait for the communist paradise that lurked in a constant tomorrow needed more concrete, material rewards today. Concerned with securing his popularity, away from the public eye, Khrushchev quickly assembled a group of individuals who were to tackle the competition to "catch up with and surpass America".

A few years later, VNIITE, the Federal Scientific Research Institute for Technological Aesthetics (*Vsesoiuznyi nauchno-issledovatel'skyi institut tekhnicheskoi estetiki*), was inaugurated. Founded in Moscow in 1962, VNIITE, one of the many scientific research institutes created in the 1960s that were focused on applied science, was, however, the only institute devoted to the aesthetic and ergonomic user side of design and construction.[3] As an institute for production design (what technological aesthetics concerned itself with), one of VNIITE's tasks was to improve the conditions of production as well as the products in, above all, heavy industry, especially machine and tool construction. This industrial branch of the economy was the pride of the Soviet Union and was often put on display (recall all the images from production plants and factories shown in Soviet propaganda). To be sure, reverse engineering and styling to make technologically outdated goods appear more fashionable was applied to achieve quick results, but, additionally, one of the tasks of the institute was to "invent" design methods within the planned economy by exploring the technology–science–art relation as much as possible.

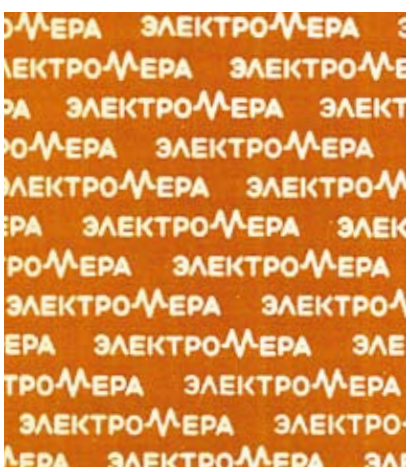
One key was finding a language common to these different spheres of culture. Since the engineers liked the notion of "objectivity", an extensive discourse took place in journals and books on design about reconciling the culture of artists and that of engineers. In his article "On the Aesthetic Values of the Machine", the Marxist philosopher of art Karl Kantor suggested that this ephemeral concept can be understood by connecting the beauty of the artifact with the "objective beauty" of mathematics.[4] With its geometric forms, the modernist style delivered this "objective" universal language, which was at the same time appropriate because it was able to provide shapes for standard modules.

With respect to the fashion of styling of goods, interesting asymmetries appear when comparing the public discourse of art and that of design. Interestingly enough, 1960s and 1970s progressive life was embodied in the modernist style preferred by the very highest echelons, such as those responsible for Soviet trade contacts with the West. With the Soviet wish to appear as a technologically advanced, progressive society in the international arena, journals on production design and decorative arts promoted a restrained and sober 1960s modernism from the Baltic States, Scandinavia, and Finland, whereas the ornamental Stalinist style was given as an example of bad taste. Promoting modernism, the design discourse thereby constitutes an interesting anomaly within the socialist-realist aesthetic paradigm which dictated the entire aesthetic system in Soviet art from 1932 to 1991.

With the foundation of VNIITE, a new attitude towards industrial production was introduced. Design, conceived as the visual and organizational restructuring of the artificial world for increased quality of life, was institutionalized on a wider scale for the first time in the USSR. A "design approach" meant the (re-)organization of the visual and material environment to make it more functional, that is, more effective from the perspective of the user. The goal of the design efforts was to create more comfortable living and work spaces in the era of increased automation – be it for the scientific organization of the apartment interiors of the housing blocks that were built in the millions after the war, or for the worker at the conveyor belt. This new approach was an alternative fundamentally different from the then current technocratic worldview.[5] Instead of the precedence of the production system narrow-mindedly taking care only of its own well-being, attention was now increasingly to be paid to the people who animated it. In the sense of technology in the service of the individual user (from the inhabitants of the new housing and their toilet plumber to the airplane pilot) this might appear as nothing more than common sense, but in the Soviet Union this perspective was a revolution of sorts.

In a country with prison labor camps in the Siberian permafrost and Kazakh deserts, a total lack of respect for human dignity had so far been the hallmark of the way industrial production was conducted, as well as of the possibility of consuming what came out. The design endeavor formulated at VNIITE meant that the human side of the man-machine constellation was taken seriously, a position which had been taken neither in industrial production nor in display technologies such as nuclear power plants.[6] When taking into account the tradition of forced labor in concentration camps or the extreme adaptation to the spaceships demanded of the Soviet cosmonauts, a design approach meant a radical break with the past. A remedy for the deep crisis between the state and its citizens in the wake of the revelation of Stalin's crimes, VNIITE became an experimental free zone for discussion of the position in the system of human agency in a wider sense. Technology should not decide everything any more, and instead of the worker being seen in terms of masses of cadres, individual varieties and preferences were at last to be introduced in the policy of the Five-Year Plan. In the structure of the enterprise and the factory, this meant that the technical experts (constructors, engineers) in control were now to be flanked by designers (artist-constructors, artist-engineers).[7]

One of the major projects of VNIITE was the redesign of the entire electronic/electrical industry for measuring tools. *ElektroMera* (Russian for "Electr(on)ic Measurement Instruments") was a design project conceptualized for the electrical and electronics industry between 1973 and 1979. It was a collaboration among the State Planning Committee (Gosplan), the State Committee for Science and Technology, the Council of Ministers of the USSR (*Gosudarstvennyi komitet po nauke i tekhnike soveta ministrov SSSR* – GKNT), and the Ministry of the Instruments Industry, Means of



They wanted to take control over how people run their daily lives. He who creates has the initiative.

Automation and Systems Management (*Ministerstvo priborostroeniia, sredstv avtomatizatsiii i sistem upravlenii*). *ElektroMera* was intended for an initial launch on a nationwide scale as a preliminary test, with the ultimate goal of competing with companies such as Siemens and General Electrics on the world market.

ElektroMera was to pave the way for the production of electrical household goods. Although electrical devices became increasingly available to Soviet consumers in the late 1960s and 1970s, tape recorders and washing machines were not widely circulated. *ElektroMera* was also a concrete project for materializing this new policy of concern for the user, both in the sense of the factory worker, and the private consumer.

ElektroMera was a far-reaching project for media and communication which involved a great deal of science and technology that lay between military (prioritized) and civil (non-prioritized) production. The experiences gained from this project could thus subsequently – and this was the idea – be applied in the sphere of private consumer goods. International examples showed success was within reach. The popular Vespa had shown that the production of fighter aircrafts could be shifted to the production of affordable means of transportation. With its small rubber wheels, the scooter proved to fit the rough Italian roads perfectly.

The *ElektroMera* project was an experiment in the restructuring of production, logistics, and artifacts, with user-friendliness as its goal. It was led and supervised by designers and it was the first large-scale design project ever in the Soviet Union. Earlier, the designers in the Soviet Union had mostly worked with small-scale, isolated artifacts.

ElektroMera's logo was an "M" – reminiscent of an electromagnetic impulse diagram. Its goal was no less than to reorganize and coordinate an entire industrial branch to make it standardized in a country with eleven time zones and a population of more than 300 million. It was developed within the Electr(on)ic Measurement Instruments Association (*SouizElektroPribor*), a conglomerate that included nearly all producers of electrical and electronic measuring devices (different kinds of metrology equipment, gauges, indicators, etc.) in the USSR. The conglomerate comprised thirty-two factories with a combined productive output that consisted of, among other things, around one and a half thousand devices, apparatuses, instruments, and assemblies of instruments, and that covered nearly every part of the economy.[8]

There were numerous reasons why the electronic and electrical measurement industry was picked for this pilot project. For a military superpower at this time, defense technology meant electronics, nuclear research, rocketry, aviation, and weapons systems. And last but not least, the high level of accidents caused by the human factor called for ergonomic adjustments.

Since measuring devices are crucial to controlling systems and automation, increased attention was devoted to this wide-ranging area of production in the 1960s. The radio systems and radio telemetry used in space exploration, for the moon landing vehicle, reconnaissance of satellites, and other remote-controlled devices demanded precise measurements as did pipelines, electric power lines, hydroelectric power plants, and all kinds of automated systems operated by remote control. Despite the centralized planning system, standardization of these branches had not been sufficiently inculcated.

The *ElektroMera* initiative was a consequence of actions already taken in the sphere of standardization. According to reports published in *Pravda* in 1965, surveys conducted of control and measuring instruments yielded alarming results: as many as half the devices tested did not meet the required quality standards, and major resources were wasted on their repair and adjustment.[9] In 1965, the State Committee for Standards received additional financial support; a state standardization was included in the 1966–1970 Five-Year Plan; the new periodical *Standarty i kachestvo* (Standards and quality) was launched in 1966, and in 1970 a "state system of standardization" was introduced.[10]

ElektroMera was backed up by the infrastructures and human resources of VNIITE. As a "grade-one institute", VNIITE had access to the newest information in the design field, and could play an important role in the transformation of old routines and the initiation of new ones. The state-subsidized VNIITE was in the unique position of having both the expertise and the size to propose and participate in projects of a magnitude that even the biggest international companies were scarcely able to afford. VNIITE could call on the diverse expertise of every design bureau and scientific research institute within its entire all-union network. With regional offices rapidly established in industrial centers all over the country, VNIITE was the biggest design institute in the world until 1991, when state subsidies decreased drastically.[11] Its interdisciplinary work methods, characteristic of military research in general, show many similarities to what is today called collaborative design.[12] The collaboration expertise ranged from engineers, inventors, architects, and methodologists to standards experts, managers, economists, and human factors specialists. Most importantly, however, was that the executive group that coordinated the whole project consisted of designers.

In an article in *Tekhnicheskaia estetika* (Technological aesthetics), the heads of the executive group, Dmitry Azrikan and Dmitry Schelkunov, presented their *ElektroMera* design brief. Their goal was, in their own words, to coordinate the "technical compatibility", to induce "ergonomic equivalence", and to create "visual harmony".[13] Considering the well-known notion of standardization as a fundamental requisite for effective industrial production, this sounds like old news. The concept of interchangeable parts was introduced in the US weapons industry even before the American Civil War in 1861, and the Berlin-based electricity company AEG secured their market by hiring the architect Peter Behrens in 1907 to bring about its corporate identity, with the products and the graphic profile sharing common features.

ElektroMera's conceptual invention, however, was the redefinition of the *entire system* of relations that embraced man and the artificial environment, from the nationwide meta-structure down to the working conditions on the shop floor to the fruits of labor distributed to improve the acoustic quality in a music lover's living room. The idea was to produce a few models of decent goods on a mass scale, so as to reach the majority of consumers, in contrast to the existing chaotic redundancy of the same models produced in such small quantities that they reached only the uppermost elite. The lack of planning was to be solved through an optimization of the assortment which embraced ideas of standardization of the basic needs of the user/consumer. Therefore it was first of all thought to be necessary to redesign the type of goods that were produced and then the individual goods themselves.[14]

With its goal of coordinating "technological compatibility" with "visual harmony", *ElektroMera* wanted to "universalize" all the units of production. A prerequisite for the planning of the material world on a large scale was the use of standardized modules, rather than complicated, randomly decorated objects. For multipurpose objects, every detail needed to be interchangeably formulated and constructed.

ElektroMera was to unify the principles of planning and designing machinery, equipment, and buildings, in order to economize the design effort on multiple levels of production. The aim of the program was a "systemic approach to planning, self-financing, organization, and automation of control and management".[15] In order to redesign the production processes of the hundreds of thousands of workers responsible for the manufacture of more than 1,500 products, a clever algorithm had to be defined. The "metalevel" called for was to approach all the material objects as a single system. This system would be made coherent by standardizing and connecting all the functions of the products with every part of the industrial conglomerate. The material system was subdivided into "means of production" and "product" with all the different appliances conceptualized as one single product. The method for restructuring entailed unifying all the material resources and all the procedures of interaction with those resources, according to a clustering principle based on a complex set of standardizations. The nomenclature and assortment of the electro-products had to be optimized, with the challenge being the formulation of a maximum of functions from a limited selection of simple elements. The initial step was to make the parameters, the metrology, and the constructions compatible. Modules were defined, thus enabling a quick and convenient modernization of select parts.[16]

Much effort was put into making a product with greater transparency, which communicated with the user in a coherent way. The functions therefore had to be directly linked to the construction. The task was to coordinate the many different instruments and equip them with a common user interface.[17] The user-centered functions were optimized in collaboration with VNIITE's test laboratory for ergonomics. The machines should "actively turn" to the operator, as underlined by Azrikan and Schelkunov. The same clustering and standardizing principles used for the material product were applied to the overarching structure. As the common language of the entire design program, the corporate design "cemented" all the components into a visual entirety.

In short, *ElektroMera*'s special mission was to formulate an alternative to the system of production current at the time and the clumsy artifacts produced by it. *ElektroMera* was to materialize the concrete products and give them a specific "socialist" identity. Above and beyond the obvious money-saving advantages from a nation-wide meta-structuring, they were to make a dif-

Technical everyday objects qua moving parts in the machinery of society. Like man.

ference in the real-world working conditions along the conveyor belt and the radio-listening in the kitchen.

Due to the post-World War II economic crisis, various models of how to make Soviet production become more effective were discussed.[18] Cybernetics raised expectations that the material world would be reformulated, and promised new ways of achieving social goals, and, within economics, it was a method of optimizing the functioning of the system. The rise of the designer as a new profession that would introduce innovation and change into the essentially static production structures coincided with the years when cybernetics developed into being something close to a nearly universal remedy for problems in the Soviet Union.[19] Nevertheless, in the Soviet case, the link between cybernetics and design has hitherto received no scholarly attention. The literature on cybernetics and economics is abundant. These studies, however, do not pay any heed to the human side of the system, but only to quantitative efficiency. I have spent some time pondering these topics and have come to realize that *ElektroMera* conceptualized the material base for the theories formulated within the framework of cybernetic modeling and computer networks of the 1960s and 1970s.

During the years of increased automation, from the early 1960s to the end of the 1970s, a number of initiatives to reform and optimize the sphere of economics were introduced in the Soviet Union. In November 1962, at a Central Committee Plenum, Khrushchev pressured his party colleagues to assume rational management methods that would be easier to implement in the system of centralized state-owned economy than under capitalism, with its fragmented structure of private companies.[20] In preparation for Aleksei Kosygin's economic reform in 1965 with its call for increased flexibility and a shift from heavy to light industry, even Western methods of management were extensively examined.[21] With the goal of finding ways to raise the efficiency of the socialist production system without giving way to the evils of the capitalist market, the use of mathematical modeling and computer networks was put forward as a better alternative.[22]

In one of these models, "industrial cybernetics", sometimes called "management cybernetics", for example as introduced by Stafford Beer for the steel industry in England, information was derived from mathematical simulations which replaced information obtained from the market. Since supply and demand were nonexistent in the planned economy, the cyberneticians leaned upon "objective computations".[23] In Beer's model, the exceedingly complex, probabilistic company was likened to a homeostat, adaptable and self-regulatory like a living "organism" where the standard market mechanisms of supply and demand were replaced by feedback loops with data about sales rates, materials available, costs, and so on. Translated into cybernetic terms, the entire Soviet economy was seen as an enormous organism that could be optimized by way of computer networks through the channeling and management of information flows.

With its potential to concentrate enormous resources on research projects that did not need to provide any immediate profit, the USSR spent considerable resources on the development of computer networks to interconnect factories with Gosplan, the State Planning organization at the top. One important agent high up in the hierarchy who could connect Gosplan with the Ministry of Instrumentation, Automation and Control Systems was Germen (Dzhermen) Gvishiani, the vice chairman, in effect chief executive, of GKNK. A state committee for *applied* science and technology, Gvishiani furthered methods of cybernetic management. Himself the author of numerous books on industrial management[24], the progressive Gvishiani was especially excited about *ElektroMera*, as a design project for the real world. He was closely associated with Kosygin via marriage to Kosygin's daughter (Kosygin, Premier of the Soviet Union, was himself also a practical man, as a former textile engineer, a minister for finance and minister for light industry).

The early 1970s saw not only the launching of *ElektroMera* on an experimental level, but also that of OGAS, a nation-wide computer network for the collection and processing of information for the planning and management of the national economy.[25] As a replacement for the existing, disorderly overlapping of information, these computer centers would assemble and re-distribute information from all fields of the national economy, from the top of the state planning system, *Gosplan*, down to the material-technical base. The computer network was to rationalize and reorganize production on a national-economic level, and the design efforts projected by VNIITE were to give life to real products. Fitting into the channels of information becoming flesh, the goods produced were to be materialized through *ElektroMera*. With standardized electronics compatible with *ElektroMera*, the smallest entities of computer systems, in combination with a unified branch system for electronics and measurement tools, would unite different factories and companies and ultimately the whole Eastern Bloc. East Germany, with its standards that were compatible to West Germany, forms an especially interesting case.[26]

During the early 1960s one of the most vital spheres of activity of COMECON was to coordinate and consolidate the production processes and the products of the member countries.[27] A coherent system of standards represented one of the first significant steps towards effective compatibility and integration of applied science, technology, and design. Given that transfer of knowledge was of paramount importance within the Soviet Bloc, standardization was essential in facilitating cooperation among the socialist countries, but was also a means of consolidating the border with the West: in order to produce a self-sufficient economy, the economic zone has to be clearly defined.

Cybernetics offered a major advantage to a dictatorship like the Soviet Union in that it "broadened the range of controllable processes", as Aksel Berg, Chairman of the Council on Cybernetics, insisted. This was "its essence and major merit".[28] The publication in 1961 of his book on cybernetics in communism[29] coincided with the erection of the Berlin Wall. Now the Soviet Bloc had its defined economic zone, and the experiments with cybernetic management could be transferred from the realm experimental simulations to the real world.

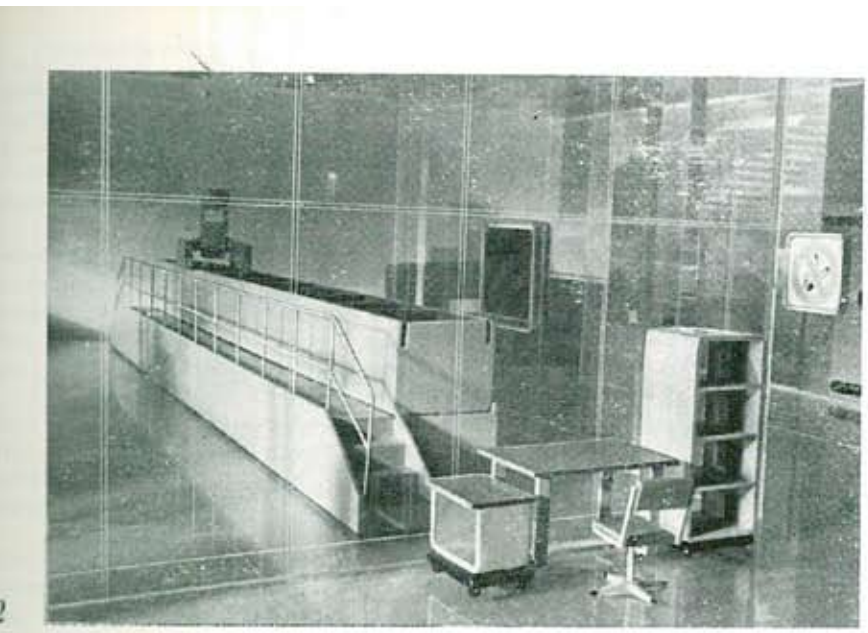
The early 1960s was a time characterized by a fear in the West of the potential that a centralized command economy had in comparison with the limitations of rival firms in the capitalist system. Less than twenty years later, the goods deriving from *ElektroMera* were to be launched. *ElektroMera* was to change the face of the Soviet Union nation-wide with its goal of bridging the enormous gap between wishful thinking and the concrete electrical devices available to consumers. The first electrical devices were to be put on sale by 1980, coinciding with the promises as to when the bright future of Communism was to be reached.

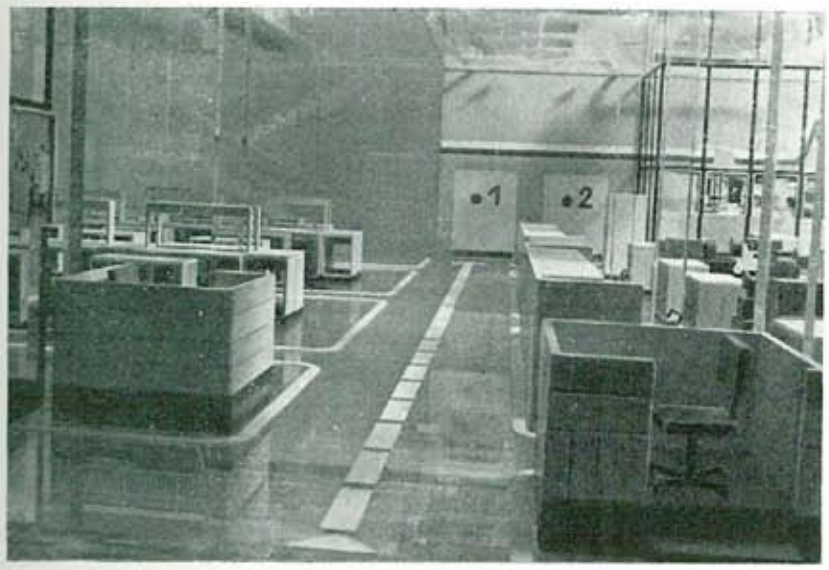
In 1979 hundreds of boards and realistically looking prototypes (see illustrations) were shown in VNIITE's own exhibition hall at the Pushkin Square in central Moscow, followed by a tour of exhibitions worldwide (for example in Germany, Yugoslavia, India, and Finland). After showing the *ElektroMera* project to a delegation from Siemens visiting Moscow, Yuri Soloviev, director of VNIITE, recalls: "They were shaken: if this program was implemented and its products were to appear on the market, they said it would be a very serious blow for them."[30]

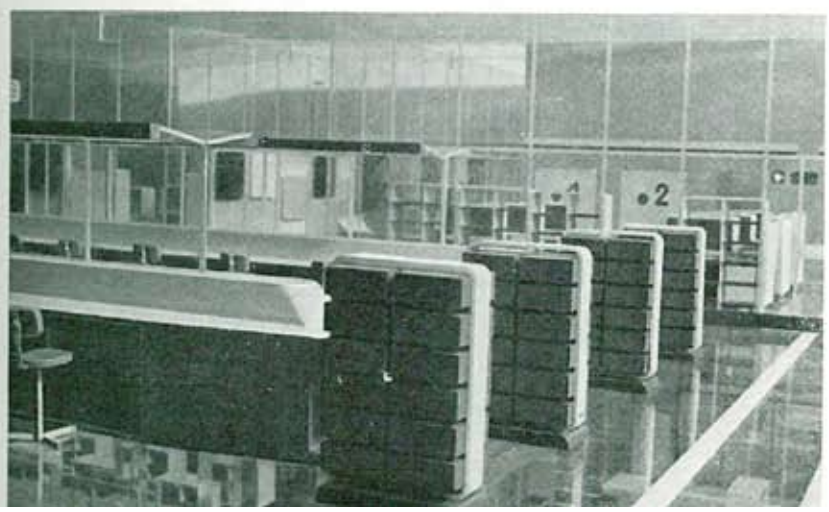
With its motto "Workers of the world, unite!" the Soviet Union built a society during its almost seventy years of existence that so differed from the Western capitalist model – which was intrinsic to the definition of design in the canonical literature of the field – that even the most basic notions of design do not apply.[31] To date, the general interest of the young academic discipline of design history has mostly centered on consumer goods in the affluent world. Given the common Western success story of industrial design as a marketing strategy to increase sales, it becomes clear that a different set of tools is required to describe design made in the Soviet Bloc.[32]

So far, presentations of design in Eastern Europe during the Cold War have made additions of a chair, a *sputnik*, and a car to the canon of design. *ElektroMera*, however – the "artifact" that my inquiry investigates – is of an entirely different magnitude. In order to do this investigation, not only the designed artifact needs redefinition, but also the borders of academic disciplines. The objects of inquiry require a wider context than that established by the mere pin-pointing of style, a typical art history approach, or by giving descriptions of machines, devices, processes, and structures, as is done in traditional history of technology. These efforts are not sufficient to analyze design as the systemic organization in the service of enabling flexibility and change – including a focus on the comfort of the user without excluding aesthetic concerns. What I propose, therefore, is the alternative of discussing design in a context of systems thinking and cybernetics and ergonomics – without excluding art history and aesthetics – to render visible characteristics that have so far not been considered.

If we are to make a meaningful connection between design and the productive processes that are shaping the world, I suggest that we must look toward the design of systems, and not only to how the individual car is streamlined, or how the legs of a table are bent. Form implies fixity, and once set up, it cannot be adjusted to its environment. Therefore, as suggested by historian of architecture Brandon Hookway, "we must look at the design of systems as well as the changing role







5а
б
в

5г
д
е

1. *Зона отдыха на территории предприятий, оборудованная скамьями, столами и напольными шахматами (макет). Отделена от входной зоны завода декоративной стенкой*
2. *Объемно-пространственное решение цеха гальванических покрытий (макет)*
3. *Объемно-пространственное решение цеха механической обработки (макет)*
4. *Объемно-пространственное решение сборочного цеха (макет)*
5. *Модели производственной одежды для персонала Объединения: а, г — костюмы мужской и женский для работников службы сервиса и выставок; б, д—халаты мужской и женский для работников администрации и конструкторского бюро; в, е — костюмы мужской и женский для станочников, слесарей и вспомогательных рабочих*

Models and prototypes for factory departments and work clothes for the electrical measuring industry in the Soviet Union (ElektroMera).

MADE IN THE USSR

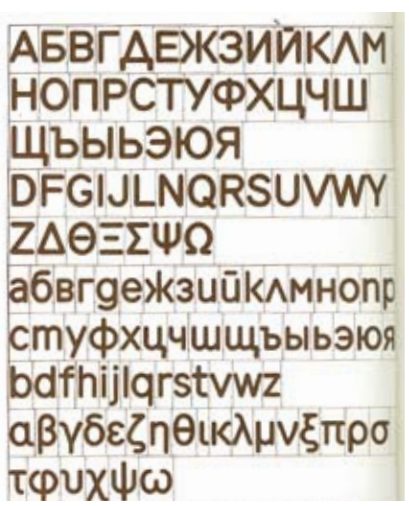
of the designer in the productive process as a whole, rather than simply the design of forms".[33] In this article, *ElektroMera* was discussed in such a framework. Boiled down to its very basics, what these complex phenomena that connected design and cybernetics in the Soviet Union all had in common was standardization – or rather the problem of lacking implemented standardization, and although the ambitious design historian should investigate these phenomena from the hands-on oily bolts and screws to the abstraction of the entire artificial world, here we confined ourselves to a few aspects.[34]

Despite good intentions, *ElektroMera* was but one more failed large-scale project in Soviet industry.[35] It is not within my competence to explain as to why the efforts to make Soviet products of consumption more widely available were eroded by inconsistencies and corruption. Rather than their failure, my concern is to place them in relief outside the paradigm of current design history, for otherwise they would have been discarded as not actualized possibilities.[36]

The Soviet military dictatorship is known as a society with little concern for the well-being of its civilian subjects. Nevertheless, as my investigations on design from the 1960s to the 1980s show, wide-ranging efforts and considerable financial resources were spent on research to change this, at least within the limits of the projects and experiments. In the attempt to make concrete consumer goods, *ElektroMera* was a reality check, with the important aspect, as I see it, that it challenged the view of whether products should be made for military display or for making the non-glamorous every-day life more livable. Whether the state concern was really for the well-being of the people, or only about putting power on display, is a judgment beyond the scope of this article.

ElektroMera was to have integrated Lenin's grandiose plan for electrification, Stalin's plan for automation, and Khrushchev's plan for the cybernetization of the whole country.

But the Soviet dream world was closer to catastrophe than to reality. The Berlin Wall fell and companies in the capitalist world such as Siemens and General Electrics could, once again, breathe freely. "Made in the USSR" was a dream which never came to be.



REFERENCES

1 Mikhail Ladur, "Programma i sozidaniia" [Program and creativity], in *Dekorativnoe iskusstvo v SSSR* [Decorative arts in the USSR], 1961:10.

2 See for example Susan E. Reid, "'Our Kitchen Is Just as Good': Soviet Responses to the American Kitchen", in R. Oldenziel & K. Zachmann, (eds.), *Cold War Kitchen: Americanization, Technology, and European Users*, Cambridge 2009, pp. 83–112. – Nixon was at that time vice president of the United States.

3 The "scientific-research institutes" that carried out applied research by 1968 numbered 2,388. Of these, about 400 concerned themselves with engineering, and about 1,000 served as independent construction bureaus. See Raymond Hutchings, *Soviet Science, Technology, Design: Interaction and Convergence*, Oxford 1976, pp. 28–29. Hutchings incorrectly calls the construction bureaus "design bureaus" which causes confusion insofar as their work did not include any ergonomic or aesthetic considerations whatsoever.

4 Karl M. Kantor, "Ob esteticheskoi tsennosti mashiny" [On the aesthetic value of the machine], in *Krasota i pol'za: Sotsiologicheskie voprosy material'no-khuduzhestvennoi kul'tury* [Beauty and function: Sociological issues concerning artistic aspects of material culture], Moscow 1967. For a history of the concept of objectivity, see Lorraine Daston & Peter Galison, *Objectivity*, New York 2007.

5 For description of technocratism in the USSR, see for example Loren R. Graham, (ed.), *Science and the Soviet Social Order*, Cambridge, Mass. 1990, and Paul R. Josephson, *Industrialized Nature: Brute Force Technology and the Transformation of the Natural World*, Washington 2002.

6 The ergonomic shortages at Chernobyl are discussed in Margareta Tillberg, "Atomdesign: Die Kontrollräume von Tschernobyl", in C. Bigg & J. Hennig (eds.), *Atombilder: Ikonografien des Atoms in Wissenschaft und Öffentlichkeit des 20. Jahrhunderts*, München 2009.

7 In the literature *glavnyi konstruktor*, e.g. the chief engineer, is often translated as "designer" even though no consideration is given to the user of the machine.

8 L. A. Kuzmichev & D.N. Schelkunov, "Dizajn-programma VO 'Soiuzelektropribor'" [The design program for the conglomeration of all-union electric instruments], *Tekhnicheskaia estetika* 1981:9.

9 Raymond Hutchings, *Soviet Science, Technology, Design: Interaction and Convergence*, Oxford 1976, pp. 104–109.

10 Grigorii I. El'kin & Evgenii R. Petrosian, (eds.), *Standartizatsiia v Rossii 1925–2005* [Standardization in Russia 1925–2005], Moscow 2005, pp. 7–39.

11 At the most, around 2,000 people were hired directly by the institute, with up to about 8,000 more involved in one way or another, some on a project basis, some part-time, see Dmitry Azrikan, "Vniite, Dinosaur of Totalitarianism or Plato's Academy of Design?", *Design Issues*, vol. 15:3.

12 See further Margareta Tillberg, "Collaborative Design: The Electric Industry in Soviet Russia 1973–79", in *Focused: Swiss Design Network*, Bern 2008.

13 D. A. Azrikan & D. N. Schelkunov, "O kontseptsii firmennogo stilia VO 'Soiuzelektropribor'", *Tekhnicheskaia estetika* 1976:2.

14 Yu. B. Soloviev, "Ob assortimente bytovykh izdelii" [On the assortment of domestic goods], *Tekhnicheskaia estetika*. 1966:6.

15 Azrikan & Schelkunov, "O kontseptsii", *Tekhnicheskaia estetika* 1976/2: 3.

16 Dmitrii Azrikan, "Sistema sredstv elektroizmeritel'noi tekhniki" [The system of remedies for the electro-measurement technology], *Tekhnicheskaia estetika* 1981:9.

17 Vladimir P. Zinchenko, "Postroenie informatsionnykh modelei v sistemakh upravleniia", in *Ergonomika: Printsipy i rekommendatsii*, Moscow 1970 [Construction of information models in systems for operation, in Ergonomics: Principles and recommendations]; Dmitrii Azrikan, "Tipologicheskaia model' kompleksa produktsii", in *Problemy tipologicheskogo modelirovaniia kompleksnykh ob'ektov dizajna* [Problems of typologization in the modeling of complex design objects], in [Problems of typologization of complex objects in design], Moscow: Trudy VNIITE 1985/48; D. A. Azrikan, "Metodicheskaia model' ob'ekta dizajna" [Methodological model of a design object], *Tekhnicheskaia estetika* 1982:9.

18 Jozef Wilczynski, *Technology in Comecon*, London 1974., pp. 115–133; Michael Ellman, *Soviet Planning Today: Proposals for an Optimally Functioning Economic System*, Cambridge 1971.

19 For the development of cybernetics in the Soviet Union, see Loren R. Graham, *Science, Philosophy, and Human Behavior in the Soviet Union*, New York 1987, pp. 266–294, and Slava Gerovitch, *From Newspeak to Cyberspeak: A History of Soviet Cybernetics*, Cambridge, Mass. & London 2002.

20 Nikita S. Khruschev, *Razvitie ekonomiki SSSR i partiinoe rukovodstvo narodnym khoziaistvom: doklad na Pleniume TsK KPSS 19 noiabria 1962 goda* [Economic development in the USSR and party leadership of the national economy: Speech at the November 19 Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union], Moscow 1962, p. 33.

21 See for example Dzhermen M. Gvishiani, *Sotsiologiia biznesa: Kriticheskii ocherk amerikanskoi teorii menedzhmenta* [Business sociology: A critical essay on American theory of management], Moscow 1962.

22 Michael Ellman, *Soviet Planning Today: Proposals for an Optimally Functioning Economic System*, Cambridge 1971; William Conyngham, J., *The Modernization of Soviet Industrial Management*, Cambridge 1982.

23 Stafford Beer's *Cybernetics and Management* (1959) appeared in numerous editions in the Soviet Union. The second Russian edition was published in 1965, the same year that Kosygin unleashed his countrywide economic reform.

24 Gvishiani had edited translations on this topic with authors from the United States.

25 Frank Dittmann, "Technik versus Konflikt", *Osteuropa*, vol. 59:10.

26 For standardization within the Soviet Bloc, see Raymond G. Stokes, *Constructing Socialism: Technology and Change in East Germany 1945–1990*. Baltimore & London 2000.

27 Grigorii I. El'kin and Evgenii R. Petrosian, (eds.), *Standartizatsiia v Rossii* [Standardization in Russia], *1925–2005*, Moscow 2005.

28 Aksel I. Berg, "Kibernetika i nauchno-tekhnicheskii progress" [Cybernetics and scientific-technological progress], in A. Kuzin, ed., *Biologicheskie aspekty kibernetiki* [Biological aspects of cybernetics], Moscow 1962.

29 Aksel I. Berg, (ed.), *Kibernetiku – na sluzhbu kommunizmu* [Cybernetics – in the service of communism], Moscow & Leningrad 1961.

30 Yuri Soloviev, *Moia zhizn' v dizajne* [My life in design], Moscow 1994, p. 194.

31 For a recent discussion on the redefinition of design, though not taking into account the Eastern Bloc, see the *Journal of Design History: Special Issue; The Current State of Design History*, vol. 22:4.

32 Hitherto, the design literature on Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union has avoided problematizing the definition of design. See for example the recent exhibition catalogue edited by David Crowley and Jane Pavitt, *Cold War Modern: Design 1945–1970*, London, 2008. On post-World War II Soviet and Russian design, see additionally writings by Constantin Boym, Alexander Lavrentiev, Yuri Nazarov, Susan B. Reid, et.al.

33 Brandon Hookway, "Cockpit", in Beatriz Colomina, et. al., (eds.), *Cold War Hothouses: Inventing Postwar Culture from Cockpit to Playboy*, Princeton 2004, p. 45.

34 The story of standardization and logistics in the Soviet Union is to my knowledge not yet written. The history of logistics in the West is currently being studied by Monica Dommann.

35 For the problem of implementation, see Slava Gerovitch, "The Cybernetics Scare and the Origins of the Internet", *Baltic Worlds*, vol. II:1; Clive Dilnot, "Some Futures for Design History?", *Journal of Design History*, vol. 22:4.

Postcolonial Age, or postcolonial Eastern and Central Europe?
Critical remarks from a Hungarian point of view

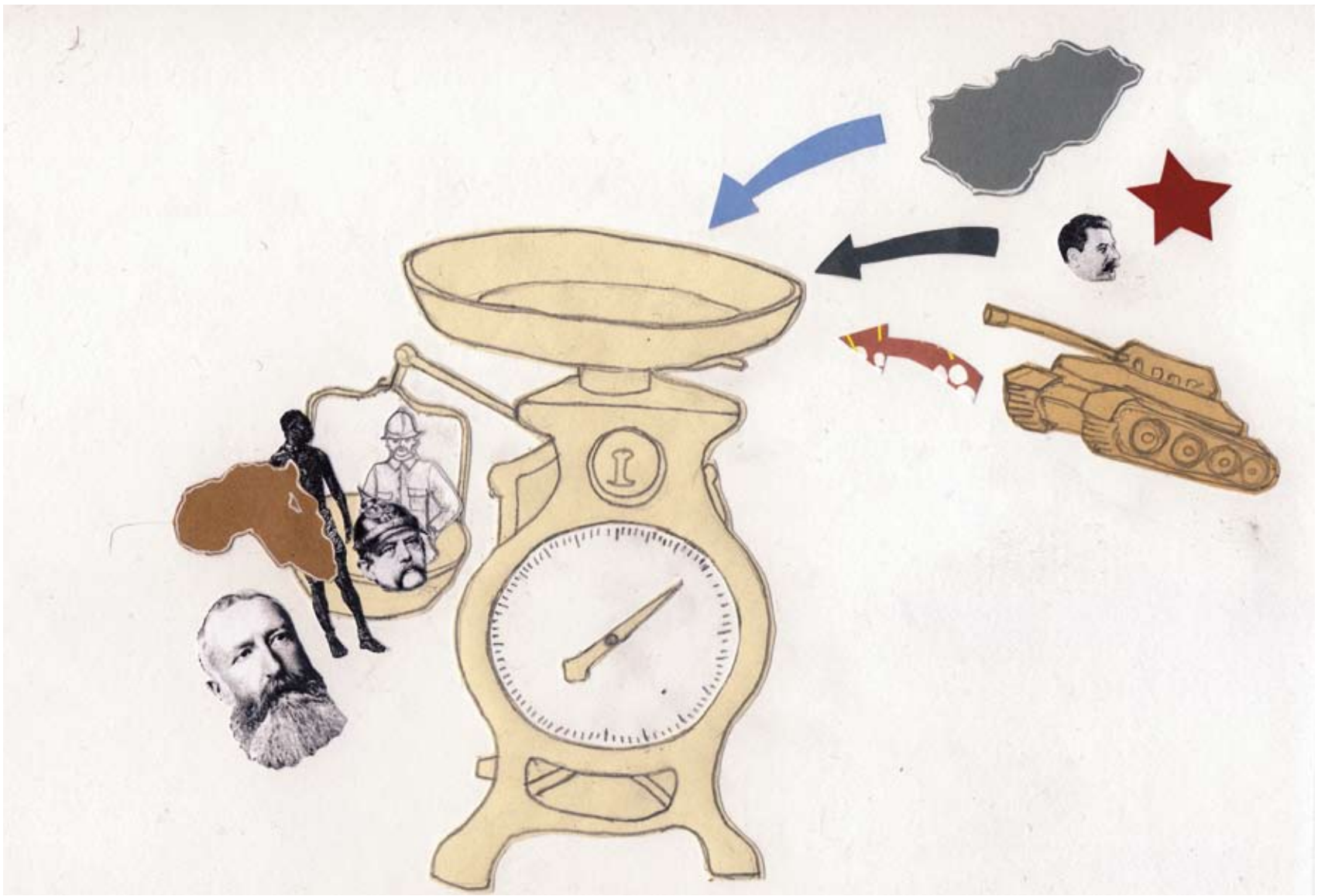


ILLUSTRATION: RAGNI SVENSSON

In light of developments in recent decades, adapting postcolonial critiques towards the post-Soviet sphere of interest has become routine. In this process, David Chioni Moore's study has played a significant role, the first version of which was presented in Budapest. Later, his ideas were presented again during around-the-world conference tours from Tashkent State University to Harvard at a number of research centers, and in 2002 the study was published in the journal of the Modern Language Association.[1] Its impact is reflected in its even having inspired an entire collection of essays, recently published under the title *Baltic Postcolonialism*.[2]

The analysis of the state of affairs with which Moore confronts us in his thought-provoking study, written over the course of almost ten years, rather reflects earlier conditions – as witnessed by the wide range of articles that have come out since the second half of the 1990s through today, analyzing Eastern and Central Europe from a postcolonial perspective.

At the same time it should be borne in mind that when talking about the colonial status of Central and Eastern Europe, and possible liberation, we are not singing a completely unheard-of tune – this should be evident to most readers, but postcolonial researchers tend to forget about this. For Moore, for instance, one of postcolonial critique's main virtues is that it "has also illuminated parallels between areas heretofore seen as noncomparable" (p. 12).

However, raising the issue of the region's colonial dependence is not at all new; and even if the timing of the emergence of the idea can be debated, we can without question encounter it in Hungarian literature by the late 18th century, as exemplified by Pál Ányos's poem entitled *Kalapos Király* [Hatted King].[3] It was also present in the first half of the 19th century in the internal Hungarian discourse, to be sure, though in the context of a possible threat by Russia, Austria, and Germany (see e.g. Lajos Kossuth and József Eötvös, both of whom played a key role in Hungarian politics and culture in the 19th century); after the events of 1848–1849 the view of Hungary as a colony was understandably strengthened, to the extent that by the early 20th century, historiography interpreted not only the Turks but also the Habsburg Empire of the Rákóczi era[4] as a colonial power (see e.g. Sándor Márki's monography on Rákóczi).[5] After World War I, the portrayl of Austrians as colonizers became dominant: the representative five-volume historiographical work, *Hungarian History* (1928) written by Bálint Hóman and Gyula Szekfü, often and clearly refers to Hungary's colonial subjugation by Vienna, whether the rulers were Leopold or Maria Theres or their successors.[6] Interwar period discourses searching for Hungary's possible roles were in any event nurtured colonial metaphors in a remarkable diversity, and the political options that took advantage of this flourishing tropology were very often incompatible, to say the least.

Thus by the time of the Communist takeover in Hungary, we are already dealing with a common, time-honored system of metaphors, and it would have been odd for no one to have dipped into it.[7] Apart from the reminiscings of

people living at the time and samizdat literature, we know from state security archives that this system of metaphors was in fact commonplace. In the early fifties for instance, Tibor Lutter, in no way anti-regime, has, among "friends", compared the country's situation to the 150-year-long Turkish occupation (traditionally understood as colonization). After 1956, the supposition that Bach Era[8] behavior could be normative can be seen as widespread in intellectual circles, while in the sixties and seventies different forms of "passive resistance" helped the self-definition of many intellectual actors.

In the eighties, the discourse prying into the "Soviet bloc" countries or nations was sharpened in samizdat publications and international or émigré forums, and metaphors of colonial existence once again played a significant role in this.

At the highly significant 1988 Lisbon conference, which generated a wide response, Josef Skvorecký, György Konrád, Danilo Kiš, and above all Czesław Miłosz, in a dispute with Tatyana Tolstaya and Brodsky, urged the recognition of Central Europe's existence, as an act of decolonization in the spirit of Kundera; they accused the Russian writers of having a colonial attitude because of their expression of doubt about the existence of such an entity. During the dispute, as the standpoints became increasingly unyielding, Central Europe's image became almost inseparably intertwined with the concept of "colony". Susan Sontag, who also participated in the colloquium, agreed with Miłosz, who said: "Central Europe [...] is an anti-Soviet idea that was provoked by the occupation of those countries", and it is exactly because of this that the Russians, proceeding from the old "colonizing principle" of divide et impera, are trying to get rid of it.[9]

The interpretive framework based on the central metaphor of colony proved to be flexible enough to allow rather different historical situations – especially radical breaks and events perceived as somehow cataclysmic from the point of view of national self-identification (such as the events of 1848–1849, 1920, World War II, 1948, 1956, and to some extent 1989) – to be described and compared, thus allowing events to be placed in a historical perspective, and they could be recognized as manifestations of the alleged "national fate". Since historiography was fond of assuming that studying the past and pondering the possibilities and decisions of our ancestors could assist in adopting the best measures, rediscovering the nation's supposed colonial subjugation over and over again may also have contributed to the formation of a new political agenda.[10]

From this perspective, the idea of being colonized has been a major factor in the efforts of national communities to create a continuous history, in which interruptions and deprivations of national self-governance in fact prove to be reinforcements of the sense of continuity.

Just as important, however, is that the system of metaphors that refers to the colonial existence laid the basis for an ever-expanding, global comparative investigation, making it possible to discover common traits and an "identical essence" in often strongly diverging complex systems of political, economic, and cultural relations which previously were not thought to have any obvious connection to one another. The nation or national component that was defined as the unit of comparison was simply added next to, for example, African, as in African American, or as in the case of indigenous American peoples, allowing a transcontinental modus of self-recognition in the other, even if this proved possible only to a limited extent. (Ideas emphasizing the dual attachment of the Hungarians in referring to their Asian origins further complicate the matter, but this issue will not be addressed here.)

We have to take into account the duality mentioned here not only in comments on the colonial essence, but also on those comments made on the assumption of a postcolonial situation. On the one hand, it can announce a form of behavior that manifests solidarity with a wider, globally encompassing community on universalistic bases; on the other hand, proceeding from a particularistic argumentation, it is also capable of strengthening the internal cohesion of a relatively close community (nation or region). From this it follows that the given discursive situation, and the aim of the communicative act will decisively influence whether it is worth it, for example, to define Hungary's subjugation as a colonial relation.

CONCEPTUAL INFLATION

David Chioni Moore's influential essay "Is the Post- in Postcolonial the Post- in Post-Soviet?", discussed by Tamás Scheibner in a polemical commentary taken from the Hungarian journal *2000*, proposes simultaneous critiques of post-Soviet studies that are both too narrowly postcolonial and too parochial; consequently, it is addressed to both groups at once. It is no doubt true, he argues, that there is, on this planet, not a single square meter of inhabited land that has not been, at one time or another, colonized and then become postcolonial.

According to Moore, it should be clear that the term "postcolonial" and everything that goes with it – language, economy, politics, resistance, liberation and its hangover – might reasonably be applied to the formerly Russian- and Soviet-controlled regions post-1989 and -1991, just as it has been applied to South Asia post-1947 or Africa post-1958. Is the net result of all these items – each subject to a complex bibliography – some version of "colonial"? And are its consequences "post"? From an Uzbek, Lithuanian, or Hungarian perspective one would have to answer yes.

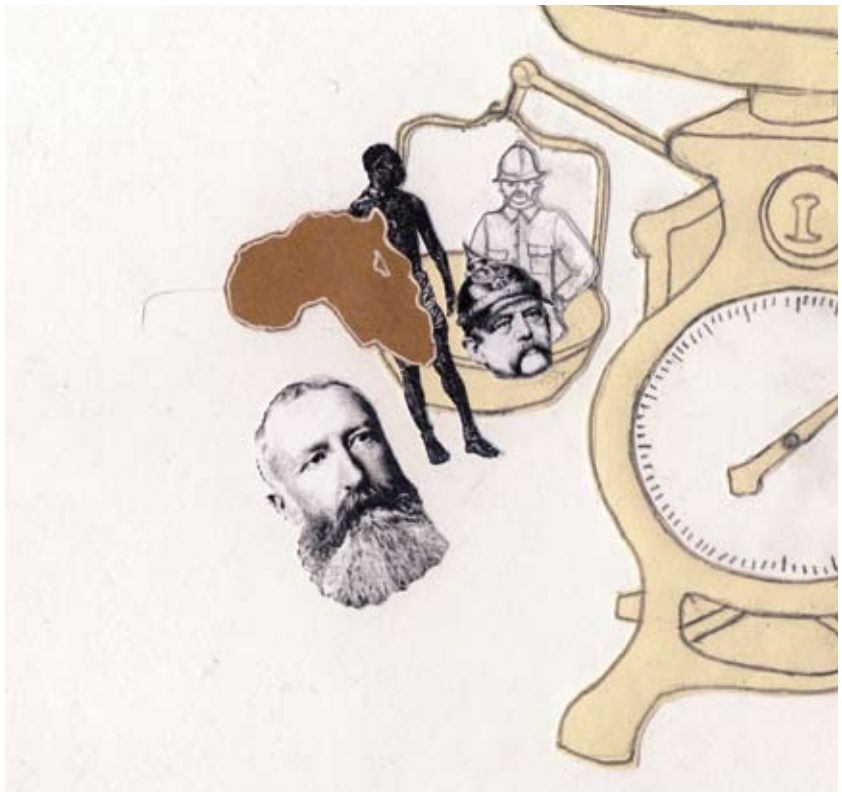
MOORE DEFENDS AN inflation of the postcolonial to include the enormous post-Soviet sphere. Primarily he does so because Russia and then the USSR exercised powerful colonial control over much of the earth for at least 50 years, if not 200. Much of that control has now ended, and its ending has had manifest effects on the literatures and cultures of the postcolonial-post-Soviet nations, including Russia. He adds that the specific modalities of Russian-Soviet control, as well as their post-Soviet reverberations, have differed from the standard Anglo-French cases; but then again, to privilege the Anglo-French cases as the colonizing standard and to call the Russian-Soviet experiences deviations is wrongly to perpetuate the already superannuated centrality of the Western or Anglo-French world, which has seen Russia as inferior for a long time.

AS FOR UNIVERSALIZING the postcolonial condition, Moore supports such a move. Even after postcolonial regions are cross-hatched, certain smaller zones remain unmarked. However, these zones, by their rarity at least, stand not outside but in relation to a global (post)coloniality. Moore speaks here, for example, of created buffer states, whose historic freedoms from Western and Russian-Soviet control were due, in part, to Occidental-Russian calculation.

In sum, the colonial relation at the turn of the millennium, whatever it may be, is not theoretically inflated to a point of weakness, nor is it the property of a certain class or space of peoples; it rather becomes as fundamental to world identities as other "universal" categories, such as race, class, age, or gender. ×

péter balogh

When trying to locate their "reborn" countries in the world in the early 1990s, the local intelligentsia might have leaned towards the long colonial past, but it generally did not; instead it chose to work on regional and national identity constructions that emphasize either national superiority or the "bridge role" that, as they argued, "essentially" still links these countries to the West. It was the reception of postcolonial critique in the 1990s that again pointed toward the possibility of a world-wide comparison in contrast to concepts focusing on national and regional culture, and in this respect Moore's essay has captured part of the truth. It is no accident that it was scholars from Western universities – often originating from Eastern and Central Europe but not necessarily specializing in this part of the world – who were trying to reshape Europe's symbolic geography so as to extend the postcolonial concept onto the area at stake, since they were already thinking in



global terms.

Occasionally the institutional background encouraged them to do so as well. David Moore, who also mentions his Lithuanian grandmother, is head of the Department of International Studies at Macalester College, an elite institution of higher education renowned for its internationality and multiculturalism. He also sympathizes with the Institute for Global Citizenship that was established there, an organization whose goal is to encourage young leading intellectuals to adopt a civic identity not only in a local and national, but also transnational sense. The institutions in question – as witnessed by their homepages – encourage their students to develop a perspective that makes possible comparison of various political, societal, and cultural phenomena on a global level.

Attributing insensitivity towards postcolonial critique to scholars of Eastern and Central European cultures, Moore himself finds the institutional perspective important in observing that "postcolonial" still allowed Western university literature departments to hire just one person in this "field", this several-billion-person space, an outcome that would not have happened (the embarrassment would have been too great) had categories like African, Indian, and Caribbean emerged as strongly separate. (p. 15)

The role of institutions should certainly not be underestimated, since the expansion of the terms of postcolonial explanation onto Central and Eastern Europe is not solely justified on theoretical grounds; it also plays a significant role in the multicultural viewpoint seen in American university education.

In his essay on the crisis of education in Eastern European studies, Alex Kurczaba argues that "multiculturalism" and "cultural diversity" have become keywords that automatically present Europeans as guilty and non-Europeans as victims, calling forth a fairly simplified historical image. And since Poles, for instance, are hardly considered a disadvantaged group after the collapse of the Soviet Union, universities do not support the teaching about this "politically incorrect" culture even in cities with considerably large Polish communities (e.g. Chicago).[11] Thus it makes sense for Kurczaba to read Eastern and Central European cultures as being in a postcolonial state, since he might see therein the token of securing resources.

It might be interesting to read Kurczaba's analysis of the situation together with Aijaz Ahmad's theory, according to which cultural postcolonialism is the tool of postmodern thinkers whom it so fondly criticizes, with which they can seize control over the spaces where knowledge is created and disseminated.[12] Even if Ahmad's model is somewhat reminiscent of conspiracy theories, it is nonetheless true that in the case of a postcolonialism that now spans the globe, we are dealing with an approach strongly intertwined with postmodern theories with which it is hard to argue – Moore himself happily notes that despite much self-critique and judgment, postcolonialism's strong position in scientific life has not staggered; moreover, it has even strengthened.

The most fruitful contribution of this cultural turn was, in my view, its focusing attention on the relationship between colony and culture, two words that even possess the same roots in Latin's colere.[13] One can never note sufficiently often that each symbolic structure and discourse creates its own relations of subordination; violence does not limit itself to the physical world, and when talking about colonization, the cultural aspect needs to be ascribed an important role. At the same time, I am prone to think that there are attendant dangers when this recognition is overemphasized, and the difference between physical and cultural violence is entirely eradicated.

According to a culture-centric approach, cultures, and "[i]n particular, the literatures of the [post-Soviet] regions show all elements of a (post)colonial situation".[14] Among these characteristics are the "narratives of change" flavored with explicit eroticism, strong patriarchal perspective, an urban setting, an apolitical/ahistorical narrative and a novel "subjective sensitivity".[15] Well, even if we accept this model, which does not lack generalizations and ignores the growing popularity of "female literature" as well as a renaissance of the historic novel in the 1990s in Hungary, we nonetheless must bear in mind that these characteristics were already present in the 1980s in the literature of our whole region.

However, this does not constitute a problem for researchers applying postcolonial theory on Eastern and Central European literature, since they, as noted by many others before me, consider the concepts of "colonial" and "postcolonial" as synonyms, as illustrated by the frequent use of the above-quoted "(post)colonial" word form. To quote Ahmad, who likewise called attention to the approximation of the two concepts' meaning in parallel with their universal spread: according to the culturalist perception of colonization "any resistance to colonialism is always, already postcolonial".[16] In our case, this resistance would be the postmodern poetics itself, appearing as a reaction to Soviet cultural domination.[17] Seen this way, the postmodern and the postcolonial practically overlap. Taken together, all of this has led to the concepts mirroring in each other compellingly, and I am not surprised that numerous historians and critics have reservations about this.

As mentioned, the debate is especially difficult with this theoretical construction, if we are approaching it from its own assumptions. The reason for this lies in the particularly adaptable metaphor of colonial existence, or rather in that discursive practice by which – in the words of Maria Todorova – "historically defined, time-specific and finite categories like colonialism and imperialism [are fused] with [such] broadly conceived and not historically circumscribed notions like power and subordination".[18] For Ahmad, this sliding together occurred in the early 1990s, when interdisciplinary postcolonialism's "culturalist theory" became an institutionalized discipline, and the designation, indeed, became an elementary category of "trans-continental, trans-historical making of the world in general".[19]

Here, we have come to a significant aspect of postcolonial discourse. Apart from being a morally-politically based perspective, always hurrying to stand up for the fallen and marginalized, with its goal being – at least in a discursive sense – liberation, it simultaneously represents an approach to language that leads to fundamental metaphor-theoretic problems: if we accept the starting points of postcolonial critique's culturalist theory, and in this way try to avoid resting on its assumptions within its own system of thought, we cannot argue that the metaphor of the colony must be limited to historically circumscribed phenomena or must prescribe a definitional criterion that would put limits on its expansion.

I believe it is more worthwhile to approach the issue from another angle, directing attention to ethical considerations.

Let me comment on one additional aspect of David Chioni Moore's analysis. His case is especially interesting given that he manages to connect the notion of (post)colonial and (post)modern by building on an explicitly historical analysis. Cultural postcolonialists – finding it an alternative perspective – usually try to avoid this. Moore is namely transforming a topographic image into a temporal one: he does not state anything less than that distinguishing between territories traditionally

seen as postcolonial from allegedly non-postcolonial ones has lost its meaning, since there is no spot in the world that is not "postcolonial" in some sense, that is, to reformulate his statement, we are living in a *postcolonial age*. Thus we are confronted with the oddity that all forms of colonial relations are post-colonial, including non-colonial ones. Hence, the question arises as to when this certain period began. Following from the article's logic, this definitely happened at the moment when colonization started to make its impact on the entire globe. This obviously difficult to specify "moment" should be placed in the 18th and 19th centuries, causing the "postcolonial age" more or less to overlap with the modern and postmodern periods. However, Moore does not actually adduce real arguments as to why we need another, even more problematic age concept on top of already problematic ones.

Moore's study is further complicated by – and presumably this is the drawback of any study written over an excessively long period – his having revised the concept over the course of his research. On the one hand he wants to convince the reader that Eastern and Central Europe fits into the classic notion of the postcolonial, on the other he denies that his article would be "an essay in ontology" (p. 29), and looks at the postcolonial as a sort of hermeneutics by means of which he would extend postcolonial analysis onto the whole world. He tells the story so that the "original" meaning of the postcolonial was replaced, or should be replaced, by the later meaning - but he keeps using the former. However, its worldwide extension and maintenance as an age-concept or mode of interpretation excludes this practice, unless we want to trigger a full-fledged notional perplexity.

Although a moral intention plays such an important role in postcolonial critique, because of the terminological confusion already present in Moore, ethical considerations are hardly present in his argumentation. However, it is exactly this question that critics considering Eastern and Central Europe as postcolonial should not forget: if comparing "Singapore and Mali" is not acceptable, then why should we accept the placing of Bohemia, Lithuania and South Ossetia into one box? Not labeling the cultures of these territories postcolonial does not mean that we cannot approach certain cultures displaying partly similar, partly different characteristics with corresponding hermeneutics. I, myself, at least, see significant differences in the level of subjection between post-Soviet states and those that could keep some degree of independence.

Further, the postcolonial metaphor is far from "innocent" in a political sense since colonialism's historical image, postcoloniality's early discourse has divided those concerned between perpetrators and victims to such a large extent that the concept will evoke this bipolar scheme even when it is mentioned with an opposite aim. Hence, in the public discourse it is in some contexts acceptable to refer to 1948–1989 Hungary as a Soviet colony at occasions commemorating justifiable wounds, but in a professional dialogue it is unfortunate to do likewise, as instead of fomenting a tinted analysis of historical events it might on the contrary bring us in the direction of simplification, especially if it strengthens the self-victimizing inclination of Eastern and Central European cultures. Contrary to what Moore believes, then, we neither have to be committed leftists still sympathizing with the Soviet Union, nor radical rightists trapped in an exaggerated national pride in order to doubt whether the post- in postcolonial equals the post- in post-Soviet.

tamás scheibner

Assistant professor of comparative and modern Hungarian literature at Eötvös Loránd University of Budapest (ELTE).

REFERENCES

1 David Chioni Moore, "Is the Post- in Postcolonial the Post- in Post-Soviet? Toward a Global Postcolonial Critique," *PMLA*, 116:1.
2 Violeta Kelertas (ed.), *Baltic Postcolonialism*, New York & Amsterdam 2006. A slightly different version of Chioni Moore's article is reprinted here (pp. 11–43). All subsequent page references included in the text are to this edition.
3 It was Joseph II of Habsburg's nickname, because he reigned without being crowned King of Hungary, thereby avoiding being subject to certain Hungarian laws and acts.
4 This period of Hungarian historiography was named after Francis II Rákóczi, Prince of Transylvania, who led an anti-Habsburg freedom fight between 1703 and 1711.
5 Sándor Márki, *Rákóczi Ferenc (1676-1735)*, Budapest 1907. II.
6 Bálint Hóman, Gyula Szekfü, *Magyar történet*, Budapest 1990. The relevant parts are written by Szekfü.
7 In my line of thinking, on this point it is primarily the colonial image manifesting itself as a resistance against the Soviets that is significant; but it is also worth recalling that "official" Marxist historiography was not averse to colonial relations in analyzing the 19th century, thereby from this perspective forming a connection directly to the tradition of Hungarian interwar historiography. On the domestic (Hungarian) colonialism debate, see Amália Kerekes, "Kolonialismusdebatte in Ungarn und Fredric Jamesons Theorie über die nationalen Allegorien der Dritten Welt", *Kakanien Revisited*, January 23, 2002. http://www.kakanien.ac.at/beitr/theorie/AKerekes1.pdf Accessed: 2007-12-04.
8 In Hungarian historiography, the post-1849 period was named after Austrian interior minister Alexander Bach, who developed and ran the new public administrative and judicial system that served absolutist Habsburg rule.
9 Jessie Labov, "A Russian Encounter with the Myth of Central Europe", *Oxford Austrian and Central European Studies, Conference Papers: The Contours of Legitimacy in Central Europe* (St. Antony's College Oxford, May 24-26, 2002) http://users.ox.ac.uk/-oaces/conference/papers/Jessie_Labov. Pdf downloaded: 2005-11-14
10 The use of the conditional mode is justified since these "programs", which were worked out to varying degrees, have not always become guidelines for the entirety of the national community.
11 Alex Kurczaba, "East Central Europe and Multiculturalism in the American Academy", *The Sarmatian Review*, Feburary 18, 1998. http://www.ruf.rice.edu/-sarmatia/998/kurczaba. Html downloaded: 2005-12-17.
12 Aijaz Ahmad, "Postcolonial Theory and the 'Post'-Condition", *The Socialist Register* 1997, pp. 368-369.
13 Terry Eagleton, *The Idea of Culture*, Oxford 2000, p. 2.
14 Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek, "Comparative Cultural Studies and the Study of Central European Culture: Theory and Application", *Kakanien Revisited*, May 15, 2003. http://www.kakanien.ac.at/beitr/theorie/Stotody1.pdf, p. 11. Downloaded: 2003-08-10.
15 See Tötösy de Zepetnek, ibid., p. 11; Roumiana Deltcheva, "The Difficult Topos In-Between: The East Central European Cultural Context as a Postcoloniality", *The Sarmatian Review*, February 18, 1998. http://www.ruf.rice.edu/-sarmatia/998/deltcheva. Html downloaded: 2005-12-17
16 Ahmad, ibid., pp. 365-366.
17 Tötösy de Zepetnek, ibid., p. 4.
18 Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, New York Oxford 1997, p. 16.
19 Ahmad, ibid., pp. 365-368.

APPENDIX

Pál Ányos (1756–1784) was a Hungarian poet (also monk and teacher), a representative of sentimentalism, and to a certain extent of early (Hungarian) romanticism.

Hóman-Szekfü chronology. Bálint Hóman (1885–1951): Hungarian politician and academic. Served as minister of religion and education twice: 1932–1938 and 1939–1942. Director of the National Széchényi Library in 1922, of the Hungarian National Museum 1923–1932. Hóman often published together with Gyula Szekfü (1883–1955). Both scholars came from Catholic families and are regarded as the two leading historians of their time. Their most notorious work is , first published in 1928. According to Hóman, Sumerian and Hattian-Hurrian literary monuments need to be taken into consideration when analyzing ancient Hungarian words.

Tibor Lutter (1910–1960) literary historian. In 1933, teacher at the German Imperial School, in late 1944, joined the resistance movement. After the war Lutter was employed at various universities; his scholarly work focuses on English literature.

Scandinavia as a melting pot?
Progress in Bronze Age research

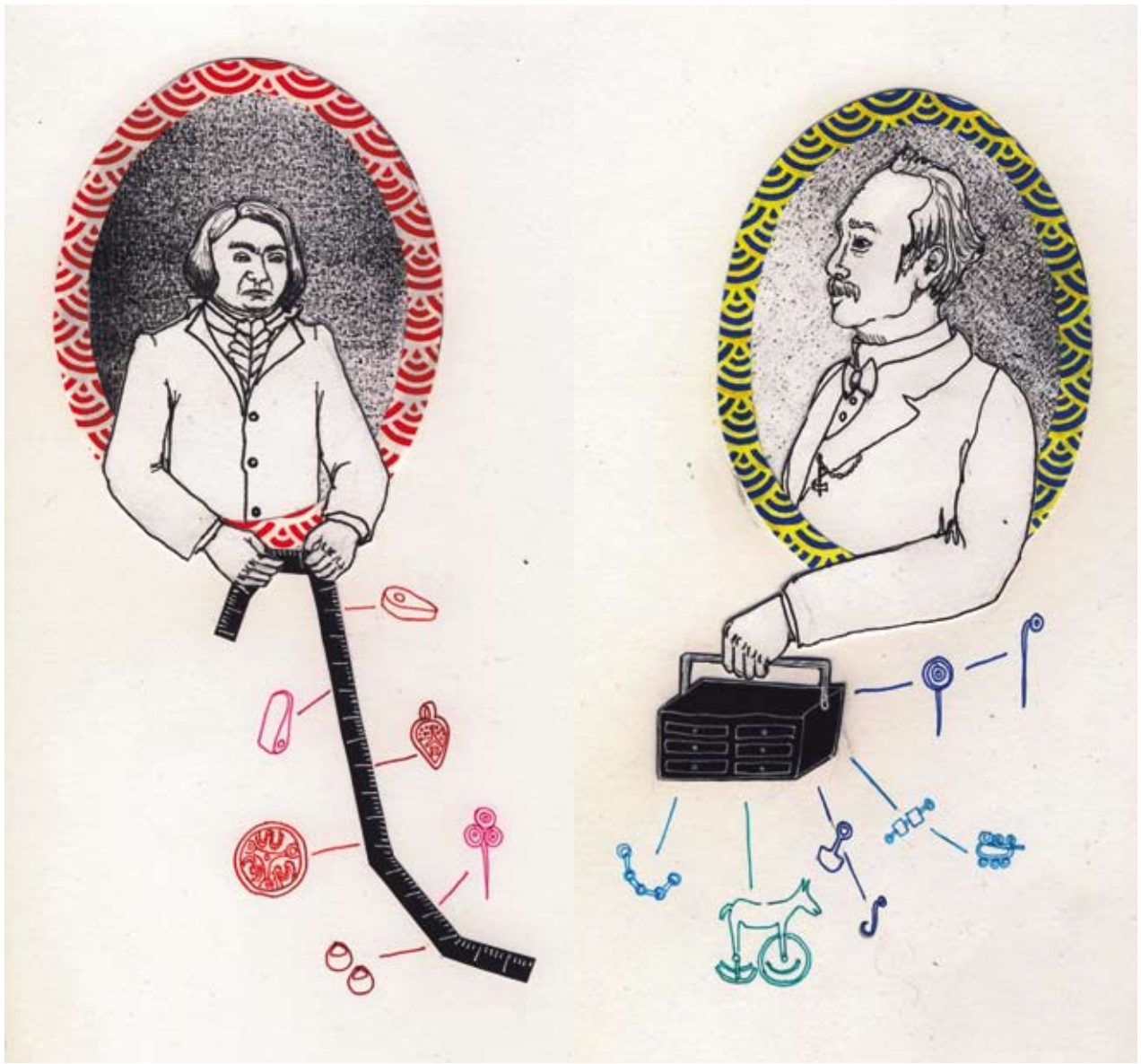


ILLUSTRATION: RAGNI SVENSSON

In 1836, the book *Ledetraad til Nordisk Oldkyndighed* [Guide to knowledge of Nordic Antiquity] appeared. It constituted the beginning of modern archaeology, both in Denmark and internationally. It was written by Christian Jürgensen Thomsen (1788–1865), a well-to-do Copenhagen businessman who was to revolutionize research on antiquity and lay the foundation for archaeology as a modern science – several decades before Charles Darwin developed his theory on biological evolution.

It was Thomsen who organized the royal collection of antiquities in *Prinsens Palais* – that is, the National Museum in Copenhagen. In the course of this work, Thomsen noted that the tools of antiquity were made of different materials: stone, copper/bronze, or iron. He concluded that these could be put in a definite chronological order, according to which the oldest tools were made of stone – that is, dated back to the Stone Age; the second oldest were tools from a period he chose to call the Bronze Age; and, finally, those from the Iron Age.

Today, it is difficult to grasp how revolutionizing – perhaps even revolutionary – these thoughts were in a world ruled by Christian dogma claiming that man was created in the image of God and that the Great Flood, estimated at 4004 BC, was the earliest date for animals' and humans' existence on earth.

After Thomsen, things changed step-by-step, as nineteenth-century Europe's Christian dogmas were forced to give way to the evolving natural sciences and the "modern breakthrough". Archaeology took shape as a modern science, particularly in England and Scandinavia.

In 19th century Sweden, the leading figure in archaeology was Oscar Montelius (1843–1921). In 1885, he published *Om tidsbestämning inom bronsåldern med särskilt avseende på Skandinavien* [Dating in the Bronze Age with special reference to Scandinavia, translated 1986]. This work, which played an important role in making archaeology a science, developed a chronological periodization of the magnificent material culture of the Bronze Age, with its many pieces of weapons and jewelry.

Montelius determined the ages of findings that had been uncovered in a geographical area extending from the Nordic region to Egypt/the Orient. The dating was determined by comparing these findings to the artifacts and pictures uncovered in the Egyptian pyramids, which could be linked to specific historical pharaohs and thus be dated.

Montelius's terminology is still used within Nordic archaeology, and, in principle, his placing of the six phases of the Nordic Bronze Age between 1800 BC and 500 BC still holds. Fundamental to Montelius's work was the idea that development invariably occurred as a result of cultural innovations spreading from the south to the north – starting with the great cultures of the Orient and the Mediterranean and moving up through Northern Europe. Accordingly, Montelius had no doubts about the geographical origin of the rich material of the Nordic Bronze Age culture: it had to come from Central Europe. It is true that southern Scandinavia developed its own unique Bronze Age culture, with locally manufactured weapons and jewelry, but it depended on imported tin and copper, the two components of bronze alloy.

Montelius's position as the giant in European Bronze Age research soon transformed this hypothesis into common knowledge. Since then, the tenet that the Nordic region imported its copper and tin has become dogma. In the case of Denmark, the claim is universally accepted. Paradoxically, this country, one of the few areas in Europe without metal deposits, has the richest Bronze Age culture of all.

In other words, southern Scandinavia was thoroughly integrated into European cultural networks. Meanwhile, Montelius's view led the rest of the Nordic region, where findings of bronze artifacts have been few and far between, to be deemed the passive recipient of bronze from the southern centers, thus constituting pale variants of southern Scandinavian chiefdoms, and thus of little value to the researcher.

No matter how we twist and turn the problem of the Bronze Age's rich and poor regions, metallurgy without doubt was central to the social changes that were taking place around 2000 BC. Nor is there any doubt that the exchange of metals over enormous distances reached new levels during the Bronze

Age, or that the Nordic region was integrated into these exchange networks.

However, the question arises of how to interpret the areas of Scandinavia with few – or no – rich bronze findings. These have been allotted a marginal position, as adding very little to our understanding of the Nordic Bronze Age. In Norway, there was even a discussion about whether it made sense to speak of a real Norwegian Bronze Age. It has, indeed, been claimed that the Norwegian Neolithic Age lasted up until the middle of the last millennium BC, until the onset of the Iron Age.

The truly paradoxical aspect of this representation of cultural history is, however, that the bronze-poor areas of Scandinavia have rich copper deposits. In Norwegian Telemark, for example, there are not only rich copper deposits, but also tin ore and tin stone. In fact, during the 1600s and 1700s, Swedish and Norwegian copper and silver mines dominated the world market. Nevertheless, ever since the days of Montelius, the idea that these local metal resources might have been utilized during the Bronze Age has barely been broached.

It is true that much of the bronze used in the Nordic region was imported. Danish copper and bronze findings follow, by and large, a European pattern. Thus, trace elements from the oldest copper findings, dating back to 3000 BC, come from West Europe/Great Britain and the Alps/Central Europe, while findings from around 2000 BC can be traced to Erzgebirge in Germany and the Czech Republic, and, later, to the eastern Alps.

The matter is, however, more complicated. Not all Danish copper findings can be traced to known European deposits. Where do they come from? The same question can be asked of the Norwegian bronze findings, which likewise contain elements that cannot be traced back to specific European localities. For reasons that are difficult to fathom, this fact has been used to bolster the idea that all metals in Norway must have been imported via southern Scandinavia – despite the fact that neither the metal nor the clay in the molds corresponds to the Danish material.

This problem was resolved in both Norway and Denmark by claiming that remelting led to a trace element composition that follows no known pattern. It

has been argued that in Norway, bronze items were scarce. Since the metal was valuable, the bronze was repeatedly remelted instead of being sacrificed in graves and marshes, as had been done in rich southern Scandinavia. The repeated remelting mixed trace elements from different localities, which means that the analyses correspond to neither that of Danish nor European findings.

This reasoning is based on an argument which is obviously circular. It reaches its conclusion (that the metals are imported) by positing the premise (that the metals are imported). The explanation for this is, of course, that the import dogma had become so completely self-evident that no one even considered the possibility of its being false. Only very recently has a group of younger researchers of the Nordic Bronze Age begun to question Montelius's legacy and to seriously discuss the possibility of local copper production in the European periphery during the Bronze Age. How, they ask, do we know there was no copper extraction, despite the easy accessibility of rich deposits? And if there was none, why not? In Ireland, where there were, until recently, only vague notions as to how long mining had been going on, archaeological excavations uncovered nearly twenty mines dating back to the Bronze Age. No equivalent of this has been found in Norway or Sweden, but neither has anyone looked – yet.

Archaeologists must therefore resort to other methods. Newly conducted trace element analyses of southern Norwegian bronze artifacts have affirmed that they are, for the most part, made from metal types other than those known to stem from Central Europe. Further, they consist primarily of copper which has not been re-melted. This means that these artifacts could, in fact, have been manufactured from locally extracted metals. In Denmark, the copper in a distinctive group of axes, dating back to the time immediately preceding the Bronze Age, has been inferred to be Swedish, which would then establish copper extraction in Sweden as early as in the 3rd millennium BC.

Is this really so hard to believe? No, say the researchers. A series of indirect sources together indicate that extraction of metal had in fact taken place in Scandinavia far back in antiquity. During the Stone Age, Denmark relied on flint as raw material (and had flint mines). Norway and Sweden had, among other things, greenstone and quartzite. The exploitation of these demanded considerable expertise in mining and pyrotechniques, as well as knowledge of stone and mineral deposits – that is, exactly the expertise and knowledge required to extract ore.

Furthermore, the types of rock that were exploited intensely since the early Stone Age are often located right next to the resources that are essential to metallurgy. One even speaks of the existence of a "metallurgic gift package" in those locations where mining has an ancient history. A number of large quarries in Western Norway, in particular, show that the extensive technological competence that existed as early as the Stone Age could easily have been applied to copper processing, as the earliest local know-how of metal production.

If this is correct, and if copper production really can be traced far back into prehistoric times, this means that we will have to re-evaluate the status of the areas in Scandinavia with little bronze – from insignificant and peripheral to central and rich in raw materials, as potential exporters of that copper whose trace elements have so far been explained (away) as the results of remelting.

This might, in turn, mean the demise of Montelius's dogma. The Scandinavian Bronze Age may be approaching a "modern breakthrough", borne forward by progress within the natural sciences – just as it was in the 1800s.

lotte hedeager
Professor of archaeology
at the University of Oslo.

REFERENCES

Lene Melheim, "Kobberimport eller kobberproduksjon?" [Copper Import or Copper Production?], in *Det Nordiske Bronsealdersymposium* [The Nordic Bronze Age symposium] Trondheim 2009

Note. — Previously published in the weekly magazine *Weekendavisen* (Copenhagen).

Small-state realism and the geopolitics of raw materials. An outsider's approach

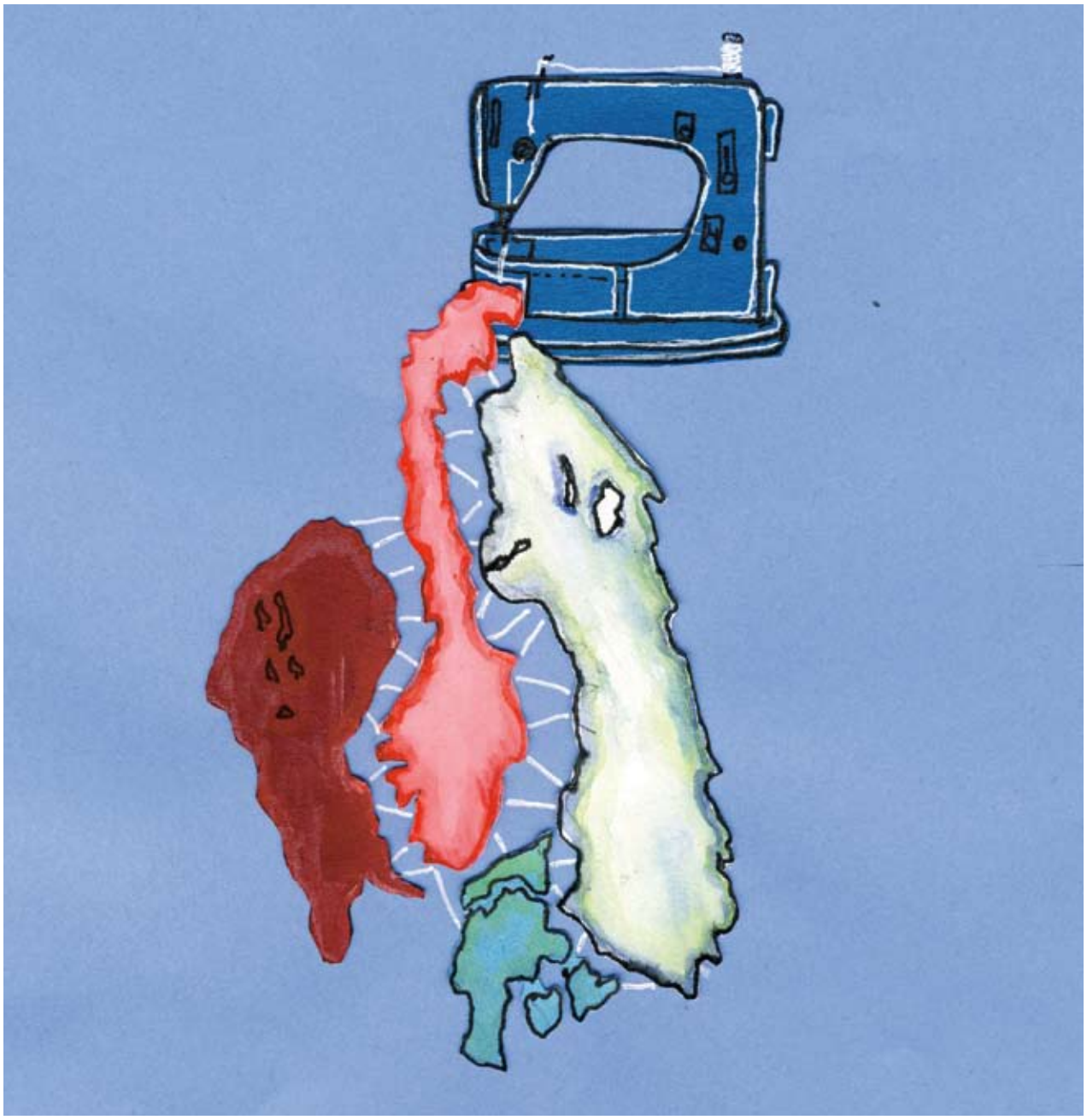


ILLUSTRATION: RAGNI SVENSSON

Einar Maseng
Utsikt over de nordeuropeiske staters utenrikespolitikk i de siste århundrer

[An overview of the Northern European States' foreign policy during the last centuries].
I–III
Oslo: Universitetsforlaget 2005
323, 291, 353 pages

SEVERAL "LANGUAGE GAMES" can be used by those seeking to describe World War II. The war can be interpreted as a battle between Left and Right Hegelians, or between Fascists and Bolsheviks. Alternatively, one can view it as a battle between democracies and national dictatorships. Occasionally, and especially by American historians, it is perceived as a war of extermination, as Hitler's battle against the Jews. It may also be described as a continuation of the European Civil War that broke out either in 1914 or 1917 (the latter is the date provided by German historian Ernst Nolte). This conception is consistent with the Soviet view that, just as the World War I had led to the birth of Soviet Russia, so would the Second lead to the birth of Soviet Europe. This perspective need not be interpreted as imperialist; it can, rather, be seen as resulting from a deterministic view of history.[1] One could also view World War II as a duel between Hitler and Churchill, as John Lukacs does – a view that was probably shared by Christian Günther, Sweden's foreign minister during the war. Einar Maseng sees the war primarily as a battle between one nation with a great naval force and another nation possessed of a strong ground force. A complete edition of Maseng's great three-volume work on Nordic security and foreign politics has now appeared, published under the direction of Lars Mjøset.

Maseng was a Norwegian diplomat who lived from 1880 to 1972. He was forced to leave the diplomatic service after the war, when Tryggve Lie, foreign minister to the Norwegian government in exile in London (and later first Secretary-General of the United Nations), had accused him of either having been disloyal or of having shown poor judgment. The grounds for Lie's accusations were strikingly flimsy. Among other things, Maseng was supposed to have hung a portrait of Vidkun Quisling on the wall of the Norwegian embassy in Moscow. This portrait, however, seems to have been a relic from the 1920s, when Quisling's work for the Nansen Aid Program had made him a great hero in Russian eyes. Maseng's habit of giving philosophical lectures had also provided space for misunderstandings. He was, for example, perceived as pro-German in his discussions on military strategy, a subject matter that sometimes makes it natural to "disregard the ideological factor" – to quote Swedish law professor Karl Olivecrona's explanation for his pro-German stance during World War II.

MASENG DID IN FACT obtain redress – that is, he was placed on the unattached list but avoided a dishonorable dismissal. Nonetheless, he chose to remain in Sweden, whither he had come in 1941 after the German attack on Russia, as a representative of the Norwegian government in exile. Even Lie acknowledged that there was no doubt Maseng was a good Norwegian patriot; but he had made himself – or the circumstances had made him – politically impossible.

Maseng spent the last decades of his life in Vallentuna, close to Knivsta, between the cities of Stockholm and Uppsala. His large three-volume work is now, for the first time, available in its entirety, with a detailed introduction and postscript written by the publisher. The two first volumes had been published in the 1960s.

LITTLE IS KNOWN OF MASENG'S private life. He was married four times and had four daughters and one son. He was a military officer when he entered diplomatic service. Moreover, he was a founding father of the Norwegian division of *Föreningen Norden* (known in English as The Norden Association, or sometimes The Nordic Association). His analysis of the European state system has gained new relevance after *die Wende*, when "the Second World" (that is, the Russian Empire; the concept may

Continued. Small-state realism and the geopolitics of raw materials

SVEN ELIAESON
Defended his doctoral thesis on Max Weber, in 1982 in Uppsala. An associate professor of political science at Stockholm University (1996) and a recurring visiting professor of sociology at the Centre for Social Studies and Graduate School for Social Research at the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw (CSS/GSSR at IFiS PAN). In addition, research professor at Uppsala University's Department of Sociology, engaged in a research project entitled "Gunnar Myrdal as a Weberian and European Public Intellectual". His principal monograph is *Max Weber's Methodologies* (2002). Among anthologies he has edited are *Building Democracy and Civil Society East of the Elbe* (2006) and, with Nadezhda Georgieva, *New Europe: Growth to Limits?* (forthcoming). Has been a visiting scholar at German and American universities and research centers.

alternatively refer to the so-called BRIC countries) imploded and new, as yet unknown, constellations began to emerge. Maseng can be seen as a natural successor to Stein Rokkan and Immanuel Wallerstein, as Mjøset himself points out. It was the legendary sociologist and resistance fighter Arvid Brodersen (1904-1996) who inspired Mjøset to reissue Maseng's work.

MASENG BASES HIS WORK on the assumption that had the Nordic countries been united, they would have been powerful enough to maintain credible neutrality vis-à-vis the great powers – something of which Norway, in 1940, was obviously incapable. Germany had no real rational interest in tying up several hundred thousand men in Norway, Maseng argued, as long as the iron ore deliveries from Kiruna via Narvik ran according to agreement.

Maseng dedicated the last 27 years of his life to the analysis of the prerequisites of Nordic unity and of the shared neutrality of the Nordic countries, both made impossible by Norway's "Atlantic turn", a turn that also cost Maseng his job. During the 1948-1949 discussions concerning a Scandinavian defensive alliance, the Norwegian stance was that all of Scandinavia should enter NATO jointly.

THROUGHOUT HISTORY, the Dutch, the British, the Russians, and the Hanseatic League had all managed successfully to block Nordic steps towards unity. There is, for example, the Sound naval battle of October 29, 1658, when the Dutch fleet saved Denmark from total collapse. Nor do we know how history might have been changed had the Union of Kalmar (1397-1523) endured. A united Nordic region would have exercised a virtual monopoly on some of the raw materials that were essential to naval powers. If, after the 1807 Russian-French agreement in Tilsit, Swedish King Gustav IV Adolf had not made the mistake of confirming the British-Swedish alliance, the British terror attack on Copenhagen would scarcely have been either possible or likely. As is well known, the policies pursued by Sweden's royal "crackpot", which ran contrary to the recommendations of his own advisers, initiated a domino effect which ended in what became known as the "small-Sweden solution" of 1809; that is, the Finnish part of the Swedish Kingdom was separated from the realm, and an unhappy "shotgun marriage" took place between Sweden and Norway (1814-1905).

One might object that Finland's special predicament is, perhaps, less than central to Maseng's reasoning. Nevertheless, his analysis of the Nordic state system does shake the otherwise standard acceptance of the diversified solution to Nordic security issues, reached after the breakdown of the 1948-1949 defense alliance negotiations, as necessarily beneficial. In this context, it is important to remember the "presence through absence" of Finland, which had a well-trained corps of officers and plenty of conquered Russian weaponry. As late as 1940, there had been quasi-official discussions of a possible Swedish-Finnish union. For instance, a commission had been given Östen Undén, specialist on international law, to investigate whether it was consistent with Sweden's constitution that Stockholm's joint foreign minister be a Finnish citizen.[2] In general, one can say that Sweden and Finland – for better or worse – have a historical *Schicksalsgemeinschaft* that is out of harmony with Norway's weak defense and pro-British orientation, both of which make Norway dependent on British military assistance.[3] Marshall Mannerheim's unexpectedly successful defense on the Karelian Isthmus in the summer of 1944 affected the entire Nordic state system; had events played themselves out differently, the security predicament of both Sweden and the Nordic region in general would have been far more troubling.

IT IS GENERALLY recognized that, in order to attain a realistic perspective on the course of a war, one needs a map and one needs information concerning strategic raw materials. One can term this the return of geopolitics – in Maseng's case, with emphasis on the geo-strategy of raw materials.

Maseng's small-state realism is used in a long perspective – half a millennium – and his primary question is why the Nordic region is permanently split, something that can be seen as a historical anomaly. Kristian "Tyrant", the last Danish king to rule a united "North", takes on the guise of an unsuccessful hero in his fight against Sweden's secession in the early 1500s.

One cannot do Maseng justice in a few short pages. But I will mention some of the points where his work has changed long-accepted conceptions, providing great "extra value". There are several areas where Maseng has made me, at least, revise or reconsider cherished and ingrained conceptions.

This is especially true when it comes to the Nordic defense policy. Consider the "Nordic Bridge", which includes Norway as full NATO member, Denmark as NATO member but without NATO troops on its territory, Sweden as a non-aligned country with its own strong defense, and, finally, Finland's geographically conditioned "special relation" to its large eastern neighbor, a neighbor that could unilaterally demand consultations when it felt threatened by West German revanchism. The dominant doctrine is that this "Nordic Bridge" was entirely in line with Sweden's individual security-political rationality, as well as with collective European rationality, all directed towards decreasing Cold War tension in North Europe. In this perspective, the collapse of negotiations concerning a common Scandinavian defense alliance constitutes a blessing. However, this conclusion does not affect Maseng's claim that had a Scandinavian defense alliance been in existence *before* World War II, the Nordic region might have been spared the great catastrophe. (Though, as is in the nature of things, this type of counterfactual historical assertion hardly lives up to Karl Popper's falsification criteria.)

MASENG'S WORK IS, moreover, the first to offer an account that allows me fully to grasp the important role played by the Sound and the Danish Belts as a sort of buffer between Germany, Europe's leading continental power, and the efforts made by Great Britain to prevent any one power from gaining continental hegemony – a principle that has guided Great Britain's foreign policy at least since the "recasting of alliances" of the 1740s. It is also worth noting that Nazi Germany's occupation of Norway in fact was a successful pre-emptive strike, as the British were "lurking among the reeds" – having, only a few days previously, and in violation of international law, mined Norwegian waters. Their unexpected and bold maneuver simply enabled the Germans to get there before the British. That the English would doubtlessly have been far more welcome as unbidden guests is another matter. Presumably, if the Danes had had the army necessary to engage the Germans for just a few days, *Weserübung* would scarcely have succeeded, for the *Wehrmacht* would not, in that case, have controlled the Danish airfields.

MASENG LIKEWISE POINTS out that the Finnish Winter War (December 1939-March 1940) actually broke out because Finnish politicians, motivated by domestic political concerns, refused to aid Russia in its efforts to secure Leningrad against attack. Mannerheim had recommended Finnish concessions, arguing that the bridgeheads in question were of far less strategic importance to Finland than to Russia, and were, moreover, almost impossible to defend should armed conflict break out. Finland certainly did the right thing in fighting for independence once the

country had been attacked. One may compare its fate to that of the Baltic States, which lost a large proportion of their populations and had to deal, in the end, with a large, irredentist Russian minority. War does sometimes pay off, even if it entails great sacrifices. But the Winter War could have been avoided by granting the Soviet Union fairly cheap concessions. To try to give the Soviet Union a leasehold on Hogland, Hanko, or Porkala in the Gulf of Finland would not have involved any great alternative outlay. But young nations tend to be particularly cocky. It is a controversial issue, and Finnish diplomat Max Jakobson points out that there are few examples of a sovereign state relinquishing territory without subsequent, long-term harmful consequences. Nor was granting a Russian leasehold even to some distant islets in the Gulf of Finland a good election-winning tactic. The Finns had missed their opportunity in the spring of 1939, when Litvinov, the Soviet foreign minister, made a modest proposal for border adjustments on the Karelian Isthmus.

Since Russia has ice-free access to the North Atlantic via the Kola Peninsula, Maseng gives no credence to Cold War scenarios according to which Russian troops would rush to control the strategic Norwegian coastline as a step towards gaining control of the so-called GIUK-gap. (This denotes the gap bounded by Greenland, Iceland and Great Britain of which, presumably, both the US and the USSR would attempt to gain control of at the initial stage of a Third World War, in order to facilitate transfers of troops and supplies.) The envisioned maneuver would, it was thought, lead to confrontations between Russian armed forces and NATO paratroopers in the area around Jämtland and Trøndelag, in Sweden and Norway respectively. It is historically more reasonable, Maseng argues, to assume that Russian imperialist thrusts would be directed against Afghanistan, the Dardanelles, and the Sea of Japan – scenarios that have been confirmed by postwar events.

MASENG REFERS TO the fact that Norway and Denmark managed to maintain armed neutrality during World War I as an argument that the same would have been possible during World War II – *if* the Nordic people had united in a credible, that is, well-armed, neutral bloc. Maseng advocates something that Mjøset terms small-state realism, a position resembling the one taken by Swedish economist Gunnar Myrdal in two articles published in the social-democratic journal *Tiden* in the spring of 1945.[4] Advocates of small-state realism may reach different conclusions, however. It is consistent both with the concept of a Scandinavian defense alliance and with the notion of a sort of Nordic Ark, able to function as a Cold War bridge and a buffer zone. This distinction depends on how those watching the elephants dance judge Scandinavia's chances of remaining in the audience's seats, not least by juggling the great powers' demands when it comes to trade in strategic raw materials such as iron ore – or, today, oil.

TABLE. MASENG'S PERIODIZATION OF SEA POWER DOMINANCE

Sea power (hegemon)	Land power (challenger)	Secondary land power (assists hegemon)	Global war	Ends	Restructuring treaty
Britain/Netherlands	France	German States/Russia	War of Spanish Succession	1713	Utrecht
Britain	France	German States/Russia	Napoleonic Wars	1814	Vienna
Britain	Germany	France	World War I	1918	Versailles
Britain /US	Germany	France/Russia	World War II	1945	Yalta
US	USSR	(EU/Japan)	Cold War	1989	(none)

Note. – Global wars and restructuring treaties, as well as information on the periods after 1918, have been added.

MASENG MENTIONS ship-mast timber as of particular strategic importance in the past; tar is another material whose importance is often forgotten today. The guiding principle is that great nations are cynical in their dealings with the small. Small nations must look, first and foremost, to their own interests. In Munich 1938, British Prime Minister Chamberlain gave a practical demonstration of this principle, with well-known consequences for (among others) Czechoslovakia and Finland. Small-state realism is, however, fundamentally paradoxical. Its principles are based on a hard-boiled Hobbesian understanding of the relationship between states – while, at the same time, acknowledging that any advances in an international legal system is to all small states' advantage. The fostering of such a legal system is a very slow process, with its roots in Grotius's times and, thereafter, the initiative taken by the Russian tsar to establish the International Court of Justice at The Hague; the UN, IMF, and the World Bank have constituted additional way stations.

Maseng also teaches us that the Norwegian-Swedish Union might have survived had not, at the time of its dissolution, Sweden been dominated by the interests of the nobility and upper classes. Norway was, at that time, a more advanced political society than Sweden, whose democratic breakthrough came relatively late.

One detail in Maseng's book that is likely to irritate patriotic Swedes is his odd habit of using the term "Sweden-Finland", a country that has never existed. The Finns were, until the small-Sweden solution of 1808-1809, good Swedes. Two ethnicities, Finns and Swedes, have contributed to the creation of both Finland and Sweden, as Swedish historian Erik Lönnroth made clear.

If one wishes to increase one's insights into security politics, it pays to listen to cultural geographers, military men, and diplomats. Sociologists, political scientists, and public pundits are of marginal utility – indeed, they are often outright destructive of knowledge. One makes certain reservations, here, for modern game theory, which is of significant use when it comes to explaining courses of events that are otherwise difficult to grasp, such as the Cuban Missile Crisis (a subject on which Maseng, however, does not dwell). Natural resources and the information infrastructure, the character of the landscape, and the country's production capacity are decisive factors. The political level, however, is probably important as well; good citizen morale is essential if a country is to assert itself in what is, basically, a Hobbesian battle among nations, a battle that is gradually diminishing in ferocity, as a system of international norms emerges. Ancient concepts such as *Standort*, *Sitten*, and *Verfassung* are still relevant.

IT IS NO COINCIDENCE that Switzerland and Sweden were the only countries capable of upholding their neutrality during World War II – that is, apart from Spain, Portugal and Ireland, countries at the outskirts. Armed people in hilly terrain hold certain good cards, even when they are up against aggressors with greater resources. Germany could, obviously, have occupied Sweden, but this would have been at a high alternative cost. Troops urgently needed elsewhere – such as in securing access to oil resources in Baku – would have been tied down in Sweden.[5] And had the Carpathians stretched in a north-south rather than an east-west direction, the Poles could have slept more easily. Had Lapland's iron ore resources been located in Lekebergslagen in Närke, in central Sweden, the Germans would not have had to risk the bold *Weserübung* – they could have taken the train or at least gone over land. With the USA's in-

Continued. Small-state realism and the geopolitics of raw materials

volvement in the war, which, in reality, was begun in the summer of 1941, and when the American productive resources were placed, through lend-lease, at the disposal of the British, no crystal ball was needed to predict the Allies' victory. Maseng's approach bears many resemblances to what we today call resource analysis: the stronger economy eventually wins out, a lesson taken from the American Civil War. The need to secure energy supplies, without which the war and the economy would grind to a halt, sheds light on the rationale behind many strategic decisions. Seen from this perspective, indeed, it can hardly be rational to start a war as long as it is cheaper to buy much-needed raw materials on the world market – something Gunnar Myrdal has pointed out in a number of interviews.[6]

I HAVE NOT EVEN come close to doing Maseng full justice. Historical demography is a theme omitted here, but it should not be ignored when planning long-term security policies. Maseng's guiding principle is his loyalty to the botched Norwegian policy of armed neutrality. In his opinion, the Germans made a mistake when they accepted Major Quisling's self-appointment as leader of the Norwegian Government (this was done without consulting Berlin). It is, seen superficially, somewhat of a paradox in a geo-strategic perspective that Norway's exile government chose to ally with precisely the government whose war planning – during the so-called Phony War and the Winter War – had openly included plans to infringe on Norwegian territorial integrity, and who, by early April, had actually begun to act on these plans. Had not Sweden denied France and Great Britain the right to transport troops to Finland, the sweeping domino effects would have included war between the Western Powers and the USSR, which at this time was allied with Germany. Maseng attributes a decisive role to British influence on Norwegian intellectual life, as well, of course, to the fact that after the German invasion, there was no alternative.

One might argue that Norway's misfortune was self-inflicted, which is not to excuse Germany's attack – in defiance of international law – on April 9, 1940, nor the Germans' brutal occupation policy, which included the use of collective punishment. Reichskommissar Terboven was no bundle of charm. On the other hand, faults in Norway's pre-war diplomacy combined with the Western Allies' plans to stop the export of Swedish iron ore through northern Norway *explains* what in German phrasing and English vernacular became the German decision to "assume guardianship over Norway's neutrality", a neutrality which Norway, given its weak military, could not guard itself. Maseng's version of small-state realism has had little influence on Norway's foreign policy, but in Sweden it became a guiding principle. Mjøset does not offer a detailed account of disagreements among Maseng, Nygaardsvold, and Halvdan Koht (prime and foreign ministers in Norway immediately before the German invasion). Instead, he lets Maseng summarize the situation:

> **Had the Norwegian defense been at its post and, together with Sweden, let England clearly understand that it would defend its neutrality against *every* aggressor – as everyone knew it would have done during World War I – then the Western Powers, with their limited ground forces, would not have been capable of initiating a landing enterprise. Further, England's general politics would not have allowed it to fight and defeat a smaller nation that it knew was bent on upholding its independence. – Germany would then in 1940 – in its own interest – have left the Nordic people in peace. And later the war developed in a manner that made it ever more difficult for Germany to reserve forces for secondary theaters of operations.**[7]

ONE MAY ADD THAT security-policy doctrines have short lives, and never constitute universal recipes. When it comes to relations between states, nothing is permanent.[8] Small states are, in times of unrest, like ships on stormy seas, little bark-boats in a spring brook; it takes *virtu* combined with *fortuna* and with lucky timing to stay afloat, to avoid being pulled into conflicts raging in one's immediate environment. It is often calm in the center of the tornado, but a tornado moves. Sweden was in a very exposed position during the winter of 1940, at least up until June 1941.[9]

As Gunnar Hägglöf writes:

> **Is it not a habit that we Swedes have gotten into, and it is actually not found in any other nation, namely discussing foreign politics as if they were a matter of juridical concepts. It is seen as not entirely correct to speak of the balance-of-power, the number of army corps, the distance by plane across the Baltic Sea, or the question of Sweden's ability to defend itself if the Russians had taken Finland. This is, of course, the sort of thing that ought to be studied and discussed within the Advisory Council on Foreign Affairs, rather than all those Geneva Conventions, which have never been anything but "scraps of paper".**[10]

A WEAKNESS OF ALL security politics is that one can only prepare oneself for probable scenarios – while unlikely scenarios are far from uncommon. Tsarist Russia's defeat by the Japanese at Tshushima 1905 facilitated Norway's secession from Sweden, to mention just one example. Another case is Schabowski's interpretation of "kurzfristig" on November 9, 1989, an interpretation whose domino effects remain difficult to fully understand today. [11]

I claimed, above, that cultural geographers, diplomats (who stand for the "first defense")[12], and military men have more to offer than do, for instance, political scientists as far as the cognitive *mapping* of an outside threat, and how to avoid it, are concerned. Maseng is, however, a historian, albeit a historian with macro-theoretical aspirations. Long time-lines and historical relativism are probably a great help in the formulation of theoretically grounded predictions. Historians are, however, doomed to hindsight.[13] The course of events leading up to an incident is turned into an object of idiographic accounts; a juridical pattern is used in order to assign responsibility. It is far easier to predict that an incident will take place than it is to predict when it will happen. In 1957, during a journey in Central Asia, Gunnar Myrdal wrote a long unpublished double-letter to his wife, in which he identified the tensions that more than thirty years later would lead to the Russian empire's implosion.[14] Actually American sociologist Randall Collins predicted this in a book written in 1986 (*Weberian Sociological Theory*), but does not give any definite date (which Myrdal does not attempt to determine). Some political scientists were still predicting, in the late 1980s, that the USSR facing the new millennium was stronger than ever.

sven eliaeson

1 The scenario in 1918–1922 was not unlike that of the early Cold War years. Had not Marshall Pilsudski defeated a much larger Russian army outside of Warsaw ("The Miracle at Vistula") in August 1920, a Bolshevik Europe extending all the way to the Rhine would have been a likely outcome, given the revolutionary currents in, for example, Saxony and the Ruhr. – See Norman Davies, *White Eagle, Red Star: The Polish-Soviet War 1919–20*, London 2003.

2 It appears that the initiative to discuss this union was taken by Major Svante Påhlson of Rottneros, where the source material would also be kept. See Wilhelm M. Carlgren, *Svensk utrikespolitik 1939–1945* [Swedish foreign poli-

cy 1939–1945], Stockholm 1973, pp. 220 ff.

3 In the German debate, the term *Schicksalsgemeinschaft* has conservative connotations, but it can also be used purely cognitively. In the case of Finland/Sweden, we may just as well speak in terms of "communicating vessels". – See also Torkel Jansson, *Rikssprängningen som kom av sig* [The realm break-up that drifted off course], Stockholm 2009.

4 By a fortunate coincidence I discovered that the article by Professor Bruce Hopper in *Foreign Affairs* to which Myrdal refers was ghost-written by Swedish senior diplomat Gunnar Hägglöf. See Gunnar Hägglöf, *Diplomat: Memoirs of a Swedish Envoy in London, Paris, Berlin, Moscow & Washington*, London, Sydney & Toronto 1971, p. 203. Graham Green wrote the book's preface.

5 According to information conveyed to the Swedish banker Jacob Wallenberg by his good friend Carl Goerdeler, Germany did in fact have plans for an assault on Sweden as late as in February 1942 – plans that were given up because it involved a force of 600,000, which could hardly be spared from Russia, where problems were mounting. – See Gunnar Hägglöf, *Var försiktig i Berlin: Möten med Hitlermotståndare under krigsåren* [Be careful in Berlin: Meetings with Hitler opponents during the war years], Stockholm 1986, p. 124.

6 This is a recurring theme in a majority of the interviews preserved in the Labour Movement Archive and Library (ARAB) in Stockholm, for example in James Angresano's interviews, which have also been published.

7 Einar Maseng, "Hvem var det som dro Norge inn i krigsulykken?" [Who drew Norway into the misery of war?] (*Nationen*, April 26, 1955.) Quoted, here, from Mjøset's "Introduksjon: Einar Masengs politiske biografi" [Introduction: Einar Maseng's political biography], pp. xlviii-xlix, Maseng 2005, vol. I.

8 Here, the relationship between Denmark and Sweden is made into somewhat of a feel-good story, with an account of how the two former mortal enemies became, during the 1800s, good neighbors and put aside old conflicts. – In 1809, Denmark and Russia could have eliminated Sweden and forced through a Polish solution. Such plans did in fact exist.

9 According to Hägglöf, Foreign Minister Günther, on hearing about Germany's assault on the USSR, is to have exclaimed: "One has to have luck at least once."

10 Gunnar Hägglöf (under the pseudonym Frank Burns), *Paradis för oss* [Paradise for us], Stockholm 1952, p. 247.

11 Journalists once asked Harold Macmillan what was most difficult to handle in politics, to which he answered: "Events, boys, events." History contains a long series of fateful coincidences.

12 "First defense" is also the title of Swedish diplomat Håkan Berggren's authoritative work *Första försvar: Diplomati från ursprung till UD* [First defense: diplomacy from its origin to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs], Stockholm 2008.

13 Like the fictional characters Backlund and Stoltz, two members of the "leisured classes" who in Birger Sjöberg's novel *Kvartetten som sprängdes* [The quartet that broke up] stand on the beach, commenting on what the lifesavers ought to have done, with shouts and "good" advice.

14 Available in Myrdal's *Nachlaß* at ARAB.

Keeping an eye on a neighbor.
A German look on Denmark

Bernd Henningsen
Dänemark

C H Beck. 2009
229 pages
(From the series: Die Deutschen und ihre Nachbarn)

NOWHERE ELSE CAN ONE find the kind of thankfulness that exists in Denmark, writes Bernd Henningsen in his book about the Danes, their culture, and their mentality. People are thanked for a recent dinner or party, and are expected to be thanked for the food. "Say hello to grandma." – "Yes, thanks." "Thank you for noticing." "What will it be this time?" – "A Pilsner, thank you." Denmark is, in sum, a thanking society, where, indeed, thanking occurs not infrequently as an intensifier to itself: "Thanks thanks." This, like so many other external characteristics, is something Danes share with other Scandinavians. That it becomes especially clear in Danish society may depend on the fact that in Denmark, there is a lot to be thankful for; for the Danes are, according to all available survey data, the happiest people in the world. They feel at peace with themselves and their social and economic system. They are satisfied with their material abundance, their functioning labor market, their healthy public finances – and their high taxes. Self-satisfied, a foreigner would say. Bernd Henningsen, born in the historic border area between Denmark and Germany, has no problem with that word.[1]

HENNINGSEN, A CULTURAL historian working in Berlin, with a research focus on Northern Europe, has published a book in a new series of short texts on Germany's neighbors. Helmut Schmidt and Richard von Weizsäcker, former Chancellor, and, respectively, former President of the Federal Republic of Germany, are the patrons of the series. The contemporary historical context, of course, is that Germany – surrounded, or as it is sometimes said, "encircled", by many neighboring peoples – has a great need to understand and learn about the social climate and political culture in its immediate vicinity. But it is also without a doubt true that the surrounding peoples are interested in how they are perceived and assessed by the state which again may take itself to be able to set the general direction that Europe shall take, if not also, in a formal sense, to be the leader of Europe. Henningsen's outlook is German, and it is normative. The European project to which Germany has committed itself after its defeat in the war bears fruit for everyone. Those who do not want to bite into the apple need to explain themselves. In Henningsen's view, the Danes have much to explain.

IN DANES, THERE IS A mildness of disposition that has been driven too far, says Henningsen. They translate *sophrosyne*, moderation, with mediocrity. The truth lies in the middle, extreme accomplishments do not impress, the competitive spirit is not particularly prominent in social life. Restraint in a Dane can be the same as laziness, yet still not be regarded as a vice. "When a Tuborg tastes best?" the down-and-out man asks his friend. "Every time." This collective declaration of satisfaction, or even love of pleasure, prevents the Danish people from dealing with serious matters, the Union for example. Denmark is the most reluctant of all EU countries. In several referendums a majority have rapped politicians on the knuckles, forced exemptions and concessions from Union commitments. The Faroe Islands, a remaining possession in the North Sea, chose at the time of Danish entry in 1972 to remain outside; Greenland, with overwhelming voter support, decided at the time of the achievement of autonomy to withdraw.

What annoys Bernd Henningsen in Danes' view of the EU is that they simply expect economic benefits from it. They joined because they had to – because the United Kingdom, their main trading partner, won entrance. They cannot leave the Union, even if they wanted to, because of concern for their business relations with the Continent, particularly Germany. This is simply to cherry pick, or to use the more expansive Swedish expression, "to pick the raisins out of the cake". No responsibility is taken for anyone other than oneself. It is a "lovely country", as we hear in one of the country's two (!) national anthems, the language spoken is considered to be beautiful, although not even the closest, neighboring kindred peoples can understand it fully, people do not focus on realizing great works, since the greatness of the country lies in the past, where it rests, quite comfortable and uncomplicated. The "de-imperialization" of the Danish kingdom – which once controlled the Baltic Sea and large parts of the British Isles, where the "Danelaw" was in force – has created among the Danes of later years a kind of pathos of defeat, a patriotism of loss, which is not the same as listless-

Continued.
Keeping an eye on a neighbor

ANDERS BJÖRNSSON
Editor-in-chief of Baltic Worlds. Has contributed to Nils Erik Forsgård, *Maktbalans och stormaktskrig 1722–1814: Krigen om Östersjön V* [Balance of power and Great Power wars 1722–1814: The wars for the Baltic Sea V] (2008), edited the anthology *Skandinaviska vägval: Det framtida norsk-svenska samarbetet* [Scandinavian routes: The future of Norwegian-Swedish cooperation] (2008) together with Bjørn Magnus Berge, and published the book *Palatset som Finland räddade* [The Palace that Finland rescued] (2009).

ness or indifference; but it is indeed difficult to impress a Dane!

NOW, BERND HENNINGSEN has not lampooned the Danes here.[2] On the contrary, Henningsen's method is both empathetic and sympathetic. Thus he can simultaneously be honest and unreserved. He recognizes the many features of the Danish society that must arouse admiration and perhaps also are worthy of imitation. The Danish welfare system is flexible and decentralized. If "The Law of Jante" – according to the Danish-Norwegian novelist Aksel Sandemose's dictate, that "you should not believe that you are anything" – has become something of the "goals" clause of the Kingdom of Denmark, and rules out feats in the present, it has also given rise to a healthy pragmatism and a consensual atmosphere in society as a whole. Despite the kingdom's having been amputated in war after war, there is very little that has broken in the actual core of the country. There is an institutional inertia or continuity that the Danes have been able to fall back on even in adversity – they have allowed themselves to be thoughtful instead of getting carried away. Mediocrity is the philosophy of the middle class, and Denmark the showpiece society of the bourgeois middle-class.

IN SOME SENSE, Denmark is still Scandinavia's bridge to Europe, though perhaps less so than when there was no fixed link between Skåne and Zealand (Danish: *Sjælland*). Traveling from Malmö to Copenhagen can be a circuitous route for those trying to reach the Continent; on the other hand, that large parts of the Skåne landscape have been integrated into the Danish labor market has become obvious and can be seen as a return to a previous state of normalcy. In his little book, Henningsen makes it clear to the reader the kind of richness Danish culture – in particular during the 1800s, the period of state bankruptcy and humiliating retreats – has constantly been able to offer: the two golden ages, with Søren Kierkegaard and Georg Brandes as fixed stars, belong without question to the common European cultural heritage. And yet: Kierkegaard published his important works under pseudonyms, and Brandes, as a Jew, went into a multiyear exile in Berlin. Were they too great for the ordinary Dane? Johann Friedrich Struensee, a German from the then Danish city of Altona, had, in his capacity as the head of government, tried to make the country modern in the spirit of the Enlightenment freedom for one and a half years in the early 1770s, but was tortured and killed by the forces of Reaction, his body publicly displayed. Struensee is Henningsen's man – a strong and energetic European who takes time by the forelock.

And in the same way, Denmark, in Henningsen's interpretative framework, is the isles of missed opportunities. A man is, in a Peer Gyntesque sense, "sufficient unto oneself", and that will do fine. It goes quite a long way. That Denmark, perhaps Europe's most demilitarized country, has provided the military alliance NATO's recent Secretary General – *das lässt tief blicken*. This book helps us keep our eyes open.

anders björnsson

1 According to data from the OECD, Denmark has fallen on the list of prosperous countries and has been surpassed in recent years by Sweden, Australia, Austria, Ireland, and the Netherlands. The country is now in eleventh place. The main reason for the decline is low labor productivity in the economy. (*Dagens Nyheter*, December 24, 2009.)

2 Far from all commentators are as averse to the Danish EU-profile as Henningsen. Anglo-Saxon praise was received by the Danes in connection with the 2009 spring elections to the European Parliament. *The Economist* praised the Danish model for strengthening the influence of the national parliament in the decision-making of the EU, namely, summoning to the Folketing (the Danish Parliament) "government ministers every Friday to give them mandate for the following week's meetings of national governments in the EU's Council of Ministers. If Danish ministers wish to depart from this mandate in the course of negotiations in Brussels, they have to consult the Folketing's European committee by telephone." (June 6, 2009)

ILLUSTRATION: RAGNI SVENSSON

A new textbook.

I.

THE 1990S WERE a golden age for professional historians in Russia. Various "veterans" of the 1960s "thaw" (*ottepel'*) resurfaced with publications on subjects about which they could not have published anything during the paralyzing "stagnation" (*zastoi*) ushered in by Brezhnev's inept re-Stalinization efforts in 1965. Following the primarily journalistic efforts of the *glasnost* era, archive-based research began to be published

Andrei Zubov (ed. and author)
Istoriia Rossii XX vek. 1894–1939
Istoriia Rossii XX vek. 1939–2007

[The history of Russia: The 20th century. 1894–1939; The history of Russia: The 20th century. 1939–2007]
Moscow: Astrel 2009
1,023+829 pages

Reflections on the historiography of a reactionary era

on a large scale, and the former historiography was revised in field after field. In contrast to the predictions of some analysts in the West, the historians in post-Soviet Russia demonstrated commitment and enthusiasm as they came to terms with the mythologization of the country's past. This pertained initially to reassessments of, and new input regarding, the history of Stalinism.

By tradition, most Russian historians are dedicated professional specialists in a single problem area during the bulk of their active research careers. The topic that they defend in their doctoral dissertation (*doktorskaia dissertatsia*) serves as the basis for further research in the same area. Strictly specialized Russian researchers have gradually begun writing generalizing and synthesizing works as well. Published archive documents in source volumes have expanded the opportunities for basic research. The so-called archive revolution and opening up to the outside world have been significant in helping them acquire new knowledge about the history of tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union. It has been customary for the last fifteen years to invite foreign historians to publish in the leading Russian professional journals. Most of the leading historians from Western Europe, Japan and the United States who specialize in Russian history have seen their work translated and included in the Russian historical debate. In the early 1990s, the fundamental works by Edward H. Carr, Robert Conquest and Richard Pipes, to mention only a few eminent scholars, appeared in mass print runs. In recent years, the popular histories on Stalinism, Gulag, and the World War II by Simon Montefiore, Anne Applebaum, and Anthony Beevor have likewise been translated, albeit without making the same impression in Russia as in Western Europe and the US. In the leading Russian publishing companies for historical works, e.g. Rosspen and AIRO-XXI, the renowned scholars Nicolas Werth, Jörg

Continued. Reflections on the historiography of a reactionary era

LENNART SAMUELSON
Associate professor of economic history at the Stockholm Institute of Transitional Economics (SITE), Stockholm School of Economics. His recent research projects concern the history of the Soviet military-industrial complex from the 1920s to the Cold War era, including a case-study monograph, *Tankograd*, which is based on archival research on the defense industries in the Cheliabinsk region (published in Swedish by SNS in 2007, in Russian by Rosspen in 2009 and in English by Palgrave Macmillan in 2011). In the academic year 2010–2011, he is Waern visiting professor at the Department of History of the University of Gothenburg.

Baberowski, Marc Junge and Andrea Graziosi have regularly published translations of their books. The economic historians Robert W. Davies, Mark Harrison and Paul Gregory have, together with Russians scholars and PhD students, carried out several research projects on the Stalinist command economy and the Gulag camp system.

Agrarian historian Nikolai Ivnitskii (born 1922) offers an illustrative example of what first became possible only under post-Soviet conditions. Only in the wake of *glasnost* could Ivnitskii resume his research on forced collectivization in the 1930s, a subject he had begun to research back in the 1960s, before being stopped. In his first monograph in 1972 on "class warfare in rural villages and the liquidation of the kulaks as a class", he succeeded in conveying a more accurate picture of the violent transformation of the rural villages thanks only to his use of Aesopian language. However, the subject was subsequently declared taboo. After the breakup of the Soviet Union, Ivnitskii resurfaced with no fewer than five works that provide a comprehensive picture of collectivization and dekulakization, of the role of the secret police in the persecution of the "kulaks", of the "kulak families" who were banished by the thousands to "special towns" in Northern Russia and Siberia and, finally, of the catastrophic famine that struck both Ukraine and large parts of Russia and Kazakhstan in 1932–1933.[1]

Corresponding renascent basic research was conducted by historians both younger and older into practically every aspect of modern Russian history: political and social life in late-tsarist Russia, the events of 1917, the Civil War from 1918 to 1921, the peasant revolt against the Bolshevik regime, through the entire Soviet period and up to the history of everyday life in the 1960s and the dissent movement that was emerging at that time.[2] Conditions, which include opened archives and extensive research using primary sources, are thus favorable for new syntheses of Russian history. At the turn of the millennium, many "veterans" evinced radical new ways of thinking about the entire preceding century, after having seemingly been fettered by the "Communist Party line" up until 1991.[3] Every university of note in Russia, including the Russian Academy of Sciences' Institute of Russian History, has presented editions of new, general handbooks that present the country's history from the earliest times to the 2000s in customary scientific fashion. Particularly noteworthy is academy member Andrei Nikolaevich Sakharov's two-volume history, which has been published in several editions in recent years.[4]

Russian economic historians have, under the editorship of Leonid Abalkin, come together to update the state of research after fifteen years of freedom from the dogmatic Marxist interpretations of the history of Russia's economy and economic thinking. The result is a substantial and comprehensive encyclopedia that runs to nearly 3,000 pages and tends to offer lengthier articles about Russia's economic history from the earliest times up until 1917.[5] In their foreword, the editors indicate that it is still too soon to write a corresponding reference work about the Soviet period, 1917–1991.

Authors, actors, and journalists have also striven to offer their views on Russian history in ways that are more or less scientifically established, albeit sometimes more in the nature of straightforward popular history. Shining examples of such writers who have become known outside of Russia as well include Edvard Radzinsky and Aleksandr Bushkov, who have compiled countless biographies of various tsars and prominent historical figures, from Ivan the Terrible to the Mad Monk, Rasputin.[6]

The 1970 Nobel Prize winner in literature, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, considered the task of depicting the historical roots and course of events of the Russian Revolution to be one of his life objectives. Solzhenitsyn continued to collect material on Russia's past all the way from 1937 when, as a devout Marxist, he wrote the draft of "R-17", to the 1980s, when he applied the finishing touches to *The Red Wheel*, while in the 1990s he even went so far as to tackle the sensitive issue of the history of the Jews in Russia from the late 1700s to the late 1970s.[7] He viewed the mighty *Gulag Archipelago* as a preliminary study for other, equally important works.[8] At some point in the early 2000s the author gained support for his idea of producing a history textbook about Russia that would clearly tie in to his view of the 1917 revolution as the great watershed in Russian history.

II.

A SCHOLASTIC TEXTBOOK must take into account that only 50 class hours are allotted to modern Russian history in the 11th grade (the final year of general education). This imposes heavy pedagogical demands in terms of presentation and choice of subjects and relevant facts, as well as assignments in which the pupils are to conduct individual or group discussions. All textbooks are vetted by the Ministry of Education before being either "approved" or "recommended" (the latter often with reference to pedagogical merits). Within academia there is also a tradition of other evaluative grounds for syntheses, general works about an era, a country, a war or a social change, the authors of which do not build on basic research, but are still assumed to be conversant with current research results.

Solzhenitsyn presented his concept for a new textbook about Russian history to Andrei Zubov, Professor of Religious History at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO). Zubov brought numerous like-minded people into the project.

Zubov is known for his strong commitment to Russia's "coming to terms with the past". When Nikolai II and the royal family were formally acquitted in 2006 of the charges brought against them by the Bolsheviks in July 1918, Zubov demanded that Lenin be posthumously charged as the one ultimately responsible for the murder of the royal family. He had the support of the vice-director of the Academy of Sciences' Institute of Russian History, Vladimir Lavrov, who explained in a letter to the Russian government that not only should Lenin's mausoleum be torn down and his embalmed corpse removed, but the entire necropolis in Moscow's Red Square had to be eliminated as an unsuitable relic of a totalitarian regime that had oppressed the people for many decades.[9]

What neither Zubov nor Lavrov took into account were the sensitive issues concerning descendents' burial rights to the remains not only of Party leaders but also of the cosmonauts, field marshals and scientists who have been given state burials and laid to rest near the Kremlin Wall. Nor does Zubov's emotional article indicate what he thinks about descendents' burial rights to the mass graves in Red Square for the hundreds of members of the Red Guard who fell in the Battle of Moscow during the Bolshevik seizure of power in 1917.[10]

Their pronouncements provide some idea of how *Istoriia Rossii XX vek* has been presented as a strong anticommunist reaction to the former predominant ideology. The authors who can be identified as professional historians include Aleksei Kara–Murza and Sergei Volkov. The chapter on the atomic weapon project was written by a specialist in nuclear weapons technology, while the chapter on the space program was written by a doctor of technology from Saratov. The art history section of the book was written by the director of

the Andrei Rublyov Museum, Gennady Popov. The other coauthors are, however, neither historians nor experts, as is reflected in both form and content.

The authors of the book share the belief that "communism was catastrophic for Russia and the entire world", but they view the causes of communism and its consequences for Russia in different ways, and sometimes portray the Soviet society in terms that indicate that it *cannot* even be considered to have been socialist in the usual sense of the word. In that regard, *Istoriia Rossii XX veka* is less sensational for a Western reader, since practically all American textbooks and most other syntheses and instructional materials have been written from roughly the same perspective. In France, a more independent tradition of Slavistics and a Russophilic spirit after the Second World War fostered a tradition which, in the context of post-1945 textbooks, adopted a paradigm that, even if not communist, was pro-Soviet.[11]

Solzhenitsyn proofread various chapters of the book. Each coauthor was clearly given free rein to write as much or as little as he or she wished, and the number of pages on some subjects piled up far beyond the number to be expected in a textbook. Some eras are given more space than others, with no actual justification being provided by the authors.

Solzhenitsyn was displeased, distanced himself from the book and forbade Zubov from using his name. On May 17, 2008, Solzhenitsyn wrote that he had agreed to support the project of creating a new school textbook about Russia in the 20th century. But

> **when, under your editorship, this project assumed concrete forms that corrupted the original intent, I saw that I could no longer identify with it. Specifically, I do not agree with its unchecked expanded scope, or its structure and form, or with many of the ideas and assessments it contains. I therefore ask that my name not be associated with your work.**[12]

HOWEVER, AT THE MOSCOW presentation of *Istoriia Rossii XX vek* on November 18, 2009, Zubov took care to point out Solzhenitsyn's input, stating that the "concept" for the book had been formulated "in close cooperation with Solzhenitsyn". Although Solzhenitsyn's and Zubov's original aim had been to write a new course text for use in schools or universities, the final result became something else entirely. The book has failed as a textbook for the general Russian 11-year school, and so far has only been approved in history courses at the St. Petersburg Spiritual Academy (*Dukhovnaia Akademiia*).

The size (1,800 pages) and the scope of the content make it impossible for one person to review *Istorija Rossii XX vek* in the customary way.[13] The 50-page introduction, "How Russia came to the 20th century", that begins in Rus in the 800s and offers a sweeping overview up to the late 1800s, has a peculiarly retrospective character. Given such a compressed format, a plethora of simplifications is unavoidable. The structure and chapterization of the rest of the book differ from the traditional approach in certain respects. It is divided in sections (*chasti*), chapters (*glavy*) and numbered sub-chapters. The first section, "The last tsardom", is divided in three chapters with 69 sub-chapters, leading the narrative up to the February 1917 Revolution (pp. 62–369). The second section, "Russia in revolution 1917–1922", devotes one chapter to "The provisional government, March–October 1917" (pp. 393–468). The seizure of power by the Bolsheviks in November that same year and the ensuing civil war are covered in a 300-page section entitled "The War for Russia" (I, pp. 469–765) in forty-seven sub-chapters. This is followed by the first book's third section on "Russia and the establishment of the Communist regime, 1923–1939" with thirty-five sub-chapters. Unfortunately, many specialists will find a lot in every section of the book that seems disputable and relates only one of many historical schools of thought or individual historians.

Volume II is divided into three large blocks. The fourth section is entitled "Russia during the Second World War and the preparatio ns for the Third World War (1939–1953)". Chapter one discusses the period from September 1939 to June 1941 (II, pp. 3–37), that is, from the negotiations in Moscow between the Soviet Union and Germany up to the annexation of the Baltic states and what is traditionally known as "The Great Patriotic War, 1941–1945", but which Zubov instead calls "The Soviet-Nazi War 1941–1945 and Russia", thereby emphasizing that it was supposedly not a war for *Russia's genuine cause* but merely that of the communist state, and second, to accommodate the Vlasov Army and others who fought for their Russia while at the same time fighting the Soviet regime (II, pp. 37–187). The post-war reconstruction period is discussed in chapter three under the thought-provoking heading: "Russia and Stalin's preparations for the Third World War that never came" (II, pp. 188–291). The post-Stalinist society, its ideology, administrative system and crisis economy, as well as the dissolution of and resistance to the regime, are analyzed in the fifth section, "Russia in the degeneration of Communist totalitarianism 1953–1991" (II, pp. 291–510). After a brief description of Gorbachev's reform attempts, the sixth and final section of the two volumes, entitled "From the Soviet Union to Russia's rebirth, 1992–2007" (II, pp. 579–810), offers a comprehensive chronicle of the most recent events in Russian history.

III.

THE BOOK IS WRITTEN in popular-science style, with only a few references to entire works provided at the end of many, but far from all, of the chapters. Nor are there any indications as to who among the roughly forty collaborators wrote what. The texts are interleaved with "A historian's perspective" (often quotations from known historians) or "The Editor-in-chief's view", in which Zubov addresses the subject just presented in freer terms, often with conclusions that go far beyond those that the author of the section in question was willing to draw. The book also contains a large number of document excerpts, so that readers can form their own opinions of what the historical actors said. Examples include Solzhenitsyn's famous letter "Live Not By Lies", which was published in the West the day after his arrest in February 1974 and simultaneously spread via *samizdat* in the Soviet Union (II, pp. 422–424).

Zubov claims ultimate responsibility for how the texts were written, and for selecting which excerpts from the works of historians and philosophers have been included. Zubov is the target of the criticisms that have been raised (even if he did not write the sections) concerning the factual errors, tendentious presentations of numerical material and downright falsified documents that account for the failure of *Istoriia Rossii XX veka* to live up to the aspirations entertained by its authors.[14]

Zubov has shunned "the Soviet spirit" that is said to have permeated earlier attempts at writing textbooks, even after the breakup of the Soviet Union. According to Zubov and his colleagues, a political regime must be judged on the basis of how it makes it possible for individuals to grow spiritually and materially, and whether it enhances the worth of the individual or, conversely, leads to degeneration. All in all, individual growth and development

Continued. Reflections on the historiography of a reactionary era

reveal whether the society tends to realize "the good" or "the bad". This would seem an overly vague goal for anyone wishing to write a "History of 20th Century Russia".

Zubov generally underestimates the pioneering work that has been done by Russian and other historians over the last 20 years. One looks in vain for any of the path-breaking works of the 1990s concerning the victims and agents of repression during the Red Terror from 1918 to 1921 and more recent contributions on Stalinist repressions in the 1930s. Zubov believes that the news value of the book lies in the fact that it is not interested mainly in the major actors, but also addresses lesser-known individuals who shaped history. The two-volume work is truly overflowing with biographies, excerpts from memoirs, diaries, and other private testimonies. However, as strange as it may seem, Zubov ignores in its entirety the social history research conducted with an emphasis on the history of everyday life (*istoriia povsednevnoi zhizni*), which was consolidated after 1992, and in which Andrei Sokolov's Center at the Institute of Russian History occupies a prime position.[15]

Zubov's own assessments deviate from what the coauthors in question have written. For instance, the author of the section about the autumn of 1939 and the first months of the Second World War presents Stalin's considerations in terms of *realpolitik*. But Zubov, as the person responsible for the final version of the book, claims in an insertion (II, p. 14) that if one views the Communist regime as having been illegitimate right from the start, then it is no longer possible to speak of any legitimate claims on the part of the Soviets in 1939 vis-à-vis western Ukraine or western Belarus, both of which were incorporated into the Soviet Union after the crushing of Poland.

For Zubov, "Russia" refers not only to the geographical/administrative element within the Soviet Union, but also to the entire cultural sphere, including the Russian diaspora. Perhaps one of the best features of the book is that it includes accounts of how the Russian groups in exile not only adapted to life in China, Serbia, Germany, France or elsewhere, but also passed on the Russian cultural heritage and the traditions of the Russian Orthodox Church. The philosophers, historians and journalists who found themselves on the losing side after the 1917 Revolution and the Russian Civil War and then went into exile were able to get published or even noticed in the Soviet Union only in exceptional cases. But in recent years, much of what was written in exile by Russian thinkers, authors and others has entered the social debate through new editions issued by publishing houses in Russia. The first large emigrant colonies in Berlin and Paris in the 1920s have been the focus of special studies, as have the later waves of Russian exiles that occurred after 1945 and in the 1970s. Correspondence between tsarist Russian diplomats in exile and generals from the White Army has been published in heavily annotated source versions. In Zubov's work these Russians are placed in their chronological context, and their assessments of the development of the Soviet Union are presented. Of particular interest are the ways in which the various emigrant groups aligned themselves at the outbreak of the Second World War, and in 1941, when Nazi Germany attacked the Soviet Union.

IV.

THE QUESTION IS WHETHER Andrei Zubov and all his coauthors can explain why, in 1917, it was Russia in particular that became the first country in which the originally 19th century socialist ideas were tested.

Zubov's simplified reconstruction is presented in the section on the World War I. Here we "learn" that Vladimir I. Lenin paid two secret visits to Berlin in June and July of 1914, and reached an agreement with highly placed military officials to undermine the Russian home front during the coming war. The leader of the Bolsheviks allegedly received 70 million German marks in return. The imminent events thus came under the control of Kaiser Wilhelm and the German General Staff. The military in Berlin had prepared a plan to "carry out the Russian Revolution" as far back as 1916! But events forced them to postpone their initiative for one year, until Lenin had returned to Russia. Zubov explains that the spontaneous workers' revolt in Petrograd in July 1917 was instigated by Lenin on the directives of the German General Staff in order to stem the Russian Army's summer offensive. Germany had nearly lost patience with Lenin's party by October 1917, having gotten nothing in return for the millions of marks invested. According to Zubov, this was why Lenin began demanding that the Bolsheviks make a new attempt to seize power in October (Vol. I, pp. 127, 332, 350, 365–366, 404–412, 459–463).

For Zubov, it is completely logical that the regime in the Soviet Union ever since 1917 be characterized as illegitimate (*nezakonnyi*). The support that Russian socialist revolutionaries, anarchists and Bolsheviks received from Austria and Germany has been the subject of various studies. But no one has distorted the aspirations of the revolutionary movement of the 1910s as Zubov has.[16] *Istoriia Rossii XX vek* explains that Lenin had, by 1914, become a traitor to his country, in the pay of the enemy and working as an agent of German influence. Up until Gorbachev's "new thinking", the Communists were driven by their aspiration of subjugating the Russian people and spreading their regime throughout the world.

Among the more peculiar elements in Zubov's work is the Catholic legend of some children in the Portuguese village Fatima who during 1916 and 1917 received revelations from the Mother of God on a number of occasions. Lucia, who was ten years old at the time, would then recount how the Mother of God had spoken to the children on the 13th of each month in 1917 from March to October and, oddly enough, warned them of what disaster was to befall Russia. Neither the ten-year-old Lucia nor her younger siblings at first understood what the word "Russia" referred to. When they told of their experiences, the press began writing about this unusual occurrence in Fatima. Huge numbers of people gathered to attend what might be the next revelation. Those present even claimed to have observed strange phenomena, such as the sun starting to move back and forth across the heavens. On October 13 the Madonna was said to have explained to the children that the people in Russia had not improved or prayed for the forgiveness of their sins. As a result, the country was now to suffer a major calamity (I, pp. 455–458). The Catholic Church granted the Miracle of Fatima official status in 1967. The reader will no doubt wonder what Zubov and his coauthors intend to explain with regard to Russian history in the 20th century by bringing up the well-known legend of the Madonna at Fatima. Does this open the way to the idea that higher powers somehow "intervened" in the events in Russia? On the other hand, Zubov's accounts of the Orthodox Church's relationship with the Tsar and of the Communist regime's fight against Christianity and other religions during the interwar period are objective and mostly matter-of-fact.

After these different takes on what is traditionally known as the Russian Revolution of 1917, the reader will not be surprised to find that Zubov devotes a 300-page section of the book – "The War for Russia" (*Voina za Rossiiu*) – to the Russian Civil War and the efforts of foreign interventionist troops to destroy the Bolshevik regime between 1918 and 1921. This section reflects, to

a greater extent than most of the others, how the authors have in fact incorporated both the classic accounts written by the White generals in exile and the numerous documents and archival publications in recent years that have shed light on the White Armies and on conditions in the areas that were periodically controlled by the White side.

The execution of the Tsar's family on 17 July 1918 is described in detail, but approached in an unusual way with respect to German considerations. Because the executed Tsar had not approved the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty of 1918, but rather had clung to his belief that the White forces would retake those areas and continue the war against Germany, Kaiser Wilhelm supposedly gave his consent to allow Lenin to execute Nikolai II and the members of his family. This curious twist of other, usually anti-Semitic, myths surrounding the execution of the Tsar's family will certainly give rise to doubts on Zubov's general worldviews.

The authors' accounts of the various armies on the White side, and their attempts to offer the unwillingness of the Russian people to fight for their country, their lack of any real sense of nationhood and their tendency to think mainly of their own best interests as a comprehensive explanation for why the Red Army was victorious on all fronts will, along with many similar "generalizations" and moralizations, undoubtedly put Zubov's *Istoriia Rossii XX vek* in a category all by itself.

Zubov's lack of elementary source-critical thinking is clearly evident in that he could not bring himself to include even the serious discussions being conducted regarding the Red and White Terror. Zubov has failed to include recent research, e.g. by A. Litvin, I. Ratkovskii and M. Shilovskii, on the campaign of terror engaged in by the Bolshevik regime against resistors. Zubov instead giddily provides, without reservation, old myths and widely inaccurate figures on the extent of repression against priests, teachers, doctors, the military, the police, peasants and workers. The figures were obtained from the November 7, 1923, (sic!) edition of the Edinburgh newspaper *The Scotsman*, which however "failed to provide any source" (I, pp. 552–553). It is said that "history is written by the winners", and that historiography is consistently one-sided and tendentious. But what is presented in this work to describe how "the more noble, more honest and more patriotic part" of the Russian population lost the battle for Russia during the Civil War falls into the realm of preconceived notions.

The widespread famine of 1921–1922 is referred to as "the planned famine" or "killing by famine" (*pervyi golodomor* in Russian). Zubov adopts a controversial interpretation which was originally introduced by nationalist Ukrainian historians in Canada in the 1980s and again in Ukraine after 1991 to paint the famine in Ukraine 1932–1933 (*holodomor* in Ukrainian) as an act of genocide that was intentionally controlled by the Kremlin in order to exterminate the Ukrainian peasantry. Historians outside of Russia are very divided on this interpretation, although no serious scholar denies the famine of 1932–1933. The documentation at hand hardly lends itself to this genocide thesis. First, the catastrophic famine of 1932–1933 was attributable not only to Stalin's requisition policies, but also to the reduction in the amount of land under cultivation and a severely dry summer in 1932, which destroyed large parts of the grain crop in Ukraine and southern Russia. In addition, there is no evidence that the famine was especially severe solely in Ukraine. Zubov thus applies the term *golodomor* to the catastrophic famine of 1921–1922 as well, thereby parting ways with the majority of historians and economic historians, who certainly do accept that the bad conditions in the rural villages were attributable to many years of requisition policies. However, none of them has denied that it was the exceptionally dry summer in 1921 that made the famine a reality, or that the Bolshevik regime did what it could to try and relieve the distress, and accepted foreign aid for those affected. On these grounds, Zubov's use of the term *golodomor* would appear to be incorrect.

Zubov's work is, in certain respects, in line with a neo-patriotic interpretation prevalent among Russian journalists and political scientists, who describe the period immediately following the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks as being significantly bloodier than has been customary in Soviet works. Lenin's reign from 1917 up to the early 1920s is considered, not only by means of the Red Terror and acts of war, to have imposed a significantly higher cost in terms of human life than did Stalin's "top-down revolution" of the early 1930s. Zubov's work is consistent with that of historian Natalia Narotchnitskaïa, who repudiates Lenin and his era in especially strong terms, and is prepared to put forth the most hyperbolic data about the persecutions during the early 1920s.[17]

The description of the NEP period is comparatively succinct, and addresses only the most important economic debates and the conflicts within the Orthodox Church during the 1920s and up until Stalin's "top-down revolution" of 1929–1932.

Zubov resurrects the legend, abandoned by scholars, that a group of "clear thinking" communists at the 17th Party Congress in 1934 approached Leningrad Party Secretary Kirov in an attempt to remove Stalin as the Party's general secretary. This legend was circulated in the Khrushchev era, and may be seen as a fabrication made to legitimize the Communist Party's struggle to reconnect to the original ideals of the Lenin era, which had implicitly been trampled by Stalin after 1929. Given Zubov's expressed aim of writing an anti-communist and supposedly truer history, it is remarkable that such tales are found in the book.

Pure historical falsifications often diminish the value of Zubov's committed anti-communism and, in the long term, run the risk of undermining confidence in his purpose, even when his positions are reasonable. Allow me to offer a flagrant example. The millions of street urchins present in the 1920s and early 1930s were a scourge on the society. They had become homeless or lost their parents during the World War, the subsequent Civil War, or the famine of 1921–1922. Various People's Commissariats took active steps to care for these *besprizornye* in special orphanages, where they were able to participate in normal schooling and even receive some occupational training. Childrearing methods, radical for the time, were employed at some of these orphanages, drawing interest from far beyond Soviet Russia. The authorities solved the worst aspects of poverty in the postwar years when the rapid industrialization process and collectivization of farming in 1928–1932 recreated a social scourge of more or less criminalized street urchins.[18] Under the heading "The liquidated street urchin problem" (*likvidirovannaia besprizornost*), Zubov conversely and absurdly posits that the disappearance of some five million street urchins who were

Continued. Reflections on the historiography of a reactionary era

present in the 1922 statistics but not 10 years later is attributable to repression by the GPU, or security police, and to the great famine of 1932–1933. Zubov attempts to tie the problem to the notorious law passed in April 1935 that lowered the age of criminal liability to 12 and also extended the death penalty to minors. Zubov claims that the purpose of the law was to give the secret police free rein to execute street urchins (I, pp. 927–928). This is, of course, not the case, but rather has been extracted from the most reactionary legends that have circulated about Stalinist terror ever since the Nazis escalated their "Judeo-Bolshevism" propaganda in the 1930s. No historical works are even tied to this section, although there are references to defected agent Walter Krivitsky and his 1939 "memoirs", co-written with the journalist Isaac don Levine. The reader will no doubt wonder why Zubov indicates that there were hundreds of thousands of such executions, or even more. The well-known Latvian documentary *The Soviet Story* by Edvins Snore likewise absurdly asserts that the "street urchin problem" of the 1930s was solved through mass executions.[19] Other sources must be consulted to see how trade schools and daycare centers gave "society's unfortunate children" a second chance in life. The theories of Anton Makarenko and others on child-rearing helped tens of thousands of street urchins return to society during the interwar years.

Western and Russian experts have analyzed the actual extent of the criminality of under-age groups in the 1930s. Russian historian Oleg Khlevniuk has provided a weighty and thoughtful background to the change in the law, its origins, and its application. Of the roughly 110,000 street urchins arrested, approximately two-thirds were restored to their parents or relatives, some 30,000 were placed in orphanages, and around 10,000 were actually sentenced to lengthy terms in the camps. On the other hand, very few minors were sentenced to death. The new law elicited strong protests in the West at the time, and Stalin tried to persuade French author Romain Rolland that it had been adopted mainly as a scare tactic.[20]

Stalin's repression of the cadres in the Party and the Army and the mass operations of 1937–1938 are among the most thoroughly analyzed topics of research in recent decades. One might expect this to be evident in a synthesis such as Zubov's book. The Great Terror of 1937 can be traced to two initiatives on the part of the top political leadership. First, a series of national operations in which supposedly untrustworthy individuals of the same ethnic origins as were present in the countries neighboring Russia (Poland, Latvia, Finland, Korea, etc.) were subjected to repression, banishment and punishment (Gulag or execution). Second, a mass operation that was somewhat misleadingly named the "anti-kulak operation". Collectively these NKVD operations accounted for the bulk of the nearly 700,000 executions that were carried out in 1937–1938.[21] But Zubov introduces, with regard to the Great Terror, a historical background that is unknown to the research community. The 1937 census revealed that the majority of the Russian people still characterized themselves as believing Christians. Zubov claims, alone among Russian historians, that the Great Terror was focused primarily on the various groups of believers in the Soviet Union.

In the chapter on the years leading up to the Second World War, Zubov buys into the view, commonly held in Eastern Europe, that Stalin sought to provoke a war between Germany and Great Britain. This could have been one of Stalin's conceivable scenarios in 1939. But Zubov makes the mistake of citing in support of his thesis a speech supposedly given by Stalin to the Politburo on August 19, 1939. No such session was held that day, and the archival document cited is, in fact, a speech in French (!) that was found in the so-called Trophy Archive (now part of the Russian State Military Archives, RGVA) among other documents that the Red Army discovered in corresponding Nazi trophy archives in Berlin. To be sure, the author refers significantly enough to the Russian translation of the text published by historian Tatiana Bushueva in the literature magazine *Novyi mir* in 1994, without devoting a single word to the provenance of the document. The source-critical review that Sergei Sluch presented in the early 2000s establishes beyond a doubt that the document was drafted by French journalists or intelligence agents purely for propaganda purposes in the autumn of 1939. Also relevant is a similar "speech by Stalin" that enjoyed widespread dissemination in the Western European press back in December of 1939 and which no serious historian viewed as an authentic record of Stalin's explanation as to why he was prepared to enter into a non-aggression pact with Nazi Germany.[22]

V.

ZUBOV BELIEVES THAT reason becomes superfluous when it comes to the behavior of the Soviet Union in an international context. As a result of this attitude, *Istoriia Rossii XX veka* provides no assessments of the *realpolitik* or even geopolitical factors that the Kremlin may have considered at one time or another. The reader is inundated with postulated truths about the regime's expansionist aspirations rather than references to research on the foreign policy of the Soviet government during the interwar period and the various phases of the Cold War. Zubov's description of the annexation of Polish, Romanian, and Baltic territories in the first phase of the Second World War 1939–1940 is straightforward and the narrative underlines the crash *realpolitik* of that epoch. The extent of repression in the sovietized territories is emphasized, as is the fact that several Western powers never recognized the Soviet annexations. According to Zubov some 700,000 inhabitants of the former Baltic states were victims of repression by the NKVD or secret police, by means of elimination of the political elite and mass deportations of whole families to distant settlements in Siberia (II, p. 16–20).

As noted, the authors do not use the term "Great Patriotic War, 1941–1945", which is the common term, even in modern Russia, but which, for obvious reasons, is called into question by Ukrainian and other nationalists. Zubov also attempts to distinguish Russia from the regime that was established. Because he considers the post-1917 regime to be illegitimate, having established an oppressive state over the Russian people, it could not have fought for the Fatherland in the true sense. Here he differs from Natalia Narotchnitskaia, who conversely believes that, when the existence of the Russian nation was threatened by the Nazis in 1941, Stalin's regime became the sole guarantor of the survival of the Russian people.[23]

Zubov aligns himself with a group of military historians in Russia who vigorously defend defected GRU agent Vladimir Rezun's hypothesis that, in May 1941, Stalin and the General Staff of the Red Army prepared for an attack on the Nazi and other troops concentrated along the borders of the Soviet Union. To date it has not been possible to substantiate this hypothesis, which Rezun (under the pseudonym Viktor Suvorov) has asserted since 1985, with archival documents.[24] On the contrary, most of the Red Army's plans for 1941 indicate that it was prepared only for a defensive war in the event that Nazi Germany should attack. Even on logistical grounds, that is, troop transport capacity by rail, it was clear to the Soviet General Staff that, in 1941, the Red Army could not undertake any

major operations for anticipatory or pre-emptive purposes. On the other hand, many hundreds of thousands of men were mobilized during the spring and early summer of 1941, all in hopes of being able to stave off the impending attack from Nazi Germany for a few more years. As is known, Stalin ultimately reasoned that Germany would not repeat previous historical mistakes and start a two-front war, against Great Britain in the west and Russia in the east. Unfortunately, little of the extensive Russian debates since the late 1980s concerning the legacy of the 1937–1938 repressions of thousands of officers, the failure of the Soviet leadership to disentangle intelligence reports from its own agents from smart German disinformation, and eventually Stalin's guilt in failing to heighten the alert in the final weeks before the Nazi attack on June 22, 1941, is reflected in Zubov's book. Similar to the versions of some other writers, Zubov's account of the course of the war from 1941 up until the Battle of Berlin in 1945 has a cut-and-dried character. Like many others who limit their perspective to "history from below", i.e. that of the individual soldiers, Zubov repeats the descriptions of putatively meaningless *tactical battles* that demanded the sacrifice of thousands of men. The fact that, in a series of *strategic operations* (Stalingrad and Kursk in 1943, Belorussia in 1944), the Red Army marshals, generals and colonels outshone the most prominent field commanders in the *Wehrmacht* should be made clear in any synthesis, and here Zubov could have made significantly better use of the research done by Western and Russian military historians in recent years.

Zubov presents the period after 1953 in a more conventional manner, and his account can be read as a standardized depiction of the Cold War era. Middle-aged and older Russian readers will find isolated deficiencies in Zubov's multifaceted account of living standards, altered housing conditions and new or elusive career opportunities under Khrushchev and Brezhnev. What is valuable in Zubov's work are his accounts of how the Russian exile groups (in the US and Western Europe) were able to begin establishing serious contacts with freethinkers and "dissidents" in the Soviet Union, starting in the late 1960s. Both international conflicts and internal Soviet complications, particularly the dissident movement, are described in vibrant and dynamic fashion. On the other hand, a reader will look in vain for connections to the debates that have raged between Russian and Western historians, particularly intense since glasnost in the 1980s and following the opening of the Russian archives in the 1990s.

lennart samuelson

1 Nikolai Alekseievich Ivnitskii, *Klassovaia borba v derevne i likvidatsiia kulachestva kak klassa (1929–1932 gg.)* [The class struggle in the countryside and the liquidation of the kulaks as a class, 1929–1932], Moscow 1972; *Kollektivizatsiia i raskulachivanie (nachalo 30-kh godov)* [Collectivization and dekulakization, 1929–1932], Moscow 1996; *Repressivnaia politika sovetskoi vlasti v derevne (1928–1933 gg.)* [The repressive policy in the countryside by the Soviet Power, 1928–1933], Moscow 2000; *Sudba raskulachennykh v SSSR*, Moscow 2004; *Golod 1932–1933 godov v SSSR (Ukraina, Severnyi Kavkaz, Povolzhe, Centralnaia Chernozemnaia oblast, Zapadnyi Sibir, Ural)* [The fate of the dekulakized peasants in the USSR]; Golod … Ural [The 1932–1933 Famine in the USSR (Ukraine, Northern Caucasus, the Volga Region, the Central Black-Earth Region, Western Siberia, the Urals)], Moscow 2009.

2 For an overview of the more recent Russian historiography on part of the Soviet epoch, refer to John Keep's and Alter Litvin's excellent overviews of the history of Stalinism: *Stalinism: Russian and Western Views at the Turn of the Century*, London & New York 2005; idem, *Epokha Stalina v Rossii: Sovremennaia istoriografiia*, Moscow 2009.

3 See here the radical re-interpretation of the Soviet period by Efim Gimpelson, *Rossiia na perelome epokh: Osmyslenie XX stoletiia rossiiskoi istorii* [Russia at the turns of epochs: Reflections on the Russia's 20th century history], Moscow 2006. Among Gimpelson's earlier publications on the Soviet system of management can be mentioned *Velikii Oktiabr i stanovlenie sovetskoi systemy upravleniia narodnym khoziaistvom (oktiabr 1917–1920)* [The Great October Revolution and the formation of the Soviet system of management of the people's economy (October 1917–1920)], Moscow 1977.

4 Andrei N. Sakharov (red.), *Istoriia Rossii s drevneishikh vremën do kontsa XVII veka*, [A history of Russia from eldest time to the end of the 17th century], Moscow 2003; idem, *Istoriia Rossii s nachala XVIII veka do nachala XXI veka* [A history of Russia from the early 18th century to the early 21st century], Moscow 2003 and later editions. See also P. V. Leonov (ed.), *Istoriia Rossii s drevenishikh vremën do kontsa XX veka* [A history of Russia from eldest times to the end of the 20th century], Moscow 2002, for its discussion of decisive historical turning points.

5 *Ekonomicheskaia istoriia Rossii s drevneishikh vremën do 1917: Entsiklopediia* [Russia's economic history from eldest times to 1917: An encyclopedia], edited by Leonid Borodkin and others, Moscow 2009.

6 See for example Edvard Radzinskii, *Stalin*, Moscow 1997; Alexandr Bushkov, *Stalin: Lediianoi tron* [Stalin: The ice throne] St. Petersburg 2004.

7 Alexander I. Solzhenitsyn, *Dvesti let vmeste (1795–1995)* [Two hundred years together, 1795–1995], Moscow 2001; idem, *Dvesti let vmeste* [Two hundred years together], Moscow 2002.

8 See for instance Edward E. Ericson Jr. & Alexis Klimoff, *The Soul and the Barbed Wire: An Introduction to Solzhenitsyn*, Wilmington 2008, pp. 150–161.

9 Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty http://www.rferl.org/content/Tsar_Murder_Probe_Raises_Divisive_Questions_About_Bolshevik_Crimes/1961860.html accessed on 2010-04-18.

10 Regarding the sensitive issue of burial rights, which is hardly ever discussed in connection with demands from Russian politicians to tear down the Lenin Mausoleum, see Aleksei Abramov, *Pravda i vymysel o kremlëvskom nekropole i mavzolee* [The truth and lies on the Kremlin Necropolis and Mausoleum], Moscow 2005.

11 Regarding the French textbooks' tendencies and connections to the Soviet-Marxist paradigm, see Laurent Jalabert, *Le Grand Débat: Les Universitaires francais – historiens et géographes – et les pays communistes de 1945 à 1991*, Toulouse 2001.

12 Solzhenitsyn, facsimile of letter, http://pics.livejournal.com/russia_xx/pic/00005893/ accessed on 2010-02-25.

13 The Harvard history professor Richard Pipes was among the first to laud Zubov's book as something radically new in Russian historiography, compare radio RFE/ RL http://www.rferl.org/content/A_New_Russian_History_Thats_Sensational_For_The_Right_Reasons/1895990.html (accessed on 2010-05-25), and as quoted by Sophia Kishovsky, "A history of 20th-century Russia, Warts and All", *New York Times*, December 3, 2009. However, the present reviewer seriously doubts that Professor Pipes, on closer inspection of Zubov's two-volume *History*, would approve of its presentation of the 1917 Revolution or endorse the explanations on the Stalinist "revolution from above in the 1930s". Furthermore, Pipes's sweeping generalizations of an alleged lack of attention by Russia's professional historians to their Western colleagues bear little resemblance to their interrelation with foreign scholars in the recent two to three decades.

14 One of MGIMO's vice rectors has even taken exception to the book as being directly unsuitable for students, based on the excessive number of dubious interpretations and pure factual errors encumbering it.

15 Cf. Lewis Siegelbaum & Andrei Sokolov, *Sta-*

linism as a Way of Life: A Narrative in Documents*, New Haven & London 2004.

16 Cf. Stefan T. Possony, *Lenin: The Compulsive Revolutionary*, Chicago 1964, pp. 151–184, on Lenin's and the Bolsheviks' contacts with Russian reform-minded millionaires, with the Austrian and German authorities on matters of financial support for the Party's newspapers and organization; for a modern account of Lenin that rejects the foreign, and purportedly German, control of the Bolsheviks, see Helène Carrère d'Encausse, *Lénine*, Paris 1998.

17 Natalia Narotshnitskaïa, *Que reste-t-il de notre victoire? Russie-Occident: Le Malentendu*, Paris 2008, pp. 43–60.

18 See Alan M. Ball, *And Now My Soul Is Hardened: Abandoned Children in Soviet Russia, 1918–1930*, Berkeley, Los Angeles & London 1994.

19 Edvins Snore, "The Soviet Story", DVD, 2008.

20 Oleg Khlevniuk, *Khoziain: Stalin i utverzhdenie stalinskoi diktatury* [The boss: Stalin and the consolidation of the Stalinist dictatorship], Moscow 2009, pp. 237–239.

21 Vladimir Khaustov & Lennart Samuelson, *Stalin, NKVD i repressii, 1936–1938 gg.* [Stalin, NKVD, and the repressions, 1936–1938], Moscow 2008.

22 Sergei Sluch, "Rech Stalina, kotoroi ne bylo" [Stalin's speech that never was held], *Otechestvennaia istoriia*, 2004:1, pp. 113–139.

23 Narotchnitskaïa, *Que reste-t-il*, pp. 129–131.

24 Viktor Suvorov, *The Ice-Breaker: Who Started the Second World War?* London 1985. The Russian debate in defense of Rezun-Suvorov's theses may be found in, for example *Pravda Viktora Suvorova: Perepisyvaia istoriiu Vtoroi Mirovoi*, [Viktor Suvorov's truth: to rewrite the history of World War II], Moscow 2006. Arguments against Rezun-Suvorov have been put forward by, among others, Alexander Pomogaibo, *Psevdoistorik Suvorov i zagadki Vtoroi Mirovoi Voiny* [The pseudo-historian Suvorov and the enigmas of World War II], Moscow 2002, and Aleksei Isaev, *Anti-Suvorov: Desiat mifov Vtoroi Mirovoi* [Anti-Suvorov: Ten myths about World War II], Moscow 2005.

Research on Russia from a Finnish horizon.
Avoiding collapse by framing institutions

Russia Lost or Found? Patterns and Trajectories
Edited by Hiski Haukkala and Sinikukka Saari

Helsinki: Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Edita 2009
217 pages

IN THE SUMMER OF 2009, the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs arranged a conference to mark Finland's annexation to the Russian Empire 200 years earlier. The volume *Russia Lost or Found?* is based on papers from the conference, written by six Finnish and three foreign scholars. They analyze present-day Russia and its domestic and foreign policies from economic, political, and historical perspectives in an effort to better understand what is currently happening in Russia.

The geographical proximity of Finland to Russia posed a problem for Finland and set limits on Finnish politics throughout the last century. This proximity also influenced Finnish research on Russia, which, up to the early 1970s, avoided any serious study of Soviet society. The ever-intensifying economic ties at that time created a need for knowledge and stimulated research. But in his overview of Finnish Russian studies, Raimo Väyrynen notes that such research did not actually commence until the 1990s. As a member of the EU, Finland made a commitment to conduct research on Russia; the Aleksanteri Institute was founded in 1996 as the hub of a research network, and the Finnish Academy provided generous funding. A number of research centers with a focus on Russia developed. Finland's proximity to Russia now became an asset.

ANALYSES OF RUSSIA tend to share a common weakness. Researchers and journalists often base their work on declarations by the Russian government rather than actual policies and the results of these policies. This book also contains contributions where the conclusions are based mainly on declared policy. It is, in my view, difficult to describe Russian foreign policy as successful in the first decades of the 21st century if you follow what has occurred. The rhetoric of Russian leaders may have become more militant, but Russia has in reality become politically isolated, unable to develop an economic policy that is attractive to states on former Soviet territory, and has experienced several foreign policy setbacks.

The authors have mostly avoided the trap of declaratory policies, or historical determinism, generalizations or schematic trend extrapolations. They exhibit methodological awareness. The book focuses on the structures, institutions (in the sense of ground rules), processes, and actors that could contribute to a change of the system.

The main message of the book is that Russia is in need of profound structural reforms. A number of contributors make it clear that the Russian political and economic system has run aground. They emphasize the severity of the situation by noting that the systems lacks incentives for change. Those in Russia who could have an impact have no personal interest in change, while those who want to change the system have no influence. The relative prosperity that resulted from the high world-market prices for energy products in the early 21st century made the small group of people who controlled natural resources extremely wealthy, while a portion of the surplus trickled down to the population and contributed only to a certain increase in the standard of living.

WHENEVER A SINGLE natural resource so totally dominates the income of a country like energy in the case of Russia, it always becomes a curse. In Russia it is even worse, says Alexander Etkind, who characterizes the situation as a "dual curse of raw materials". According to Etkind, the Russian regime is dominated by old-fashioned geopolitical thinking, and winks at the soft sectors in the society. The demographic trends are frightening, with extremely high mortality rates, a bad healthcare system, an under-financed educational system, and a totally inadequate social safety net. Living conditions are unnecessarily harsh for many Russians, which explains the extremely high levels of alcohol consumption.[1] Etkind asserts that a commitment to soft sectors has played an important role for positive economic development in many countries.

The "curse" inherent in the dominance of one natural resource derives from the fact that energy extraction employs only a small part of the population (1.6 percent of the workforce), and occurs in isolation. It is controlled by only a few oligarchs, state officials, and politicians, who also control the welfare revenues and their distribution. This elite has no personal interest in improving the quality of the workforce and its standard of living, or in investing in other industries. For them, it is enough to make the necessary investment in the energy sector. The rest is used for consumption or to buy property in the West. Nor does the elite have any interest in coming to grips with corruption, since that is part of the system. It permits no opposition to its policies, and expands the security apparatus. Moreover, says Etkind, the population as a whole also prioritizes private consumption, maintains a passive attitude, and does not seek change.

So is the picture completely bleak? Soili Nysten-Haarala hopes that the actors in the market economy, the companies, will be agents of change. When formal institutions are weak, and laws and regulations are not enforced, informal institutions (practices, attitudes, unregulated processes) tend to take over. Such informal institutions have a long tradition in Russia, and they have en-

joyed extensive freedom of action over the last two decades. Nysten-Haarala believes that individual companies can assume continued importance in such a context. They often rely on the goodwill of local governments to be able to operate, but they also play an important role in contributing to the social services in the given area. Local governments are poorly financed, and are unable to offer satisfactory social services to their citizens. As a legacy from the Soviet era, this responsibility rests with the companies. It is a heavy responsibility, but it does give the companies a means of exerting influence at the local level and, through their actions, an opportunity to help reshape informal institutions. We may recall that the Ikea furniture company became a popular role model when it fired three Russian managers in the fall of 2009 for turning a blind eye to corruption and bribery.

MARKKU KIVINEN TAKES a look at efforts by the Russian government to reform the social welfare system. The old system provided small but reliable benefits to a host of weak social groups. It was a complicated system which was to be replaced with cash benefits. Because the government failed to embed the reform via political discussion, it was met with strong popular protests. Russian pensioners took to the streets in early 2005, and the government backed down. Such public reaction is an indication that there exists a potential for change. But popular protests are still a rarity.

From a theoretical standpoint, the growing middle class could become a force for change. Kivinen concedes that, so far, there are no signs that this is the case in Russia. The middle class seeks individual solutions. When it becomes politically active it does so within the framework of the loyalist United Russia party.

I WOULD SUPPLEMENT Kivinen by noting that any close examination of the behavior of the middle class reveals a spirit of total resignation which characterizes Russia at present. Not only does the middle class obtain private insurances, use private doctors, send children to private schools or, even more preferably, schools abroad, buy apartments in the rest of Europe, and settle in oases of housing tracts on the periphery of Moscow named after Western countries and isolated from the rest of society. Opinion polls show that a majority of young, well-educated Russians want to settle abroad, not only to qualify for better future jobs in Russia, but because they have no comfort, security, or confidence in a good future in their homeland.

TIMO VIHAVAINEN is a historian who views current Russian society in terms of the legacy from the past. Even though he carefully discusses how this legacy of many centuries could conceivably impact on the present situation, his chapter displays a spirit of historical determinism. It is obvious that the shadow of history hangs over Russia. But Vihavainen looks at opinion polls showing strong popular support for Stalin, a belief in Russian exceptionalism, a Russian *Sonderweg*, and imperialistic dreams of a Great Russia in light of the country's long tradition of a dominant authoritarian state. He offers a similar explanation for the heavy voter support garnered on TV shows (such as "Russia's Name") by people who have defended Russia against invasions from the West, such as Alexander Nevsky, or tsarist Russian conservative ministers like Peter Stolypin. I disagree with Vihavainen's analysis, because he cannot explain the changes in public opinion over time, such as the fact that support for Stalin in public opinion polls rose in the early 21st century after having declined over the preceding decades. Leading Russian sociologists point out that this support was to a large extent a product of the number of TV programs. With encouragement of the political regime, the programs influenced the more than 80 percent of the population for whom TV is the primary information source. TV series, documentaries and fiction have explained, comprehended, and humanized Stalin, to say nothing of how his name has been linked to the government's intensified political rhetoric over the last ten years regarding Russia's victory in World War II.

THERE IS ANOTHER aspect to this. Vihavainen looks only at one tradition in Russian political thought. He forgets that there has been and remains another tradition, one that, while certainly significantly weaker, has run parallel to the dominant tradition of thought over the centuries. In his great work on Russia and Europe from 1492 to 1921, the Russian-American historian Alexander Yanov argues that for centuries there existed two schools of thought in Russia, and he shows how the pendulum has swung from one to the other. If the first school falls back on "conservative" conceptions of Russian uniqueness, then the second is based on more "liberal" ideas about how Russia can be reformed by and learn from the experiences of other nations. Yanov does not date these viewpoints to the late 19th century struggles between "Slavophiles" and "Westernizers"; he finds them also in the 16th century. According to Yanov, every "liberal" attempt to reform has failed. Each half-implemented reform program has been followed by a reactionary backlash and a period of political restoration. Even though the "liberal" alternative has not always been accorded its proper place in the public sphere, it has been present in the political discussion among intellectuals.

After having followed Russian cultural life *in situ* in Moscow for over four years, I can vouch for the existence of a dynamic spirit of innovation and creativity in Russian cultural life that bodes well for the future, albeit over the long term. Culture in the form of art, film, and theater communicates a different perspective on the future than the lamentable stagnation that characterizes Russia's political life, with its destructive consequences in terms of both social development and individual life.

Etkind summarizes the book and the concerns of its authors in the following way:

> **Deep changes in Russia will follow deep changes in the world. The best hope is that in response to these changes, Russia will not collapse, as did the Soviet Union, but will engage itself in a deep and productive perestroika, which will transform the economic and biopolitical foundations of the nation.**

To help Russia carry out this process, both the authors and the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs recommend that everything should be done to create a framework for a lasting and mutually cooperative relationship in order to reduce the threat both from and vis-à-vis Russia. With this we can only strongly concur.

lena jonson

1 See "Na zdorovye! Gender and binge drinking in Russia", *Baltic Worlds*, vol.II:1.

LENA JONSON
PhD in political science, head of the Russia Research Programme at the Swedish Institute of International Affairs. Cultural Counsellor at the Swedish Embassy in Moscow 2005–2009.

Brodsky's credo. Aesthetics is the mother of ethics

Bengt Jangfeldt
Språket är Gud
Anteckningar om Joseph Brodsky

[Language is God: Notes on Joseph Brodsky]
Stockholm: Wahlström & Widstrand 2010
367 pages

MICHEL EKMAN
PhD, researcher and literary critic for *Svenska Dagbladet* (Stockholm) and *Hufvudstadsbladet* (Helsinki).

TO THOSE WHO CANNOT speak Russian, the works of Joseph Brodsky may to some extent remain foreign. Brodsky agreed with the sentiment expressed in the title of Bengt Jangfeldt's knowledgeable, empathetic, and sympathetic book: *Language is God*. And this mainly applied to poetry, the pinnacle of the human use of language. Jangfeldt, an associate professor in Russian literature, says: "Poetry was the breath of life for Iosif Brodskij, it occupied his being more than anything else; an obsession. He proclaimed that poetry was older than and would also outlive politics – a higher form of human activity, higher, to be sure, than political language, but also more perfect than prose. A friend who shared a taxi with him on the way to the Leningrad airport the day he was deported from the Soviet Union remembers that the conversation was mainly about poetry and not, as might have been expected, about politics and the impending exile."

Add Brodsky's strongly traditional view of poetry: he considered its most important characteristics to be meter and rhyme. Through the power of his innovative command of these elements he became one of the most significant poets of the Russian language. The central theme of Brodsky's poetry is time and the ability of the poem to conquer it. The form both perpetuates culture – with links to past works – and provides structure. Meter and rhyme overcome the limitations of the present by referring both backwards and forwards within the text, keeping both memory and expectation alive.

SUCH TIES ARE of course difficult to convey in another language; consequently, some of the beauty and perfection of Brodsky's verse is lost. But the consequences are even more serious. They diminish the reader's ability to understand the great demands that Brodsky makes as a thinker and linguistic philosopher. His view of language was highly controversial. Jangfeldt summarizes it: "Time is greater than space, but language is greater than time." Therefore language is God.

Of course this ahistorical interpretation of language is inconsistent with linguistic teachings and Brodsky received considerable criticism for this view even during his lifetime. Meanwhile, for him personally it led to a perception of aesthetics as the mother of ethics. He believed that a person who developed good artistic taste would become immune to moral and political evil. He proposed that classic literature should fill the pages of newspapers in the post-communist countries rather than current events – yet another point for which Brodsky received no understanding.

JANGFELDT MENTIONS BRODSKY'S "combination of intuition-driven energy and inadequate logic" as a thinker and explains this by the fact that he was self-taught. The authority on which he rested was, as one might imagine, his mastery as a poet. And therefore the consequences are so extensive that the majority of the world's poetry readers will never be able to fully appreciate the greatness of the poems – and why Brodsky is undeniably enigmatic. Even as an essayist – where he sometimes wrote in English – he leaves a mixed impression. When Brodsky departs from his own field, the brilliant poetry analyses, a strange condescending and nonchalant tone often encroaches – as in the unusually unpleasant controversy with Milan Kundera about Dostoyevsky's ideology, where Brodsky manages to marginalize the ancient Russian tyranny of its neighboring countries, blaming the Western world for Soviet communism (because Marx was German …) and implying that he himself, because of his high moral and ethical qualifications, resisted the totalitarian power more successfully than Kundera. As would appear to be natural, Brodsky was largely a product of both his own experiences of Soviet oppression and of the spiritual climate of ancient Russian totalitarianism. When he expressed himself on conditions in the Western world he could appear to be insightful, but also somewhat bizarre, in essence distanced from the problems of equality and democracy.

Bengt Jangfeldt's book provides an excellent explanation for the contradictions that typify Brodsky. As a Slavicist, an expert on the Russian tradition of poetry, and as Brodsky's translator, Jangfeldt has both personal and professional credentials. But most importantly: he was Brodsky's friend and is both sympathetic to, and deeply understanding of, the poet – which does not prevent him from occasionally resorting to mild irony. Unpretentiously, he subtitled his book *Anteckningar om Joseph Brodsky* [Notes on Joseph Brodsky], but his very candor and soft-spoken approach to the equations that may not always fully compute open the way for an understanding of the man and his works. Jangfeldt wrote his book in three parts. The first, a biographical essay about Iosef Brodskij, the young Jewish poet from Leningrad, presents his background, his first steps as a poet, the contacts with Anna Ahmatova, persecution by the authorities, exile to Siberia, and finally deportation at the age of 32, when Brodskij amazingly quickly transformed himself into Joseph Brodsky, cosmopolitan American poet and university professor.

THE SECOND ESSAY FOCUSES on Brodsky's language, poetry, and ethics. The third, entitled "Fragments", occupies almost half of the book. Its short texts deal with a variety of subjects – from stories and anecdotes about traits and idiosyncrasies of the poet to political and aesthetic discussions. Jangfeldt writes about Brodsky's enthusiasm for Sweden and about his many sojourns there, as well as his relationship with American traffic police, in the poet's eye government authorities no better than KGB agents. These fragments all build on Bengt Jangfeldt's personal memories of Brodsky, making them not only authoritative, but also alive and captivating.

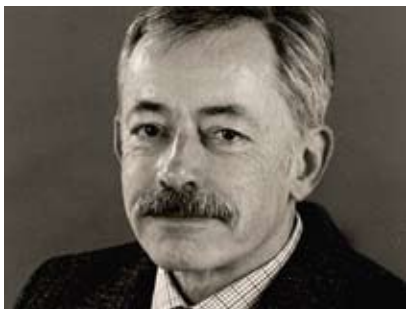
michel ekman

Note: This review was first published in *Svenska Dagbladet*, Stockholm.

main contributors

BALTIC WORLDS

Philip Hanson



Professor emeritus of the political economy of Russia and Eastern Europe, University of Birmingham. Associate Fellow of the Royal Institute of International Affairs Russia and Eurasia Programme (Chatham House, London). Interested in comparative economic systems, the Soviet and Russian economies, and economics of transition. Author of *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Economy* (2003).

Margareta Tillberg

Associate professor of history and theory of art and design at the Linnaeus University, writes about design, art, and technology in 20th century Russia. Currently working on a monograph about design and art, ergonomics, observation and cybernetics, collaboration and innovation within the planning system in the Soviet Union from 1945 until today.

Her PhD thesis, *Coloured Universe and the Russian Avant-Garde*, was translated into Russian. It is the first close study on practices of a so-called laboratory in an art- and science institute in the Soviet Union in the 1920s. In 2010, visiting scholar at the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Berlin.

Sergey Zhuravlev & Jukka Gronow

Sergey Zhuravlev is a senior researcher at the Institute of Russian History at the Russian Academy of Sciences. Among his books is *"Malenkiye liudi i bolshaya istoriya": Inostrantsy moskovskogo Elekrozavoda v sovetskom obshchestve 1920-kh–1930-kh gg*. **Jukka Gronow** is a professor of sociology at Uppsala University. His previous publications include *Caviar with Champagne: Common Luxury and the Ideals of the Good Life in Stalin's Russia*.

Together Gronow and Zhuravlev have written a history of pre-war – up to the late 1940's – Soviet fashion, *Krasota pod kontrolem gosudarstva: Osobennosti i etapy stanovleniya sovestkoi mody*.

Gudrun Persson

Gudrun Persson, PhD in history from the London School of Economics and Political Science; researcher. She specializes in the periods of reform in Russian history. Her most recent publications are *Learning from Foreign Wars: Russian Military Thinking 1859–1873* (forthcoming) and *Varför föll Sovjetunionen?* [Why did the Soviet Union fall?] (2006). Currently, she is working on a book about the Soviet Union and post-Soviet Russia's search for a national memory.

The hybrid Russian military

At the time of its dissolution in 1991 the Soviet Union had the world's largest standing army, with 3.4 million soldiers. Two million (almost 60 percent) were conscripts. The Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, established in May 1992, was at first composed of just over 2.7 million men, including 1.5 million (approximately 55 percent) conscripts. The strength of the forces was cut by 60 percent during the Yeltsin era and at the end of Yeltsin's presidency the percentage of conscripts was down to one third of all personnel. At that point, the current size of the force was achieved, which according to official figures is 1.13 million. The goal is a force of 1 million in 2016.

In 1996 Boris Yeltsin issued a presidential decree ordering a gradual transition from conscripts to contract professionals for defense and other armed forces. At the same time the number of grounds for exemption from conscription doubled so that no more than 20 percent of all men in a given age group complete obligatory military training. The trend to reduce the number and percentage of conscripts in the Russian armed forces was underpinned by the perception among leading politicians that professional military units are superior to conscript armies on the battlefield, a view largely shared by the general public. A two-year basic training program was considered wasteful and overly challenging, especially among Russia's elite. Recruitment of conscripts after deferments has also been socially stigmatized.

THIS MAJOR OVERHAUL of the traditional troop-heavy Russian army is discussed by Norwegian expert Rolf-Inge Vogt Andresen ("Framtiden for russisk verneplikt" [Conscription and the new Russian army] *Nordisk Østforum* 1:2010). The Russian military leadership has had a restraining effect on the transition to a professional army with exclusively enlisted personnel; specifically since in 80 to 90 percent of cases contract soldiers are recruited from the ranks of those fulfilling national service. Intervention by the Minister of Defense in 2003 led to a compromise, which partially satisfied the generals, resulting in both conscript and contract forces – thereby effectively ending the Yeltsin decree. At the same time military service was cut from two years to one year.

Defenders of conscription have faced public relations problems because of the physical attacks (including maiming and murder) to which recruits have traditionally been subjected in the Russian army by older comrades and officers. During the demoralizing 1990s, this brutal hazing became particularly disturbing. At the same time, extensive exemptions and deferments cause the military to lose the very soldiers who would benefit it most, writes Vogt Andresen, because those most qualified "view military service as a task for others, not for themselves or their relatives"; "it is well documented that conscripted recruits are weaker than the average young man in relation to a number of indicators: they have less education, poorer health, they have difficulties adapting and are drug abusers, they have a criminal record".

THE RUSSIAN CONSCRIPT armed forces will probably remain as the base for and a complement to mercenary soldiers – a feature unique to Russia compared with other major military powers. In the late 1990s the reputation of the armed forces was at its worst, with underlying factors such as conscripts apparently at risk of being sent to trouble spots like Chechnya. Since then public opinion has become somewhat less negative. However, according to Vogt Andresen, the fact remains that conscripted units consisting of troops with mixed ethnic backgrounds will continue to be a point of conflict within the Russian army.

Arming the people and democratization went hand in hand. Now democracies want mercenary armies.

BALTIC WORLDS

A quarterly sponsored by the Foundation for Baltic and East European Studies

A question of self-atonement?
When hatred and humiliation abound

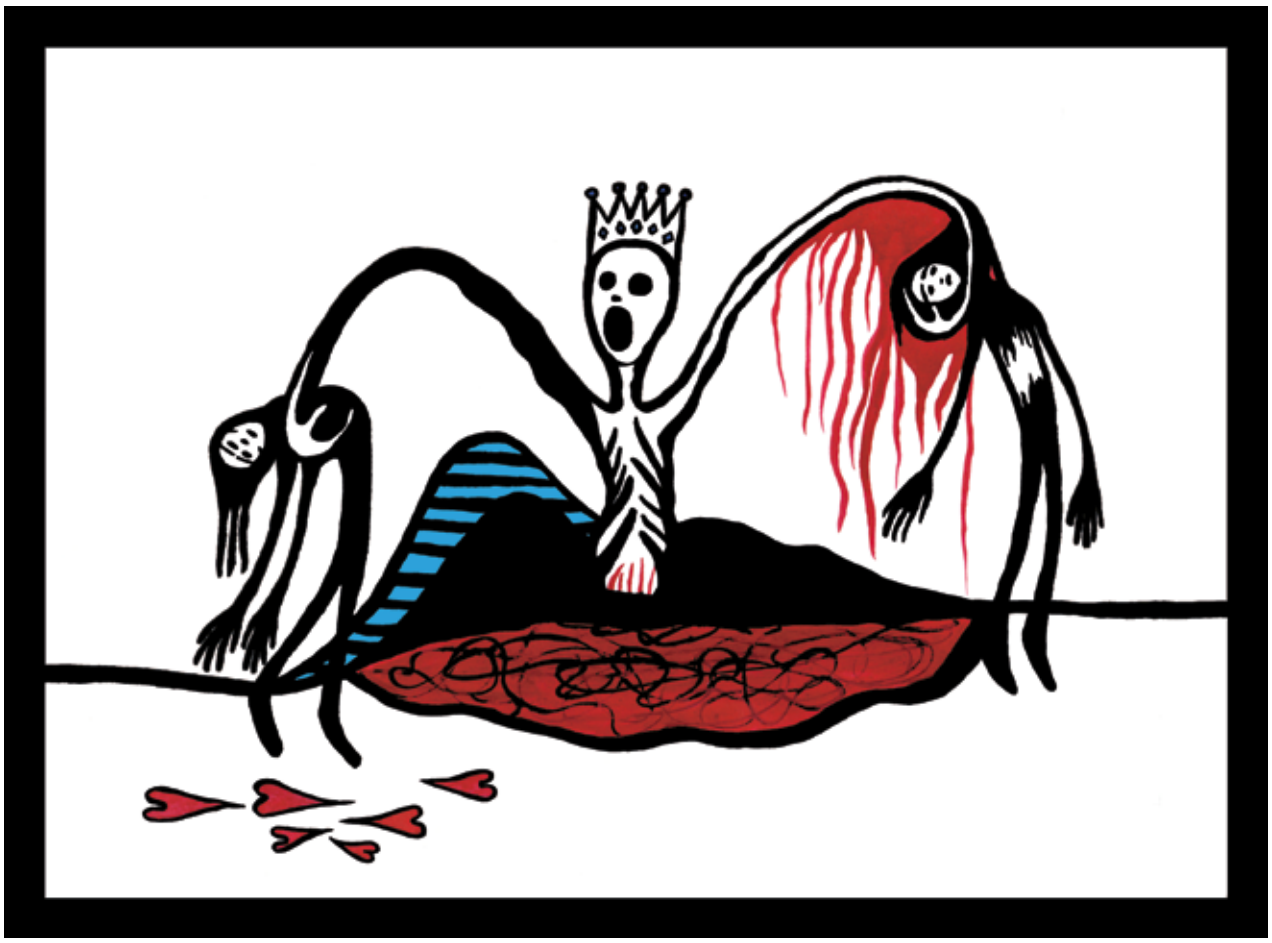


ILLUSTRATION: KATRIN STENMARK

Fyodor Dostoyevsky wrote his novel *The Insulted and Humiliated* after returning from his exile. He wanted to establish himself as a modern author at the very moment in history when Russian society was on the brink of compulsory modernization. Russia was exhausted following wars and centuries of serfdom. The Russians had learned to suffer under extremes. Sentimentality and delusions became logical expressions of an escapism that led inward – toward intimacy and self-sacrifice.

This early book contains subjects that would fully blossom in novels such as *The Idiot* and *The Adolescent*. Loquaciousness ends up in close proximity to inner dialog, the daily reality check confronted by everyone, that addresses the price of survival. The characters in Dostoyevsky's novels range from villainous to naive, and their demise may be encountered at any given point along the way. Most vulnerable are those who dare to believe in honesty and sincerity, for such people, we learn, are always betrayed by their beliefs.

A scrupulous prince who is used to living off the resources and misfortunes of others is given the role of anti-hero in this novel. He belongs to a cosmopolitan class of parasites and lives off the gullibility of the oppressed. The author makes it clear that change is impossible when such individuals are permitted to run rampant. The freedom he enjoys consists of breaking every promise and violating every agreement, while sowing misery and insanity everywhere around him. Meanwhile, his life is completely worthless because he creates nothing and only consumes, especially trust.

Russia had no choice but to rid itself of this black soul in aristocratic guise. For Dostoyevsky, spiritual renewal was the preferred course of action. He could venture to the extreme, even to anti-Semitic outpourings, as in *A Writer's Diary*, in his appeal for a Russian rebirth – no room for nuances, only for contrasts.

A similar approach can be found in Sofi Oksanen's award-winning novel *Purge*, in which a small and insignificant people are hounded. The Estonians are subjected to war and occupation for which they are in no way responsible. However, due to these circumstances they are so abused that their own deeds become devoid of moral substance. Even at the hour of liberation in 1991, the misdeeds, desecration, and self-deprecation continue.

For Oksanen, the Russians bring the atrocities and spread them in their wake, whether addressing the deportations that occurred during the era of national humiliation, or sexual trafficking under the capitalist free market system. Everyone exploits everyone. There is no heavenly choir. The smell of alcohol hangs heavy over the destitution of the Estonian countryside, like the smell of sperm in the room of a rootless young woman who winds up there by necessity, after a childhood in Siberian exile. Her pimps are both ethnic Russians. Their violent death by the cold-blooded hand of an old peasant woman on a particularly dreary day in the early 1990s avenges all previous injustices.

Or is it a question of self-atonement? That woman once murdered an unhappy love – freedom fighter or terrorist, depending on one's perspective – because he would not abandon the futility of his life as a sniper in the Estonian forests. Stalin was still alive at that time. The dream of liberation had to be buried for the foreseeable future. What was later dug up was not always pleasant to behold. It swept away a resentment that resembled ethnic hatred.