

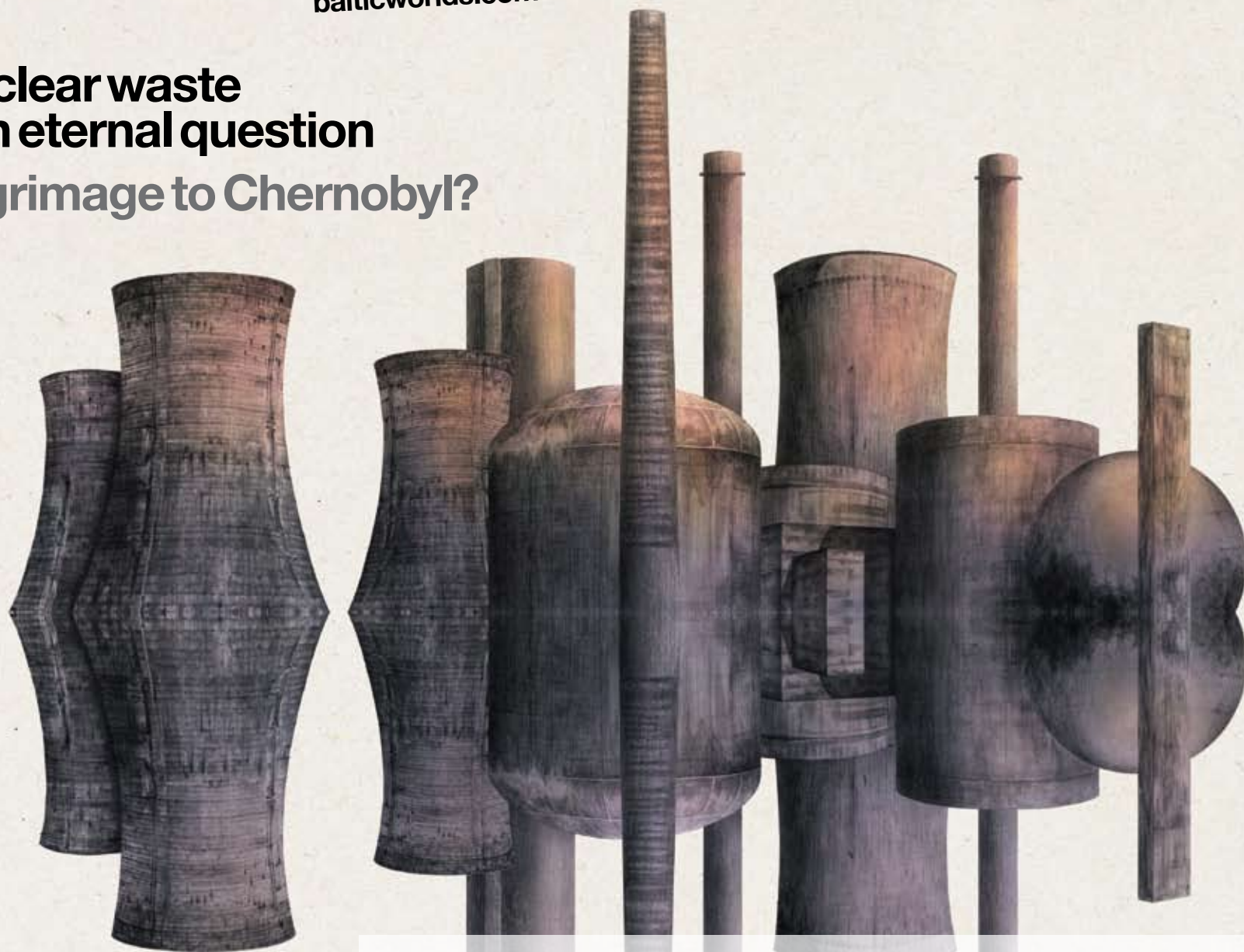
A quarterly scholarly journal and news magazine. December 2010. Vol III:4  
From the Centre for Baltic and East European Studies (CBEES)  
Södertörn University, Stockholm

**COMMENTARY.** At last,  
Russia must modernize

# BALTIC WORLDS

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**Nuclear waste  
– an eternal question**  
Pilgrimage to Chernobyl?



## ENERGY & GEOPOLITICS

**reports & reviews**

**WEBER** / PRIVATIZATION AND RE-NATIONALIZATION / **WAR CRIMINALS** / PRZEWORSKI: REWARDED AND MARGINALIZED

## Management of a lost vision. Recreate – or make cultural layers visible

**IN A PALACE** that symbolizes the modernist 1960s, the Wenner-Gren Center in Stockholm, forty experts, activists, and researchers gathered in September (see BW III:2, pp. 2 and 4–8) to present and discuss the issue of attitudes to a cultural heritage that to some degree exists only as a vision, partly as a cultural landscape with elements of the influence of nature and politics across centuries. From the top floor of the 24-story skyscraper there is a stunning view of the Royal National City Park, but under us there was a road construction project that has long threatened both the park and the adjacent Bellevue Park. A compromise has been reached, but the matter of managing the conflict between rationality and aesthetics remains.

The Wenner-Gren Center is an exclamation point in the fairly low-key urban landscape of Stockholm. It symbolizes the termination of a Swedish great power epoch of mechanical engineering, but also the definitive end point of King Gustav III's 1700s dream of a royal road between the Royal Palace and his "retreat" pavilion, and the English gardens of Haga.

**THE LOST VISION** actually consists of several layers of grand plans for the area around Lake Brunnsviken, now connected to the Baltic Sea via a narrow channel. The King's architect, Fredrik Magnus Piper, was heavily influenced by the idea of the English garden, but his visions were only partially realized, and



The foundations of the never completed Haga palace.

then the King's interests shifted towards a classicist idiom after a trip to Italy. And after Gustav was assassinated in 1792, the grandiose plans for a magnificent palace were shelved; only the foundation remains, like fake ruins.

**A CENTRAL QUESTION** at the symposium was about restoration – to what? Should a park, which in this case contains many separate components, be managed by different authorities, be seen as a palimpsest, where various cultural layers remain visible? Or should an ideological era be recreated, as when long-lost buildings are rebuilt to a presumed original state? The symposium yielded no definite answer to the question, but in reality one must deal with a physical place that for financial, emotional, and political reasons require compromises.

The symposium provided a glimpse into a period of currents of thought where the Italy of the classicist period, with links to the Russian Empire, gave way to an English, liberal, "softer" view of landscape, conveyed to Sweden by the English-Swede William Chambers, along with Fredrik Magnus Piper. Piper's magnificent but unfinished *Beskrivning [...] till en Ängelsk Lustpark* [Description (...) for an English Leisure Park] was published in facsimile in 2004 by the Royal Swedish Academy of Arts in Swedish and English. The symposium talks will be published by The Committee for the Gustavian Park, an independent body. ✖

**thomas lundén**

Professor of human geography,  
Södertörn University

## Expanding election coverage

**BW CONTINUES TO** expand election coverage within CBEE's focus area through interviews, reports, and analyses on the Web site. Most recently the coverage has been on parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, and Latvia, as well as the presidential election in Belarus and municipal elections in Ukraine.

## A woeful world record

Lithuania has the highest suicide rate in the world: of 100,000 Lithuanians, 34 took their own life in 2009. This is three times higher than in Spain or the United States, and eleven times higher than in Greece. Before World War II, the corresponding figure in Lithuania was eight out of 100,000. During the Soviet period, suicide rates rose steadily and, in the 1980s, were up to 30; after independence, they rose further, and from 1994 to 1996 reached a peak of 46 suicides per 100,000 inhabitants.

In most countries, the suicide rate is higher in urban than in rural areas. In Lithuania, it is the reverse. In the Lithuanian countryside, unemployment is high, as is alcohol consumption; and sanitary conditions are terrible (only 25 percent of the rural population has running water). The mortality rate is 75 percent higher in the country than in urban areas.

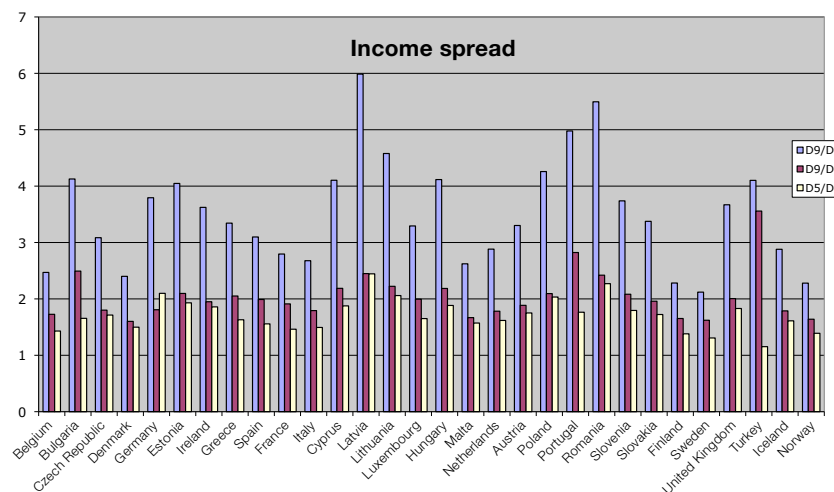
Reference: [www.cafebabel.com](http://www.cafebabel.com)

## Letters and figures. Additions and corrections

**THE COVER OF** BW III:3 ended up somewhat disfigured because the last two letters in the word Solidarność were dropped because of a technical mishap. Some country information was also accidentally dropped from a bar chart (Figure 1, p. 7) in the article on income disparities in Poland. The chart is reproduced here in its proper form.

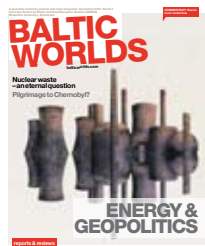
**IT SHOULD ALSO BE** noted that the

research presented in the essay on the cooperation between the Polish Solidarność and the Swedish trade union movement was financed by the Foundation for Baltic and East European Studies (Östersjöstiftelsen). ✖





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The next issue of BW is scheduled to be published in March 2011.

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# Neither in the grammar nor in the genes

The railway companies in Croatia, Serbia, and Slovenia have come together in a joint venture in order to create faster rail traffic through the former Yugoslavian territory. This is, according to *The Economist* (September 18, 2010), yet another example of how companies in these countries have come to realize how small their domestic markets are – and of how difficult things have become with the customs barriers at state borders that previously did not exist.

Prior to the Yugoslav civil wars, almost all freight between Turkey and Western Europe went through Yugoslavia, but since then it has been redirected to other routes using other modes of transport, such as boat and car; only two percent of this trade is currently transported by rail. Cargo 10, as the new company is called, will change this, is the idea. But the plans are broader than that. Within a few years, a railway tunnel under the Bosphorus will be opened. With this, a bottleneck in trade between Asia and Europe will vanish.

THE BERLIN-BAGHDAD LINE was Imperial Germany's dream before World War I. Within the foreseeable future, a Berlin-Beijing route through Belgrade will be a realistic possibility in the Post-Cold War World. This means that the classic silk and amber roads would be linked together and that Istanbul would again be the heart of the Mediterranean world, and – no mere rough guess – a counterweight to Brussels and Berlin in the realm of power politics. Though hardly anticipated, it would be entirely logical if the Turks took greatest advantage of the breakup of the Balkans.

And it is perhaps not surprising that observers think that neo-Ottoman sentiments can be registered in the corridors of power in Ankara. The age of empires need not be over just because so many of them have gone under.

IN ANY EVENT, with Eurasian integration, a lot of the mystique surrounding the idea of Europe will be peeled back. That which culturally unites a Finnish Skolt Sami and an upper crust Genovese aristocrat has always been a bit unclear. Asia, on the other hand, has never been able to be captured by a generally accepted formula – the land mass has simply been too vast for that. What's most likely is that zones rather than borders will mark the place where the people of tomorrow feel at home or will be thought to feel at home – if belonging to a place doesn't in fact consist in the actual crossing of borders and the forced or freely chosen movement from one place to another.

It seems that heterogeneity is becoming the norm where purity had been worshiped previously. Although, to be sure, it is a norm that meets resistance. It is easy




ILLUSTRATION: KATRIN STENMARK

enough simply to make the resistance an object of raillery, since it is based on ignorance and prejudices, but it must be taken seriously when it is preached from established platforms. In France, the National Assembly passed a law decreeing that genocide of Armenians took place almost a century ago, *but*, at the same time, the French government expels the Romani in violation of European law. The Swedish government is also getting rid of Romani in an extralegal way, *and* runs a propaganda center that provides information about crimes against minorities that have taken place in the recent past.

IN THIS WAY, neo-racism also is part of normality and, with improved communications that disseminate calls to action with lightning speed, it is perhaps easier for it to move around. On the other hand, historically conditioned mistrust between ethnic groups takes time to work through. From that perspective, it was encouraging that the Russian-speaking minority did not turn its back on the fall parliamentary elections in Latvia.

Riches lie neither in the grammar nor in the genes. ■



"I AM NOW IN  
THE PLACE  
WHERE YOU  
SHOULD  
NOT COME"

# NUCLEAR STORAGE GONE AWRY



PICTURES FROM THE MOVIE INTO ETERNITY

The present age will never be held accountable for the thoughtlessness of the future. But must be held responsible for its own.



In Michael Madsen's film *Into Eternity*, the safe storage of nuclear waste has gone awry: distant descendants of ours from a civilization unknown to us have penetrated the defenses of Onkalo, the final repository of nuclear waste on Finland's west coast. "What drove you to enter?" the voice of the Danish director asks the unknown people of the future after they have gained access to the world's first final repository for deadly radioactive waste. "Was it the scars we left on the surface? Or a rumor?" Hadn't the pictures we left behind of "forbidden landscapes" frightened them away, asks Madsen? Or was it precisely these pictures that had aroused their curiosity in the first place?

These are fascinating questions about a truly far-reaching topic. Two hundred and fifty thousand tons of highly radioactive waste worldwide must be hermetically sealed for 100,000 years to protect future life from the deadly rays. No one knows how to do this save for the Finns (and, in their wake, the Swedes), who are drilling a giant underground tomb four kilometers deep in the rocky territory of the Gulf of Bothnia for their own 5,000 tons of nuclear waste. In his 75-minute documentary, the Danish-born Madsen is not only introducing it to cinema and TV audiences, he is addressing the future.

Madsen asks Berit Lundqvist of Swedish Nuclear Fuel and Waste Management (SKB) to do the same. She speaks into the camera, aiming her words at those who are going to force their way into Onkalo: "Go back to the surface and take better care of the world than we did. Good luck." Good luck? Don't all the other experts in charge of building the facility say that neither an intrusion from outside nor the opening of the radioactive final repository because of climate, wars, or other breakdowns in civilization are to be expected during these 100,000 years?

**Madsen does not** have one single opponent of nuclear power speak in his film. All of those who discuss the Onkalo project on camera are experts actively involved in the undertaking (or in the corresponding Swedish facility, not yet under construction). Timo Äikäs, deputy head of the construction project, imagines how, after an ice age (expected in 60,000 years), people might try to drill a hole down to this strange repository – something that could seem even odder, more curious, and possibly even more fascinating than the pyramids still do to us, after a mere couple of thousand years. And have we obeyed the Egyptians' decree that the burial chambers should be left sealed forever?

But what good is all that? The radioactive waste is here, after all, and it has to be "disposed of". "You cannot make nuclear waste go away", explains Onkalo manager Äikäs, with an earnest expression, to the Danish interviewer's camera. One of the strengths of this powerful documentary is that we can read the faces of the participants. We can see from those actively involved in Onkalo that everything is at stake here; they are dealing with fundamental questions that no one in his right mind can maneuver around.

The questions are extremely difficult, yet cannot be sidestepped: Should one try to leave behind information about the dangers of the nuclear waste repository for generations existing more than 100,000 years into the future? With what symbols, in what languages, and

by means of what media? Or is it more prudent to let Onkalo be completely forgotten, so that no one will know anything about the copper drums, sealed with huge amounts of concrete, and their radioactive contents?

**It is devastating** beyond measure to hear and see how Mikael Jensen, analyst with the Swedish Radiation Safety Authority, explains matter-of-factly that this dangerous nuclear waste burial site will in fact be a "treasure chest" for future generations because of all the copper, uranium, and plutonium. "People want to get at treasure. Hasn't that always been the case in the history of mankind?"

"I am now in the place where you should not come", says the director to the generations of the future, with only a match for light and maybe a little too much emotion for this film, which is otherwise so calm. What gives it life is the contrast between the experts' statements, which shock us repeatedly, along with the film's exquisite visual aesthetics and haunting soundtrack. Madsen's shots of the giant caverns are accompanied by a Sibelius waltz. It is no coincidence that we hear echoes of Stanley Kubrick's waltz music from the universe in *2001: A Space Odyssey*. His camera almost always moves slowly – there is not a single picture that aims to shock. The extremely careful work with radioactive material in water as a temporary storage medium was thought out to the last detail and holds a beauty all its own. The atomic waste experts presented are reminiscent of figures from the films of Aki Kaurismäki, so dry and sober in tone, and with minimal gestures when they, who perhaps know more about this than anyone, utter apocalyptic-sounding sentences.

Carl Reinhold Bräkenhielm, theology professor and member of the Stockholm National Council for Nuclear Waste, believes that it is impossible for us to imagine what it will be like a few hundred years from now. Yet, we have to deal with the atomic waste we have now, which will radiate for nearly an eternity. The director, again with a lit match held in front of his face, gives his time perspective: Construction of Onkalo began in the 20<sup>th</sup> century when he was a child. The facility is to be sealed in the 22<sup>nd</sup> century by which time he will be long dead. And then it must remain sealed shut for 100,000 years. No building in the history of humanity has ever lasted for even a tenth of this length of time.

Whoever has seen the movie will be all the more astonished by the current status of the nuclear debate in Finland: The construction of a nuclear reactor, to supplement two older ones at the Olkuliuto nuclear power station, in the immediate vicinity of Onkalo, is plagued by breaches in security, delays, and cost overruns. Neither that nor the growing doubts of Finnish geologists about the Onkalo project have prevented the parliament in Helsinki from green-lighting construction of two more new reactors. However, there is no room in the world's first final repository for nuclear waste for the additional waste from these plants. Ah well, we'll just find another repository somehow, say industry and government. As Berit Lundqvist says in the film, staring directly into the camera and addressing future generations: "Good luck!" ❌

**thomas borchert**

DPA correspondent

Note. Information about the film can be found at <http://www.intoeternitythemovie.com>.



**How long is eternity?** If a terrorist can hijack nuclear weapons, he can make his way down into the bedrock.

## THE DECISION-IN-PRINCIPLE (DIP) IN 2002 TO BUILD A FIFTH NUCLEAR POWER PLANT MADE FINLAND THE CENTER OF ATTENTION WHEN THE NUCLEAR POWER INDUSTRY BEGAN TO SEE ITS CHANCES. FINLAND IS THE FIRST COUNTRY TO HAVE MADE A DECISION ON FINAL STORAGE OF NUCLEAR WASTE. FINLAND IS ALSO THE ONLY NORDIC COUNTRY IN WHICH ENERGY CONSUMPTION IS RISING.

**N**uclear power has a preeminent role in the Finnish government's energy policy. The country's metal and forestry industries are energy-intensive sectors. A model calling for nuclear power-generated electricity as driving force is intended to secure jobs and the welfare state. Economic stimulus plans and improved competitiveness are the prerequisites for the implementation of the major renewable energy package debated in the parliament this autumn, in connection with budget negotiations. This has been the position of Mauri Pekkarinen, Minister of Economic Affairs. It has been suggested that these new programs shall take effect in early 2011.

The nuclear power decisions have drawn international attention to Finnish energy policy. Finland was among the first countries to join a rapidly deregulated electricity market and is now a member of Nord Pool, the biggest electricity exchange in Europe.

In *The Renewal of Nuclear Power in Finland* (London 2009, eds. Matti Kojo & Tapio Litmanen), six Finnish researchers analyze the arguments and circumstances that led Finland to its Decision-in-Principle on final storage in 2001, which was soon followed by a permit to build a fifth nuclear power plant in 2002. The initiative to build the fifth reactor came from the paper and metal industries. In short order, nuclear power was transformed from environmental threat to climate solution and a central mechanism for achieving emissions limits under the Kyoto Protocol.

Tapio Litmanen of Jyväskylä University mentions four "articles of faith" that are deeply rooted in the Finnish political culture and have guided the renewed expansion of nuclear power – belief in education, authority, technology, and bureaucracy. Ari Lampinen, associate professor at Strömstad Academy in Sweden, highlights the dominant role of the Ministry of Employment and Economy in the permit process. This Finnish Ministry is, at once, the licensing authority, chief expert, manager of environmental impact assessments, and funder of research. Moreover, the Ministry administers the so-called nuclear waste fund and the state's holdings as a partner in energy companies and the electricity grid.

**Olkiluoto 3, the** first nuclear power plant in the West, whose construction began after Chernobyl, was built on an island in the municipality of Eurajoki, on the west coast of Finland. The energy company Teollisuuden Voima (TVO) already had two reactors in operation on the island. The new EPR reactor type, a third-generation pressurized water reactor, is the flagship of French nuclear power giant Areva. With its net output of 1,600 MW, it will be the world's largest nuclear power plant.

The construction contract was made in 2003 at

a fixed price of three billion euros. As of today, the price has nearly doubled and the project is four years behind schedule. TVO is blaming Areva for poor planning. Areva is blaming TVO for delaying construction. Responsibility for the cost overruns has become a matter for the courts. More than 3,000 quality assurance problems have been identified. Radiation safety agencies in Finland, France, and Britain have criticized the automation system. The plant will not become operational before 2013 at the earliest.

Petteri Tiippana, director of nuclear reactor regulation at the Finnish Radiation and Nuclear Safety Authority, STUK, is responsible for safety.

"The automation system has not yet been approved in every aspect", he says. "Safety standards in Finland are among the most stringent in the world. Many shortcomings are remedied. The reactor is being built to ensure that only minor quantities of radioactive substances are discharged to the surrounding area even if the highly unlikely were to occur, that is, if an accident were to happen. Even the worst conceivable scenario, a meltdown, will not be able to cause injury to people or the immediate environs."

Tiippana confirms that the Finnish version of the EPR has a lower output than the one being built in Flamanville, France:

"Nuclear fuel with a higher combustion rate is until further notice not permitted in Finland."

Might it be in the future, then?

"Any application by the nuclear power company will be dealt with by STUK as an operational change in the plant. This does not require parliamentary or government approval."

**The Onkalo final** storage cave, where the waste will be buried, is next door to the power plants on Olkiluoto Island. Under Finnish law, permission to operate a nuclear power plant is conditional upon settlement of the question of final disposal of the used nuclear fuel. A separate company, Posiva, was formed in 1995 by the two power companies TVO and Fortum solely for the purpose of solving the problem of final disposal.

The KBS-3 method is a Swedish concept based on stable bedrock and multiple barriers. The nuclear fuel is placed in steel capsules and then encapsulated in copper, 5 cm thick. The capsules are lowered into drill holes in the rock and deposited in bentonite clay at a depth of 400–500 meters. The tunnels are then filled and the opening sealed.

Posiva's design manager Erkki Palonen provides a tour of the area.

"The nuclear waste in ground-level water basins is the greatest hazard. Encapsulation in the rock is a considerably safer alternative", he says. "Regardless of whether or not more nuclear power is commissioned,

we are not going to get away from the nuclear waste that has already been produced."

Palonen likes the Finnish way of making decisions:

"We are pragmatic. The debate was carried out in connection with the Decision-in Principle of 2001. The Finnish people have approved the plan through the vote in Parliament. Our task is to execute the decision with the greatest possible expertise. We are also paying the costs."

There is a downside to decision making at the political level. Members of Parliament are replaced every four years. Important information is forgotten.

Matti Saarnisto, professor of geology, is a former research director of the Geological Survey of Finland and former secretary general of the Finnish Academy of Science and Letters. Saarnisto is doubtful about the safety of final storage.

"It is insane to believe you can store nuclear waste for 100,000 years. The Ice Age reached its maximum distribution 20,000 years ago. Olkiluoto was covered by ice two-kilometers thick. The earth's crust was pushed down about 800 meters. You can see traces in the landscape of major earthquakes that have occurred about every 2,500 years."

Onkalo and final storage are monitored by STUK, under the management of Jussi Heinonen:

"We are aware of the uncertainty with regard to copper corrosion. Discussions are in progress among Posiva, STUK, and the research community. The national nuclear waste research program, KYT, which reports to and is funded by the Ministry of Employment and Economy, has initiated two investigations into copper corrosion that are not yet complete. Thus far, the Finnish researchers have found no factual information to indicate that corrosion is a problem."

The processes that take place during glaciation are the most critical phase, which is now being analyzed, according to Heinonen.

"When the ice masses melt, enormous pressure is released. Matti Saarnisto is an expert on glaciation and permafrost, and has evaluated Posiva's report at our request."

The report indicates shortcomings in Posiva's study: "Permafrost may have major effects on the hydrological conditions and in the worst case result in the release and dispersion of radionuclides from a depository. The depth of permafrost is of vital importance." The report goes on to state that "all predictions of depository safety beyond the next glaciation 55,000 to 65,000 or 90,000 to 110,000 years after the present are speculation and not based on scientific facts". (Matti Saarnisto, *Expected Evolution of a Spent Nuclear Fuel Repository at Olkiluoto. Evaluation report on the Posiva Report 2006:5*. January 2008, pp. 14 and 22)

A research project in Greenland involving researchers from Posiva, Canada, and Sweden is investigating the water currents of inland ices and how they affect

**The pyramids of our age are built underground. And will never be plundered ....**



A BALTIC  
WORLDS  
feature

# FINLAND — LAND OF URANIUM

PICTURES FROM THE MOVIE INTO ETERNITY. ILLUSTRATION: KARIN SUNNVISSON



What does radioactivity taste like? A bit like blueberries perhaps.

groundwater. The project, which will run until 2013, is expected to provide information about future conditions.

**Opinion surveys show** that more than half the Finnish population opposes further expansion of nuclear power. Less than one fifth of the population supports the construction of two new nuclear power plants. The greatest opposition is on the Åland Islands. In spite of this, the Finnish parliament ratified in July the government's decision to allow TVO and Fennovoima each to build a new reactor and Posiva to expand the final storage facility. Fortum, which is half-owned by the state and has years of experience with nuclear power through its two units in Loviisa, also applied for permission to expand, but was denied.

The nuclear power projects of both TVO and Fennovoima, a new player, are based on a unique Finnish ownership structure known as the Mankala Principle, which is based on electricity at prime cost, with no markup. The EU Commission is in the midst of studying competition and tax issues related to the energy companies in response to a complaint by Green Party European Parliament Members Heidi Hautala and Satu Hassi.

Fennovoima was founded in 2007. It is owned by Finnish industrial companies and local energy companies. German E.ON, which holds a minority stake of 34 percent, is providing the financial security and the expertise. Fennovoima is not worried about the final storage issue, which is still unresolved.

"We have direct contact with the Swedish Nuclear Fuel and Waste Management Company (SKB) in Sweden via E.ON", says Timo Kallio, head of construction at Fennovoima. SKB and Posiva are working together on final storage.

"Power plant locations under consideration are Simo and Pyhäjoki along the Gulf of Bothnia. We have the support of local government and the public", he says.

Helena Majjala from Pro Hanhijoki in Pyhäjoki does not believe Fennovoima's opinion poll showing that 60 percent of the people in the municipality support the nuclear power plans:

"We have asked the municipality for a referendum twice, and were turned down both times."

The nuclear power decision was pushed through Parliament at breakneck speed in the shadow of domestic campaign financing scandals, the replacement of the prime minister, and the complaint by the Chancellor of Justice that Taisto Turunen, leading energy official at the Ministry of Employment and Economy, was biased because he sat on the board of directors of the Outokumpu steel company, one of the founding partners of Fennovoima when the latter was being founded. ("Preparation of the matter was not jeopardized, but the impartiality of government agencies sustained a blow.") Taisto Turunen retired in August.

A lot of people thought that the law imposing unlimited financial liability on nuclear power plants should an accident occur, proposed by the Minister of Trade and Industry just before the vote, was only done for show. The law applies only to losses that arise in Finland.

Researchers who have issued critical opinions have been censured by their employers. A report from Greenpeace shows that the more campaign financing



PICTURES FROM THE MOVIE *INTO ETERNITY*. ILLUSTRATION: KARIN SUNVISSON

from business interests accepted by a member of Parliament, the more obvious was the tendency to vote in parliament in favor of two nuclear power plants. Those who opposed nuclear power were found in the group of MPs who had received the least contributions.

The Green Party's situation as governing party on the one hand and, on the other hand, as the opposition with regard to the specific issue is complex, to say the least. From the outset of negotiations on the formation of the government, the Greens announced that they opposed expansion of nuclear power and supported renewable energy solutions and green values. The party voted unanimously against the pro-

posal, though without bringing down the government. The main proponents of expanded nuclear power are the right-wing National Coalition Party, the business community, and big industry. Ten leading politicians from the Center Party, among them the Minister of Economic Affairs and the Minister of the Environment, who opposed nuclear power in 2002, now voted for two new reactors.

The Finnish paper industry, which has not done well in recent years, sees electricity production in the integrated European market as an appealing alternative. The main argument is to give a clear signal to business and investors that Finland can supply energy securely at a reasonable price – to reduce energy im-

**Nuclear waste can justify the police state. Yes, and then we will have created the permanent state of emergency.**



ports from Russia and bring down carbon emissions.

Opponents to nuclear power, on the other hand, are worried that investments in renewable energy and energy conservation will suffer.

“We don’t have the time to wait ten years. Emissions have to come down now. The hurried schedule got in the way of thorough preparations and the decisions were based on insufficient facts”, says Janne Björklund of the Finnish Association for Nature Conservation.

According to Matti Saarnisto, expert testimony before the parliamentary committee was a farce: “Everything had been decided in advance.”

**The rising price** of uranium and the nuclear power initiatives have also made Finland interesting in terms of mining exploration. Finland is part of the mineral-rich Fennoscandian Shield. Accession to the EU in 1995 opened the doors to foreign subsidiaries, and an outdated mining law from 1965 promotes mining operations. An amendment to the law in order to better protect the rights of citizens and the environment has been in progress for years; the process has been protracted. Intensive uranium exploration has been taking place for about a decade. When Areva’s application for a mining concession in two areas – 70 km east and 70 km west of the capital city of Helsinki, respectively – became generally known in 2006, opposition against uranium mining arose and grassroots movements around the country were born in the wake of the mining concessions.

A mining boom is now under way. Finland’s largest nickel and zinc mine, Talvivaara, began operating in 2008 in the municipality of Sotkamo in the province of Kainuu. The Ministry is currently dealing with an application to extract the uranium in the ore.

Mika Flöjt, researcher at the Northern Institute for Environmental and Minority Law at the University of Lapland’s Arctic Centre in Rovaniemi, has been sounding the alarm for years that there are mines in Finland with permits to extract other ores that are also abundant in uranium:

“Facts are being withheld. The public and local politicians do not have enough information when permits are granted. When problems arise, it is too late.”

“The dust particles in Talvivaara contain radioactivity, but the uranium content is low. Real uranium ore is a hundred times more radioactive”, says Esko Ruokola, principal advisor on the monitoring of nuclear waste and nuclear material at STUK:

“The expectation is that 350 metric tons of uranium per year will be extracted as an ancillary product. The motive is not financial. The uranium makes nickel processing more difficult. If the uranium is not removed in the mining stage, Norilsk Nickel in Harjavalta, the ore refiner, will have to deal with the problem.”

Matti Saarnisto is of the firm opinion that mining can only be permitted as long as the uranium is left in the earth:

“When uranium is enriched on-site, the facility is contaminated. The consequences are precisely the same as in a uranium mine. Why was Talvivaara granted a mining permit even though it was known that uranium was present?”

The environmental impact is massive. When the bedrock is crushed, the area that emits radiation in-

**“FACTS ARE BEING WITHHELD. THE PUBLIC AND LOCAL POLITICIANS DO NOT HAVE ENOUGH INFORMATION WHEN PERMITS ARE GRANTED. WHEN PROBLEMS ARISE, IT IS TOO LATE.”**

creases markedly. The basins have already leaked.

Before Parliament on August 12, 2010, Minister of the Environment Paula Lehtomäki, who is from Kainuu, answered a question about the environmental impact of mining in the Talvivaara mine. Her family owns shares in Talvivaara worth nearly €300,000, purchased shortly before the company announced it would be utilizing the uranium. Olli Mäenpää, professor of administrative law at the University of Helsinki, believes that Lehtomäki was biased both when she spoke in Parliament and when she participated in the decision process about permit issuance. She was recently freed from suspicions of trading on insider information.

(See [http://www.eduskunta.fi/faktatmp/utatmp/akxtmp/kk\\_625\\_2010\\_p.shtml](http://www.eduskunta.fi/faktatmp/utatmp/akxtmp/kk_625_2010_p.shtml);

[http://www.suomitv.fi/uutiset/oikeusprofessori\\_lehtomaki\\_jaavi\\_talvivaara\\_lausunnoissa\\_kuuntele\\_hastattelu](http://www.suomitv.fi/uutiset/oikeusprofessori_lehtomaki_jaavi_talvivaara_lausunnoissa_kuuntele_hastattelu). Accessed 2010-11-18.)

It has also emerged that Elias Ekdahl, director-general of the Geological Survey of Finland, which reports to the Ministry of Trade and Industry, owns 7,500 shares in Talvivaara. He signed the official opinions when the company applied for mining permits.

(See Mäenpää’s remarks in this case as well: <http://www.apu.fi/ajassa/article162662-1.html>. Dated October 13 2010.)

The Sokli phosphate mine being planned in Eastern Lapland at the Russian border is surrounded by national parks, untouched nature, and unique watercourses. Yara, a Norwegian industrial group whose business is agricultural chemicals and fertilizers, has admitted that the phosphate ore is radioactive. The values are several times higher than those at Talvivaara.

The jobs provided by the mining company do not compensate for the jobs lost in tourism and nature-based business, according to reindeer herders and the sparse local population. About one hundred families in the area make a living from reindeer husbandry. A mine will result in the destruction of the reindeer pastures.

The environmental impact assessment for the Sokli phosphate deposit in the province of Lapland will be determined in late 2010. The small window of opportunity for local residents to make their voices heard is found somewhere among the various bureaucratic processes. If they miss this chance, political and business interests decide. There is a risk that uranium-containing fertilizer will be spread on farm fields and enriched in the food chain.

Esko Ruokola concedes that both uranium and thorium are found in the ore:

“One suggestion is to mill the ore in Russia, which will lessen the environmental load on the Finnish side. In connection with the environmental impact assess-

ment, the question of whether the project is in the best interests of the public will be carefully reviewed.”

Mika Flöjt criticizes the authorities:

“Nuclear power companies and mining companies, with the assistance of officials with the Ministry of Employment and the Economy and STUK, have sold the public a misleading picture. This applies to both the hazards of uranium in mining operations and the radioactive emissions of nuclear power. Problems are glossed over and critics are branded. The limits that apply to uranium and other radioactive substances should be tightened. Nuclear power is not emission-free. Toxic radioactive nuclides are released in the various production processes and end up in the air and in the groundwater, watercourses, and finally the sea.”

More than 800 radiation safety experts from all over the world gathered at Finlandia Hall in Helsinki, June 14-18, 2010, for the Third European IRPA (International Radiation Protection Association) Congress. Professor Wolfgang Weiss from Germany, chairman of MELODI, the Multidisciplinary European Low Dose Initiative, which is an assembly of central research institutes and financiers in the field of radiation research, says the goal is to establish a permanent European center of excellence:

“We must gain a better understanding of the risks of radiation mechanisms. The results science gives us do not constitute sufficiently clear signals to make us change the way we assess radiation – but they are clear enough to arouse our concern.”

STUK, the Finnish Radiation and Nuclear Safety Authority, acts in accordance with the risk model in use. The task is to ensure that radiation does not exceed stated limits and to protect people from harmful exposure. But who, then, is responsible if the risk models we rely on do not correspond to reality? The issue is bounced around among the various actors. The nuclear power companies are responsible for any emissions and environmental damage. In turn, these companies have permits for their operations issued by the ministries, and they comply with STUK regulations. The final storage is an execution of a parliamentary decision. STUK, the ministries, and the companies are the experts heard when Parliament makes its decisions.

For the moment, it looks like the nuclear power zealots have won the day in Finland. The general election in March 2011 will show whether the decisions reflect the will of the people. Time will tell if these decisions are in the “overall interests of society” – the phrase used in the most varied of contexts, especially when projects need to be forced through. ■

angela oker-blom

**The models are real. But is reality just a model?**

# NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS AS MEMORY SITES

BY **ANNA STORM**



ILLUSTRATION: KARIN SUNVISSON

**A monument, an energy problem, a cultural heritage. Someone is surely formulating the question.**



Is it possible to imagine a disused nuclear power plant as a monument or memory site, a trace in the landscape that tells of days gone by? Have our notions of what constitutes history and cultural heritage expanded to the degree that we can also include a physical setting whose meaning is so controversial, especially considering the current political relevance of nuclear power technology?

One simple answer is: yes, it is indeed possible. It has already happened. Historical research surrounding nuclear power is relatively extensive; nuclear power is claiming space in museum exhibitions about the 20<sup>th</sup> century; and nuclear power plants have been documented and analyzed from a cultural history perspective in several countries.

However, the simple answer is not the whole truth. For many people, nuclear power plants carry such repugnant associations that it is impossible to understand them as cultural heritage. Nuclear power is burdened by potential disaster, has indisputable connections to nuclear weapons, and the question of how radioactive waste will be managed is by no means resolved. And cultural heritage, we have learned, is something chiefly good, something that creates meaning and contributes to our collective identity, and preferably something beautiful and with economic potential in the form of opportunities for tourism. Nuclear power plants seem to have no place in this canonized collection.

One might also think that nuclear power plants are too modern. How far ahead in time should history and cultural heritage actually extend? Should that which has only recently occurred be immediately viewed through a thin layer of dust and from a retrospective position? Some say no: “Nuclear power is the future, not history! Nuclear power is a key component in how the people of the world will respond to the climate crisis and is integral to our country’s independence.” From this perspective, nuclear power sparks hopes and visions, and has nothing to do with what has already happened, with that which cannot be undone.

Less strident voices can be heard. In local communities where nuclear power plants are located, the plants are generally appreciated places to work. It’s not unusual for the plant actually to be the linchpin of the community’s existence. There is strong faith in the technology and pride in having specialized expertise. If the nuclear power plant is shut down, a critical number of jobs is eliminated, and the memory formed over the years will probably take on an ambivalent nature.

The process involved in articulating and giving form to memories, monuments, history, cultural heritage, and museums is by nature extremely political. The process is characterized by negotiation and the struggle for interpretive precedence, often hidden behind putatively non-judgmental language cribbed from various professional contexts. Those involved may be curators and environmental experts, engineers and accountants, architects and local politicians – all with their specific areas of responsibility. In a recently begun study, I am investigating two nuclear power plants that have been shut down because of political decisions and which are the bearers of people’s memories and affect their view of the future: Barsebäck in Sweden and Ignalina in Lithuania.

## BARSEBÄCK, SWEDEN

The Barsebäck nuclear power plant was finished in 1977. It is in the municipality of Kävlinge in southern Sweden, situated along the coast in flat countryside where it dominates the area visually. Many of the people who worked at the plant live in Löddeköpinge, only about five kilometers away. In the 1970s, housing was built in Löddeköpinge for plant workers and the energy company, Sydkraft, paid for certain infrastructure upon which the plant depended, such as roads and a fire station.<sup>1</sup>

The familiar silhouette of the Barsebäck plant has become a symbol of nuclear power in Sweden. When it was opened, the Swedish nuclear power initiative was significant by international standards, before then it was mainly the superpowers that had launched such programs. The environmental movement initially supported the Barsebäck plant nuclear power as a better alternative to oil-dependency and continued exploitation of Swedish rivers. The Danish government was also in favor of Barsebäck: the plan was that Denmark would be able to buy power from Sweden until Danish nuclear power was up and running.

The actual construction of the nuclear power plant involved around 1,100 people and the workforce fluctuated between 340 and 400. Only Swedish citizens could be employed, but foreign nationals were allowed work as consultants or subcontractors. The Barsebäck plant was a popular workplace where people stayed a long time. It was known for its positive spirit and the workers were relatively well paid. The energy company worked consciously to build a good relationship with the local community, and according to a 1995 study, 80 percent of the people who lived near Barsebäck had very high confidence in the plant.

But even as the Barsebäck plant was being established, the public attitude toward nuclear power had begun to change. The Danish government abandoned its own nuclear power program and began expressing discontent with the location of Barsebäck, only 25 kilometers from the Danish capital. The Swedish debate also intensified and the atmosphere became increasingly negative, in part because of the incident in Harrisburg in 1979. Annual protest actions gathered tens of thousands of people around the Barsebäck plant, including a great number of Danes. One year after Three Mile Island, a referendum on the future of nuclear power was held in Sweden, and the winning alternative called for nuclear power to be dismantled at a rate consistent with the country’s energy requirements. There would be no further expansion



Barsebäck.



Ignalina.

of nuclear power. After the referendum, the Swedish Riksdag (parliament) resolved to shut down all nuclear reactors in Sweden by 2010.

In 1987 the Riksdag decided to shut down Barsebäck’s two reactors, the first in 1995 and the second in 1996. The decision was rescinded and the reactors were actually closed in 1999 and 2005, respectively. In the interim, a seminar was held in 2001 on the possible cultural heritage value of the plant, and the regional museum assembled antiquarian and ethnological documentation before the second reactor was shut down. According to the energy company’s current plan, demolition of the Barsebäck plant will begin in 2020, despite arguments from people in the cultural heritage sector that some parts of the plant should be preserved. Moreover, public opinion began to shift again in the early 2000s, becoming more in favor of nuclear power, partly in light of the threat of climate change. No Swedish nuclear power plants other than Barsebäck have been shut down as a consequence of the referendum vote, and nuclear power currently accounts for 50 percent of Swedish electricity production, a large share in comparison with many other countries.

## IGNALINA, LITHUANIA

The nuclear power plant in Ignalina was constructed between 1972 and 1983 to meet the rising need for energy in the northwestern region of the Soviet Union. The plant is located in inland Lithuania near the borders of Latvia and Belarus on the shore of the largest lake in the country, Drūkšiai. When it began operating, it was the biggest nuclear power plant in the world. A workers’ town, Sniečkus, was built about six kilometers away from the plant, which was intended to house a population of 30,000.

The Ignalina nuclear power plant and the town of Sniečkus were controlled by the central and secret Soviet Atomic Energy Committee, and architects with experience from other “atomic cities” were brought in from what was then Leningrad. The construction process involved more than 20,000 people. Tensions arose at the local level concerning the project, and most of the more than 25,000 people who moved to Sniečkus in the 1980s were Russians. Lithuanians made up less than one percent of the inhabitants of the town, whose setting of natural beauty, high housing standard, and relatively high wages at the plant made it something of a “Socialist Paradise”.<sup>2</sup>

During perestroika and following the accident at Chernobyl in 1986, local environmental activists tried to raise public awareness of the dangers of nuclear power. The environmental movement may also be regarded as having been a covert arena for the endeavor to attain national independence in the Baltic countries.<sup>3</sup> The organization Žemyna was a key actor in this process, and one of its most pronounced goals in the late 1980s was to stop the Moscow-controlled expansion of Ignalina. This effort was supported by several Western European governments, which found it easier to support a struggle with environmental overtones than a struggle for political independence.<sup>4</sup>

When the Baltic countries regained their sovereignty in 1990–1991, the localization of Soviet nuclear power plants outside Russia became a complex economic and political issue. Paradoxically enough, the environ-

mental struggle, which had strongly contributed to the countries' independence, quickly died away once the goal had been attained. The Ignalina plant instead became a highly valued source of national pride and economic independence in Lithuania. For the Russian majority in Sniečkus, the change was, naturally enough, not entirely easy to take.

In 1993, Sniečkus was renamed Visaginas after an early Lithuanian settlement in the vicinity. Lithuania's accession to the EU in 2004 was made conditional upon the closure of Ignalina, since the EU had assessed the plant as far too dangerous, partly because the reactor type is similar to the one at Chernobyl. One of the two reactors was decommissioned that year and the other was shut down at the end of 2009. In 2008, the Lithuanian government asked the EU for permission to postpone closure of the second reactor, but, for various reasons, the request was denied. The plant had 5,000 employees and accounted for 75 percent of the country's electricity production. When Ignalina was closed, Lithuania was forced to import gas from Russia to meet its energy needs, which has had both economic and political implications.<sup>5</sup>

## A RESEARCH PROJECT

One track I want to follow has to do with nuclear power plants as border phenomena, as things that have engendered cooperation, but also conflict, concern, and real and perceived threats across national boundaries. The Danish view on Barsebäck was at first favorable and came about in the spirit of a joint energy policy initiative with Sweden, but government and public opinion rather quickly turned in a negative direction and for a few decades "Shut Down Barsebäck" became a central cry of the Danish environmental movement.

Ignalina, built as a Soviet nuclear power plant, became a symbol of Russian oppression during the liberation process, but retained a similarly strong position – now as promise and pride – once Lithuania had regained independence. Yet another border is, of course, that which runs through the Baltic Sea and has to do with how Soviet nuclear power plants have figured in the public debate in neighboring countries, and, in very concrete terms, through radioactive waste in connection with the accident in Chernobyl. How is the nature of these nuclear power plants, as emotionally charged border symbols, given space in the memory of both?

The question of risk is closely connected to the question of borders. How has risk been a part of life in the community, in business, and in political discourse? What risks can be considered acceptable, and what constitute comparable magnitudes in risk assessment? How did the Swedish and Danish governments, and the companies involved, reason when they decided to build the nuclear power plant in Barsebäck? And how can we understand the risk-seeking found lately in adventure tourism, with Westerners paying hefty sums to wander around the ruins of Chernobyl? The quest for authenticity, purity, and genuineness of place is leading people to seek out dangerous, non-sanitized environments. "Rust tourism", as it is sometimes called, is a search for cultural heritage outside the arenas where it is usually found.<sup>6</sup>

A third track to follow concerns cultural heritage as a double-edged sword. Designating something as a

cultural heritage is to elevate it and lend it value, but also to conclude and banish from contemporary reality something that can provoke and disturb the age if it does not perceive the identified cultural heritage site as something whose day is over. Nuclear power, as a highly topical issue, with renewed support in public opinion and with ongoing new construction in other countries, like Finland, is certainly not a closed chapter. At the same time, a nascent interest in decommissioned nuclear power plants can be discerned, which is entirely consistent with the way it has become an established practice for tourists to visit disused industrial settings of other kinds.<sup>7</sup> The negotiation, that is, a cultural heritage or "museumization" process, virtually always entails something lost and something gained.

The question of risk and cultural heritage as a double-edged sword leads to a fourth track that involves memory processes as a work of reconciliation, an integration of complex aspects of the past in the contemporary age, whose consequence is that the past must to a certain extent be disarmed and made harmless. This is a phenomenon manifest in the Western world's attitude toward its industrial past in general.<sup>8</sup> The project thus connects to research on cultural heritage as something that may be controversial and doubtful, such as industrial ruins, or obviously dark and painful, such as concentration camps and prisons.<sup>9</sup> Certain places, such as nuclear power plants, are also dangerous, not only owing to a complex history that must be dealt with in a cultural heritage process, but also due to physical contamination and literally risky settings. The presence of material risk entails substantial costs to secure and remediate the settings, but also triggers excitement and gives the place an atmosphere of adventure, which along with the perception of patina and nostalgia lays the foundation for the aforementioned "rust tourism". Can a conversion to tourist destination be an expression of reconciliation with the past?

## CULTURAL HERITAGE AS POLITICAL PROCESS AND DEMOCRATIC OPPORTUNITY

What is required for memories to be regarded as cultural heritage? This is a critical political issue. Should the individual experience be defined as a collective concern or not? This is a question through which a society both creates contemporary images of itself and justifies directions and choices for the future.

Another way to approach the same question is to consider whether everything can be regarded as a potential cultural heritage monument. In the foregoing, I have dealt with cultural heritage as a contemporary product, constantly negotiated and renegotiated in relation to current social issues and interests.<sup>10</sup> From this perspective, cultural heritage is something that, explicitly or implicitly, carries value judgments about what can be considered important to remember, appropriate to reuse, or esthetically interesting and thus able to contribute to a good living environment. Recent decades have witnessed a movement aimed at involving ordinary citizens in this evaluation process and creating a more democratic cultural heritage. This should be seen in contrast to the designation of cultural heritage characterized by a more elitist perspective,

which nonetheless still constitutes a significant part of institutionalized work involving cultural heritage.

What does the contemporary ideal of a democratic cultural heritage actually entail, in theory and in practice? What are the possible consequences? Concerns have been expressed that designated cultural heritage monuments are increasing to such an extent that they will become worthless through inflation. And, one might ask, will the cultural heritage expert then become superfluous or need to find a new role? In any case, for individuals and collectives, the crucial skill continues to be an ability to manage change, at the intersection of past experiences, present situation, and future prospects. ■

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## Russia maintains its focus on gas. And everybody is fed up with Ukraine

**T**he Russian energy strategy for the next few years includes lofty goals. While other countries are investing 1.5 percent of their GDP in the energy sector, Russia is spending 5 percent. Russia wants to increase production and exports, especially of gas. Tatiana Mitrova from the Center for International Energy Markets Studies at the Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow explained this during a talk at the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) Annual Conference on Russian and Eurasian Studies. The theme this year was “Russia, Europe, and Energy: Rule of Powers or Power of Rules”.

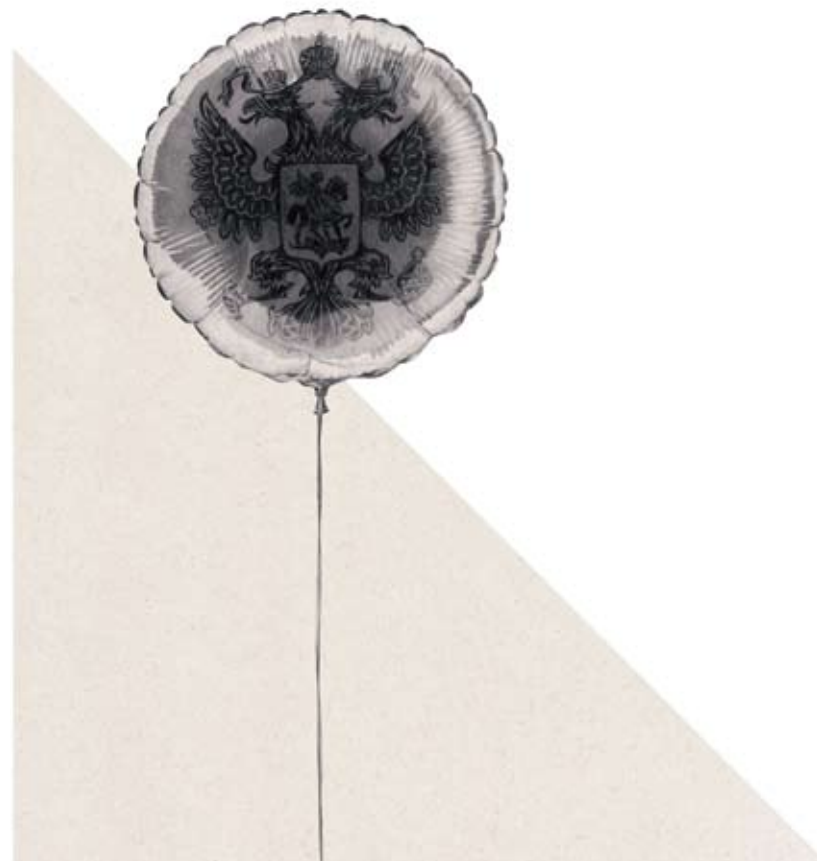
“The current strategy calls for energy exports to increase by 20-30 percent. But the share of gas exported to the EU is going to decline and the share exported to countries in the East, especially China, is expected to rise”, Mitrova said, and further noted that the plan is to increase exports of gas alone by 30 to 40 percent.

**SINCE RUSSIA'S COSTLY** projects and investments are risky, the country is eager to create stable contracts with long-term price agreements. Contracts in which the parties agree to import certain goods in exchange for others are also conceivable, especially when it comes to countries to the east.

Over the next few years, energy as a base product will account for no more than 70 percent of exports, according to the official energy strategy. Russia wants to process the energy itself. One area where foreign investors are being invited to participate involves planning and extracting oil offshore – where outside expertise is required.

The energy issues must be put into a greater context, according to Irina Busygina of the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO). Russia is investing in the energy sector because the country wants to play a role in international politics. Busygina is inclined to link geopolitical initiatives to modernization initiatives. The message from the Kremlin is “trade with us but do not interfere”. Russia will manage its internal affairs on its own.

Everybody is talking about the modernization of Russia. But there is opposition among the masses. They



understand that modernization is not going to bring them any advantages in the foreseeable future, according to Busygina. She reminded listeners that the same applied to the “shock therapy” introduced after the fall of communism. Many groups were excluded, groups that have yet to benefit from economic growth in Russia.

“The question is not how Russia will manage to compete in a superpower arena, but how it will manage to become a normal country. These days, people in general are just trying to survive”, Busygina said during the lunch break.

She continued: “Russian policymakers are going to Silicon Valley and now they are talking about creating a similar high-tech center in Russia. As something to show off, a symbol that we are in the game. Innovation and creativity do not come without freedom. There is a discrepancy between vision and reality. The energy policy is one way to manifest to ourselves that we are still one of the big guys.”

**RUSSIA INTENDS TO** maintain its focus on gas, even though the economic crisis has led to declining demand for gas and

changed the price structure, according to Derek Averre of the Center for Russian and East European Studies (CREES) in Birmingham. He spoke about a changed realpolitik scenario in which strong, independent states are not in full control. Several other actors are now having an impact on state policy – actors that states cannot influence, such as major energy companies.

The EU has also developed a new energy strategy based on the 20-20-20 principle and an emphasis on investment in renewable energy sources. Similar thinking is seen in the strategy Germany's recently established.

The EU does not play an especially significant role in the design of energy policy between EU Member States and Russia, for example, said Indra Øverland of NUPI. Agreements on energy supply are made at the bilateral level, even though the EU is currently the biggest consumer of Russian energy and Russia is the EU's biggest supplier.

**IN ONE EXAMPLE** of the success of bilateral negotiations, an agreement was finalized last spring in the northern corridor between Norway and Russia concerning offshore rights in the Barents

region. Øverland emphasized that this agreement, which had been discussed for 40 years, was now made with no need for involvement by other parties, such as the EU.

Pavel Baev of the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) noted that gas projects in the southern corridor have been stalled. He sees no risk of conflict surrounding the issue, even though the positions are in gridlock and have been for some time. He notes that, miraculously enough, Russia has not been the victim of a terrorist attack on its pipelines in the Caucasus.

**GAS IS A MULTIFACETED** instrument for the exertion of power. Concerning the pipelines between the southern and northern corridors, through Ukraine, Baev believes that Russia and the EU are in agreement: no one wants anything to do with Ukraine for a while.

“The rational choice would be to go for Ukraine. It is the shortest way between Russian gas supplies and the European market”, said Baev, only to immediately state that this is not on the agenda for either Moscow or Brussels. Both, he said, are fed up with Ukraine.

During the following panel discussion, Ingmar Oldberg of the Swedish Institute of International Affairs (UI) noted that there had been discussion of oil and gas, but no mention of nuclear power.

Tatiana Mitrova answered that nuclear power is a topic people in Russia prefer not to talk about since the Chernobyl accident. A number of safety studies were performed afterwards, but no investments are currently being made in nuclear power, according to her. One pragmatic reason is that Russia has lost know-how.

“The people who had the expertise in this area have either retired or they died in the accident. A lot of them were sent there to study the site and they are now dead”, said Mitrova. ■

**ninna mörner**

**It seems that fewer and fewer believe in the southern link. But it took 40 years to come to an agreement in the Barents Sea.**

## Following the Nord Stream. Elder statesmen paved the way

“Pipelinestan” is a much-used concept by the eminent traveling reporter Pepe Escobar in *Asia Times*. “Follow the pipeline” was also one of the central themes of the 10<sup>th</sup> Aleksanteri Conference, “Fuelling the Future: Assessing Russia’s Role in Eurasia’s Energy Complex”, held at the University of Helsinki at the end of October 2010.

There is a growing interest in pipelines transporting oil and gas eastward, from Russia and Central Asia to China and other Asian countries, but Europe is still the most important market for energy from Caspian and neighboring fields, and there are competing projects for new pipelines to move oil and gas to the east.

Of these new projects, only Nord Stream is already being realized – no decision has been reached about the competing alternatives around the Black Sea – South Stream, Blue Stream or Nabucco – even though interest in them has been keener. Hanna Smith has some thoughts on this. She is a researcher at the Aleksanteri Institute and spoke at the conference about Nord Stream as an example of the importance of energy in Russian foreign policy.

According to Smith, this is an interesting case study in several respects: it combines bilateralism, multilateralism, and globalization. Several states, as well as the EU, commercial enterprises, and “elder statesmen”, have been involved, and historical memory plays an important role here. Nord Stream is a result of bilateral negotiations between Germany and Russia and bypasses the Baltic countries and Poland, which has resulted in accusations of a new Molotov-Ribbentrop pact. The point of contention was probably about the transit fees for which these countries had been hoping. Some other EU countries thought that the gas deliveries should have been a question for the entire European Union, not just for Germany. In Sweden, fears were voiced that the pipeline could be used for espionage. The EU Commission, however, declared that the project was important for the Union.

The primary concerns were, however, about the environmental effects of the pipeline on the shallow Baltic Sea.



Since the pipeline from Vyborg to Greifswald – the longest sub-sea pipeline in the world – mainly goes through the Finnish and Swedish economic zones, the project had to pass environmental examinations in both countries. One of the problems is the number of mines and old munitions on the bottom of the Baltic Sea. To minimize this problem it was decided to change the type of ship laying down the pipeline from one stabilizing by laying anchor to one stabilizing in another way. Anchoring would also have disturbed sea life more.

**HANNA SMITH THINKS** this was one of the points where the “elder statesmen” engaged by Nord Stream, such as former prime ministers Gerhard Schröder of Germany and Paavo Lipponen of Finland, were useful: they not only lobbied for support for the project in their countries, but were also able to tell Gazprom how details of the project should be modified in order to get it approved:

“This has also been a learning process for Russian decision makers; they got to know how to take care of this and that in a way that would not have been

possible in Russia.”

It might even be that this mostly rational process in the North of Europe has helped the Nord Stream project get off to a faster start than the competing projects in South Eastern Europe.

Hanna Smith reminds us that the first idea for Nord Stream was a Finnish one. The Neste oil company proposed in 1995 that a gas pipeline be built through Finland to its most Southern point, Hanko. From there the plan was for it to continue to Germany, presumably through Sweden. For Neste, the idea was to use part of the gas in Finland – and there would also have been other benefits for the country. When Finland was left aside, Neste withdrew from the project and Gazprom continued planning with its German partners. The project grew much bigger when the Netherlands, France, and even the United Kingdom, became interested in buying Russian gas.

About the foreign policy aspects of energy, Hanna Smith said that the relationship is complex. It is often thought that energy simply provides power; however this is too simple. Energy can

be used as a foreign policy tool in a negative sense, but such a use can also turn against those using it in this way.

Russia is, according to her, so dependent on its energy that even if it can use it as a “weapon”, it is at the same time also a prisoner of the framework. In the case of Nord Stream, Russia has invested not only a lot of money, but also too much prestige to allow it to fail.

**THE CONFERENCE WAS** organized by the Eurasian Energy Group, one of the most important units of the Aleksanteri Institute, connecting its own researchers with an international network of experts. It was established in 2005 and is led by David Dusseault, acting professor in Russian Energy Policy at the Institute. The group has been trying to formulate a “social-structurationist approach to energy policy”, which was presented at the conference, but most of the approximately 70 presentations described more practical aspects of Russian energy policy, from the coexistence of the gas industry and the reindeer herders in Siberia, to Gazprom as a media owner. ■

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## Energy issues are being dealt with by a variety of actors; governance and cooperation are lacking

**T**he EU wants the Baltic region to have a common energy sector, something the region does not have today. Political governance is weak and the people making the investments have yet to prioritize regional cooperation.

This is the view of Michael Bradshaw, professor of human geography at Leicester University, who opened the first Baltic Worlds Annual Round Table on November 24 at Södertörn University in Stockholm. The general theme was “The Energy Sector in the Baltic Sea Region: Governance, Sustainability, and Knowledge”.

Bradshaw noted that the global energy sector is facing a number of challenges for the future: Consumers must have a secure energy supply and tariffs must not threaten economic growth, while carbon emissions must be reduced – if they are not, climate change will have an even worse impact on the economy in the long run.

Development of the energy sector, according to Bradshaw, is controlled by the value and priority policymakers assign to economic growth, reliable access to energy, and environmentally sustainable development. Prioritizations are determined by national economic development levels and energy supply.

**The countries in** the Baltic region differ from one another: some are post-socialist economies that consume a great deal of energy; others are developed market economies that are more or less energy efficient. Some countries export energy, but most need to import it.

The Baltic region gives a picture, in miniature, of the global challenges of the energy sector, but the region has no common energy strategy outside of EU program declarations. There would be advantages to such cooperation, according to Bradshaw, and Russia should not be excluded.

The task is made more difficult by the fact that many governments in the region have only limited control over energy decisions in their countries. Within the EU’s deregulated energy sector, investments are made – and most priorities set – by corporations. For this reason, someone who wants to



study the genesis of Nord Stream, for example, needs to study the companies behind the construction project rather than the states affected.

**Tora Leifland Holmström** is a communications project manager at Nord Stream. Previously, she was involved in permit examination in preparation for the pipeline construction, and before that was a political expert for the Swedish Ministry of Agriculture. She reported that the Nord Stream pipeline will cost about 7.4 billion euros, has a planned lifetime of 50 years, and will have the capacity to supply 26 million households in Europe with energy, and with half the carbon emissions produced by consumption of oil and coal.

That the Baltic countries are not an integrated region was apparent during the permit processes. Companies had to comply with the national laws of five countries, EU laws, and international laws involving nine countries.

Russia is not really included in the region and there is some hesitation and sometimes opposition to Europe

becoming dependent on Russian gas.

“But such a dependency becomes mutual. Nord Stream will be dependent on revenues from Europe and the Russian state on tax revenues from Gazprom”, said Leifland Holmström.

“Russia is on the Baltic coast, but is often not counted as part of the region politically”, said Nikolai Dobronravin, professor of international relations at Saint Petersburg State University. Dobronravin does not see the Baltic region as a cohesive region and nor could it become one – since Russia does not fit into the picture. But Russia plays a key role in the region, especially in the energy sector.

**Dobronravin** referred to European voices calling for the diversification of energy supplies to avoid too much dependence on energy imports from Russia. This could mean building of ports and pipelines for importing liquid natural gas and oil from countries other than Russia.

Meanwhile, Russia wants to continue exporting oil and gas, preferably to

Europe. But the new gas and oil fields are getting further away from Europe and closer to China. If Europe wants to reduce its energy dependency on Russia, Russia may begin selling to China instead, leaving Europe without the gas in such demand.

“But the gas and oil transports through the Baltic are going to increase even if the energy is not consumed in Europe; this is a risk that demands joint action.”

**Short-term,** the Russian energy sector is prioritizing secure energy supply and economic growth, not environmental sustainability, according to Dobronravin. As yet, there is no serious discussion of long-term environmental objectives and Russia has no major renewable energy programs in the works like those in China.

Nuclear power is another component of the energy sector in the Baltic region. Susanne Oxenstierna, senior security policy researcher at FOI (the Swedish Defense Research Agency) has surveyed Russian nuclear power initiatives.

On the domestic front, primarily in the European parts of Russia, including Kaliningrad, the country plans to build new power plants and more than double nuclear power production by 2030. Rosatom, the state-owned nuclear power company, is engaged in building seven nuclear power plants and another seventeen are planned. In addition, Russia has thirty-two nuclear reactors in operation, eleven of the Chernobyl type. The reactors of this type closest to the Baltic Sea are in Saint Petersburg – these have been rebuilt to improve safety.

**The point of** the nuclear power expansion is to enable Russia to export gas instead of using it at home. Nuclear power is also considered an important aspect of the Russian push to modernize its economy. Russia is the world’s fourth nuclear power nation, has an extremely advanced nuclear research program, and is an exporter of nuclear power plants and nuclear fuel – about one fifth of Europe’s nuclear fuel is purchased from Russia and milled and

## When nuclear weapons are reduced to an existential question. In civil society they are a non-question

enriched there as well. However, safety is considered a weak spot in Russian nuclear power.

Per Högström, senior administrative officer of the Energy Division at the Swedish Ministry of Enterprise, Energy, and Communications, talked about cooperation among Baltic governments in the energy sector. In that context, he discussed the Baltic Energy Market Interconnection Plan (BEMIP). BEMIP is part of the EU strategy for the Baltic Sea region, the objective of which is to integrate the electricity and gas markets of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania with markets in the Nordic countries in order to reduce the Baltic countries' dependency on Russia. Actions include completion of the NordBalt submarine power cable between Lithuania and Sweden by 2016.

**Högström agrees** that energy market development is largely under corporate control.

"If we want a deregulated energy market in the EU, then the investments have to be made by market players, on market terms. But the state also plays a role, by initiating projects and issuing permits." ■

**kristoffer morén**  
Freelance journalist

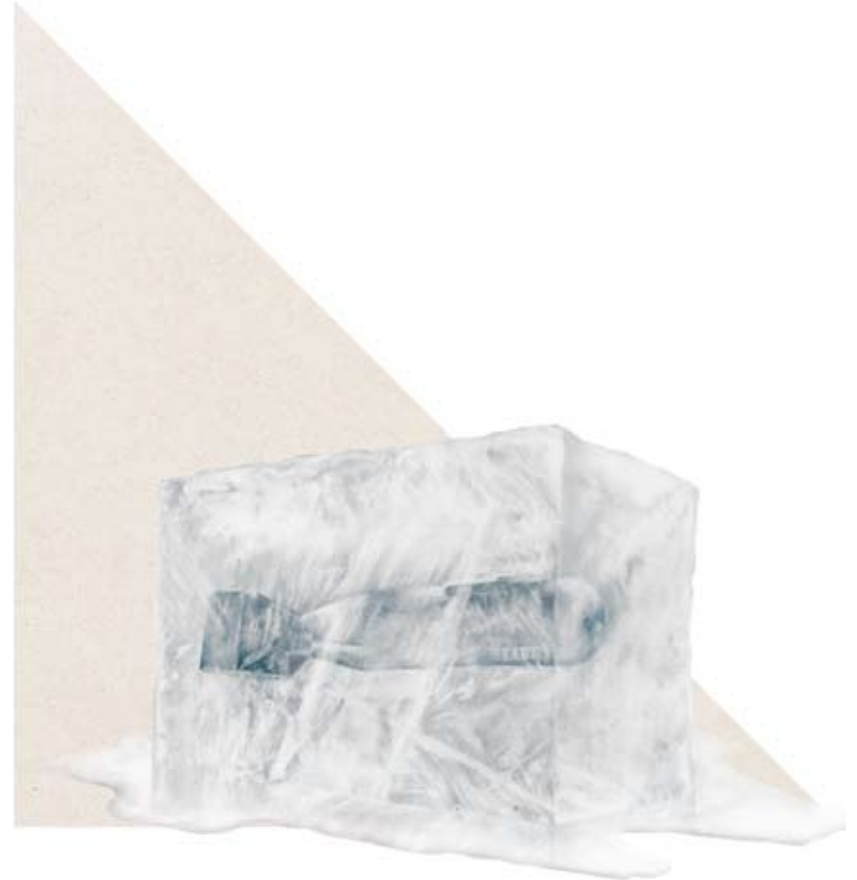
**T**he question of nuclear disarmament has been largely absent from the public conversation since the end of the Cold War. The previously widespread political commitment seems to have ended as the issue of nuclear weapons was transformed to an expert matter for nuclear physicists.

David Holloway, professor of international history at Stanford University, has been specializing as a Cold War scholar for a long time, not least through his book *Stalin and the Bomb: The Soviet Union and Atomic Energy, 1939–1956* (1994), for which he won several awards. He has recently delved into many archives in an attempt to find the answer to the question of the significance of the atom bomb during the Cold War. He presented part of his findings at a research seminar at CBEES in September.

**ACCORDING TO** Holloway, the Cold War was so dominated by the focus on security that the significance of social and political movements in Eastern Europe was misjudged. Holloway and others have noted that there are at least two narratives about the end of the Cold War, one focusing on the dismantling of the Cold War security systems, and the other focusing on social and political movements. Neither of these alone can explain what happened.

In Holloway's estimation, the role of British prime minister Winston Churchill in the arms race was significant. Churchill believed the atom bomb could restore the balance of power in Europe. One important consequence of the presence of atomic weapons in Europe was the ever-tighter closing of the Iron Curtain: from this perspective, the conflict was intensified by the existence of the bomb, and the bomb did nothing to bring about the end of the Cold War.

**IN US DOMESTIC** policy, nuclear weapons functioned as a "guarantee of our security". Nuclear weapons were considered deterrents and their danger was probably why they were never used: a nuclear war in Europe would have been so devastating that it would not have served the political purposes of either side. Finally, Holloway believes that the disarmament treaties of the 1980s and the conversion to new security



systems changed the balance of power in Europe. The trend was reinforced by changes within the nations.

But the end of the Cold War reduced the international importance of nuclear weapons. They still abound and there are no fewer nuclear weapon states.

**DAVID HOLLOWAY'S SEMINAR** was followed by a panel discussion at the Nobel Museum in Stockholm. Other participants in the discussion were Anna Ek, chair of the Swedish Peace and Arbitration Society, and ambassador Henrik Salander, who has many years of experience as the Head of the Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Department of the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs. He served as secretary-general of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission, also known as the Blix Commission. The debate dealt with the current nuclear weapons situation from a global perspective: how can the number of nuclear weapon states be limited or eliminated, and what opportunities are there for getting closer to global nuclear disarmament? Holloway, who has also been Barack Obama's adviser in matters

of nuclear disarmament, referred to the American president's speech in Prague in April 2009, when the issue once again landed on the political agenda. Salander mentioned the Blix Commission's 60 steps toward a world free of nuclear weapons.

But even though the issue is once again on the agenda, it still has no major presence in civil society. Teenagers and young adults who have not lived under the threat of nuclear weapons seem to have a hard time understanding the problem and thus a hard time getting involved. The threat of the atom bomb is so abstract that it becomes more of an existential question. But for those who go to Hiroshima and look at the survivors' drawings of the events on and after the 6th of August, 1945, the consequences of the atom bomb of that time become utterly concrete. It is to think the unthinkable. ■

**rebecka lettevall**  
Pro-vice chancellor  
of Södertörn University

**The balance of terror ended. And the Taliban cannot be hunted with nuclear weapons.**





PHOTO: SCANPIX, THE US ARMY

# THE BALTICS

## A SEA TOO TRANQUIL?

**T**here was a time, only a few decades ago, when Northern Europe was the object of intensified strategic attention. Soviet submarines were seen, or believed to be seen, in Swedish waters. The North Atlantic Sea, according to John Lehman, Ronald Reagan's Naval Secretary, could become the target of "horizontal escalation". A superpower clash in the Middle East would immediately escalate into a military confrontation, eventually drawing in the Soviet submarine bases on the Kola Peninsula, "the most valuable piece of real estate on earth", according to Secretary Lehman.

Were the submarines in fact Russian? Or had British and possibly US vessels entered the Baltic Sea to test Swedish defense efforts, and had a couple of those submarines in fact been damaged by Swedish mines or depth charges close to the Naval Base of Muskö on the eastern coast of Sweden? According to US Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger, these underwater tests were carried out "regularly" and "frequently" in Swedish waters, after US-Swedish Navy-to-Navy consultations. Senior Norwegian and US officials revealed to Ola Tunander, a Swedish scholar based at PRIO in Oslo, that a Western submarine during such a test had been damaged in the Stockholm archipelago in October 1982.

British and Danish naval officers also revealed to Tunander that British submarines had actually passed submerged through the Danish straits of Stora Bält for covert operations in the Baltic Sea, with the consent of the Danish navy high command. When some of these findings were published by the Danish Institute for International Studies, the top brass of the Swedish Navy caused a minor diplomatic incident, as they barged into the Danish Embassy in Stockholm and demanded an explanation from the Danish Foreign Ministry. The admirals even demanded that measures should be taken to "correct" the Danish inquiry.

**Those were the** days and the aftermath of the Cold War. Today, by comparison, the Baltic area seems a fairly tranquil place. Is it in fact *too* tranquil? That is worrisome for the once-again independent three republics on the eastern shores of the Baltic Sea. Since 2004, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania are members, not only of the European Union but also of the North At-

lantic Treaty Organization, which after the end of the Cold War did not follow its eastern counterpart, the Warsaw Pact, into oblivion. Instead, NATO expanded and now includes most of the former communist nations that had been the Western line of defense for the Soviet Union. NATO is seen as life insurance for the three Baltic states. But even with that insurance, the Baltic nations do not feel entirely safe.

During the Cold War, the iron curtain cut the Baltic in half. After 1991 and the collapse of the Soviet Union, Sweden, Norway and Denmark sought to compensate for decades of neglect. Sweden, recalling its own history as a Baltic great power, felt a particular responsibility toward Estonia, which during the Cold War had seemed more distant than, say, Tanzania.

Thomas Käbin of the Swedish Export Council said in a 1991 interview: "In the same way as former West Germany assumed responsibility for what was formerly named the GDR, it has become natural for Sweden to assume responsibility for Estonia." In that case, Swedish prewar ties to Estonia and Sweden's special intelligence responsibility during the Cold War would be arguments for a post-Cold War "responsibility"; one should, however, also remember the large number of Estonian former "boat refugees" in Sweden, who arrived at the end of World War II.

**Several of the** new politicians in independent Estonia turned out to be Swedish nationals, raised in a country to which their parents once had escaped. A Swedish financier and Estonian exile, Jan Manitski, became Estonia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, a Swedish banker, Madis Üürke, became Estonia's Minister of Finance, and a Swedish historian, Hein Rebas, became Estonia's Minister of Defense. In Latvia, Swedish banks took over the entire financial sector, lending liberally to practically everybody. All went very well until the world economic crisis erupted and many Latvians realized they owned very little, except their bad debts. In 2009, Latvia's GNP fell by 18 percent.

Outside interest was appreciated, but did their nearest Western neighbors really commiserate and understand the touchy issue of the Baltic States' relations to its big neighbor further to the east? In Riga and Tallinn, Russian street signs, recalling the painful Soviet years, were torn down. But, as Norwegian dip-

lomat Sverre Jervell points out, in the extreme north of Norway, the good burghers of Kirkenes decided to make their own street signs bi-lingual, in order to accommodate Russian guests from across the border. Norway has been eager to open the border and deal face-to-face with its Russian neighbor in the Barents Sea. But that seems too friendly an attitude to ex-Soviet Balticum, where the long period of annexation is not simply history but rather a living presence in the form of half of Latvia's population and a sizeable portion of the population of Estonia who are native Russians.

Early talks in the 1990s, involving the Baltic nations' desire to join the Nordic Council (*Nordiska rådet*), became slightly frightening when Latvian representatives clearly expressed their wish to get rid of the Russians, even by using psychological pressure to make it extremely unpleasant for them to remain in the Baltic area. The Nordic Council quickly decided to admit the Balts only as observers rather than full-fledged members. Very early on, the Balts turned to NATO, seen as a more important ally than the Nordic Council or even the European Union, which they later did join as full members.

**To what extent** can one rely on NATO? The new nations on the eastern coast of the Baltic are still jittery. Is NATO in fact de-escalating, seeking a modus vivendi with its former enemy, one transubstantiated from an evil communist empire into a cuddly Russian bear? Is the current US president too much of a peace lover? After all, the Norwegian Nobel committee in 2009 gave Barack Obama the peace prize as a reward for promising a radical change in US relations to the world and – yes! – attempts at peace building, including a "re-set" of the relationship to Russia. (It was, says Norwegian journalist Erling Borgen, like a young writer getting the prize in literature for promising to write a very good book some time in the future.)

Facing a new and extremely uncertain world after the collapse of its communist adversary, NATO is redefining its purpose. NATO will, according to its Danish Secretary General, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, build muscles by burning fat, i.e. reducing bureaucracy and getting rid of redundant bases and command centers in Europe.

**The Balts need a strong neighbor. Another one they fear.**



PHOTO: SCANPIX, THE US ARMY

There was considerable tension when the newly elected Secretary General attended his first NATO get-together in Istanbul. Muslim Turkey, a member of NATO but still waiting for acceptance by the European Union, did not like the cartoons in the Danish daily *Jyllandsposten* depicting the Prophet Mohammed as a terrorist. In his former capacity as Danish prime minister, Fogh Rasmussen had found it impossible to curtail freedom of speech and apologize. By a fluke, Fogh, before the meeting, tripped and fell, hurting his arm in the bathroom of his hotel in Istanbul. Initially, he was planning to fly back home to Copenhagen to receive professional care, but was well taken care of by Istanbul medics, and emerged, arm in a sling, to greet NATO members and praise Turkish health services. Tensions subsided.

Who, then, is NATO's enemy?

Europe as a whole seems a lot less important these days, both to the American president and to NATO. When redefining its purpose, NATO reiterates its guarantee to protect all the 28 member states in case of external attack, deterring outside threats – but from whom? Could it possibly be NATO's guest at the Lisbon meeting in November 2010, Russia's president Dmitry Medvedev? Medvedev on his part wants to re-open talks between NATO and OSCE, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. This is the so-called Corfu Initiative, the main topic when OSCE's 58 members assembled in Astana in early December 2010, capital of OSCE's current chair, Kazakhstan.

A sizeable proportion of Russia's own, relatively rusty military machine is being overhauled. At least in the near future, the Baltic area is not a primary target for a re-habilitated Russian army. Russia's current frontline is in the Caucasus, fighting al-Qaeda type jihadists.

Scandinavians should show more empathy with the Baltic States, says Rolf Ekéus, a veteran Swedish diplomat. "We haven't been living under Soviet rule. We haven't had tens of thousands of our countrymen and women deported to Siberia." On the other hand, he feels that Sweden should avoid participating in big military exercises in the Baltic, with Russia as the presumed enemy.

**During the Cold** War, Norway and West Germany were entrusted by NATO to keep an eye on north-western Russia, in particular Murmansk on the Kola Peninsula, home port of Soviet nuclear submarines. Even though Sweden was not a member of NATO, the Swedish air force and the FRA, Sweden's National Defense Radio Establishment, were given the task of monitoring Soviet signals. As a tragic consequence, on Friday, June 13, 1952, Soviet planes shot down a Swedish DC-3, flying on its regular run along the eastern Baltic coast to map Soviet defenses. It took several decades before the Swedish government owned up to being part of this spying operation, which entailed the loss of eight FRA operators.

Sweden is still listening in, nowadays on Internet traffic. When the Internet was born, one of its nodes was located in Sweden, an asset that opened the

door for Swedish participation in the US exercise CyberStorm III – particularly pertinent after the cyber attack on Estonia in 2009, which followed a political controversy involving the removal of a Soviet-era statue of a hero from the center of Tallinn, the Estonian capital.

**One thing that** looked like a genuine effort to defuse conflict was president Obama's announcement in the fall of 2009 that the US would cancel the Bush administration's plans to station ten ground-based interceptor Patriot missiles in Poland. That project was a remnant of Ronald Reagan's Star Wars program, aiming at shooting down missiles in mid-space, presumably launched not by Russia but by "terrorist" nations such as Iran and North Korea.

But the Patriots are not off the agenda. President Obama and his Republican Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates, have plans to replace the abandoned project in favor of what is called a "stronger, smarter, and swifter alternative", deploying Aegis class warships with SM 3 missiles that will have a range of at least 500 kilometers, making it possible to reach at least Saint Petersburg. In the future, missiles will travel on ships in the Baltic.

In other words, there will be further joint military exercises in the Baltic Sea, supervised by NATO. The annual BALTOPS (Baltic Operations) involves naval forces from twelve nations, led by US Carrier Strike Group 12: Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, Sweden and the US. In June 2010, that operation involved a full amphibious landing in Estonia. Jackal Stone in Poland in September 2010 involved special forces from nine countries in the Baltic area.

Saber Strike in late October 2010 is of particular interest. It was in essence a land exercise, preparing troops for Afghanistan, with participation from the three Baltic States and the US. It was, in military language, "designed to tune together interoperability procedures with prospects of participation in the ISAF operation in Afghanistan and other multinational operations in the future". And the Latvians are already there. One hundred Latvian soldiers are fighting in Afghanistan as part of Norway's ISAF troops.

Small and relatively poor members of NATO, the Baltic republics are not living up to NATO's requirement that two percent of their GNP should be spent on defense. Lacking their own air force, they are presently being assisted by NATO and its members on a rotating schedule, from an air base in Lithuania. Recently the Czech air force spent four months protecting Baltic air space with its Swedish JAS Gripen planes, rented out by the Swedish air force.

**To make certain** they will be defended, the three Baltic republics, without much defense of their own, are in effect clinging to NATO, hoping to show themselves as reliable partners, even in distant Afghanistan. Paradoxically, this is also one of the reasons why neutral Sweden is sending troops to Afghanistan.

"I am against disarming Sweden", says Sven Hirdman, a former ambassador to Moscow and before that undersecretary of state in Sweden's Ministry of Defense. Hirdman is opposed to what he sees as a rapid dismantling of his country's traditional territorial defense. He finds it strange that Sweden has been left with a defense system that can do nothing to stop a foreign invasion, while a large portion of its military resources is being committed to international operations, with more than 500 men and women in Afghanistan.

Sweden, says Hirdman, should not prioritize military activities in foreign lands. Like Finland, Sweden ought to maintain its territorial defense. A small international force, brigade-size, could be offered to the United Nations in case of need.

"Sweden shouldn't", says Hirdman, "be having half of its defense forces ready to go abroad to fight."

Hirdman also questions what he sees as misguided talk about international solidarity. Do Swedish parliamentarians seriously envisage sending Swedish troops to assist the Baltic republics in the event of a Russian attack? That is a promise that would never be kept. Hirdman suspects that those promising that kind of unrealistic solidarity are actually in favor of Sweden's joining NATO. Such a move, Hirdman thinks, would disturb the traditional pattern of security in Northern Europe. He is convinced that Sweden is creating more stability in the area by staying outside.

Rolf Ekéus, former UN arms inspector in Iraq and 2001-2007 OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, thinks it is about time to remember Henry Kissinger's instructions in 1975 to the newly appointed US ambassador to Sweden, Robert Strausz-Hupé, after there had been a long interruption in US-Swedish relations, caused by Olof Palme's bitter critique of US policy in Vietnam. There ought to be a Northern balance, Kissinger pointed out to his ambassador. Swedish neutrality was of great importance. ■

**björn kumm**

**ACCORDING TO DOCUMENTS** released by WikiLeaks, NATO in January 2010 decided to include the Baltic states in its war plans. NATO is prepared to engage nine army divisions from the US, Great Britain, Germany, and Poland if a serious conflict erupts in the area.

Initially, the US was hesitant, because Washington did not want to risk relations with Russia, which had been improving, albeit slowly. Germany vigorously opposed the plan.

A temporary solution was found, according to which there would be no specific plan involving the Baltic states. Instead they would be included in NATO's general defense plan for Poland. This was accepted by all involved, but Poland expressed concern that the defense of the Baltic states would be too spread out.

The short war in August 2008 between Russia and Georgia made the Baltic states extremely worried. They exerted strong pressure on NATO and wished to be expressly included in the war plan. This was finally accepted at the NATO meeting in January 2010.

**READ MORE** at our Web site.

**The Baltic as a sea of peace has made room for permanent military exercises. They are at times called tests of solidarity.**



## The Baltic ghost. Selling out or keeping the Russians out?

A specter is haunting the Baltic States. It appears in different forms and with different names: Air Baltic, Maizeikiu Nafta, Lattelecom, Ventspils Nafta, Latvenergo, Estonian Air.

One may wonder whether an evil spell has been cast on the nationalized and public-owned big enterprises, this cumbersome heritage of the Soviet era.

And when a formerly successful private business suddenly goes broke and is saved by the state, its nationalization threatens to pull a whole country and its neighbors down the financial drain, as happened with Parex Bank in Latvia two years ago.

One keyword here is corruption. Another is Russia.

Mazeikiu Nafta is perhaps the saddest story of all. Or maybe Latvenergo is. Or Air Baltic. They are all a combination of farce and tragedy.

**With their** independence in 1991, the Baltic nations inherited enormous state enterprises, built to serve large parts of the Soviet Union, and thus too big for small republics like Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. Running the huge industries was often overwhelming for inexperienced governments, while privatization proved to be a financial and judicial quagmire. No wonder it became one of the most sensitive political issues in the Baltics.

As in Russia, the sale of state-owned businesses produced criminally rich oligarchs. In Latvia, Andris Skele was probably the most cunning of the lot. By means of offshore companies, he built up an enormous personal fortune. He became an advisor to the Latvian Privatisation Agency and then rose to Prime Minister, creating the country's most influential business and social network. Together with rival oligarch Aivars Lembergs, Skele was able to control much of the privatization process in Latvia.

And if the problem was not corruption, it was fear of Russian influence.

Mazeikiu Nafta was one of the most modern refineries in the oil-rich Soviet Union. After 1991 it became the largest company of any kind in the Baltic states, producing a tenth of Lithuania's GDP. The well-managed Mazeikiu might have made Lithuania richer than Latvia and Estonia, but instead it became a millstone around the neck of the government in Vilnius.



Russian Lukoil would have been the natural choice to buy Mazeikiu. It was the heir of the Soviet oil industry, which built both Mazeikiu and its crude feeder, the Druzhba pipeline. But politicians in Vilnius turned their backs on Russia, made a bad deal with an American company, and ended up with a dry pipeline and huge losses.

The Americans escaped through the backdoor, selling their stakes in Mazeikiu to Yukos in secret, not long before Yukos' CEO Mikhail Khodorkovsky was arrested, charged with fraud, and saw his financial empire and the most enormous wealth in Russia eliminated.

Lukoil was then left out a third time, when Polish PKN Orlen became the new owner of Mazeikiu. The Poles paid almost two billion euros for an 84 percent stake in an oil refinery where the pipeline has now been dry for four years due to "technical" problems east of the border. PKN Orlen is searching for a buyer.

The nuclear power plant Ignalina, the other energy giant that Lithuania inherited from the Soviet Union, was shut down by the European Union for safety reasons. More than seven years after the decision to close Ignalina, the state's policy for the alternative generation of energy has made little progress, despite Lithuania's urgent wish to become independent of Russian energy.

The one achievement was the Leo LT company, created by the government in Vilnius to raise funds for new reactors and oversee the establishment of electricity grid lines to Sweden and Poland. After allegations of corruption, however, Leo LT was liquidated.

**According to a** recent analysis, Lithuania's state-owned assets in energy, transport, and land are worth over five billion euros, but provide only 13 million in dividends. This is reason enough to keep the most coveted investors at a distance. Mismanagement is particularly obvious in the forestry in-

dustry, where average yield is a quarter of that in Sweden, according to a report in *The Economist*.

Latvian State Forest might be more attractive to investors, though it is not a popular political move to sell out national forests in a country where the population has a deep attachment to rural areas, where many families have lived for generations, and where the woods have an almost religious significance in folklore – as it is for ethnic Latvians; and the Russian minority, for ideological reasons, votes for a party that opposes privatization in general.

Political fighting over the privatization of lucrative Latvijas Kugnieciba (Latvian Shipping Company) has divided a number of consecutive governments in Riga. The state still has a stake in Latvijas Kugnieciba, but the majority shareholder is Ventspils Nafta, one of the most questionable businesses in the Baltics. Ventspils Nafta is controlled by Latvia's richest man, the oligarch and mayor of Ventspils, Aivars Lembergs, who is on trial for corruption, suspected of having bribed a huge number of Latvian political parties, ministers, and parliamentarians.

**State-owned** Latvenergo has also gone through years of political wrangling. Despite the fear of having the Latvian energy monopoly swallowed by Russian Gazprom, Latvenergo might have been an example of a well-managed, financially sound state business. That was until this last summer, when the Corruption Prevention and Combating Bureau arrested five executives at Latvenergo, including the CEO, on suspicion of bribery, embezzlement, and money laundering.

The government had hoped for privatization of Latvenergo. There has also been talk of selling Parex Bank, Lattelecom, and Latvijas Mobilais Telefons (LMT), partially or fully owned by the Latvian state.

The government had to buy Parex Bank, when it became insolvent in the autumn of 2008, a deal that almost caused the state to go bankrupt, and forced Latvia into a controversial 7.5 billion euro loan deal with the IMF, the EU, Sweden, and others. Now Parex Bank has split, and the part remaining with the Latvian Privatisation Agency will soon be sold.

The IMF is asking the Latvian govern-

ment to acquire capital by selling more state assets. But an insolvent bank is an easy case compared to the profitable Lattelecom and LMT. Oligarchs and politicians have fought endlessly over how to privatize the lucrative telecom business and get the most out of it. The main bidder, Swedish-Finnish Telia Sonera, has showed admirable Nordic patience, still willing to negotiate after numerous setbacks.

Air Baltic is a story of its own, with loose canon CEO Bertolt Flick in partnership with oligarch Ainars Slesers – referred to, even by himself, as a "bulldozer" – making headlines ranging from business success to corrupt deals that seem to escape both the hand of the law and the hand of the government.

Estonian Air, like Air Baltic, is still partly state-owned, and the government in Tallinn plans to renationalize most of the remaining shares. Scandinavian SAS has long tried to get rid of its financially bleeding daughter company, but the Estonian government has not been clear on how privatization or renationalization will take place.

Eesti Raudtee (Estonian Railways) was partly privatized in 2001 and became Baltic Rail Services, owned by Estonian and foreign shareholders, among them American investors. The deal was politically controversial and the operation and management fell under much criticism. After heavy political and financial infighting, Eesti Raudtee was renationalized in 2007, and is now fully owned by the state. That deal was criticized as favoring the Russian transport sector, since it permitted discounts for shipments to the east.

The story of Estonian Railways is symbolic of state-run businesses in the Baltics. Political controversy surrounds them constantly, influence peddling or allegations of such are always present, and shadows of suspicious foreign interests lurk in the background, mostly Russian interests, but also American, European, and not least Swedish.

The shadows here are seldom illusions, but rather signs of real and strong financial – and sometimes political – powers, often able to profit from conflicting political and private interests in these young and vulnerable democracies. ✕

arne bengtsson

TT correspondent

PHOTO: J SEDOLSKY/Flickr

The state qua cleaning woman was revived in the post-Soviet reality. Now the threat is a Russian capitalism.

# SMOKY DAYS IN MOSCOW

BY BARBARA LÖNNQVIST

**W**hen we step off the express train from the airport at Belorussky Station on the third of August, we are assaulted by the heat: 37°C in the shade. In the chaotic traffic, we manage to find a taxi advertising *klimatizatsiya*, air conditioning. The fare is double what our friends said one should pay – 1,300 rubles these days. The trip to Leninsky Prospect/Dmitri Ulyanov Street takes an hour and a half, spent sometimes at a complete standstill, sometimes at 100 km an hour when the driver steps on it – but only for short bursts. The air is thick with exhaust fumes.

At three o'clock the next morning, I am woken by smoke filling the apartment, and jump out of bed to close the window – which will stay closed for a week (while the temperature hovers at 33°C inside the apartment). I switch on the radio and television – where is the smoke coming from? On the second of August, Medvedev had declared a state of emergency for all of the Nizhny Novgorod Region and the Ryazan Region southeast of Moscow. The peat fields and forests are burning and the fires have become so widespread that the smoke is being carried all the way to Moscow. We soon find out that fires are also burning east of the city in the Moscow Oblast itself, and I piece together bits of information gleaned from newspapers and the radio – there are fires in Noginsk, Orekhovo-Zuyevo, Yegoryevsk, Kolomna ... A military base full of aviation technical materials in Kolomna burnt to the ground on July 29. REN TV interviews a soldier (already dismissed), who reveals that there was no proper fire extinguishing equipment on the base. Medvedev appears on the “state-oriented TV channels” and lists the names of the generals who were “responsible”. Each name is followed by an expressive *uvolit* (dismissed!). Medvedev commandingly relates that Defense Minister Serdyukov has been notified of the decision, which will be carried out immediately. Soon, we will get to see Putin in action somewhere in the Nizhny Novgorod Region. Before the mass media, he informs the public what sort of compensation will be paid for lost property and – with a somewhat macabre touch – for family members burnt to death. As the state’s bookkeeper, he explains, the compensation “according to the law” is actually 50,000 rubles for lost property, but now he has decided that the amount will be 110,000 rubles from the national budget, supplemented by 100,000 from the regional budget. I wonder whether the region actually has any money. The fire service has been completely neglected. Fires are put out with spades, and even spades are in short supply. We are told that all houses destroyed by fire will be rebuilt “under strict supervision” with CCTV cameras that can be monitored directly from the Kremlin.



Pictures of fire-ravaged villages are shown on TV, with cranes lifting away charred and smoking beams while new building materials are already being brought in! At a meeting that Putin holds on camera with a local bigwig in the Voronezh area (there are fires there too!), the two discuss the size of the houses to be built. “We were thinking houses of 40 square meters”. “No”, says Putin. “If they had 60 square meters before, they will have that again”.

**Visibility in Moscow** on the seventh of August is barely 100 meters. EMERCOM Minister Shoigu reports that “we are now fighting the fires around the

clock”. What? Were they going home before at the “close of business” and letting the fires rage? Muscovites are encouraged to stay inside and not to drive “due to the poor visibility” (accident risk!). Air pollution levels are now seven times higher than normal. Radio stations report “from the field”. The pharmacy has sold out of gauze masks at seven rubles each. Some people have bought “up to a thousand” and they are now being sold on the streets for 50-100 rubles a pop. The masks are actually useless – they are made to prevent the spread of infection (coughs and saliva) but that information is found only in the fine print. We are told to hang wet sheets in front of our closed windows.

We make a break for it on the eighth of August and take the trolleybus downtown. Wisely enough, I had bought masks in Stockholm, not at the pharmacy, but at the hardware store, masks designed to protect against welding fumes, toxic paints, and chemicals. We have draped wet towels on our heads against the heat. Besides us, there are only three women on the bus. An 80-year-old babushka laughs at our get-ups and begins talking cheerfully with us. Naturally, she has been through worse things than this – lived in a cellar in Moscow during the war,

her husband severely disabled after serving on a submarine. She delivers an axiom: “Zaraza ne pristaet.” (“The contagion moves on” – meaning everything passes.) We take refuge in the New Tretyakov Gallery and stay there for five hours. It is air-conditioned and the smell of smoke that does manage to penetrate is pretty faint. The gallery is showing a special exhibition of the works of Prokofiev’s son. In a film, the son tells fascinating stories about his father and the latter’s relationship with Stravinsky. Outside the museum, we trudge around the sculpture park and find the sculpture of Sakharov gazing up into the heavens. It is still looking for its place – “Sakharov doesn’t need a statue while we have yet to achieve human rights in Russia”,



his wife Elena Bonner has supposedly said. Tsar Alexander II at any rate has been given a statue next to the rebuilt Cathedral of Christ the Savior. On the base of the statue, he is also praised for having “ended the war in the Caucasus” – the war that just broke out again right after the statue in his honor was erected. Sculptures and statues in today’s Moscow seem to pop up and disappear again according to temporary changes in mood. However, Lenin still stands in Kaluga Square (the former October Square), watching the new constructions rise. In Moscow, buildings are being built, torn down, and renovated crudely, to within an inch of their lives. If a Moscow courtyard (like those described in Pushkin’s *Eugene Onegin*) happens to have escaped, the surrounding district is in any case destroyed. The city just gets uglier.

Sushi joints seem to be the latest fashion, with the SUVs lined up outside them. Sushi in 39-degree heat? Where was the fish kept before it landed on the table? We have agreed to meet on Tverskaya in the Central Telegraph Building, which now houses a jumble of small shops and a café. To our surprise, we can get the old *Guryevskaya Kasha* (Guryev porridge) dessert, a semolina pudding made with preserved or marinated berries and nuts, a dish that had utterly disappeared during the Soviet era. When we take the bus back from downtown, we are as alone as we were when we rode in. We buy a giant watermelon and a five-liter pail of water from the *gastronom* on the corner. We spend another night taking cold showers every three hours and draping our bodies in wet towels. The windows stay closed.

A new topic of conversation has come up in the mass media. Medvedev has lobbed a bombshell into the discussion to distract people from the smoke: law enforcement – the “militia” – will henceforth be called the “police”. The change of name is expected to increase people’s trust in the authority. Medvedev explains: The “militia” is a voluntary guard, and “our police are professional”. The Moscow Echo radio station remarks, “For us, belief in the *power of words* has always been a substitute for knowledge and ability.”

**As the smoke** still lies thick over the city, the cause of the misery starts to become clear. A new forestry code (*Lesnoj kodeks*) was passed in Russia in 2007, which led to the separation of forest rangers and other local forest managers from their duties – according to one source, 170,000 people were dismissed. The “forest managers” are now those who “utilize” the forest. The code was meant to make it easier to log forests and start sawmills. But no one is responsible for the peat fields anymore – in the promised land of gas and oil, peat cutting is considered unprofitable. Despite the authorities putting the blame on “the weather” – two solid months of heat and drought – the fires and the inability to put them out illustrate the disintegration of local administration in today’s Russia. Putin’s “strictly vertical” government with appointments instead of elections has created an army of civil servants who look nowhere but up and whose primary goal is promotion, away from the provinces – to Moscow! And so we are treated to this carousel of three people riding round and round (on the TV screen) – Medvedev, Putin, Shoigu – the knights-errant of Russia, like the three bogatyrs in Vasnetsov’s famous painting.

Alarming news comes from the district around

the Russian Federal Nuclear Center in Sarov, in the Nizhny Novgorod Region. The fire is approaching ... If the fire spreads through the tree canopy (*verkhniy pozhar*) it does so at 20 km/hour or faster, depending on the wind. Kiriienko, one-time prime minister under Yeltsin, now in charge of the nuclear energy industry, has gone to Sarov and allays our fears on television. The popular press opines that this is the revenge of Saint Seraphim of Sarov – the ungodly nuclear research center was built on “sacred ground” (*svyatye mesta*). And now Patriarch Cyril I joins the verbal fray and urges confession – the fires have been visited upon the Russians for their sins. He does not say what sins, but I almost begin to agree with him. The Kultura TV channel gives us a report from the Istra River northwest of Moscow (it proves that crowds of Muscovites have found weekend refuge there, where it was relatively smoke-free). Author Edvard Radzinsky goes to the site and shows the piles of trash people have left behind in the landscape. And now some of the ignition points are revealed: cigarette butts, shashlik (shish kebab) roasting fires left smoldering, and, worst of all – broken bottles that act like lenses for the burning sun. Trash and garbage are to be found everywhere that people have been. And what should be done with it all? There are no rubbish bins in the city, much less the countryside. We have asked in our local grocery where we can turn in empty bottles. We wonder where the *punky priema stekla* (glass collection points) of the Soviet era have gone. The store security guard obviously regards us as being most definitely behind the times. Finally, I force myself to overcome my scruples and throw bottles, glass jars, metal, and food waste willy-nilly in the uncovered dumpster in the courtyard and wonder: just how big is the rat population in Moscow? Or have they been eaten by the stray dogs (although the dogs seem less numerous than in 2003). Have the dogs succumbed to the lack of water? Or are they all down by the Moscow River? Doubtless they have a greater capacity for survival than Muscovites in general. We hear on the radio that mortality in Moscow during July was one and a half times higher than in July 2009.

At last, it is time to leave Moscow. We are on the way to Tolstoy’s estate Yasnaya Polyana in Tula. The road there is broad and heavily trafficked. Suddenly, we see thick black smoke on the horizon – forest fire? When we get closer, we find a semitruck ablaze on the roadside. The driver simply looks on – no one is trying to put out the fire. There is nothing to put it out with. One can only hope the fire does not spread to the field, where the grass is yellow and as dry as tinder. A wave of heat pushes through the side of our bus as we drive by.

The heat is blanketing the Tula region as well, but we are spared the smoke of the fires. On only one day, the wind blows in from the direction of Ryazan and the familiar smell of smoke can be felt in the nostrils. But we can sleep with the windows open and the thermometer drops to 27°C at night. One evening as we walk in the meadows near Yasnaya Polyana, I can feel the dew fall. ■

Note. — This article is being co-published in Swedish by *Östbulletinen*.

## POSTSCRIPT

As of yet, there is no estimate of how much forest and peat land or how many villages were destroyed by fire. The Russian Forestry Agency says a million hectares of forest, Greenpeace speaks of three million, and the Global Fire Monitoring Center sets the figure at a colossal fifteen million. But Global Fire has included all fires – peat fields, tundra, steppe (*Novaja Gazeta*, August 25, 2010). The newspaper has interviewed Nikolai Shmatkov, WWF-Russia forest policy coordinator. Shmatkov confirms that the problem of “forest and peat fires” was exacerbated by the Forest Code, *Lesnoj kodeks*. Still, the leased forest (leased to companies for logging) represents only about 10 percent of all forest land. And who is in charge of the remaining 90 percent? The local authorities should be, but “they do not want to accept the responsibility”. Shmatkov confirms that the forest rangers have been dismissed – he mentions the figure of 70,000. It is obvious that the current confusion about the division of responsibility between the lease tenants and local authorities has seriously worsened the situation.

And the peat fields? During our stay in Moscow, we heard that they had begun “watering the peat” from the Oka River. As known, it is extremely difficult to put out peat fires, and the peat should be inundated to a depth of 5–10 meters. Shmatkov talks about this in the *Novaja* interview, saying that it is pointless to pour water on the fields if the ditches once dug for peat cutting are not filled in. And he states that this is a job for “specialist remediators”, not for the army or EMERCOM (Ministry for Extraordinary Situations). Shmatkov also notes that if the fires had not happened to start burning in the actual Moscow area, if the smoke had not been choking the capital city, public authorities and the mass media would not have paid much attention to the fires.

Sergey Gordeychenko, until recently the head of forestry for the Moscow Region and Moscow (Mosleskhoz), was also interviewed in *Novaja Gazeta* (August 23, 2010). He was considered “ultimately responsible” for the fires (“krajnij po pozharam”) and was forced to resign. Gordeychenko relates that his “lesnaja sluzhba” (the forest service) had suffered continual budget cuts and that people had been dismissed. There were still 3,500 employees working in “forest protection” in the Moscow Oblast in 2000, now reduced to only 700. The Mosleskhoz budget has been cut by 40 percent since 2007 when the new law was enacted.

But won’t the forest regenerate? Shmatkov explains: “First comes the fireweed, then the wild raspberry and certain grasses, then the birch and aspens. After 20 years, we will see the fir seedlings and the forest will begin to ‘heal the wounds’. But fifty or sixty years will have to pass after the fire before we see the real forest – new growth – again.”

I cannot help but wonder whether the people who have lost their cottages really want their homes rebuilt in the same place – among the ash piles and charred trees? But perhaps, as with Potemkin’s villages, “Putin’s villages” will just become stage sets for TV’s ongoing reality show.

# NOT YET EQUAL

## REFLECTIONS ON EAST/WEST AND FEMALE/MALE IN A POLISH CONTEXT

BY KARIN S. LINDELÖF

In 2001 I conducted ethnographic fieldwork in the Tri-City area (*Trójmiasto*, i.e., Gdańsk-Sopot-Gdynia) on the Baltic coast of Poland. My main research interest was constructions of femininity, and the “ways of being a woman” that were culturally available to young, urban, and highly educated women in Poland, more than a decade after the end of state socialism but before Poland’s accession to the EU.<sup>1</sup> As a complement to interviews with young women (and people close to them) and ethnographic observations, I collected written material including a number of short essays by students in the Scandinavian Studies program at the University of Gdańsk for a Swedish language test, on the topic of gender equality and feminism in Poland and Sweden.<sup>2</sup> Quotations from the essays will be used in this article to illuminate tendencies that emerged in the ethnographic material as a whole.

The aim of this paper is to discuss questions of normality, deviation from norms, and power relations through a selection of Polish student essays that address both gender relationships and the relationship between East and West. The working assumption is that theories of gender and the East–West relation can enrich each other and thus help achieve greater understanding of how both power systems work, individually, and combined.

In the essays, Poland is represented as a worse country in many respects than Sweden for women to live in. Polish society is described as less equal and more conventional than Swedish society, less modern and

more traditional. But the essay authors note that there is also a great deal that unites women in the two countries: they have similar interests and their position is in several ways subordinate to that of men. Sweden has come a long way toward gender equality, according to the students, but is not yet fully equal. Women in both countries have vigorously pursued higher education, but have yet to reach top-level positions in business and politics. Despite the similarities, it seems the disparities are assigned the greatest importance, or are the most interesting for the students. As well, these discussions are to a great extent structured in relation to what I call the *transition discourse*, that is, the growing Western European and American influence on Eastern Europe since 1989, wherein the West has taken on a status as the ideal and where the transition process, with its elements of neoliberalism and individualism, is considered the only possible path: a kind of linear evolutionism, if you will.

**“The transition” was** the term used in the social sciences to describe (first and foremost) the economic and political processes of the 1990s and early 2000s that changed the countries in East Central Europe from communist to capitalist.<sup>3</sup> The rest of the world regarded the events as a *transition*, a passage from something foreign to something familiar. “The Others” were to become like “Us”. However, in the countries involved in these processes of change, *transformation*

seemed to be the preferred term.<sup>4</sup> People living in Poland, the Czech Republic, or the former Soviet states perceived the events as a transformation of the existing society and not as a move from one society to another.<sup>5</sup> Naturally, there has been a conceptual debate on this subject among proponents of terms that run the gamut from *transformation* to *revolution*, but the concept of transition has been predominant.<sup>6</sup>

I, too, use the notion of transition because it encompasses something more than mere description of the social reality in which the people of Poland and other former Eastern Bloc states have lived for a long time – and are still living in to some extent – since the events of 1989/1991. In addition, the concept captures a fundamental aspect of how the people in these countries perceive and are perceived by the outside world.<sup>7</sup> It also shapes their self-image, since identities are cultural products that are always interwoven and reciprocal with prevailing social, political, and economic conditions in a given society at a given time.<sup>8</sup> The endeavor to “become like Europe”, or like the West, has been so accepted in post-communist Central and Eastern Europe that it has essentially not been examined, and capitalism, neoliberalism, and individualism have emerged as indisputable values.<sup>9</sup>

I believe that the gender system – as described by historian Yvonne Hirdman – sorts, in the same way, women and men, feminine and masculine, into discrete categories wherein the masculine-connoted – such as traits, occupations, interests, activities, and places – is

Try this figure of thought: Transition – the path to something predetermined; transformation – into the unknown.





MARKET  
ECONOMY

EQUALITY



# NOT YET EQUAL

consistently more highly valued.<sup>10</sup> The striving toward gender equality usually embraces this norm too: it is women – by learning in various ways to “be more like men”, to stand their ground, be more assertive, and so on – who are meant to enter male-dominated arenas in order to gain power, influence, status, and money. Hirdman illustrates this with the A-a and A-B formula: if men are uppercase A, women have historically been regarded as either an inferior version of A (“a”), or as essentially different (“B”).<sup>11</sup> The occupational structure, constructed according to a male norm, is one example. Since women, according to the dual logics of the gender system, separation and hierarchy, are not men, but are regarded as an inferior version, “lowercase a”, they do not advance as far in their careers as men. The resulting imbalance reinforces the view of women as less successful; hence they become so. The male norm in the occupational structure thus, to a great extent, makes working women into “lowercase a”, which manifests in pay disparities and the glass ceiling (as the invisible, embedded structures that make it difficult for women to achieve positions above a certain level is usually called; the corresponding *opposite* phenomenon for men is sometimes called the “glass elevator”, referring to how men are often afforded the conditions for rapid advancement within an organization), which contributes to reinforcing the “uppercase A” norm.<sup>12</sup> However, the difference between the gender system and the transition discourse is that in the context of gender, despite everything, there is a distinct and desirable *separation* of masculine and feminine, a horizontal sorting (A and B) that is utterly absent from the transition discourse (but existed to the highest degree during the Cold War, when East and West were to be kept apart, perhaps most clearly manifest in the Berlin Wall<sup>13</sup>). Instead there is only the A-a relationship between West and East: the goal has been to “become like the West”, that is, like the old EU countries or the United States. This is the discursive condition of the transition.

This imbalance is also something to which the young Polish women (and men) in the dissertation all relate. It becomes especially clear in comparisons with other countries, as in the student essays, where Swedish women are described as *still* being in a better position than Polish women. The situation is *still* not particularly good, even though women’s lives are *starting* to become *more and more* like they are in Sweden, the students argue. This evolutionary idea is reproduced by one young man:

We can be grateful that the lifestyle and economic circumstances are changing so fast in my country. Women’s opportunities

to study, to control their own lives, and to feel more independent are getting better. Although this text sounds mainly pessimistic, I also want to express my hope that in ten years I will be able to show that things are better for Polish women and that they can enjoy life as much as their women friends in Sweden.

In this student’s view, and that of the transition discourse, Poland is a “not yet” country, one that cannot yet measure up to Sweden and other EU countries, but will hopefully be able to soon. The “*not yet*” metaphor is used by many researchers who adopt a postcolonialist perspective. I have borrowed it from an argument by historian Dipesh Chakrabarty. He criticizes the way in which European models, categories, values, and concepts have emerged as universal and directly applicable to processes and conditions elsewhere in the world. He is particularly skeptical about European modernity and its linear evolutionist perspective on history and society, where Europe has taken the position as the crown of creation, while other countries are regarded as *not yet* developed and sophisticated enough – politically, economically, socially, and culturally.<sup>14</sup> This analysis is also relevant to the post-socialist transition discourse and applicable to the relationship between East and West within the borders of Europe.

**Western gender** patterns – particularly Nordic or Swedish – are often presented as desirable role models and ideals. In her study of a Swedish development aid project in Romania, ethnologist Agnes Ers describes how the staff constantly reproduced the images of the “Swedish independent woman” in contrast to the “Romanian subjugated woman”, where the latter was considered in need of liberation from patriarchal structures and reactionary husbands. The Swedish model of gender equality was included among everything else the Swedish aid organization was supposed to teach the Romanians – explicitly or implicitly. With knowledge and the passage of time, the Other women would eventually become independent, just like Swedish women.<sup>15</sup> Here again we find the notion of “not-yet”.

Chakrabarty opposes the historicism embedded in the idea of modernity which says “first in the West, and then elsewhere”.<sup>16</sup> I believe that the former “Second World”, that is, post-communist East Central Europe, has been marginalized and patronized in a similar way to the countries in the so-called Third World. Eastern Europeans have been (and still are) regarded as backward and outmoded, as “not yet”. It became apparent

in my dissertation that this view has also been partially internalized by the people of these countries, such as the young Polish women I observed.<sup>17</sup>

In this context, historical time is often seen as a measure of cultural distance. “They are fifty [or twenty or ten] years behind us” is a common formulation when Western Europeans describe Eastern Europe.<sup>18</sup> Chakrabarty argues that ideas about capitalism, modernity, and enlightenment in general are thought to have arisen in Europe and thereafter spread across the world (via the colonies). There is also a tendency to regard the histories of colonized countries in terms of shortcomings, absence, and incompleteness – always in comparison with, and having a lack of, that which Europe has represented (such as modernity and capitalism).<sup>19</sup> I suggest that the former communist states of East Central Europe are often regarded in a similar way from both the historical and contemporary perspectives. There is a tendency to see only the drawbacks of the previous state socialist system: the shortage of goods, the dictatorship, the lack of political freedom. Combined with the Iron Curtain’s stark separation of the communist states from the rest of the world, this resulted in the “de-Europeanization” of East Central European countries in the minds of Western Europeans. They were thought to be degenerating, going backwards on the developmental scale of European modernity and as no longer part of the Europe that became the West, along with the United States, during the Cold War.<sup>20</sup> Many continue to regard these countries (even from the inside) as incomplete and still developing. However, the transition has been ascribed the potential to remedy this shortcoming and lead them (back) to Europe. For Poland, the transition from East to West can be said to have been largely successful, not least so through the country’s accession to NATO (1999) and the EU (2004). Nevertheless, the country is still widely regarded as “not yet”.

**The same view** prevails in the student essays. A female student believes that the differences she sees between women’s conditions in Poland and Sweden are due to the fact that Sweden is a welfare state and that Poland “unfortunately [has] a long way to go to become one”. According to her, the Polish government has more important problems to solve right now than “helping women”. This is a consistent theme in the students’ texts and the interviews. They argue that gender equality is an issue that cannot yet be prioritized in Polish politics. The country must first catch up with Europe economically and organizationally; only then can women’s issues be dealt with. “Hard” issues



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concerning the economy and international politics are set against “soft” issues, among which gender equality obviously can be numbered.

There is ambivalence surrounding the meaning of being a woman in Poland today. The students express a wish for independence for Polish women, even while the feminine woman is a cherished icon.<sup>21</sup> A young man reflects upon the wider consequences of this image of women:

**How Polish men regarded their wives – and often still do – is also embedded in the culture. On the one hand, poems about women, their beauty and their uncommon traits abound, but on the other hand, everyday life proves that many men show no respect at all for their “ladies”, whom they actually want to exploit as servant girls. What seems distressing is that Polish women seem not to have been able to eradicate this belief system and simply subordinate themselves, while Swedish women show themselves more as independent individuals, aware of their aims, power, and status in society. In practice, this affects how many women are employed in modern companies. One striking example is the high number of women government ministers in Sweden compared to the few women ministers in my country.**

In this student’s opinion, the “pedestal status” women in Poland have officially been given is problematic, given that they have unofficially been “exploit[ed] as servant girls”. This has kept women down and they have not been able to develop traits like independence, awareness, and a personal capacity to act. They have consequently lost out on powerful positions in business and politics, according to the student. He puts much of the blame on the women themselves. Gender scholar Monica Platek has also discussed the pedestal status of Polish women. She argues that the respect this special image of a woman receives is a constant element of Polish history and national tradition, but that there is no living woman in it – it is merely a symbol.<sup>22</sup> According to Platek, the reality is something else: “Officially, a woman is portrayed as superior, as the priestess of the home, but the home is the only priesthood awarded to women in our part of the world.”<sup>23</sup>

Nancy Fraser’s theory on *status* can be used to understand this situation, one in which Polish women have throughout history at once been elevated and oppressed. Fraser’s concept of status entails full citizenship and equal participation in public life for all citi-

zens, which requires both redistribution of resources and recognition of various groups in society, based for example on sex, ethnicity, class, and sexual orientation.<sup>24</sup> But even though women in today’s Poland are both revered and have formal access to the job market and politics, they are not equal. How can this be reconciled? Fraser argues that a fundamental transformation of social structures is required to achieve genuine status: women must gain access to all spaces, all jobs, all income levels, and must also be recognized in all areas, not only as beauties, mothers, and housekeepers.<sup>25</sup> Fraser discusses gender patterns in communist East Central Europe and posits that even if state socialism entailed a transformation of fundamental social structures, this did not primarily concern gender, since the cultural recognition of women did not change. Nor was the binary arrangement between the sexes questioned. The historian Marianne Liljeström has shown that the problem with the women’s emancipation project in the Soviet Union was precisely this duality: the combination of the ideology of equality and biological determinism.<sup>26</sup> The complex relationship between redistribution and recognition (of difference) is articulated in the essay quotation above. They are constituted here as two quantities that are difficult to join, yet impossible to separate. Similar disparities of status are also revealed in the relationship between East and West.

**Several students relate** the current situation in Poland to the country’s communist history. They describe it as baggage that is weighing down Polish society and has put the country behind its neighbors in Western Europe and Scandinavia – which also applies to gender equality. The ambitions of state socialism toward equality were often personified by the woman tractor driver, a negative stereotype of a sexless, manish woman doing a man’s work. Talking to ethnologist Katarzyna Wolanik Boström, a woman vividly describes her mother, the incarnation of this particular womanly ideal: short hair, flat shoes, men’s jackets, permanent press clothes, and sturdy underwear. “All that was missing was the military uniform as the *pièce de résistance*”, she says and characterizes her hardworking and politically active mother as “totally unfeminine” and as an “energetic, determined, and tyrannical she-man”. The picture of her mother becomes a parody of the socialist feminine ideal.<sup>27</sup> Criticism of the communist equality project addresses this: an equalization of gender roles that obliterated what ordinary people considered highly valuable gender-specific traits.

A female student describes social development in Poland: “Women have become strong and demanding

and men have become meek and weak.” Clearly, this change is not appreciated, either by her or by most of the other students. It is obviously not easy to be a feminist and/or a woman in Poland. “Feminist” is a term of opprobrium and the patriarchal patterns are strong.<sup>28</sup> However, there is an infectious enthusiasm among the young women and men who are not yet working or involved in a project of forming a family: they are all optimistic about their future in the new Poland. “We can do anything”, says one young woman I met at the university: “Times have changed and we have every opportunity in the world, it’s all up to us.” Life lies in front of them and they just have to reach out and grab it. In an essay, under the heading “Why I am not a feminist”, one woman writes:

**The word “feminist” means that someone does not understand men and feels genuine antagonism against them. I have always been a bit skeptical of the male-oriented society, and there are a lot of things I disagree with. But on the other hand, I try to understand a few facts and the reality. That is why I have to say that I am not a feminist. I am aware there are many injustices in various families, but it is the woman’s own fault if she does everything at home without any help from her husband. I would also like to point out the situation in the job market. I agree with feminists that there are many injustices, but they can be explained. It is a well-known fact that men earn more. Studies show that men are more confident and decisive, which makes a better impression on employers. These are just two examples that show that many women are unreasonable in their convictions. The most ridiculous thing I have ever heard is the question “Why are there so many women teachers in Polish schools?” I can answer with another question: “Why are there so many men working in Polish coal mines?”**

This attitude is consistent with the individualism and neoliberalism of the transition discourse. Everything is up to us and it is the woman’s own fault if she does not get help with the housework (which is apparently *her* responsibility) from her husband or higher pay at work. Within the confines of this kind of thinking, the relationship between the sexes has nothing to do with patriarchal, structural oppression or general power disparities between men as a group and women as a group, as feminists have interpreted the inequalities.

# NOT YET EQUAL

It is instead a matter of personal choice – if you do not make it, you have only yourself to blame.

The student also claims that people who are capable of seeing reality as it is cannot ignore certain facts. Men do better at work because they are good at asserting themselves and women wear themselves out doing housework because they are bad at delegating. A biological understanding of gender thus complements the individualist norm of success. According to this understanding, women seem not to have what it takes to act as individuals. Women and men are understood here, as in several other essays, as fundamentally different from one another, and emancipation is classified as a purely personal matter. Many of the essay authors are not content with the state of affairs, but instead of challenging the socially and culturally constructed patriarchy, they describe themselves as prisoners of a gender-specific psychology and biology. Women “are” in certain ways and men “are” in certain other ways. Women are not interested in politics and men cannot take care of children. Women and femininity are seen as distinctly different from men and masculinity. The sexes are presumed to be diametrically opposed. It is taken for granted that women and men have different skills, different interests, and utterly different ways of being.<sup>29</sup> Feminists are described as unsympathetic, hostile, unreasonable, man-hating, and laughable. They overstep the polarized understanding of gender and hence become incomprehensible to others. The essay author seems to believe that women should be happy they do not have to work in coalmines instead of angry that they are poorly paid as teachers. Similar attitudes characterize other students’ texts and several of the interviews.

**Transition and gender** equality emerge as a recalcitrant equation for women. When freedom and individualism are combined with biological determinism, the same problems arise that Liljeström identified in the communist gender equality project: that the liberation of women (and men, for that matter) is constrained by the frameworks of the binary gender system. The problem has survived the transformation to a capitalist social system with neoliberal overtones. Despite major political changes, the gender arrangements seem relatively intact. Some discursive structures are thus considerably harder than others. Anthropologist Susan Gal and sociologist Gail Kligman argue that gender issues – which cut across all strata and affect all institutions from the level of international politics down to the family and individual – show how much our everyday lives are still shaped by continuities. Division of household labor and gender segregation in the

occupational structure do not change at the same pace as political regimes. Despite everything, there are important continuities between pre- and post-1989 East Central Europe and capitalist and socialist societies before 1989, or between the transition countries and today’s “West”.<sup>30</sup> The polarized understanding of gender is widespread and hard to break, while there are geographical and historically specific variations.

**A biological** understanding of gender is also prevalent among the essay writers who are positive toward feminism and gender equality. Instead of challenging the very idea of Woman, they seem to articulate a position that wants to assign higher value to the so-called feminine qualities and create a society in which the differences between women and men are “treated as advantages and not as drawbacks”. Only one or two students bring up other, more constructivist perspectives. One young woman concludes her essay thus:

**I believe it is actually very hard to be a woman these days. First off, we have to combine our families with paid work. So, there is always a great deal that has to be done. If we cannot manage it all, our husbands or partners are dissatisfied and disappointed. Secondly, we also have difficulty taking a stance on various opinions about the role of women in society. This often makes us feel confused and guilty, but it is after all we alone who should take the responsibility. A new image of women must be created, an image adapted to our own needs and demands.**

The more difficult the balance between the conventional, family-oriented ideal and the simultaneously coveted position as a strong and independent working woman, the greater the impact of such a novel “needs and demands-adapted” notion of what it means to be a woman. As the gap between demands at home and at work widens, a combination in which all of these demands can be met appears increasingly unreasonable. Here, the unstable nature of the gender is laid bare to the women – that femininity, like other identities, is constructed in social and societal norms; that they are always the result of temporary fixations of meaning, and thus *could be* some other way<sup>31</sup> – and with this, the potential opportunity to formulate new ways of being a woman. But we are not yet there, this student seems to believe; this is still a matter of “not yet” – both for the women in Poland and Polish society in general.

In their comparative historical essay *The Politics of Gender After Socialism*, Gal and Kligman describe the East/West opposition as a form of orientalism that identifies the East as the negative end of a cultural contrast that pits civilization against barbarism, wealth against poverty, development against backwardness, etc.<sup>32</sup> Within the framework of “intra-European orientalism”, concepts such as normality, progress, and development are defined from a Western European perspective. The countries and peoples of the former Eastern Bloc are thus subjected to a practice of stereotyping; they are locked – albeit temporarily – into certain representations that influence how much scope for action individuals are permitted.<sup>33</sup> “Old” Europe has the power to decide the rules of the game and the “new” Europe is expected to adjust and strive for what Old Europe has identified as good and right. As we have seen, such an ideal also applies to things like gender equality and feminism.

**On the other** hand, within the power relationships of the transition discourse there is an element of distrust (from the West) of development processes that seem to be going much too fast. The premise here seems to be that a society that has changed completely in a very short time can hardly be stable and reliable – and definitely not normal.<sup>34</sup> Something must be missing in “the evolution”. Despite strenuous efforts from the post-socialist countries to adjust to the European norm, the eastern Others seem still to be excluded. One telling example is the fear of “social tourism” and discussion of so-called transitional rules for the new EU countries, including Poland, that came into force in the spring of 2004. The boundary between the major league and the minor league in Europe is maintained and reproduced by the constant shifting of norms and standards in this way, which makes them impossible to meet for the groups defined as the “Others”. The disparities of status remain.

These mechanisms are similar to how the gender system is constantly changed so that equality seems always to be just beyond the reach of women, regardless of formal progress like the right to vote and access to higher education or certain occupations.<sup>35</sup> Male dominance and the transition discourse thus have much in common: Poland is not yet equal to Europe, and women – in Poland, Sweden, and other countries – are not yet equal to men. The evolutionary thinking of the transition discourse is also similar to the idea of equality as something that is continuously improved, that is, the notion that as each generation passes, society will – automatically – become more equal.<sup>36</sup> The



# REFLECTIONS ON EAST/WEST AND FEMALE/MALE IN A POLISH CONTEXT

idea is that equality will be achieved: not yet, but over time. Unfortunately, feminist scholars, people working for equality, and activists know that things are not that simple. As long as the cultural and political discourses in these areas are filled with unfair power relationships that subjugate some people through stereotypification, exclusion, and *othering*, while some others are made the norm, neither equality between the sexes nor equality between countries will be achieved.<sup>37</sup> It is here that the approaches provided by gender theory can contribute to an analysis of power relationships between East and West, while theories on the former Eastern Bloc's transition and transformation can enrich studies of gender and equality. ❌

## REFERENCES

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- <sup>2</sup> The texts referred to are thirteen short examination essays written in Swedish in the spring semesters of 2001 and 2002. Scandinavian Studies is a five-year program leading to a master's degree with a concentration in Swedish, Danish, or Norwegian studies. In addition to language, the students read Scandinavian literature and study culture, social life, and politics in these countries. In the first year, seven students in the third and fourth years of the Swedish concentration chose to write on the topic "Why I am (not) a feminist" and the second year, six students chose the essay topic "Being a woman in Poland and Sweden – similarities and differences". The program is heavily female-dominated, with only one or two male students in each year (with about 12 students in the class for each language concentration), but both times there was one man among those who chose these topics for the written examination. The essays are on file at the department and I have read copies. The material has been de-identified, but I have stated whether the author was a man or a woman. I have also corrected certain linguistic errors to make the excerpts easier to read. Since the texts were written in an exam situation, where the main purpose was to demonstrate written language skills in Swedish, the students' arguments can be expected to be somewhat inadequate (although not necessarily so, of course). In addition, the essays were written under a time limit and the students did not know the topics in advance. Due to these circumstances, the opinions expressed may be relatively crude and stereotypical in nature. The students may have chosen to express themselves differently in another situation. The texts were also written for a specific reader: the middle-aged Swedish woman who was their teacher. That said, it is nonetheless interesting to analyze the opinions articulated in the essays – especially because they coincide to a great extent with other material in the study.

- That they are formulated as they are means they can be expressed and perceived as understandable – they are part of a discourse, at least at the time of the examination: see Anna Sofia Lundgren, *Tre år i g: Perspektiv på kropp och kön i skolan* [Three years in G: Perspectives on the body and gender in school], Diss., Stockholm/Stehag 2000, p. 103.
- <sup>3</sup> See e.g. EBRD, *Transition Report 1999: Ten Years of Transition*, London 1999.
  - <sup>4</sup> See Michael Burawoy & Katherine Verdery (eds.), *Uncertain Transition: Ethnographies of Change in the Socialist World*, Lanham 1999, p. 16.
  - <sup>5</sup> See also Susan Gal & Gail Kligman, *The Politics of Gender After Socialism: A Comparative-Historical Essay*, Princeton 2000, pp. 120–121.
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  - <sup>7</sup> See Gal & Kligman, 2000, pp. 10–11.
  - <sup>8</sup> See Nancy Fraser, *The Radical Imagination: Between Redistribution and Recognition*, Gothenburg 2003, p. 181.
  - <sup>9</sup> See Gal & Kligman, 2000, pp. 4, 309.
  - <sup>10</sup> Yvonne Hirdman, "Genussystemet – reflexioner kring kvinnors sociala underordning" [The gender system – reflections on the social subordination of women], *Kvinnovetenskaplig tidskrift*, no. 3 (1988).
  - <sup>11</sup> Yvonne Hirdman, *Genus – om det stabila föränderliga former* [Gender – on the mutable forms of the stable], Malmö 2001. To illustrate the dual logics of the gender system on separation and hierarchy, the model must be augmented with a lowercase b, which is both separate from and worse than uppercase A. However, Hirdman does not do this and it is my own further interpretation of her model.
  - <sup>12</sup> Hirdman, 2001, pp. 44 and 193.
  - <sup>13</sup> See e.g., Sofi Gerber, *Öst är Väst, men Väst är bäst* [East is West, but West is best], Diss. (forthcoming).
  - <sup>14</sup> Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, Princeton & Oxford 2000, p. 8.
  - <sup>15</sup> Agnes Ers, *I mänsklighetens namn: En etnologisk studie av ett svenskt biståndsprojekt i Rumänien* [In humanity's name: An ethnological study of a Swedish development aid project in Rumania], Diss., Hedemora 2006.
  - <sup>16</sup> Chakrabarty, 2000, p. 6.
  - <sup>17</sup> Lindelöf, 2006, pp. 208–212.
  - <sup>18</sup> See David Wästerfors, *Berättelser om mutor: Det korruptas betydelse bland svenska affärsmän i Öst- och Centraleuropa* [Stories of bribes: The meaning of corruption among Swedish businessmen in Eastern and Central Europe], Stockholm/Stehag 2004, p. 42; Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment*, Stanford 1994, pp. 6, 360–361.
  - <sup>19</sup> Chakrabarty, 2000, p. 32.
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  - <sup>21</sup> Lindelöf, 2006, pp. 37–38.
  - <sup>22</sup> Monika Platek, "Hostages of Destiny: Gender Issues in

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- <sup>23</sup> Platek, 2004, p. 17.
  - <sup>24</sup> Fraser, 2003, p. 220.
  - <sup>25</sup> Fraser, 2003, pp. 246–247.
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  - <sup>30</sup> Gal & Kligman, 2000, pp. 11–13.
  - <sup>31</sup> See Ernesto Laclau & Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony & Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*, London & New York 1984, pp. 104, 121.
  - <sup>32</sup> Gal & Kligman, 2000, p. 119.
  - <sup>33</sup> See Stuart Hall, *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, London 1997, pp. 257–259.
  - <sup>34</sup> See Mikael Vallström, *Det autentiska Andra: Om etnografi, etik och existens* [The authentic Other: On ethnography, ethics, and existence], Diss., Uppsala 2002, pp. 59, 78.
  - <sup>35</sup> See e.g., Hirdman, 2001, pp. 115, 122, 129–130.
  - <sup>36</sup> See e.g., Anna Wahl et al, *Det ordnar sig: Teorier om organisation och kön* [Things will work out: Theories of organization and gender], Lund 2001, p. 172.
  - <sup>37</sup> See e.g., Chandra Talpade Mohanty's arguments on global economic and political conditions and their gendered and racialized implications: Chandra Talpade Mohanty, *Feminism utan gränser: Avkoloniserad teori, praktiserad solidaritet* [Feminism without borders: Decolonized theory, practiced solidarity], Hägersten 2006, p. 256. The political economy is also pivotal to an understanding of the conditions of the transition and power relationships between West and East in Europe.



# AN HOUR WITH ADAM PRZEWORSKI

Adam Przeworski is professor at the Department of Politics, New York University. Born in 1940 in Warsaw, Poland, he graduated from Warsaw University in 1961 and then moved to the United States, where he received his PhD at Northwestern University in 1966. For a long time Adam Przeworski taught at the University of Chicago, before moving to New York City. Among his major works are *Capitalism and Social Democracy*; *States and Markets: A Primer in Political Economy and Democracy* and *The Market: Political and Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America*. On September 25, 2010, at Uppsala University, Adam Przeworski received the Johan Skytte Prize in Political Science for “raising the scientific standards regarding the analysis of the relations between democracy, capitalism, and economic development”.

**P**rofessor Adam Przeworski often asks the questions most of us are a little embarrassed to ask. We see democracy as the natural state of affairs. We believe that non-democratic states are abnormal cases that in due course will grow democratic through modernization. We do not ponder the fact that, historically, electoral defeat by incumbents is rare. The American public is brought up to see its roots as democratic and disregards the disdain for party politics often expressed by the Founding Fathers.

To Adam Przeworski, who came from New York to Uppsala in late September 2010 to receive this year’s Johan Skytte Prize in political science, no such truths are taken for granted. He finds violent conflict more natural than consensus or compromise, and marvels that we still manage to live civilized lives. He asks himself why the socialist movement chose a reformist path and settled with the right to vote rather than pursuing revolutionary goals. He tests and invalidates the once common notion that social and economic modernization leads to democracy.

**You were born, brought up, and educated in communist Poland. Does this explain why you approach social question outside of the framework of conventional wisdom? Or do you have a unique capability to ask the most simple, and at the same time complicated, questions?**

“I think that my lifelong puzzlement about democracy is due to having grown up under communism”, he responds.

“As youths in Poland, we were taught that a society can function and develop only if it is united and guided by a single authority. Hence, the spectacle of regular contests for power was bewildering. It was also thrilling: as I report in the autobiographical preface to my recent book, it was like football: parties compete and no one can be sure who will win. But two more experiences marked my quest for understanding how and under what conditions democracy works. One was my disappointment with the workings of the US democracy when I first studied there between 1961 and 1963, and secondly, the debacle of the Chilean democracy between 1970 and 1973. The latter experience, in particular, raised questions about conditions under which democracy could survive distributional conflicts.”

**Adam Przeworski left** Poland for the first time in 1961 when by chance he got an offer to do graduate study in political science in the US. At that time, political science was an unknown entity to him. But political science was not the point:

“I was 20 years old”, he has noted, “and I would have gone anywhere to do anything.”

But there was no drama to his departure from Poland. His attitude to his life as a young man in communist Poland appears to be quite laid-back. He returned to finish his doctoral studies and seems to have been able to live a decent life there (at least until the events of the late 1960s).

His remarks about contemporary Poland are often skeptical, in particular when it comes to religious life and nationalism. Nonetheless, the Polish embassy in Sweden proudly posted the announcement of his Skytte Prize on its Web site and the

Polish ambassador was an honored guest at the award ceremony.

**What is, on balance, your view of Poland and Polish developments?**

“I always felt marginal in Poland”, he confesses: “I shared neither the ardent Catholicism nor the nationalism of my compatriots. While I was always critical of the communist regime, my initial reaction against it was that it did not practice what it preached. It was a left-wing critique. After 1989, people who shared this position either moved to the right or were politically marginalized. Hence, while I obviously have some sentimental attachments to the land of my youth, I do not find a place for myself in Poland. And this is a reciprocal feeling: it seems that Polish intellectuals find me too left-wing for their tastes. Paradoxically, until the Skytte Prize, I was pretty much ignored in Poland.”

**Still, even as** a left-wing critic of communist Poland, it was the observation during a visit to his native country in the late 1980s that Poland would introduce market reforms which convinced him that the communist system would eventually fall. Other analysts stress the crucial importance of the growth of civil society with the KOR and Solidarity movements and the activist role played by the Catholic Church.

**How relevant is civil society for your analysis of viable democracy — in the Polish case and more generally?**

“This is a complicated topic”, he replies. “In my view the transition in Poland was a result of an interplay among three interrelated factors: the decline of the Soviet power, the divisions within the communist elite, and the rise of the civil society. I do not think that it is possible to say that one of them was the cause.”

One of Adam Przeworski’s most quoted research findings and analyses is that democratic regimes need prosperity above a certain level to sustain themselves. With average individual incomes above 4,000 US dollars a year, states stay democratic. He sees this as a rock-solid correlation.

**How does this play out with dictatorships? Can states remain dictatorships when they get richer and exist at a high level of market economic activity? China, but also the Gulf states, are the relevant cases in point, of course. Is the jury still out on China’s future and possible need to reform?**

“I think that dictatorships die for different reasons but not as any mechanical result of economic development. I suppose that if they become sufficiently wealthy, they can last. The problem facing China is how to regulate political conflicts. There are between four and five thousand mass eruptions every year: peasants protesting that land is being taken from them by developers, workers that they cannot breathe the air, parents that schools crumble during earthquakes, etc. And there is no mechanism to handle these eruptions according to some rules: each conflict is treated ad hoc, by a combination of repression and accommodation. But this is a minefield: if such conflicts erupt one day in several places at once, the crisis will be profound. Hence, my prediction is that the Chinese leadership will try to institute

**Criticizing communism from the left. That is a great way to marginalized when it doesn’t exist.**





some mechanism of regular conflict resolution. But whether it will entail some degree of political competition, I have no idea.”

**Some analysts tend to emphasize the necessity of the rule of law rather than of democracy for social and economic development. Hong Kong, e.g., has been portrayed as a bastion of liberty. Was there any truth to the discussion about “Asian values” in the 1990s?**

“‘Asian values’ are just an excuse for authoritarianism.”

**There is a no-nonsense** matter-of-factness with Adam Przeworski and his remarks. He kept his cool and seemed mildly amused but not impressed by the pomp during the Skytte festivities in Uppsala. He is a short, low-key man who does not impose himself on others and is almost squeezed out of the way during cocktails before dinner in Uppsala. When we fail to find an hour for an interview during his weekend in Sweden, he generously offers to answer questions by mail and takes his time to elaborate on them but leaves no time for small talk or social niceties. There is only one crowd-pleasing line in his Skytte address in the Uppsala university lecture hall:

“Swedish social democrats and Arsenal are two of my long-time favorites.”

**This was said a week after the social democratic disaster in the 2010 Swedish general election. Since you have written so convincingly about the strategic success of social democrats when they choose “paper stones” in order to gain power via elections, would you be able to offer an analysis of the “withering away” of social democratic parties today?**

“As I noted a long time ago, the essence of ‘reformism’ was that reforms would cumulate and would never be reversed: a social democratic party would come to office, adopt some reforms, and these reforms would survive until social democrats won again and adopted new reforms. And then came neoliberals and did exactly that: reversed. They did not reverse everything: even Thatcher and Reagan did not reduce social spending; it took Clinton to do this. But they reduced the role of governments in other realms, deregulated, opened capital accounts, and privatized. Hence, reformism collapsed as a long-term strategy and in many countries social democrats turned into social liberals.”

**On most topics,** Adam Przeworski prefers to rely on hard facts for his comments and assessments. He is an outright empiricist and bases his arguments on statistical analyses of huge sets of data. He is most cautious where there are no data. Thus, he finds it hard to discuss and analyze economic and social inequality.

**According to your findings, are there levels of inequality that could account for deficiencies in both democratic and economic efficiency? How relevant for democratic viability is the distribution of resources in**

**a society, compared with absolute economic levels?**

“The problem with saying anything about the effects of income inequality is that cross-national data are not comparable and national data are unreliable. Moreover, the effect of inequality on economic growth is extremely hard to identify. There are different theories about it, but given the quality of the data, it seems impossible to tell which is better. My own work shows that democracy is less likely to survive in societies that are more unequal. To put it differently, if two countries have the same average income, democracy is less stable in the more unequal of the two.”

**In his Uppsala prize** address, Adam Przeworski chose to ask a basic question about the role of the military in public affairs: Why do men in uniform obey?

He returns to his experience of having lived in Chile during the Allende years and having seen the brutal overthrow by the military of the Allende government, and its impact on his life and thinking. In Latin America, the military has intervened in politics when they have defined internal security as part of national security. It thus became legitimate for the military to usurp power in domestic affairs.

**Could it be that men in uniform only obey where they have always been left out of internal policy decisions?**

“But why would national security be considered part of internal security? This was just a particularly pernicious language of Latin American authoritarians: ‘Eradicate the foreign virus of subversion from the body of the nation’, that is, kill communists. I hesitate to say much about the military because I know that I do not quite understand why they intervene. All I can say is that purely intra-military conflicts (promotions, conflicts between different corps) play an important role, not only their relation with civilian governments.”

**“Fear of conflict” is a perspective to which you often refer. It was also prominent in your Skytte lecture. If you had to find only one independent variable to explain human social and political behavior, would this be it?**

“Perhaps”, he replies. “The idea that conflicts can be structured, regulated, and contained is just not natural. People are repeatedly seduced by slogans of ‘harmony and consensus’ as well as another political mantra, ‘unity’. But we live in societies in which interests, values, and norms are inevitably in conflict. And it turns out that we can learn how to process conflicts in peace without excessively curtailing the freedom of conflicting groups to advance their interests and their visions of a common future. This for me is the miracle of democracy.”

**anders mellbourn**

Visiting professor of political science, CBEES. Former director of the Swedish Institute of Foreign Affairs (UI) and editor-in-chief of the leading Swedish daily *Dagens Nyheter*.

**There are many ways to evade democracy. And they are not easier to reject simply because they are well tested.**

## From crisis to crisis. The Hungarian variant of European democracy



ILLUSTRATION: KATRIN STENMARK

Crisis. For a year and a half, everyone who has heard this word has thought of the same thing: the financial crisis that was triggered by the bankruptcy of Lehman Brothers, and that is gripping every country in the world, one by one – including Hungary. All over the world, people are much more risk-avoidant than before; foreign capital has begun to drain away from Hungary, a country economically fragile to start with, and confidence in the country's finances has decreased. The moral causes of the crisis were recognized back in the fall of 2008, when the crisis was just beginning. We knew that in fact the real trigger for the crisis was what I would like to call the decrease in human value.

Long before the fall of 2008, it was obvious that money, profit, and rates of return had become the only relevant yardstick – not only in the banking sector and everyday life, but also in the cultural sphere. The one-sided privileging of the principle of utilitarianism is, however, itself a sort of crisis phenomenon. Meanwhile, economists (such as George Soros) and historians (such as Tony Judt) agree that the deregulation of the financial sector that took place in the Reagan-Thatcher era set a process in motion in which the economy clearly separated itself from politics, and social inequality dramatically increased. This in turn made possible the principle of quick profit, to an extent that had never before been seen.

In the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, we witnessed the unprecedented triumphal procession of an economy that had been freed of all political restraints. That paved the way for the present economic and financial crisis. Before 2008, before the collapse of Lehman Brothers, if someone, whether George Soros or Amartya Sen, spoke of hubris, he was simply disregarded. After 2008, on the other hand, there arose – for about six months – a worldwide moral demand for restraint, for stronger control of unrestricted economic transactions. Soros was optimistic, because of his belief that not only the finance system but also the worldview associated with it had collapsed, and he expressed this optimism at a round-table conference in New York held on April 30, 2009, in response to the crisis. He made it clear that what he called “market fundamentalism” was just as dangerous as every other kind of fundamentalism. Today, on the other



hand, we can see that this worldview has by no means collapsed. Just the opposite: one has the feeling that nothing has happened – the course of the world is determined today by those same processes that were responsible for the onset of the crisis.

**But now I'd like** to focus on Hungary. There, the crisis of 2008 had, in addition to its many negative symptoms, a decidedly positive effect: it drew our attention to something we had until then only vaguely suspected. Just as in an emergency people behave more honestly and are less inclined to cover up their inner motives, now, as a result of the crisis, the veil of secrecy fell away from everyone and everything. For about two years now, anti-Semites have been stating their opinions quite openly, instead of cryptically, as they did before; fascist ideas can be expressed legally; neo-Arrow Cross supporters are forming a legal party; and a weekly magazine, which the future right-wing president helped to make popular, baldly calls upon its readers to destroy books by contemporary Hungarian authors (Konrád, Nádas, Kertész, Esterházy). And the self-professed left-wing ruling party, in power for nearly ten years, used up its moral credit long ago; some of its representatives had been plundering the land spectacularly and without restraint, and the populace follows the cases of corruption and scandals (which always go unpunished) like a soap-opera on TV.

While the crisis became more severe, and the longstanding, extreme right-wing of Hungary drew together once again to form a political party, the culture of lies in which Hungary has been ensnared since 1945 (a culture that befools everything) simply continued, despite the economic crisis. The communists' old abuse of language lives on and prospers. Before 1989 the dictatorship was considered a democracy: the curtailing of human rights was called freedom. Since 1990, those who have stirred up hatred against Jews have claimed not to be anti-Semites, Gypsy-haters have claimed not to be racists, and although the Jobbik party ("the better", "the more right"), with at least 15 percent of the voters behind them, refuses to be called an Arrow Cross party, it is really a neo-Arrow Cross movement comparable to the former Romanian Iron Guard.

Of all the parties, it is Jobbik that has the greatest influx of volunteers. The ruling right-wing (conservative) party talks about "revolution" – a concept that in the current situation is as meaningful as the concepts "democratic centralism" or "the dictatorship of the proletariat" were in their time. This, too, is a sort of crisis, and one for which I personally am grateful – even if I'm not happy about it. But this crisis will help us to see more clearly, and it is to be hoped that it will have a cathartic effect on many areas of life, including political and public life. One can learn best from a crisis. It can have a sobering effect – after all, during a recovery it is expected that the wound will break open and the pus will begin to flow. This is what I'd like to concentrate on now.

**The Hungary that** existed before 1989 seemed to be an exception among European countries. An enviable place for the average citizen of the former socialist countries: from the point of view of the East, we were "the happiest barrack in the camp". And even many Western European politicians who were striving for a modern-day reconciliation, Chamberlain-style, found little to find fault with in the Hungarian version of communism, which people – with a condescending shrug of the shoulders – called goulash communism. The happy barrack, where goulash is eaten. It was by pointing to Hungary that the political leaders and left-wing intellectuals of Western Europe salved their conscience; by means of our example they wanted to drive away the bad dreams that communism gave them. For the politicians this went hand-in-hand with the cynicism that is necessary for power: clearly, it was not because she was sympathetic to his views that Margaret Thatcher kissed Ceaușescu shortly before his execution. In the case of the left-wing intellectuals of Western Europe, even at the time I saw it not as cynicism but as a mixture of naivety and blindness: they needed the Hungarian example, so as to fight their own mental and social battle against the right wing in their respective homelands. If they had ever been confronted by the unredeemable primeval sins of socialism as it exists in reality, it might well have shattered their own left-wing consciousness of redemption.

As a result of all this, for nearly a

quarter of a century, from the middle of the 1960's until 1989, Hungary lied to itself and consoled itself with this sometimes naive, sometimes cynical recognition by the West, and also with the envy of the inhabitants of the other socialist countries, to make up for everything that it in reality painfully longed for: human rights, civil rights and liberties, democracy, and a liberal public life. Before 1989, Hungary, which appeared so inviting from the outside, so pleasant, and, according to certain deceptive ideas, so "monarchically" frivolous and amusingly cynical, was in reality a country under Soviet occupation, antidemocratic through and through, pervaded by self-deception, repression, and cynicism.

Where is this once-so-envied country located on the political, economic, and cultural map of Europe today? Hungary has become the tailender of the European Union, a negative example in every respect in the eyes of the rest of the world. Not only because of its bad economic indicators and results, but also because of the ever-increasing extreme right-wing mood in the country, which has led to a whole series of occurrences and phenomena not seen elsewhere in Europe. Consider the violence in the streets that in the last three years led to situations in Budapest sometimes similar to civil war; consider the hatred of foreigners, which has grown to distressing levels – although in Hungary, in contrast to Germany, France, the Netherlands, or Britain, there are hardly any foreigners; consider that according to polls, 41 percent of the population complain that Jews have too much influence in public life and the media – and that in a country in which the number of executed Jews was second only to Poland as a proportion of the total population. Consider the alarming situation of minorities, which has led to mutual lynchings by Romanians and non-Romanians. Or consider the malicious anti-Semitic campaign that has been carried on in the right-wing and extreme right-wing newspapers and television broadcasts since 2002 – when Imre Kertész received the first Nobel prize to be awarded to a Hungarian – and that still continues today – in articles for which their authors would be prosecuted in every Western European country and their papers immediately banned.

Just as the self-deception practiced before 1989 regarding goulash com-

munist had faded away, so too did the envy and recognition that had characterized the relationship of the outside world to Hungary come to an end.

What had happened? How could it come to this? The precipitating events must be sought in the time before 1989 – the time for which both the East and the West had praised us equally.

**Before 1989 most** of the Hungarian population had made a pact with the powers that be; they were awarded small freedoms, personal advantages, which they had to pay for with lies, self-deception, and repression. The so-called small freedoms for which the subjects of the other socialist countries envied us so much were not basic rights but feudal alms, concessions for the purpose of repression, given to everyone who promised not to question the supporting pillar of the system, the one-party system, nor, in turn, its pillars, the suppression of the popular rising of 1956 and the status of the country as a satellite state of the Soviet Union. Added to these was their silence regarding the fact that Hungarian Jews had been sent to their deaths not primarily by the German fascists but by non-Jewish Hungarians. The way I see it, this was a genuine civil war, and almost the whole country kept silent about it for nearly half a century.

As we know today, repression and concealment do not function such that people lie in public but tell the truth at home. On the contrary: someone who lies away from home will in most cases lie within his own four walls after a short while. And not only within his own four walls, but also when he is alone: he will also lie to himself. He will believe what he wants to believe and deny what he doesn't think is worth fighting for. A substantial part of the population regarded the revolution of 1956 as a counterrevolution and socialism an optimal solution à la János Kádár. Between 1956 and 1989 people in Hungary learned to lie to themselves at a level that may well have been unique in Europe. They paid for this after 1989, but they paid a particularly high price during the last few years, as a result of the cleansing effect of the world economic crisis. Hungary's current economic and public life foundered on the same phenomena that made it look so attractive in the eyes of the world before

1989: on repression, self-deception, the refusal to look the past, but above all the present, in the eye. In the interest of the small, silent agreements that always valued short-term advantage over long-term interest.

The one-party state of Hungary in the period before 1989 was an economically unstable country, and it is a strange twist of history that, more than anything else, it was the loans of the Western democracies that protected it from bankruptcy. Before 1989 it was unequivocally in the interests of Western Europe that the Iron Curtain remain. Hungary was the juicy morsel that the Soviets had thrown down – and the West accepted it, indeed, cosseted it, supported it, ideologically as well as materially. When acquaintances of mine shake their heads over the current conditions in Hungary, I usually answer: Perhaps it would not have gone this far, perhaps we would not have sunk to such depths, if people hadn't praised us so highly and supported us so strongly before 1989. If people had held up a mirror in front of us and said: See the lie you are living, look how far you are being held away from European values! Perhaps then basic democratic values could better have taken hold in all areas of everyday life after 1989. It would have been a great help, but it only happened now and then. But I am not naive, of course; I don't believe in the admonitory finger. However, I don't think it's entirely useless, either.

**The 1989 caesura** did not, of course, remain unremarked in Hungarian history. On the contrary. A new constitution, one that guaranteed all the basic rights that are essential for a liberal democracy to function, was created. This constitution also guaranteed that the arbitrary system would be replaced by an institutional system. What does that mean? Nothing more than that things that up till then had been possible only through political bartering or through extortion or personal favor, that is, everything that had functioned according to arbitrary feudal power, came under the protection of the law and institutions after 1989. To get a passport one did not have to assure the authorities of one's loyalty. To be able to publish a book, one no longer had to take the sensitivities of the censors into account. This list could go on and on. In 1989, institutionalization and the rule of law were a novelty that Hungary had never before experienced in its thousand-year history. To be precise, there had been at least two opportuni-

ties for this – in 1848 and between the end of 1918 and spring of 1919 – but the European constellation permitted its realization neither in the first nor in the second case. In 1849, it was the Austrians and the Russians who prevented Hungary from becoming a European state; in 1919 the country, reduced to one-third of its territory as a result of the ruling of Trianon, was the victim of its own internal crisis – and the victorious powers of Europe watched with the sort of indifference given to the vanquished. So what happened in 1989 was for us unprecedented: the outside world, that is, the European Union, did not want to destroy our constitution and our democratic institutions; on the contrary, they did everything they could to support them.

In reality, the great crisis for Hungarians today – I, at any rate, consider it the greatest crisis, one that affects me personally and influences my fate in a decisive way – is the fact that this institutional system that we have is becoming less and less able to function; the paragraphs of the constitution have deteriorated into hollow-sounding words; the various political parties interpret the constitution arbitrarily; and the dispensation of justice can override the power of the law. The years 1849 or 1948 (“the Year of the Change”) did not trigger a crisis in Hungary. Trauma, yes. National mourning, yes. Mass migration and emigration, yes. But the situation then was morally pure: the superiority and power of the Austrians and Russians, or Soviets, impacted the country from the outside, the oppression came from the outside, and had, one might say, a morally unifying effect. In the twenty years since 1989 exactly the opposite has happened. There is no external force, no foreign oppression – there are no Tartars, Turks, Austrians, or Russians: none of those things that still frighten children today in Hungarian lullabies. And yet the lawful functioning of the institutions is breaking down: this can be seen most clearly in the corruption, in which Hungary is the frontrunner in the European Union. This corruption was not triggered by the international economic crisis that broke out in 2008 – that simply fanned the flames. The corruption in Hungary is an expression of a specifically Hungarian crisis. What does corruption mean? The circumvention of institutional paths and legality, when personal relationships and personal influence override the legal route. In Hungary this is extraordinarily widespread – which means nothing more than that this time it is not Russians or Austrians who are threatening the independent

institutional system, but we ourselves. “We are our own devils, we are driving ourselves out of our paradise”, wrote Goethe in a letter. We Hungarians can say this of ourselves: We are our own devils. Like in 1944: not only were Eichmann and his troop of a few dozen SS officers supported by a large proportion of the Hungarian population in the deportation of the Jews, but without their active assistance the deportation of more than half a million Hungarian Jews could not have been carried out.

This leads to two observations. First: nobody likes to see himself as the devil. In Hungary everyone points to someone else, wants to call somebody else to account, wants to protect his own democracy from his neighbor. Since, however, there are not two sorts of democracy and two sorts of law, that can only mean one thing: a strong central power, changing the constitution, bringing back the one-party state. Today every Hungarian party longs for this from the bottom of its heart; it is what characterized the semi-feudalistic tradition of Hungary for nearly two centuries. And why do they long for this? Because the institutions have been destroyed by someone – some groups. By those who are, so to speak, our enemies and don't like us. And what sort of people are they? People who are among us, yet invisible, for there is, after all, no longer an external enemy; no Austrian or Russian troops are at our border. And who are these inner enemies, these devils? (For it can not be we, of course.) They are all those who are different from us: the foreigners, the Romany, the Jews, the Liberals, those who think differently. The list could go on and on. In the Hungary of today they play the part that formerly was assigned to the wicked Austrians and the terrible Russians. These days people are looking everywhere in Hungary for some devil or other. And he who looks will find. Hungary has become the country that drives out devils.

**And the other** observation? The corruption, the weakening of the institutions, the spreading arbitrariness are a result of the wild growth of capitalism of the last twenty years. But the feudalistic methods and routines are a legacy – a legacy of the Kádár system, in which, as I have already mentioned, arbitrary power prevailed instead of law, and the political bartering took the place of the non-existent provisions of law. The public state of affairs in Hungary today is reminiscent to a great degree of the Kádár era. Particularly, however, as far

as the moral level is concerned. Indeed, we have a constitution (even if the new right-wing government is changing it under pressure from the even more right-wing neo-Arrow Cross party), we have a legal system, but the general morality that could enforce them is lacking. The corruption, which cannot be controlled and which has become the norm, and the moral decay that goes hand-in-hand with it are the clearest indication of the deep abyss that has opened up between the constitution on one side and political, economic, cultural, and everyday practice on the other. And that was typical of the Kádár era – of that era that back then received so much support from the West. In this respect, Kádár and his cohorts have won: the current Hungarian variety of democracy bears witness to the immortality of the Kádár era. (According to polls, in Hungary today Kádár is the most popular Hungarian politician of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.) And we are not just talking about ingrained habits, inherited instincts, learned behaviors. The “victory” of the past is far more concrete. Among the former socialist countries, Hungary is the only one where the activities of the former secret service are still shrouded in mystery. Attempts to reveal them are being thwarted by both the right-wing populist parties and the socialists. The former secret service was illegal. And yet this illegal organization has been covered up right up till today, in a liberal, democratic, legal state, and those who once ran it enjoy more protection today than their victims. It is as if the officers and spies of the East German secret service were still living in anonymity today, as if not only their former activities were unknown, but also they themselves continued their work today, could pursue their former duties. That would be as incompatible with the Federal Republic's legal system as fire is with water. The Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, and Romanians have also understood this. In Hungary everything goes on as before – from which logically we can only conclude that the current state of affairs, too, which is supposedly in conformance with the law, is pervaded by those earlier illegal activities.

I perceive this situation to be the actual crisis. To be precise: When I talk about a crisis, as I am doing now, that always means an internal crisis for me, too. For I am aware that the crisis in Hungary today is also taking place in me. I can't avoid recognizing in myself the man who vacillates when he has to choose between the legal way and the backdoor that offers some personal advantage, who discovers in himself

the reflexes of those people with whom he otherwise would in no way show solidarity, who from time to time looks back nostalgically at what he should repudiate, respond to with hatred. And who keeps catching himself instinctively behaving defensively. And so on. That's why for me the current situation in Hungary is critical. I feel personally affected and infected by it.

**I have said** that public life in Hungary today is pervaded by the Kádár-style spirit of communism. This spirit did not, however, emerge from nowhere, and that it has functioned successfully should not only be credited to the Soviet occupation. The Hungarian variety of socialism is partly an organic consequence of Hungarian history. As a result of its backward, one might even say non-existent, development toward a bourgeois society, Hungary has eked out an existence on the periphery of Europe and is still firmly situated there. One of the most obvious indications of this backwardness has always been the constant repression of conflicts and, hand-in-hand with this, Hungary's unwillingness to take part in dialog, or to exchange or adjust points of view. In the first quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, during the so-called Reform Era, serious steps were taken for the first time to create a sort of bourgeois Hungary. Among the goals of these efforts were administrative reform, freedom of association, the economic amalgamation of workers and farmers, universal suffrage, secret ballots, and the reduction of state power. This all failed – because of the opposition of the Hungarian nobility, who feared the loss of their privileges. These bourgeois reforms were never carried out in Hungary, with the result that the state remained very powerful and individual initiative, the basis of every single democracy, always remained underdeveloped. Even today everyone fears for his privileges. To speak plainly: everyone thinks he's an aristocrat.

The feudalization of public life increased above all after World War I, when, because of the Trianon peace treaty, Hungary shrank to a third of its territory, the number of large landowners grew in leaps and bounds, and hardly more than a quarter of the adult population had the right to vote. Looking back at the time between the two world wars, István Bibó writes about the “dead-end character of Hungarian history”, and Sándor Márai writes: “What the Horthy regime has to take responsibility for is unprecedented in the history of Hungary; the Tartar attack

and Mohacs are just shadows of that terrible reality that this generation has conjured up and that has then inexorably become established.” (*Unzeitgemäße Gedanken: Tagebücher 2*) The Horthy era, which today is experiencing a huge emotional and political renaissance among the Hungarian right wing, saw itself as having a Christian-national tack. It is worth remembering what Márai thought of these attributes: he repudiated their Christian as much as their national character. For what does the “Christian” in this description consist of? “Christianity, they said – and meant a trade license acquired without training in that trade. Christianity, they said, and meant the robbery of Jewish furniture. Christianity, they said, and meant the intimidation of every free thought, every expression of personal opinion. I am a Christian, they said haughtily, and held their hand out.” (*Literat und Europäer: Tagebücher 1*) And what is “national” about them? “To protect feudal-style large landholding, for twenty-five years a lobby upheld a system that by means of gentle and not so gentle terror oppressed and suppressed every striving for quality, using Trianon as their excuse.” (Ibid.)

And I should add that the attribute “Christian” meant specifically non-Jewish, just as it does again today, when the word is used at every turn with political intent as a deplorable cryptic expression of anti-Semitism. In Hungary this Christian tack, reawakened today, had once led to the Jewish Laws, which were unprecedented in Europe at that time, and which predated even the German ones, and the same Christian tack had taken over the assets of those 500,000 Jews who – with the cooperation of the Hungarians – were handed over to Nazi Germany to be exterminated. The socialist regime after 1945 did not refer to Jews directly as Jews, it remained silent about this terrible story and hushed it up, denied everything, instead of helping to work through what had happened and thereby bring about a confrontation with itself. The antidemocratic mentality typical of the Horthy regime, the cynical evasion of the legal system and of the institutions, the feudal subjection, the repression of all individual initiative, the overturning of all the democratic rules of the game – it was precisely these elements that Kádár and his cohorts took over, and they manipulated them very skillfully.

The culture of irresponsibility and amnesia turns out to be stronger than everything else. I use the present tense advisedly, for the centuries-old mentality appears to have survived 1989 intact

and, as always, couldn't care less about the things that make up the prerequisites of a liberal democracy: the new constitution, the law, the institutional system constituted on the basis of the law.

**For four decades** Western democracy and liberalism represented hope for Hungary; it was the other Utopia, the one that people could believe in, rather than the communist Utopia they had rejected. However, when Hungary was let loose in the free world of democracy and liberalism, other, radical, winds were already blowing there: the ideology of neoliberalism, which gave capital free rein, freed it from every type of fetter, and also attempted to withdraw it from the oversight of the democratic political institutions, was playing an ever-more-decisive role. The freedom that descended upon Hungary was certainly not the freedom of a free market overseen by democracy and liberalism; it was the freedom of boundless, unfettered capital. We had longed for social democracy, and instead we found ourselves once again in the Wild West. As Rüdiger Safranski aptly writes in his study *How Much Globalization Can Man Endure?*, neoliberalism is a “legitimization ideology for the unrestricted movement of capital in search of favorable conditions for exploiting it [...], state and culture must serve the economy. Neoliberalism is as economistic as popular Marxism once was, and is therefore in a certain sense the resurrection of Marxism as management ideology”. That is why many people in Eastern and Central Europe are disappointed with the West; they have the feeling that they have gone from the frying pan into the fire. It also explains the phenomenon, widespread in Hungary, that being anti-communist does not necessarily mean also longing for democracy. Most people who are anti-communist support totalitarian solutions at the same time.

The current economic crisis has exposed the country's true situation in a double sense. First, one can see the rules – or more precisely the lack of rules – of neoliberalism, which many people had confused with the rules of democracy, more clearly than before. Second, the rules of democracy, which in Hungary have for centuries not been able to penetrate the functioning of society, are becoming easier to recognize. When we look at it in this way, the economic crisis is having a cleansing effect: it has created a situation that is less ambiguous both morally and politically. The untenability of market fundamen-

talism has opened our eyes to the fact that we still have to free ourselves from many other “fundamental” fixations – not only in economics but also in public life, in the area of morality and culture, in political thinking, in the evaluation of otherness. We have been trapped in this fundamentalism for a long time: I do not harbor any illusions that we are going to be able to free ourselves from it quickly. After all, we have been pushing it along in front of us for two centuries. The financial crisis will slowly fade away. The more general cultural-spiritual crisis in the other areas will, however, continue, at least in Hungary.

So what use is the economic crisis? The short answer is that in all the many and varied areas of life we are finally beginning to recognize that everything we formerly believed to be the most natural thing in the world is a symptom of crisis. ✖

**lászló f. földényi**

Note. This is the text of a speech that was given during the Leipzig Book Fair, 2010.





## What kind of modernization does Russia need? Report to the Assembly of the Council for Foreign and Defense Policy

How should Russia relate to the world? How should we develop our foreign and defense policies? What direction should the modernization of the present-day way of life in Russia take, if indeed any change should be made at all? As a historian, I will try to find answers to these questions by considering them from a historical point of view.

First of all, Russia, as a civilization and culture, is not a uniquely Eurasian or even – as some Russians love to insist – Russian phenomenon but rather a peripheral, remote province of the West. This proposition is easy to prove. The structure of our government and the features of our culture emerge from the gloom of an illiterate society without any centralized government, which existed at the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> century AD. It takes its form from the Eastern Roman Empire. One has only to look at the reading customs, style of architecture and painting, and the legal code. Christianity and the culture imported from Constantinople were imposed on a barbaric people, who had existed for a long time in a state of total cultural decline. Despite his efforts, Boris Rybakov, member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, could find few relics of a pre-Christian period on the stretches of the Eastern European plain. Ancient Rus cannot be compared with Greece or Egypt, or even the Roman Empire, with their rich, millennia-old, pre-Christian past. Russia is a very young culture, born entirely out of an ancient Mediterranean civilization in its Christianized form. That is why, in the temporal as well as spatial sense, Russia can be considered simply a remote province of the West.

The differences between the Eastern and Western Mediterranean civilizations at the time of Russian Christianization were very minor and were perceived by people living at the time as no greater than the current differences between, say, Germany and Italy. The second such periphery of the Western civilization is Scandinavia in northwestern Europe. To assess Russia's progress, it is necessary to find a reference group in history, and we find just such a group with a similar historic genesis in northwestern Europe.

In the distant past, in the fourth millennium BC, the areas currently occupied by Russia and northwestern

Europe were the two cultural centers of the prehistoric era. In the opinion of the majority of scientists, the prairies and wooded steppes between the Vistula and the Ural mountains gave birth to the Indo-European civilization, from which the Indo-Europeans, at the end of the third millennium BC, began to spread in all directions, excluding, of course, the northern one, and gradually reached Xinjiang in the east, Punjab in the southeast, the Atlantic in the west, and the shores of the Mediterranean to the southwest. We should not forget that Greece, Rome, and Armenia are all Indo-European societies. However, the future Slavs and Balts remained in their primordial locations on the eastern European plain. As far as northwestern Europe was concerned (the southern part of Scandinavia, the British Isles, and Brittany), this was a megalithic civilization that had spread, in the third and second millennia BC, to Egypt and Syria.

**Beginning in the** second millennium BC, the societies in both of these ancient centers began to deteriorate, and the center of culture moved to the Mediterranean – first to Egypt, then Crete, followed by Greece and Etruscan Italy. It is important for us to review this ancient history so that we don't develop an inferiority complex. We are, so to speak, the children of good parents without whom the present-day cultural world would be unthinkable. However, we ran wild, fell into decline and lived in this degraded cultural state outside the realm of civilization for about two millennia. Over this long period, the Mediterranean world made enormous progress, while the Germans of Scandinavia and the Slavs and Balts of the eastern European plain degenerated, so it seems, even in comparison with the level of their ancient Indo-Aryan community. Yet, secondary acculturation within the same civilization is always easier than the injection of an entirely new culture. In fact, the latter, as a rule, rarely succeeds.

Both Russia and northwestern Europe were once again incorporated, simultaneously, into the cultural field of the West only at the end of the first millennium AD due to their Christianization. Scandinavia and Rus adopted Christianity at the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> century AD. In 988, Prince Vladimir "bap-

tized" Rus and, in 993–995, King Olaf Trygvason, a close relative of Vladimir, did the same for Norway after spending some time as the latter's guest.

Through Rome, Scandinavia embraced the Western form of then united Christianity, while Vladimir, through Constantinople, took the Eastern form. But the structure of Christianity, pace Pyotr Chaadayev, was in reality not significant for the development of these two regions. As a matter of fact, virtually all historians recognize that the Church continued to be indivisible at the time, not only before 1054 but even as late as 1204 AD, in other words until the Crusaders destroyed Constantinople. Orthodox Byzantium actively interacted with Europe and even led it in technology and intellectual development up until the 13<sup>th</sup> century, and in a number of ways even until the trecento.

We may recall the scholastic disputes of the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries over the Areopagiticus, and the Hesychastic disputes of the 11<sup>th</sup>–14<sup>th</sup> centuries, which led to the Gothic Age in the West and the Palamitic Rite in Eastern Europe. These were common for all of Christendom. By itself, the difference between the Byzantine and Roman versions of orthodoxy was not important for the cultural matrix of the time. These differences did not influence the degree of modernization, merely minor aspects of it. In the 14<sup>th</sup> century AD, Constantinople and Thessalonica were no less "advanced" than Rome or Paris, and they understood each other perfectly on all levels, from theology to the art of war, since they were the centers of a single Mediterranean civilization.

For the provinces, the most important thing was not the difference in cultural details, but the intensity of association with the cultural center. This is a very important thesis: Not a type of culture, but the intensity of association. The close association of Scandinavia with the Western cultural center – the Mediterranean and, in a broader sense, all the areas of the ancient Roman Empire – was never interrupted after her inclusion in the sphere of civilization. The Christianization of Scandinavia went along with the rest of the Catholic world. Later, in Scandinavia, we see the same processes of transition to Lutheranism again as in the rest of northern Europe. After a lag of some 40 to 80 years, Scandinavia adopted all the trends of the southwestern cultural

centers: university education, Gothic arts, theology, and the growth of self-ruled municipalities. Even this lag completely disappears after the Reformation in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. In Norway and Sweden, the peasantry maintained their freedom, and, to a great extent, their land. In Norway, manorial landowning was negligible, while in Sweden, where manorial estates had grown from 22 to 60 percent of all farmlands from the mid-16<sup>th</sup> to mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, the "reduction" of property according to the statutes of 1655 and 1680 returned to peasants and townsfolk a part of their holdings. By 1700, the lords of the manors had retained no more than one-third of all agricultural land. Civil freedoms were never taken away from the Swedish "fourth estate", while its duties in relation to the state and the lords of the manors were clearly specified in royal law and could not be increased.

**In Russia, everything** was different. The Mongol invasion of 1237–1240 did not deal an irreparable blow and did not cut Rus off in the same way that the Turkish conquest severed Byzantium in 1453. Firstly, Rus was under vassalage and was not totally subdued. Secondly, its most Westernized northwestern part – including Pskov and Novgorod, and the Polotsk and Turovo-Pinsk principalities, which were less Westernized but still oriented to the West – were entirely bypassed by the conquest. They paid financial tribute to the Mongols but nothing more than that.

The 14<sup>th</sup> century was a time of very intense communication between Rus and the cultural centers of the West, while the western part of Rus was simply recaptured from the Tatars by the Lithuanian-Russian forces in the second half of the century (in the victory of Olgerd over the Ordinsk troops at Siniye Vody in 1363), and its links with the Western cultural centers through Poland and Hungary were fully restored. The Venerable Sergei of Radonezh could converse as an intellectual equal with Kiprian (the metropolitan of Bulgarian descent) and Philotheos Kokkinos (of Greek descent). In turn, these two were easily understood by Italians. The works of Gregory Palamas were almost immediately translated into Slavonic, and many Russian scribes mastered the Greek language. An integrated cultural field was maintained,





albeit still in the mode of a center with the periphery. Theophanes the Greek, an icon painter, taught the Russian genius Andrei Rublyev, whose unusual work equaled in excellence the best specimens of the European trecento. Thus, Rus typically lagged 50 to 80 years behind the major cultural centers of Europe.

In 1448, a dramatic break took place in Muscovite Rus: self-proclaimed autocephaly, when the Russian Church refused to accept metropolitans from Constantinople, and more specifically, in 1459, when the Moscow bishops, at the insistence of Metropolitan Jonah, pledged to preserve the complete independence of the “Holy Muscovite Church” as the supreme value. Since that time, for about 120–150 years hence, all association between Rus and the rest of the world ceased completely. The Greeks considered the Muscovite Church dissident, schismatic, and self-proclaimed. Clearly, the Catholic world did not recognize it either. The conquest of Novgorod by Ivan III, and the devastation of both Novgorod and Pskov wrought by his grandson Ivan the Terrible, sealed the gates to Europe completely and uprooted Europeanized Northern Russian culture.

For Rus, the dramatic 150 years from the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> to the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century became a period of complete stagnation and lack of development. During this time, the West achieved extraordinary cultural growth. This was the age of the Renaissance and scientific revolution, of William of Ockham and Meister Eckhart, of Erasmus and Luther, of Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci, of Copernicus and Kepler, of Galileo and Francis Bacon. During the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, the West created an immense body of culture in the fields of mathematics, mechanics,

philosophy, and medicine, while Russia remained almost completely outside this process and lagged further and further behind, severed by her leaders, both secular and ecclesiastic, from the cultural centers of civilization. Moscow viewed the natural result of intellectual development in Paris, Rome, or Oxford as something miraculous, similar to nanotechnology today.

**As a result,** when in sixteenth-century Europe they discussed the problem of free will (the reader will recall the discourses of Luther and Erasmus), in Russia, they debated whether they should circumambulate the lectern with the Gospel clockwise or counterclockwise, or whether to say the Hallelujah twice or thrice. In order to compensate for the total severance from the rest of the world during the reign of Vasili III, they advanced the notorious concepts of Moscow as the Third Rome, composed The Story of Monomakh’s Crown and of White Klobuk, and other such nonsense, later censured by the Moscow Council of 1667–1668 as fabrications originating “from the winds of their own minds”. By this time, our reference group, Scandinavia, became a perfectly organic part of the Western world – not a leader, but already not a stranger. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, René Descartes felt himself quite at home everywhere – in France, Holland and Sweden, in spite of the religious differences of these countries. At the same time, the German guests in Moscow felt completely alienated, while that poor graduate of Padua University, the Orthodox Christian Michael Trivolis, known in Russia as Maksim the Greek, spent long years in the dungeons of Moscow’s monasteries for his attempt to raise the intellectual discourse in Moscow to a level acceptable for a man of the Renaissance.

Therefore, the modernization of the 17<sup>th</sup> century penetrated either through Ukraine (the only part of Rus that was open to the West, since it was a part of Poland) or directly through the Leffortov German settlement in Moscow. However, this modernization was imitative in character because the Russian approach to modernization was not the outcome of a developing consciousness, as it was in old Europe, but simply of certain borrowed innovations – technical, military, political, and so on. Tsar Peter the Great may have shaved off the beards of his boyars and dressed them like dolls in European doublets, but that did not make them European,

and clearly, they could not become so. Germans were needed, and they were invited to Russia in great numbers, or came by way of the Baltic region. However, our modernizers were not able to simply get away with Russian noblemen disguised as Europeans. Without question, imitative modernization is a poor fit. It creates the illusion of culture but not culture itself, similar to Cornelian suits on present-day Moscow officials.

I will not discuss in detail the alternative to Peter the Great’s modernization, which was taking shape at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. This was a plan of reforms delineated by Tsarevna Sofia and Vasily Galitzin, which envisioned a series of slow and gradual reforms promoting essential modernization. Tsarevna Sofia was overthrown and imprisoned by Peter, and Prince Vasily was sent into exile to the Kargopol region. The essence of Peter’s reforms was not to open wide a window on Europe but rather a small crack through which only the elite nobility were able to slip, and, during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, only within the framework of imitative modernization. The other 95 percent of society was completely cut-off from this process. The overwhelming majority of Russians lacked the means to achieve any sort of education, much less a European one, and had no civil freedoms. Not only were they stuck in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, but, in addition, change was effectively prohibited. In fact, Peter’s orders of 1714 and 1719 turned a large segment of the Russian population into slaves with no hope of developing any culture. It was a significant moment for us, when modernization of the elite occurred at the cost of stealing from and degrading the masses. As my old friend and colleague Yuri Sergeyevich Pivovarov has written, finally the two cultures emerged: one of them Westernized and modernized, people who could not even speak Russian but were highly refined and comprised no more than two or three percent of the Russian population; and the sub-culture of the majority, becoming more and more barbarous in comparison to the European common people, muzhiks who seemed to still live in time of The Hundred Chapters.

## The absolutism of 18<sup>th</sup> century

Western Europe proclaimed “rule without people, but for people”. By the end of the century, almost the entire population of Prussia, France, Austria, England, and Sweden was literate. Local

self-government had been established everywhere: serfdom in the majority ethnic group had disappeared almost completely, or existed only symbolically, as in the annual one-week service performed for the Lord. In Russia, beginning in the reign of Empress Elizabeth (1741–1762), the peasants no longer had to swear an oath of fidelity. However, they were not considered citizens, could not own property, had no right to choose a marriage partner, were not educated to read or write, and could not sue their masters in court. Although they shared the same religion as their nobles and were of the same blood, no one contemplated their modernization. Russian absolutism was a reign without people, but not for people, rather for the thinnest stratum of the elite at the expense of the people.

This elite would start to move from imitative to more authentic modernization only during the reign of Tsar Alexander the Blessed (1801–1825), when, immediately after the death of his father, Emperor Paul I, all restrictions were lifted on foreign travel and the circulation of foreign books and magazines in Russia, a modern system of high schools and universities was created, Russian translations of the Holy Writings were made available, and Novosiltsev was working, at the request of the Emperor, on the text of a Constitution (the Statutory Charter). It was in the age of Alexander that poets and writers, philosophers, historians, and theologians – both Slavophiles and Westernists – appeared. They were to bring about the so-called “Golden Age” of Russian culture during the reign of Nicholas I (1825–1855).

But the true modernization of Russia began only with the liberation of the serfs, the great reforms of the 1860s and the full opening of Russia to the West – this time not only for the narrow stratum of the elite but for all of Russia. It is well known how rapid and powerful this period was. Over 50–60 years, especially during the final 20 years of Tsarist Russia, she experienced remarkable economic and cultural growth. An essentially modernized stratum of society appeared that resulted in such figures as Mendeleev, Tchaikovsky, Leo Tolstoy, Klyuchevsky, and Sikorsky. However, because of its largely sickened roots, these developments resulted not in a modern European Russia, as envisioned by Pyotr Stolypin, but in the Bolshevik nightmare. Approximately 10–15 percent of Russians had become truly modernized by the time of World



War I. But the wild mass of the people, tortured by a war that was incomprehensible to them and whipped into an angry frenzy by the Bolsheviks, rose up and smashed the new Russia in a five-year civil war. In fact, it was a war between two sub-cultures and two centuries: the 20<sup>th</sup> and the 16<sup>th</sup>.

Following the brief opening during the time of the New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1929, Russia once again shut herself off completely. By this time – and over the next ten years – the thin layer of effectively modernized Russian society was either massacred in the Red Terror or expelled from the country. The million or million and a half people who left Russia before World War II constituted the most modern and culturally advanced segment of Russian society.

Thus, once again we were doomed to lag behind. This was Stalin's version of modernization: largely imitative and confined to the technical and military spheres. I believe it is a mistake to view Soviet Russia as a great new civilization and a great power. It is a mistake because it was only while the old pre-Revolutionary cadres and their students still existed – up to the end of World War II – that any new scientific research was carried out. In the unexplored fields before the Revolution, however, for example in genetics and cybernetics, Soviet Russia was lagging far behind from the very beginning. Eventually, the USSR flagrantly stole technological innovations from the West in the decades from 1950 to 1970. Without Peenemünde or Bruno Pontecorvo, would we have been able to develop our nuclear and rocket might? Thus, without accomplishing true modernization, we once again fell back on imitation. Witness Sweden and Norway in the 1980s, and the USSR in the latter period of stagnation: this difference was the result of the millennium-long race of the two peripheral European regions. It is obvious who won.

**Finally, the opening** of Russia to the world in the 1990s and the removal of totalitarian pressure has, of course, unleashed pandemonium and, as a result, led to the deterioration of society, even – and not surprisingly – when we compare it to Soviet times. But that period is almost over. We all see that the body politic is stabilizing, especially in the realm of values. It is open to the West. The Internet, travel, and experience of life in the West have all had their effect. Young people, those who will

stand at the helm of Russia tomorrow, are undergoing the greatest change. Russia is reaffirming herself as part of the larger civilization. Under these conditions, all talk about establishing an autocratic political model, orienting not to the West – which represents the cultural foundation of Russia – but, say, to Eastern countries, to the Muslim world, or closing in on ourselves, is irresponsible, foolish, and dangerous. Today, any attempt to fence Russia in, to build a new wall between Russia and the West, as was done by Paul or Ivan III, would mean yet a fourth stagnation, which Russia would most likely not survive. The swift progress of the current world of science and technology would make such self-isolation especially ruinous, and the acquisition of knowledge in exchange for petroleum (a new round of imitation modernization) will cure our society no more effectively than an injection of morphine will cure cancer.

True modernization is a long and arduous process, requiring enormous political skill. It does not offer the promise that we will once again become a great power let alone a superpower. Authentic modernization would give us the opportunity to join the company of kindred nations, and, together with those who were close to us culturally for centuries, meet the common challenges and address common concerns.

I believe that in the aftermath of all that we have survived, we still have a chance to become not necessarily a great country, but a Western country, with a developed and responsible civil society. Alternatively, if we shut ourselves off from the West, we may try again to simulate a powerful modern state but with a rapidly deteriorating people, enslaved by a corrupt elite – a colossus with feet of clay, doomed to fall sooner or later. In my opinion, there is only one solution to these alternatives: to open ourselves to the West, to reconcile ourselves to the fact that we cannot be first now – having lost so many of the best minds during the 20<sup>th</sup> century – and enter into concert with Western states in those roles that we may deserve. There is no other path worthy of our long-suffering Russian people and there never was. ■

**andrey b. zubov**



ILLUSTRATION: ARVID WRETMAN

## Russian governor yields to protests

As we go to press, the news arrives that the Governor of Saint Petersburg, Valentina Matviyenko, has decided that the main office building of the gas and oil giant Gazprom on the Neva River will be constructed at a different location than the one originally chosen. The 403-meter-tall skyscraper in the form of a cornucopia was to be built at a location in the city center near the Smolny Convent and would have contrasted sharply with the otherwise general low skyline of the inner city.

The plans had been met with widespread and persistent protests from locals, and, as a consequence of the protests, the project changed name from Gazprom City to Ohta Center.

UNESCO, as well, has urged Russia not to destroy what is sometimes called the “The Venice of the North”, sometimes “an imperial Amsterdam”. UNESCO Deputy Director-General Marcio Barbosa said that if Gazprom's plans were not stopped, it could happen that “we place Saint Petersburg on the list of cities that are at risk of losing their status as a part of world cultural heritage”.

The German city Dresden recently lost its position because of an insensitive bridge construction across the Elbe River in the middle of the old quarter of that baroque city.

“A final decision on a move has been made”, Mrs. Matviyenko has now made clear. The governor says that the inhabitants will be informed and that they will be able voice their opinion on the matter.

“We have found that Saint Petersburg needs a business center in order to develop the city and attract investment, but we have not been able to agree on where it should be built”, said Matviyenko, according to news agency ITAR-TASS.

Saint Petersburg was built on old Swedish soil during the Great Northern War in the early 1700s. The original project would have destroyed important archaeological remains.

(See also the editorial, BW II:2.)





## The global fertility industry. Commodification of the body in the wake of biotechnology

About a year ago, the Romanian authorities raided the Sabyc Fertility Clinic in Bucharest. Thirty people – buyers and sellers of human eggs – were detained. Those arrested included intermediaries, “brokers”, who arranged contacts between buyers and sellers, and doctors accused of being at the center of these illegal transactions. Three of the doctors were Romanian, two others were from Israel. The incident has been dubbed the Romanian Egg Affair and is an illustrative example of the burgeoning reproduction tourism industry in which infertile women all over the world are going to foreign clinics – less scrupulous than the ones at home – to buy eggs for implantation in their fallopian tubes.

Anna from Sweden is one of the many women I have met in connection with my research on trade in human cells and organs. After years of failed attempts to conceive, she is looking for alternatives at a clinic in Ukraine that operates in a semi-legal gray zone. Another woman, whom I met on one of my research trips, is Tamar, a 45-year-old woman who lives just outside Haifa in Israel. Like Anna, Tamar had undergone several rounds of IVF but

was offered no more by the established healthcare system. Now she has come into contact with a clinic in Eastern Europe that illegally sells fertilized eggs. Although these women’s lives are very different indeed, they share the dream of parenthood, the battering of their self-esteem as motherhood eludes them, and determination to do something about the situation.

**Huge sums of** money are being made in the black market in human eggs, with consumers like those who shop at the Sabyc Clinic in Bucharest paying up to 21,000 US dollars for each purchase, while the women who sell eggs earn about 270 dollars. However, childless women are not the only buyers. There is also a demand for eggs for clinical experimentation by pharmaceutical companies involved in embryonic stem cell research.

The sellers – or rather the merchandise brokers and the intermediaries – are often doctors who make sure the egg cells are passed on to both childless women and interested research institutes. However, as in the Romanian Egg Affair, the real sellers are the women, who may be anything from poor East-

ern European university students trying to pay for their studies to single mothers to young Romanian girls.

Attempts by poor people to improve their lives by selling their bodies are historically well known and include all trade in human bodies. Less well known today is the exploitation associated with the commercialization of the body – such as trafficking in illegal labor or sexual services. In this context, the fertility industry and the black market in human organs are part of a persistent historical pattern in which individuals become merchandise to be used, cultivated, and consumed. Meanwhile, this “commodification” and commerce in egg cells and organs is taking on an utterly specific role due to its connection to advanced medical technology.

**In modern-day** society, shaped by individualism and the search for an “authentic ego”, reproductive and regenerative medicine are becoming an increasingly significant element in human lives – whether that involves helping nature along through in vitro fertilization or extending life with other people’s organs. These techniques are capable not only of improving people’s

lives, but of giving “new” life.

It is obvious that new medical possibilities are not the only thing emerging in the wake of biotechnology. New patterns are also arising in which parenthood is incorporated into a system that turns infertile people aching for children into buyers and poor, but fertile, people into sellers. Moreover, all of them become not only actors, but also pawns in the game of the global fertility industry.

**susanne lundin**

Professor at the Department of Arts and Cultural Sciences, Lund University. Her research, sponsored by the foundation for Baltic and East European studies, focuses on cultural analysis of medical praxis with regard to, among other things, ART, gene therapy and xenotransplantations.

## Rich food for thought. A tribute to a pioneer in Scandinavian studies

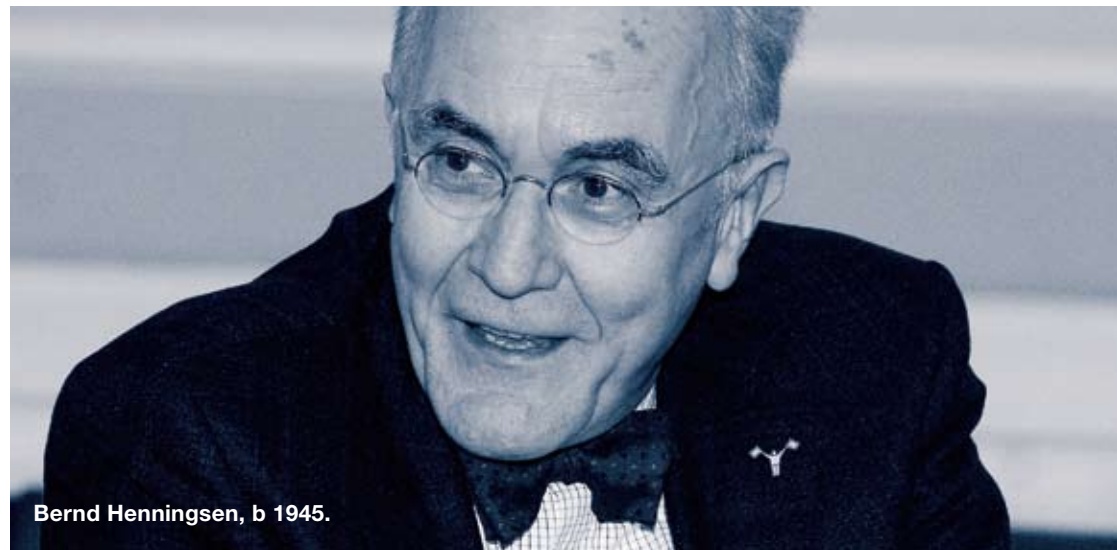
Norbert Götz,  
Jan Hecker-Stempehl  
& Stephan Michael  
Schröder (Hrsg.)  
Vom alten Norden zum  
neuen Europa  
Politische Kultur im  
Ostseeraum  
Festschrift für Bernd  
Henningsen

Berliner Wissen-  
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Berlin 2010  
458 pages

**T**HE DEDICATEE OF this festschrift is very much present throughout the contributions – journalist, researcher and teacher, friend, football fan and even younger brother. The early years of the Henningsen brothers, brought up in the town of Flensburg, is vividly recalled by Manfred, who argues that the political and cultural tensions between Danes and Germans that they experienced helped give the brothers a broader perspective and an awareness of the need to confront and overcome such tensions. Bernd followed his brother to the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich, taking political science as his main subject. Searching around for a second minor subject, Bernd Henningsen discovered the Institute for Nordic Philology in the building of the Psychological Institute, and decided to put his knowledge of Danish to further use. The offer of a post in the Scandinavian department in Munich posed something of a dilemma for the young scholar, whose abiding passion was political and philosophical, rather than philological; but he succeeded in adding a new dimension to Scandinavian studies, carefully outlined in his 1984 article “Nordeuropa-Studien: Die Skandinavistik als Kulturwissenschaft”.

This collection of essays is indeed a fine tribute to his work. It is sub-divided into four sections, covering political culture, history and the literature of memory, northern Europe, the Baltic and Europe, and finally, the organisation of knowledge and the university. With twenty-four contributions ranging chronologically from Ludvig Holberg to the experience of Vilnius as a capital of culture in 2009, and drawing into the northern European arena such diverse figures as François Mitterrand and the Japanese prime minister Shinzo Abe, this is a stimulating and lively book (though it does demand of the reader a wide range of language skills!).

**COMING TO TERMS** with the recent past has been one of the driving forces of Bernd Henningsen's research, and it is a prominent theme in this book. In his comparative study of Gdańsk and Szczecin since 1945, Jörg Hackmann includes a revealing extract from the introduction to a collection of photographs and memories of Gdańsk, written by the political activist and subsequent prime minister of Poland, Donald Tusk. For Tusk, and those of his



Bernd Henningsen, b 1945.

generation, the revelation of the city's past as part of the struggles of the 1970s and 1980s had a liberating effect. Given the huge demographic changes experienced after 1945 all along the southern Baltic coast, from Rostock to Klaipeda, this statement may seem strange, and Hackmann himself sees a new form of Polish identity emerging in these two cities, for centuries under German rule, based on the desire of the independent Polish state for a maritime outlet, and the shipyards as a symbol of modernity. Nevertheless, the evident interest in and enthusiasm for re-creating an identity for Kaliningrad drawing upon its Prussian past and the huge efforts to re-create a Pomeranian identity would seem to support Tusk's belief in the invigorating powers of the past. (Interestingly, in his essay on dictatorship and transition, Stefan Troebst also draws attention to the importance of historical memory.) Hackmann's study prompts one to wonder whether the socialist world-view will also be woven into the fabric of continuity. It certainly seems to have influenced thinking during the strikes of 1970–1971, more particularly in Szczecin, which followed a more “proletarian” approach than Gdańsk in the unrest that broke out a decade later. As Hackmann argues, Gdańsk was always more “political”, not only because it became the headquarters of Solidarność, but because there developed a strong sense of the recent history of the city, as a regional cultural centre and as a centre of heroic resistance at the outbreak of war.

**TIM SNYDER** HAS asked how Wilno became Vilnius, and he might well have asked how Danzig became Gdańsk: in both instances, destruction opened up the way for reconstruction, both physically and mentally. It is interesting and instructive to compare how the people of Gdańsk have approached their recent past with the way in which Vilnius was presented during its year as a European capital of culture. Antje Wischmann notes how the murder of nearly half of the inhabitants of the city during the second world war was seldom mentioned, and draws the contrast with another 2009 city of culture, Linz, which made the Nazi past of Austria a central theme.

Coming to terms not only with “the great silence”

about Germany's recent past but also Danish unwillingness to recognise its own colonial history is the starting point of Manfred Henningsen's contribution on the political use and abuse of historical memory. Henningsen examines recent examples of denial or amnesia about past atrocities such as the Nanjing massacre, and tentatively concludes that an all-consuming obsession with the Holocaust has allowed other mass murders to slip into obscurity. Another current obsession provides the starting point for Steen Bo Frandsen, for whom the furious reaction unleashed in 2007 by the publication in a Danish newspaper of cartoons of the Prophet evoked echoes of an earlier controversy. Jokes in the Danish press about the new regime in Germany soon got in the teeth of Nazi officialdom. A cartoon in *Berlingske Tidende* depicting two uniformed Nazis assaulting a man for reading a book on Esperanto, with a verse warning philatelists that it might be their turn next, a joke about a visitor to Berlin asking for the taxi driver to lower the window, only to have his attention drawn to the sign “Nur der Führer darf die Fenster bedienen“, the naming of an all-brown variety of flounder caught on the west coast of Jutland as “Hitler-Skrubber”, all roused the ire of German officialdom. When Hans Bendix gave leading figures of the Nazi establishment the faces of animals in a series of cartoons accompanying a two-page article by Oscar Hedberg, published in the Swedish paper *Social-Demokraten* in April 1935, this provoked an official protest. The veiled threat to Danish exports caused some alarm in Danish conservative circles, and both prime minister Stauning and his for-



## Continued. Rich food for thought

eign minister P. Munch were moved to remind the press of their responsibilities. This was seen by the Germans as a victory, and used by the non-socialist press in Denmark to score points. Frandsen concludes by saying that even in totalitarian Germany, there was some tolerance of the peculiarities of Danish humour: in cultures that barely understand one another, such tolerance does not exist.

Five years after *Social-Demokraten* published “Mennesker og andre Dyr”, Denmark was occupied by Germany. As Jan Hecker-Stempehl suggests, the Germans in their willingness to maintain Denmark as a model protectorate were prepared to allow the Danes a good deal of freedom to uphold their own democratic traditions. Although anti-German sentiments were forbidden, positive evaluations of democratic values were permitted. Danish radio programmers sought to ward off or minimise German pressure by putting on as much Danish material as possible, and coming up with programmes that dealt with uncontroversial aspects of German–Danish relations, such as nineteenth-century literature. The occupation also offered an opportunity to put into practice many of the ideas that were aired in the 1930s about using the radio for popular education. Study circles proved to be the ideal medium for the dissemination of ideas. Although the numbers participating in the study circles dealing with citizenship, law and justice were relatively small, and the course material somewhat less than inspiring, the message was clear: Danes should not only value their own traditions, but should strive actively to support and develop them. Hecker-Stempehl’s contribution is a valuable corrective to the prevailing concern with the resistance movement. As he himself notes, hardly any serious attention has been paid to the wealth of evidence of concealed obstruction, “inner exile” and oppositional thinking against the occupation.

**YET ANOTHER CLASH** between Germany and one of its northern neighbours is the subject of Reinhold Wulff’s essay on the 1958 World Cup football championship semi-final between Sweden and the German Federal Republic, a match which the Germans lost 3–1. Wulff’s essay shows very clearly how legends arise. The match was not televised, yet many in subsequent decades claimed to have seen it on TV. (Wulff incidentally



Germany vs. Sweden in 1958.

tally appears to be determined to set another hare in motion when he cites a recent article in a Swedish newspaper that seems to attribute the disputed third goal in the 1966 World Cup final to the Azerbaijani linesman’s memory of the wartime suffering of Stalin-grad.) In 1958, the Germans complained less about the final score than about the circumstances in which the match was played. The initial reaction of the German press to their team’s defeat seems to have been moderate, but by the weekend, especially after Germany suffered a heavier defeat against France in the playoff, a distinctly anti-Swedish mood had developed. The Swedish supporters were accused of turning the Ullevi stadium in Gothenburg into a “hell” with their blind fanaticism, and the Swedish players themselves were portrayed as little more than mercenaries. The Swedish press was not slow to respond. Torsten Tegnér, the doyen of Swedish sports journalists, drew parallels between the course of German history and the almost religious devotion to football of the German public. “Millions of Germans (of course, not all!) WORSHIP German football ... just as millions of Germans during the old Kaiser’s time worshipped the army and the navy, just as millions of Germans in growing numbers worshipped the party, revenge and the FÜHRER in the 1930s.” Things got so bad that the West German ambassador felt obliged to intervene, organising a conference of German and Swedish sports journalists. Wulff concludes that, four years after winning the World Cup in Switzerland, the German football public experienced a national identity crisis when they were defeated in the 1958 semi-finals. Certainly, some of the language used by German journalists was pretty nasty – for some unexplained reason, the press in the Saarland seems to have been especially virulent – and one gets a sense of how thin the protective cover of the “great silence” could be during the 1950s.

**ANOTHER SENSITIVE ISSUE** is the subject of Seppo Hentilä’s contribution. Hentilä begins by pointing out that Finland is probably the only country that ended up on the losing side during World War II in which the historical identity of the overwhelming majority of the population is still

based upon extremely positive images of the war. Defence of the fatherland, fulfilment of duty and heroism are still highly valued in a country that was spared occupation and radical disruption to political and social life. The darker side of collaboration with Germany from 1941 to 1944 has only recently become a subject of debate. Hentilä attributes this largely to the revelations of a journalist, Elina Sana, whose book on the prisoners handed over by the Finnish authorities to the Gestapo aroused foreign media coverage and prompted the Finnish government to commission a report from one of the country’s leading historians. The Finnish state tends to respond to controversial issues by setting up lengthy and well-financed research projects – in this instance on prisoners-of-war and extradi-

tions between 1939 and 1955. The fragmentary nature of the material available for research has posed problems, but the findings of the researchers have not always made for pleasant reading for the Finnish public, particularly as there has developed a tendency since the collapse of the Soviet Union to see Finland as the ultimate victor in both its wars against its eastern neighbour.

In addition to his more academic research interests, Berndt Henningsen has been an informed and lively commentator on the contemporary scene, and there are a number of contributions here that complement that interest. Walter Rothholz offers a sturdy critique of modernisation theory in the context of the Baltic Sea region. Maj-Brith Schartau discusses the reasons why a more confrontational culture has begun to replace the Swedish consensus model. Sten Berglund and Kjetil Duvold show why the Finnish minority in Sweden cannot be compared with the Swedish-speaking minority in Finland, even though the two minorities are roughly of the same size. The two final essays are concerned with international dimensions. Ursula Geiser uses her own experience of two research projects on music in a Swedish–German perspective to examine some of the definitions and difficulties of transnationalism, whilst Kazimierz Musiał looks at the role of universities in the Nordic countries in regional development and in the internationalisation of higher education.

These then are some of the contributions to this festschrift that have caught my eye. Undoubtedly, other readers with other interests will find much to engage their attention – the attitude of the main political parties in Denmark towards the highly successful early cinema industry of that country, social gynaecology in interwar Sweden, the influence of Knut Hamsun’s 1894 novel *Pan* on the German writer Friedrich Griese, to give a brief idea of the range of goodies on display. The editors are to be congratulated on succeeding in bringing together in one book such a collection of stimulating essays – which is indeed the finest tribute to a man whose own work always provides rich food for thought. ✕

david kirby

## A chancellor that cared also for commoners. Power politics with letters as weapons

**Rikskanslern Axel  
Oxenstiernas skrifter  
och brevväxling  
Avd. 2. Bd 13  
Brev från Jacob Spens  
och Jan Rutgers  
Utgivna av Arne  
Jönsson**

[Lord High Chancellor  
Axel Oxenstierna's  
writings and corre-  
spondence II:13  
Letters from  
Jacob Spens and  
Jan Rutgers  
Published by Arne  
Jönsson]  
Royal Swedish Academy  
of Letters, History and  
Antiquities (2007)  
643 pages

**Rikskanslern Axel  
Oxenstiernas skrifter  
och brevväxling  
Avd. 1. Bd 16  
Brev 1636–1654  
Del 1–2  
Utgivna av Helmut  
Backhaus**

[Lord High Chancellor  
Axel Oxenstierna's  
writings and corre-  
spondence I:16  
Letters 1636–1654  
Parts 1–2.  
Published by  
Helmut Backhaus]  
Royal Swedish  
Academy of Letters,  
History and Antiquities/  
Swedish National  
Archives (2009)  
883 pages.

**N**O OTHER SWEDEN has wielded as much power for as long a time as Axel Oxenstierna. He became a member of the Council of the Realm in 1608, was appointed Lord High Chancellor at New Year's in 1612, and held that post until his death on August 27, 1654. In present-day terms, this is the equivalent of being Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs, long-term Minister for Finance, the operations manager for the entire civic administration, and also the person responsible for the State's commercial enterprises, which dominated the Swedish economy at that time.

Axel Oxenstierna is Sweden's sole European statesman. Together with Cardinal Richelieu (and later Mazarin), he dominated the anti-Habsburg forces in Europe from the early 1630s until the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 and the execution date in Nuremberg in 1650. His status was on a par with that of Trautmannsdorff in the Empire and Olivares in Spain.

However, there is an important difference. His contemporaries gained their positions on the strength of a ruler's favor. Oxenstierna was very different in that he had to work to attain his position. He sat on the Swedish Council of the Realm under four different regents (Karl IX, Gustav II Adolf, Christina, and Karl X Gustav); he was compelled to seek the approval of the Estates of the Realm in matters regarding taxes and conscriptions, and not even in the Council of the Realm did he always have the majority on his side.

**OVER THE YEARS** the Swedish Chancellor became a European celebrity. Just before his death, Cromwell's emissary Bulstrode Whitelocke sought him out. Upon Whitelocke's return to London, the Lord Protector asked him about his impressions of Oxenstierna:

**Prot. The Chancellor of the Realm appears to be quite a shrewd man?**

**Wh. He is the wisest man I have ever met outside of England, and lives up to his reputation in all particulars.**

Few statesmen have been so constructive. Many have exercised power in ways that leave little lasting trace, but Oxenstierna's efforts put their permanent stamp on Swedish society and the State government, and even influenced the development of other countries. He was active in practically every area of civic life; he founded institutions that still exist today, and established standards that have guided their operations ever since.

It is possible to get to know him rather well. Oxenstierna was a formidable writer of letters. Some of them were lost in the fire that destroyed Tre Kronor Castle in 1697, while others have been misappropriated by greedy autograph collectors, but 10,000 outgoing and 30,000 incoming letters have been preserved. The Swedish Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities began publishing the letters in the late 1800s, and had amassed some thirty volumes by the time the publications trailed off in 1977. The Academy and the Swedish National Archives resurrected the project a few years ago, with State Archivist Helmut Backhaus



serving as its eminent expert and coordinator.

Axel Oxenstierna had the worst penmanship in Swedish history, which is why the printed edition is needed. I once heard Backhaus say, "Whenever I get a new original letter, I know that I have a tough work-week ahead of me." Even after the chicken scratches have been deciphered, they are still not entirely easy to read, but anyone who starts to spell out the old Swedish, Latin, and German walks straight into the sorcerer's workshop.

**BECAUSE OXENSTIERNA AND** his contemporaries traveled a great deal, the letters capture much of the political maneuvering of the time. He communicated what he wanted to have done through letters and writings. The reader can follow the Lord High Chancellor through uncertainties, emergency solutions, and bold initiatives; the information and questions contained in the incoming letters are addressed in the outgoing correspondence, and on a few occasions Oxenstierna even checks himself, turning a harsh draft version into a milder letter.

The original volumes have seen the addition of several important supplementations in recent years. A year or two ago the Latinist Arne Jönsson published Jan Rutgers's and James Spens's letters to the Chancellor, with an emphasis on the period around 1620. Rutgers and Spens were among the foreigners with whom Oxenstierna associated in the Swedish Foreign Service. They were charged with keeping the King and the Chancellor informed about the actions in Europe in which Sweden was becoming involved, with the invasion in 1630, during the Thirty Years' War, being the most important venture.

At that juncture Oxenstierna was already in Prussia, where he had been serving as Governor General in Elbing since 1626. Prussia was at that time under Poland, a country with which Sweden had been at war off and on ever since Prince Karl, later Karl IX, ousted Sigismund in 1598. Eventually the Chancellor



## Continued. Power politics with letters as weapons

set off to find the King, following him on his route down through Germany. When Gustav II Adolf fell in the Battle of Lützen outside Leipzig in 1632, Oxenstierna took over his role as the Swedish Crown's official legate at the battle site, but he also became the leading figure in the Regency.

Oxenstierna returned from ten years in Germany in 1636. The earlier editions come to a halt there; from that point on Oxenstierna worked in and through the State apparatus that he himself had created, and the tracks he left were fewer and less distinct than those left when he governed through his letters. A few later letters have been published in other contexts, but the bulk of them remain in the archives.

In the new issue, Backhaus has reconsidered some of the principles underlying the earlier efforts. The first editions concentrated on official State activities, and tended away from private correspondence. Backhaus has instead chosen to publish a selection taken from the entire body of correspondence, from major instructions and directives to recommendations for worn-out crofts, New Year's greetings to other potentates, and orders to the bailiffs on the numerous estates.

**EVEN THOUGH OXENSTIERNA** had returned to Sweden, there were still many government actions that had to be managed through correspondence. The Swedish armies remained in Germany almost the entire time, and Oxenstierna writes to Johan Banér, Lennart Torstensson, and other field commanders concerning both the troops and the politics. The negotiations in Osnabrück and Münster began in the 1640s, leading after many twists and turns to the Peace of Westphalia.

Oxenstierna's tenure as Chancellor had begun with the humiliating Peace of Knäred with Denmark in 1613, when Sweden had to pay 10 casks of gold to redeem Älvsborg Fortress, a sum that was equivalent to the government's entire income for two years. The military situation gradually changed, and the King and Oxenstierna ultimately considered eliminating Denmark to keep a line of retreat open upon entering the war with Germany.

At long last, Oxenstierna pursued his plans in earnest. During the winter and spring of 1643 he coaxed his colleagues in the Council of the Realm to resolve to attack Sweden's neighbor to the south.



Axel Oxenstierna in front of the Home of Nobility in Stockholm.

On May 24 the Chancellor wrote to Field Marshall Lennart Torstensson, ordering him to shake off the imperial troops and move from Germany into Holstein and Jutland. The only problem: where was Torstensson? Oxenstierna's messengers searched for months before they finally located the Swedish army and were able to turn over the pages of documents; first the propaganda justifying the attack, and then practical suggestions for how to confound the enemy.

Then France and the naval powers entered the picture. The French wanted Sweden to concentrate on the war in Germany, while England and the Netherlands saw an opportunity to ease the harsh Danish customs tariffs in Öresund. Axel Oxenstierna went down to the negotiations in Brömsebro in Southern Sweden and forced the Danes to relinquish Halland for 30 years. After the peace had been concluded, a highly pleased Oxenstierna wrote of how the Queen had made him the Count of Södermöre; one of Europe's most powerful statesmen had long been a mere baron.

**ON OCCASION THE** reader lands right in the middle of the power politics of the 1600s. Many of Oxenstierna's efforts at domestic reform were codified in the *regeringsform* of 1634, Sweden's first constitution. Oxenstierna claimed that the draft version had been reviewed by the King, who had wanted only a few minor changes. Right up until the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary, some historians questioned just how complicit the fallen Gustav II Adolf had actually been. They were inclined to view the constitution rather as Oxenstierna's attempt to assert the influence of the noble oligarchy at the expense of the power of the Crown, pointing to the heavy representation of the extended Oxenstierna family in the Council of the Realm and the five-man government.

I have wondered for a number of years whether such theories are not overly conspiratorial. Axel Oxenstierna had a cousin named Gabriel Bengtsson who, in 1634, was appointed Lord High Treasurer, the equivalent of the modern Minister for Finance. Even early on there was reason to suspect that Axel was not par-

ticularly pleased with the choice. Although the cousin bore the Oxenstierna name, he often voted with the opposition in the Council of the Realm. The Lord High Chancellor's skepticism is borne out in the new edition. Gabriel writes to his cousin Axel asking for advice: Queen Christina has offered him the position of Governor General in Riga. The Chancellor devotes several pages to convincing his cousin to accept the position, citing as the most laughable reason Gabriel's recurrent headaches at his position.

His private letters reveal Oxenstierna to be rather a wise and, on occasion, kind master. He asks the City of Enköping to arrange for a hospital bed for an aged Karin in Enöglå, who had been disowned by her husband and children, and he arranges care for a schoolteacher in Jäder parish. In 1651, during the famine years, he tells his bailiff to go easy on collecting the grain taxes, "so that you don't tear the bread from out of their mouths", although, on the other hand, the bailiff is also to make sure to collect even more beef and pork, as the crop failure affected only grains. In the fall of 1646, Axel's daughter told him that the dairymaids were underpaid. Her father then wrote to Bailiff Peder Andersson, asking him to review their wages, "so that they won't leave their positions because of this". But he also looks out for his own interests: when the compensation for the Peace of Westphalia is to be divided, he writes numerous letters to secure his share of the proceeds.

He was troubled by gout as early as the 1620s. In his old age he suffered from shingles, broken bones, blood clots, and eye problems, but, even just a few weeks before his death in August of 1654, he wrote letter after letter. When Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie falls out of favor with Christina in the spring of 1653, everyone involved writes to Axel, and the wary Chancellor copies the Queen's letter before forwarding it to her successor and Magnus's brother-in-law, Margrave Karl (X) Gustav.

The reader can revel in the Chancellor's use of language. Power had to be rooted among the commoners even back then; pithy expressions pertaining to peasant matters find their way into the letters. He complains of the defections of allies, but does not feel that they "should [...] spin silk" either. When the time comes to fulfill the conditions of the Peace of Westphalia, he grunts like a second Reagan, saying that negotiations without weapons are like "a bell without a clapper".

**UNFORTUNATELY, I MYSELF** can only struggle through the Latin, but those with a better mastery of that language can attest that the enjoyment to be derived from his correspondence with statesmen and scholars outside of Sweden is equally great.

Helmut Backhaus concludes his foreword with a brief, modest proposal. He had to leave out the letters to Axel's wife, Anna Bååt, and to his sons, Johan and Erik, "which, however, would be well worth collecting in a separate volume". Yes, absolutely: his letters to his idler son, Johan, offer glowing instruction in timeless statecraft. ✕

gunnar wetterberg



## Writing history politically. A safe haven for war criminals?

**Mats Deland,**  
**Purgatorium:**  
**Sverige och andra**  
**världskrigets**  
**förbrytare**

[Purgatory: Sweden  
and the criminals of  
World War II]  
Stockholm:  
Atlas 2010  
568 pages

**T**HE TENSION AMONG politics, justice, and history lies at the heart of the recent book *Purgatorium* by the Swedish historian Mats Deland. Even though Sweden was formally neutral throughout World War II, it was still intimately drawn into many aspects of the conflict. A neutral state, it was also the destination of choice for many refugees both during and after the war. Among those who sought refuge in Sweden were not only the victims of various persecutions, but, indeed, also persons who had been complicit in persecuting others. Deland's interest is in exposing how the Swedish state handled this situation.

Within the framework of a government funded "Svenaz" research program initiated by the Social Democratic Prime Minister Göran Persson, a number of projects aimed to shed new light on the relations between Sweden and Nazi Germany, and, more broadly, Sweden and Nazism. One of the research projects in the program was Deland's investigation of Sweden as the destination for alleged Nazi war criminals in the final phases of the war and its immediate aftermath.

Due to his "Svenaz" affiliation, Deland was able to access certain classified files and documents closed to other researchers, although this did not prevent him from feeling thwarted at times by the overly bureaucratic procedures that hindered his progress. Despite this, after some years Deland managed to amass an unparalleled body of source material on war criminals in Sweden after World War II. The results were far too much to be contained in a single volume. Aside from *Purgatorium*, which runs to over 560 pages, Deland has also published a separate report<sup>1</sup>, magazine articles<sup>2</sup>, and appendices on his Web site<sup>3</sup> based on this research.

In *Purgatorium*, Deland focuses primarily on one group of suspected Nazi war criminals who came to Sweden, the Latvians. Other groups – Germans, Estonians – are mentioned as well, but mainly to contextualize the general historical trends described. Although not the largest refugee group in postwar Sweden, nor the group with the most (in absolute terms) suspected war criminals among them, Deland lets the case of the Latvians exemplify the moral, legal, and political factors that shaped Sweden's problematic history of dealing with war crimes since World War II.

The occupied Baltic states were the locus of some of the earliest mass atrocities of the so-called Einsatzgruppen phase of Nazi genocide. During 1941 and 1942, hundreds of thousands of Jews, as well as Romanis, Communists, Soviet POWs, and the mentally ill were executed en masse in the Baltic region by the SS men of Einsatzgruppe A and their helpers: German soldiers, German policemen, and local auxiliaries.

These tragic circumstances thus contributed to a sizeable group of perpetrators, both German and local, in the Baltic states. Sweden's geographic proximity made it an ideal escape route for those who sought to avoid the retribution that could be expected with the collapse of German power and the return of the Soviets to the region.

The book opens with the story of a German policeman who served with an SS unit that swept through



ILLUSTRATION: RAGNI SVENSSON

small-town Lithuania in 1941, leaving behind a trail of mass graves. This German, who fled to Sweden after the war, was later extradited to face charges relating to his complicity in wartime Nazi crimes. After serving a short sentence in a West German prison, he returned to his family in Sweden, where he remained to the end of his days. As it turns out, he was the only foreigner ever who was extradited from Sweden to a non-Nordic country.

Throughout the Cold War, Sweden never assisted other countries in prosecuting alleged war criminals who had sought refuge there, but nor did it actively pursue prosecuting these persons itself. Deland offers several explanatory factors for this, some legal, some

## Continued. A safe haven for war criminals?

pragmatic, some political. Most significant, however, would seem to have been the political ones.

**TO SET THE SCENE**, Deland presents a great deal of detail regarding the situation in German-occupied Latvia during World War II, including the types of atrocities committed there, and by whom. The reader is left with few illusions about the implications that complicity in these crimes would entail.

To his credit, Deland also does a commendable job of portraying the Latvian resistance networks that allowed refugees to escape to Sweden from their Soviet-threatened homeland. Current Latvian historiography has a tendency to emphasize the Latvian National Council (LNC) and its boatlift operations as heroic democratic resistance (as opposed, for example, to the Red Partisans lionized during the Soviet period). This picture of the LNC is, however, incomplete, since it does not adequately deal with the geopolitical realities on the ground at the time. Deland, using Swedish sources heretofore unutilized by historians of Latvia, demonstrates not only the extent to which LNC operations were determined by the support of American and Swedish intelligence priorities (something also discussed by Lena Einhorn previously<sup>4</sup>), but also the degree of Latvian collaborators' infiltration of this resistance project for their own getaway purposes. This nuancing of our historical understanding of the LNC offers food for thought to those who would make it the central element of a new, more positive – and democratically teleological – national narrative of Latvia in World War II.

The bulk of Deland's analysis focuses on the historical, political, and legal context in Sweden. He presents an overview of the development of Swedish legislation concerning immigration, political asylum, and the deportation and extradition of undesirable foreigners. The modern political debate in Sweden on asylum and expulsion was triggered largely by the arrival of political activists (called "terrorists" by some) fleeing Tsarist Russia following the failed Revolution of 1905.

As Deland notes, imperial Russia at the time was generally considered in Sweden to be a "semi-civilized" state without the rule of law. Thus, even though these asylum seekers may well have been guilty of criminal acts in their home countries, this opinion made it politically awkward to justify sending anyone back to an unfair trial. It was therefore eventually decided that persecution by a politicized legal system could be grounds for granting asylum in Sweden to a foreigner, even if their alleged crimes (e.g. robbery or murder) were not "political" per se. Whilst formulated in a Europe of empires that was sliding into World War I, this Swedish law and practice was to live on into the era of totalitarianism.

**DELAND ALSO GIVES** the reader a good introduction to the history of international criminal law concerning war crimes and genocide. He discusses the Swedish legal and political establishment's engagement in the issues surrounding the workings of the Nuremberg Tribunal and the negotiation of the UN's genocide convention. Opinions diverged and there was thus no united Swedish stance on these developments.

Deland defines the two possible approaches that Sweden could adopt as being the "legalistic" and the "realist". The former is based on a dispassionate application of established legal tradition and practice, whilst the latter is more flexible and pragmatic, with an eye to political expediency. Deland favors the "legalistic" approach as the only one truly compatible with the legal concept of justice; however, as he clearly shows, the weight of Swedish historical developments supported the adoption of the "realist" approach to Nazi war criminals. As with the Tsarist-era revolutionaries, Sweden was loath to extradite persons accused of Nazi crimes to countries whose legal

systems it did not view as fair (in practice this meant any non Nordic-country). In order to avoid embarrassing legal situations, the decision of whether to allow extraditions or not was left to be taken at the political level. Another dodge was to allow certain persons with sinister pasts to be naturalized, for the extradition of Swedish citizens was simply not allowed.

At the same time, Sweden lacked the prerequisites to prosecute extraterritorial crimes. Offenses committed outside of Sweden could only be tried in Swedish courts if they involved Swedish nationals or Swedish interests. Even if these criteria were to be met, there was no specific legislation on war crimes or crimes against humanity that could be used. Instead, such acts would have to be classified as murder, manslaughter, and the like – all crimes subject to a rigorous statute of limitations.

As a result of all these factors, no suspected Baltic war criminal was ever extradited from Sweden. After the war, the Soviets were quick to present a list of Baltic suspects for extradition, but again the Swedish authorities could in good conscience refuse on the grounds that the Soviet legal system was as "semi-civilized" as its Tsarist predecessor. By the 1950s and '60s many Balts who had sought refuge in Sweden were granted Swedish citizenship, thereby closing the door permanently on the issue of extradition to the USSR, or anywhere else.

The terms of the statute of limitations in Sweden also precluded the trying of Baltic suspects in domestic criminal courts by this time. As such, the question of a Latvian refugee's culpability for Nazi crimes was considered by a Swedish court on only one occasion, in a libel case. The Swedish Communist daily *Ny Dag*, based on Soviet information, published an article that called the former Latvian police officer Kārlis Lobe a "mass murderer". Lobe responded by filing for libel. The defense team received legal support from the Soviet Latvian authorities, which provided copies of archival documents that not only implied that Lobe was in charge of the Ventspils police during the massacre of local Jews in 1941, but also that he commanded a unit of Latvian police auxiliaries during brutal SS-led "anti-partisan" operations in Belarus. In the end, the court was convinced that there had been ample evidence to support the newspaper's statements of opinion about Lobe. Nevertheless, this had not been a criminal case, so Lobe's actual guilt was thereby never proven.

One reason Deland gives for the lack of prosecution of suspected war criminals in Sweden is based on the poor record Sweden has for incorporating international norms into domestic law. To this day, Sweden regularly receives criticisms for the flawed way in which it applies international legal instruments ranging from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child to the EU's Dublin Convention. Deland shows how slow Sweden was to adopt war crimes legislation and amend its statute of limitations and extradition laws. Only after the end of the Cold War and the wave of genocidal conflicts in the 1990s did Sweden begin to embrace real change in its approach to prosecuting crimes against humanity.

Another reason Deland gives for the Swedish reluctance to prosecute suspected Baltic war criminals stems from the fact that several of them were important for the building up of post-war Swedish intelligence services. As in other Western countries, Balts who had collaborated with the Nazis were seen as unwavering anti-Communists. Furthermore, they had language skills, cultural competence, and even first-hand experience of living under Stalinism and fighting the Soviets in combat. They also had networks that extended into postwar German society. All of these qualities made some refugees highly valuable intelligence assets. Deland describes how the Swedish police and military intelligence services utilized a number of former Baltic collaborators as informants, agents, and analysts. He even goes so far as to call one group he documents an autonomous "Latvian intelligence service" operating from Swedish soil.

Such phenomena were not unique to Sweden; for example, the Americans are known to have acted similarly. Nevertheless, that Swedish intelligence also employed Nazi collaborators during the Cold War is probably difficult for many Swedes to accept.

**IT IS FINDINGS** like this that make Deland's book such a trying read for a Swedish audience. A country used to seeing itself as a moral superpower is exposed to tu quoque critique, as time and again political expediency is shown to have taken precedence over historical and legal justice with regard to the question of suspected Nazi war criminals. Indeed, given the way the international human rights conventions are so poorly anchored in Swedish domestic law and practice, Deland is somewhat pessimistic about the future.

There are, however, some grounds for optimism. On the one hand, Sweden actually does have war crimes legislation now, and for the first time it will be tested in the case of a Bosniak former camp guard accused of crimes dating from the war in 1992.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, Deland's book has been published, making a valuable contribution to the historical debate. It is a good example of what Deland himself calls "writing history politically": while his personal moral position is clear, he is nevertheless scrupulous in his scholarly, non-polemical treatment of the alleged perpetrators he describes.



## Dissertation review. Class divides and xenophobia in the shadow of World War II

Purgatorium is a wide-ranging book that tries to cover a number of complex topics down to the level of individual actors. This, too, can make it a difficult read, as not all the sections are as cogent as others. Nevertheless, those who persevere will be rewarded with many new, reflection-provoking insights. Ideally, it would also be translated for the benefit of a non-Swedish readership.

matthew kott

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ILLUSTRATION: RAGNI SVENSSON

**L**VERY PERIOD IN the long history of immigration to Sweden has been characterized by unique conditions. During the build-up of Swedish industry that started in the late 19th century, immigration was relatively modest, but after World War II, it increased sharply. By then, workers in Sweden had built strong union and political organizations – exceptionally strong by international standards. Union organization helped improve working conditions and raise wages. Labor shortages in Sweden strengthened the labor position in the market. Immigrants were recruited to work in industry and arrived in a specific context that shaped their relationships with their Swedish coworkers. Homogeneity in terms of ethnicity and gender facilitated the effort, although it was not always to the long-term advantage of union organizations. A discourse using the categories “Swedes” and “immigrants” was developed around these issues. There has been continued discussion ever since about whether particularly xenophobic tendencies have existed among workers and in the union movement. Can ethnic prejudices be separated from the goal of limiting the labor supply and cultivating a common labor culture?

Johan Svanberg's dissertation discusses these ques-

tions on the basis of a study of relationships between Estonian refugees sent as workers to a company town in the southern Swedish province of Blekinge, their Swedish coworkers, and company management. Labor relations at Svenska Stålpresnings AB (SSAB) in Olofström, a small industrial community dominated by a single company, found themselves at the intersection of class and ethnicity.

Union membership, virtually total in Sweden at the time, was one of the primary issues in the conflicts that arose between Swedes and Estonians. Of primary significance was the ambivalence of the Metalworkers' Union towards labor immigration. The union eventually accepted the stance of the Social Democratic Party, that immigration was important to the development of the welfare state. The immigrants were to be included and were to be part of the Swedish organizations, albeit not really on an equal footing. Permission to come to Sweden was often made conditional upon accepting unionization.

**THE AUTHOR CLAIMS THAT** this conflict did not follow ethnic dividing lines. Many

**Johan Svanberg**  
**Arbetets relationer och**  
**etniska dimensioner:**  
**Verkstadsföreningen,**  
**Metall och esterna vid**  
**Svenska Stålpres-**  
**nings AB i Olofström**  
**1945–1952**

[Labour Relations and Ethnic Dimensions of Work. The Swedish Engineering Employers' Association, the Swedish Metalworkers' Union, and the Estonians at Svenska Stålpresnings AB in Olofström 1945–1952] Linnaeus University Press: Växjö 2010 380 pages

## Continued.

# Class divides and xenophobia in the shadow of World War II

Estonians joined the union; relationships between Swedes who did not want to join the union and their coworkers were equally hostile. In spite of this, there was talk about the conflict between the organized and the unorganized in ethnic terms, as an antagonism between immigrants and Swedes. Gender also made some difference – male workers who refused to join the union were threatened with violence, while women were influenced by verbal means. Nor did gender enter into the contemporary formulation of the issue.



**WAS THERE A** particular union-centered xenophobia? The question has been addressed previously based on union demands in the 1940s for mass deportation of the Estonians.<sup>1</sup> Svanberg's account shows how two things coincide: the conflict surrounding organization based on class divisions, and the emphasis on ethnic dividing lines rife in society in the 1940s and not specific to the unions. The roots of xenophobia were found in the racism of the interwar period. This is a reasonable conclusion, although the distinction is a fine one and the notions were often confused with each other at the time.

Then as now, immigrants were given the worst and dirtiest jobs. Through the recruitment process, employers often created tighter bonds between themselves and immigrant workers. The immigrant workers were given housing assistance and sometimes loans to set up a rudimentary household. This made Swedish workers inclined to regard the Estonians as more privileged than were. In Olofström, the company appointed Estonians to salaried positions and gave them supervisory status over their countrymen. The Estonian workers were given no opportunity to learn Swedish, which made language a clear dividing line between the ethnic groups.

Svanberg makes an exemplary analysis of the immigrants' backgrounds; instead of regarding them as a homogeneous mass, he illustrates the class differences that cut through the ethnic landscape. Part of the conflict was a class conflict played out on the shop floor. The majority of the Estonian refugees were not originally laborers: the group included former white-collar employees, housewives, business owners, farmers, and fishermen. They were employed at SSAB because that was the work on offer, not because they had actively chosen it. Their identities had been shaken and they found it hard to rapidly identify with the workers who were active union members.

The Estonian workers came to Sweden in two waves. The first group of refugees had arrived in the autumn of 1944 and came to Olofström relatively soon thereafter. A second group was recruited in German refugee camps around 1950 when the company needed to expand. An Estonian supervisor, Alfred Wendt, managed the recruitment process. He had held a high-ranking position in the puppet government in Estonia under German occupation and was among those accused of war crimes. In other words: he had been an active Nazi sympathizer.

**SVANBERG DISCUSSES** THE stereotype of the "Balt as Nazi" that existed in the minds of the Swedish public in the 1940s, previously studied by two other historians, Carl Göran Andrae and Mikael Byström. Andrae traced the origins of the stereotype to the Swedish communist press, which got information about the refugees directly from the Soviet Union. In these terms, anyone who feared the Soviet Union or belonged to a non-Socialist party was a fascist. Describing the entire group of Estonians in this way was not something that


gained the support of the Social Democratic government.<sup>2</sup> Fears that fascist war criminals would make their way into the country were the basis of the interviews held with all refugees, which also constitute fascinating source material for Svanberg. Byström talks about a comprehensive campaign in the communist press and discusses why they were accorded interpretive precedence on this issue by the Swedish labor movement. He sees the need for a Swedish coming to terms with Nazism after the end of the war as one reason the Balts became targets.<sup>3</sup>

Wendt was there as an obvious target in the company town of Olofström. But Svanberg goes beyond the invectives in the public debate. He is able to document how Wendt was appointed by the company, not the Estonian group, and that feelings about his leading position within the group were far from wholly enthusiastic. The anti-communism of the Estonians was unpopular during the initial years after World War when Stalin was hailed as a victor; with current knowledge, it seems more understandable. Union methods that would not be accepted today were then used also against non-unionized Swedes and later against immigrant Finnish workers. Svanberg gives a very credible picture of the conflict in Olofström. His method, analyzing the immigrant group based on its own conditions, leaving room for varying backgrounds, should be applied considerably more often. He gives a great deal of nuance to the understanding of ethnic antagonisms. Laudably, he ascribes to the immigrants their own ability to act, a history, and political convictions.



**ONE POSSIBLE OBJECTION** is that Swedish workers become less visible – the detailed and critical discussion is devoted to the organized union actions – and that private actions, both hostile and benevolent, appear mainly in anecdotal form. One might get the impression that they had no political opinions and that the image of the Soviet Union and Stalin made no difference to them. This does not seem likely.

Johan Svanberg attempts to unite two theoretical traditions, the institutional

tradition of working life research and the constructivist tradition of migration research, oriented toward the construction of the Other, in a chapter on Swedes' views of Estonians and Estonians' views of Swedes. Charles Tilly is among the role models. Meanwhile, the author avoids evaluating these perspectives and sometimes gives the impression of adding the one to the other without discussing their mutual relationship. He calls it the "polyphonic method". The main impression is that the polyphony becomes richer than the unanimous picture. 

anu mai kõll

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## Max Weber on and in Russia. The long road to modernity

**M**AX WEBER WAS keenly interested in conditions in Russia, as primarily shown in his essays on the Russian prerevolution of 1905 published the following year in *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, a journal for which Weber was a contributing editor.<sup>1</sup> January 1905 brought Bloody Sunday in St. Petersburg, which was followed in May by the Japanese victory over the Russian navy at Tsushima – the first time in modern history that a non-white people defeated one of the white colonialist peoples.

The year 1905 was a fateful year in general, with mutinies within the Black Sea Fleet (Battleship Potemkin) and uprisings at the Kronstadt naval base.

The tsar had relinquished his absolute power and Russia was moving toward a parliamentary system; a Duma was elected and Russia was suddenly, and for the first time, controlled by a government. However, the tsar still retained sufficient power to oppose the proposed constitution drafted by the Duma, and only the prime minister had the right to request an audience with the tsar.

An election was held in April that made the Constitutional Democrats the strongest group in the Duma. This Duma was dissolved in June 1906 and the newly elected Duma did not convene until February 1907. It was dissolved in June of the same year in connection with a “reactionary” coup in which Stolypin was advisor to Nicholas II. Stolypin was an impressive figure. During his tenure as prime minister, agrarian reforms were instituted that were intended to establish a modern, capitalist system of agriculture, but the reforms never proceeded beyond half measures because the mir, the village communities, demonstrated such serious resistance to development and the abandonment of tradition.

Weber began to analyze conditions in Russia during the period between Bloody Sunday and Tsushima. He quickly learned enough Russian to be able to follow the Russian daily papers. There was a reading room in Heidelberg that had Russian newspapers, but Weber also subscribed to several (as documented by his request to have them forwarded to Flanders while there on a recreation trip).

This interest in Russia had a long prehistory. Max Weber had laid the foundations of his scholarly repute and career with his extensive studies resulting in a work of more than 800 pages on farm workers’ conditions East of the Elbe. These studies were sponsored by the *Verein für Sozialpolitik* and are reflected in his inaugural address in Freiburg im Breisgau, “The Nation State and Economic Policy”.<sup>2</sup>

Weber is usually ascribed a Russophobic attitude, which may be accurate on a geopolitical level. The German border to Poland coincided with the border to Tsarist Russia, and the encircled Germany had an interest in making sure this border toward the East did not become too porous. For this reason, Weber recommended stemming the inflow of guest workers: the Polish peasants were, after all, prepared to “eat grass” and outcompete German smallholders in a kind of reverse social Darwinism.<sup>3</sup> The politically and militarily dominant Junker class had a utilitarian interest in cheap seasonal labor and wanted protectionist tariffs against American competition in the grain market, tariffs which would have conflicted with Germany’s national interest in modernization. Agricultural policy is a focal point (*Schwerpunkt*) in Weber’s scholarly profile. This was expressed at the 1904 World’s Fair in St. Louis, Missouri, where Weber appeared before an audience for the first time in eight years and then chose to speak specifically about German agricultural policy from a historical perspective.

Weber’s Russophobia did not result in any lack of Russian students in Heidelberg, who flocked to the University – and to Weber. So it was more a matter of geopolitics than ethnic stereotypes, which may be noteworthy in light of Weber’s disdain for Poles, stereotypes instilled in him during military service in Posen.

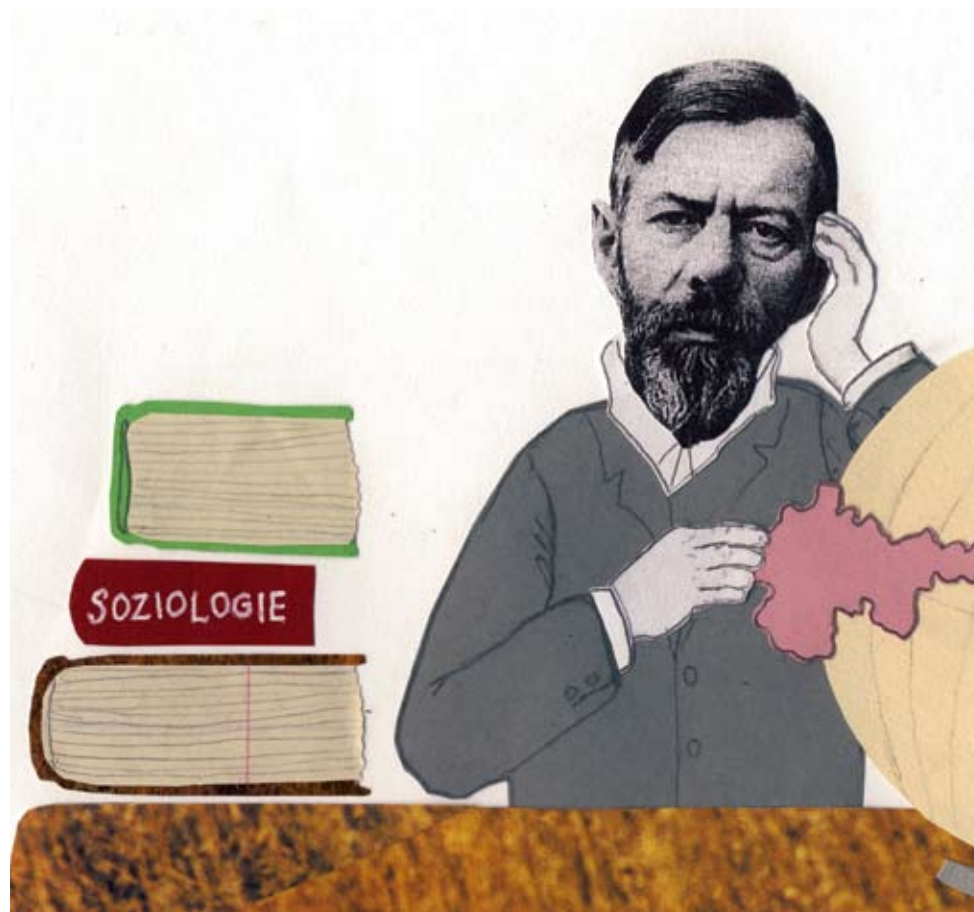


ILLUSTRATION: RAGNI SVENSSON

Agricultural policy is important in Weber’s analyses of Russia – he emphasizes the obstacles to efficiency that could have smoothed the way for industrialization and modern capitalism. The liberal Russian *zemstvo* movement<sup>4</sup> held out the promise of a Russian transformation to Western modernity. As prime minister, Sergei Witte advocated the rationalization of Russian society. Earlier, as finance minister, he had worked to improve the infrastructure by means including railway construction, most importantly the building of the Trans-Siberian Railway, which was intended to replace the Suez Canal as a transport route.

That no real revolution came about in 1905–1906 was to a large degree the result of peasant lethargy; there were no social movements there of the kind found in France in 1789 or Sweden in the 1430s. Witte resigned when he felt he no longer enjoyed the tsar’s confidence. “Even today, Weber’s articles about the Russian Revolution of 1905/1906 can help to illustrate the distance between Russia and the West and to understand the – possibly – irreconcilable Russian conflict between traditionalistic rigidity and desperate struggle for modernization, in short, the chances of Russia’s transformation to Western modernity.”<sup>5</sup> This was written after *die Wende* and the implosion of the Russian Empire in 1991–1992. But civil liberty and the rule of law without administrative arbitrariness (“sultanism” is one term Weber uses to designate the opposite of a legal state<sup>6</sup>) was a utopian goal in a Russia characterized by lethargy and illiteracy, where the rural tradition of *obshchina* presented an obstacle to private ownership and marginalized the kulaks’ relationship to ordinary farmers.<sup>7</sup> Farmland was normally not privately owned, but was instead held in common by the village, something that did not promote novel initiatives or improvements in operational efficiency. One might, like Weber, talk about a natural, primitive communism that worked against the pride and ambition that private ownership can evoke.<sup>8</sup> In

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Max Weber and Russia**

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## Continued. The long road to modernity

theory, the land allotments could be re-distributed on an egalitarian basis every fifteen years within the village community, and it was not until the new Russian Land Code of 2001 that farmers could gain full and unrestricted rights, including the right to buy and sell land. The landowning large farmers and estate owners outside the obshchina system were opposed to the small-scale and hidebound smallhold peasants, among whom the kolkhoz system had, so to speak, ready soil – hence the expression “primitive communism”.

AS A NATIONAL LIBERAL German patriot, Weber’s interest in the geopolitical dimension and the problems and prospects of liberalism in 1905–1906 makes perfect sense. This was connected to Germany’s own pre-parliamentary state of affairs: a complex federal system with no real parliamentarianism and a Kaiser who was absolute monarch of Prussia and inclined to consider himself the same for all of Germany. Outmoded forms of government were a main cause of the outbreak of World War I – as pointed out by Wolfgang Mommsen, one of the editors of the thick volume of *Max Weber Gesamtausgabe* (MWG), issued in 1989 and containing Weber’s writings on the Russian prerevolution. Mommsen further believes that Weber’s writings on Russia after the October Revolution should be viewed in light of the situation in Germany at the time. Sham democracy prevailed there under Prince Max von Baden as parliamentary chancellor (that is, reporting to the Reichstag; before that, the Reichstag’s main power had been to decide on finances, but the chancellor had reported to the Kaiser) during the final phase of Wilhelmine rule, even though Germany was an open society with a dawning party system and free media. Weber also discussed the nascent Russian party system and the relationship between Church and State, two interests dear to his heart. The Orthodox Church’s repudiation of the profane world did not make modernization any easier. The divorce between the eastern and western churches of 1054 still has its acknowledged predictive force.

Weber’s concern with Russia has an interesting sequel. After the war, he was forced to support himself<sup>9</sup> and was a probationary employee in Vienna, but after a year in that city, he chose to accept an offer at Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich to succeed Lujo Brentano.<sup>10</sup> Weber died in June 1920 of complications from pneumonia. He had not enjoyed bustling Vienna, where he was forced to jostle with profanum vulgus on the streetcars. (In addition, his employer forgot to pay him on time. In Munich, he was also closer to his mistress, Else Jaffé von Richthofen.) Weber’s lecture, “Socialism”, given to Austrian military officers (later also held in Munich) is an intriguing document – a sort of bouillon cube or distillate of his political analyses.<sup>11</sup> Here, he thoroughly explores *The Communist Manifesto*, which he deems to have certain scholarly qualities.<sup>12</sup> He cautions against a system in which both economic and administrative power are held in a single hand, and deems the Russia that had been taken over by a “local sect” a huge experiment. Also telling is a famous argument at the Café Landtmann in Vienna between Weber and Joseph Schumpeter, when Weber became so incensed that he forgot his hat upon his hasty departure.<sup>13</sup> Actually, there was cognitively more that united the two than divided them – but while “Schumpy” welcomed an interesting, full-scale social experiment, Weber was more civic-minded and inclined toward an ethos of responsibility. One should keep in mind that Weber had lived through the Bavarian Soviet Republic in 1919, was dragged into its aftermath, and became a character witness who probably saved the life of Ernst Toller, victor at Dachau, in the vanguard of a hastily assembled army of workers and peasants. The third and final phase of the Bavarian Revolution was dominated by Communists (including Eugene Leviné and Ret Marut) and a number of stark raving mad, psychopathic Russian anarchists who instituted, among other things, a curfew for

“bourgeois” elements and a court-martial to deal with violations.

In connection with the 1917 revolutions, Weber wrote, as noted, about Russia’s transition to sham democracy. His perspective focused on the prospects for a stable peace between Russia and Germany. Even in the popular outline lecture “Politics as a Vocation” of January 1919, Weber touches upon conditions in Russia. One should remember that immediately after World War I, there was a fear that Bolshevism would prevail, and socialist revolts were by no means unusual. For a time, Bavaria was joined by Hungary and Saxony as Soviet Republics, Finland had experienced a bloody civil war, the Spartacists rose up in Berlin. And the Ruhr region was a hotbed of revolutionary activity. The danger was not averted until the “Miracle at the Vistula” in August 1920 when Pilsudski vanquished a much larger Russian army outside Warsaw.<sup>14</sup>

Weber tended to overestimate “soldier’s communism”, the revolutionary potential of homeward-bound troops, yet underestimate the leaders of the Bolshevik regime, whom he regards as *café literati*, a category he consistently disparaged. The assimilation of soldiers who had served at the front into society is one of Weber’s main reasons for advocating the full implementation of democracy in Germany as well, which is best evinced in “Suffrage and Democracy in Germany”, perhaps the most important of his political writings during the war, in some competition with “Parliament and Government in Germany under a New Political Order”, which Johann Winckelmann preferred to regard as the draft of a never accomplished Weberian political sociology.<sup>15</sup>

After the implosion of the Russian Empire, the question was asked as to which classics of social science were significant for the understanding of both ongoing and imminent transformation processes. The answers have varied, but Max Weber has been a favorite alongside Talcott Parsons, Karl Polanyi, Carl Schmitt, Joseph Schumpeter, Gunnar Myrdal, Karl Marx, and S. N. Eisenstadt. Randal Collins identified<sup>16</sup> the tensions that would lead to the breakdown of the USSR, although he did not manage to predict when it would occur. Considering that several other roads to modernity already exist elsewhere in Europe, it is a reasonable prediction that whichever version Russia chooses, it will be path dependent. But “path dependence” is a truism; all nations are dinosaurs, controlled by formative historical memories.<sup>17</sup>

There has been an abiding antagonism or tension between history and theory ever since the days of Comte and Ranke. Particularisms and *Sonderwege* imply a nomothetic ideal as a contrast, which seems at once unattainable, perpetually “on the horizon”. It may be legitimate to create new taxonomies, today dependent upon globalization having reached qualitatively new levels that have put older modernization theories (e.g. Parsons’ and Stein Rokkan’s) in mothballs before we have found new instruments.

IN THE CURRENT Russian reception of Weber, focus is primarily on the basis of legitimacy and aspects of the sociology of religion. Russia today is post-secular and

the Orthodox Church is playing a key role in the government’s legitimization process, a notion that can be supported in many ways, including quantitative media studies. Weber did not develop any ideal type of democratic legitimacy, although he may have considered doing so toward the end of his life.<sup>18</sup> To him, democracy was a subtype of what he called charismatic legitimate rule, which was inherently a non-stable transitional form between traditional legitimacy and the legal-rational legitimacy of modern government. Weber certainly overestimated the role of charisma, but here he still feels refreshingly au courant: Singapore indicates that a calculable legal state is more important than “democracy” (polyarchy and open society).

No dedicated “value rational” democrat, Weber was instead a rational or “functional” democrat, defined more by an ethos of responsibility than by an ethos of conviction. His first priority was to integrate the working class into the German nation and modernize the German polity, to develop Germany from *Machtstaat* to *Volksstaat*. Accordingly, he advocated the institution of parliamentarianism and full political rights, including for the working class.<sup>19</sup>

There is much to say about the concept of charisma – both its interpretation and operationalization are relatively complex matters, and Weber himself had an ambivalent attitude toward rapture vs. reason. He could probably find the prospects for a successful Russian jump start to modernity appealing, provided that this circumvented the rigid bureaucracy of the West, molded by the iron cage of rationality. After all, the functions of charisma include generating meaningful new values. But the irreversible trend of rationalization is the cognitive main tendency in the Weberian view on history. Russia is a country that seems always to have been on the way toward Western modernity<sup>20</sup> – but obviously slowly, and in a way punctuated by savage kicks and starts. Ivan the Terrible, Peter the Great, and Lenin/Stalin are all coworkers in the same long-term project, while liberal-constitutional forces have never really been given the chance.<sup>21</sup>

AFTER THE WORKS of Yuri Davydov,<sup>22</sup> which are of the nature of “Weber and ...”, an inexhaustible subject, we now have a volume on *Max Weber and Russia* under the stewardship of Vesa



Oittinen, which is based on a symposium that took place in 2007. The anthology was presented at the ICCEES World Congress in July/August 2010. It contains contributions from younger researchers from Finland, the Netherlands, Germany, Mexico, Canada, and Russia. Tapani Hietaniemi, the foremost Finnish Weber specialist alongside Kari Palonen, died before he could write his contribution. Some of the essays are like etudes, but laudable and promising ones nonetheless. To talk as Gregory Sandstrom does of Weber's value neutrality is not wrong, but nor is it wholly right. In his methodological writings, Weber qualifies freedom of values to value relationship, but the popular so-called twin addresses of 1917–1919<sup>23</sup> on “Science as a Vocation” and “Politics as a Vocation” can probably be understood as an argument for value neutrality or value freedom in a, so to speak, Viennese empiricist spirit. Sandstrom's reflections on Weber and re-enchantment are of considerable contemporary relevance, not only in the case of Russia.

If, as in this volume, one comes across the term neo-Weberianism, there is reason for skepticism: the term does not exist in Weberology. It is hardly wrong as a designation for Michael Mann and Randall Collins, but neither of them have any acknowledged role in Weberology – they are rather typical examples (setting aside their other merits) of the iconographic use of Weber. From a longer time perspective, it is noteworthy that Pitirim Sorokin<sup>24</sup> carried Weber with him in his baggage to the United States, and that there may be a line of influence to Parsons, for whom, according to some, Sorokin was the model for his Weber-inspired system construction. Igor S. Kon wrote a widely used textbook in which Weber plays a prominent role.<sup>25</sup> Alexander von Schelting occupied himself a great deal with both Weber and Russia – but as far as I know, not at the same time or combined.<sup>26</sup>

There are significant parallels between Weber and Lenin when it comes to viewing imperialism as the highest stage of capitalism, although from different value premises. Both apply the British economist Hobson's theories on imperialism and business cycles, and Weber's power realism (in the same tradition as Thomas Hobbes and later Henry Kissinger and Hans Morgenthau) leads him to advocate German participation in the hunt for colonies as an aspect of the European balance of power. In terms of foreign relations, Weber was closer to Hitler than to Bismarck. One should add that Hitler's programs essentially coincided with the principles of most of the major parties in the Weimar Republic; the difference was the brutal means Hitler employed to implement the program.

Weber's work on the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism makes up Part I of his posthumously published *GARS* (*Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie*) and must be depressing reading for a Russian whose home is east of the famed divide of 1054.<sup>27</sup> Entrepreneurialism and Protestant virtues seemingly have a positive correlation, which is also supported by Estonia's great successes compared to its neighbors, with the laggard of Greece a fine complementary illustration. More recent survey research seems to suggest that the main line of demarcation in attitudes is not between Protestant and other Christian churches, but between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism on side and Orthodoxy on the other.<sup>28</sup> Karl Schlögel's studies of urban culture point in the same direction. West of the 1054 divide, the center of the village is not the sole province of the church, but is shared with the town hall. The virtues of civil society and its institutions are gradually diluted in the porous *Kresy* of Poland. *Magdeburger Stadtrecht* reached Kiev but no further.<sup>29</sup>

One may speak of a delayed reception of Weber everywhere – more delayed in Eastern Europe than in the West. *WuG* was translated at the same time it was deconstructed in *MWG* to its composite parts. The details are rather complex and I will not go into them here.

Oittinen's volume contains many pearls and is rewarding reading

from several perspectives. Evert van der Zweerde's essay contains a valuable overview of Weber's works on Russia. Josephien van Kessel discusses interesting ideal types of rationality, although with mixed references that raise questions about selection. I would otherwise like to make special mention of the contributions of Mikhail Maslovskiy, Elena Ostrowskaya, and Rimma Tangalychea, which may be understood as potent scholarly history. Ostrowskaya's observation that the fact “that such key German sociologists as F. H. Tenbruck, W. Schluchter, J. Weiss, M. Riesebrodt, and R. Münch, among others, referred to the analysis of the major themes of Weber's sociology of religion in their work represented a fundamental turning point in German Weber studies” (p. 22) is very true and important. The pedagogical commissioned work *WuG* as Weber's main work is a so-called factoid (defined as an invented fact believed to be true). The theme of Weber and Tolstoy is given rightful attention by van der Zweerde.<sup>30</sup> ✕

sven eliaeson

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- Ola Agevall, “Science, Values, and the Empirical Argument in Max Weber's Inaugural Address”, in *Max Weber Studies*, Vol. 4:2 (July 2004), a theme issue dedicated to Weber's relevance as a theorist of politics, edited by Sven Eliaeson and Kari Palonen.
- Zemstvo* were non-governmental base organizations at the regional level, which also arranged national assemblies (after 1903, when they had held an assembly in Schwarzwald, near Schaffhausen). The *Zemstvo* movement was dominated by liberal/constitutional goals; it had no official sanction and was stymied by schisms in the Kadet party. See *MWG: Abteilung I: Schriften und Reden*, Volume 10; Max Weber, *Zur Russischen Revolution von 1905*, editor W. J. Mommsen in cooperation with Dittmar Dahlmann, Tübingen 1989, p. 88 ff. Dittmar Dahlmann characterizes the league of *zemstvo* constitutionalists as a lobbying group for large landowners, but the *zemstvos* were also assembled bodies for local management of road construction, social welfare, trade, tax collection, etc.
- Karl-Ludwig Ay, “On Some Observations of Max Weber”, in Sven Eliaeson & Hans Löden (eds.), *Nordisk Säkerhetspolitik inför nya utmaningar* [Nordic security policy in the face of new challenges], Stockholm 2002, p. 88.
- Borrowing from Juan L. Linz and Alfred Stepan, Archie Brown labels the Ceasescu-family rule in Romania from the 1970s “increasingly sultanistic”. (*The Rise and Fall of Communism*, London 2010, p. 543)
- Obshchina* refers to peasant communes (cooperative communities) responsible for (re)allocation of land, and collectively responsible for taxes until 1903, as well as for law enforcement.
- Richard Pipes is the scholar on Russian affairs who has most energetically propounded the significance of private property rights. See for example “Max Weber and Russia”, pp.

- 371–401, in *World Politics*, vol. 7:3 (1955), a work cited by van der Zweerde in his contribution to Oittinen's anthology.
- His mother Helene had invested the family fortune in German war bonds, which became worthless after the war.
- He had several alternatives to choose among, including Bonn.
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- On the scholarly qualities of the Manifesto and its relevance today, see Bob Jessop, “The Communist Manifesto as a Classic Text”, pp. 199–219, in Sven Eliaeson & Nadezhda Georgieva (eds.), *New Europe: Growth to Limits?* Oxford 2010.
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- Norman Davies writes about this in, for example, *White Eagle, Red Star: The Polish-Soviet War, 1919–20*, London 2003.
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- This is the same problem Guenther Roth deals with in *The Social Democrats in Impe-*

## Continued. The long road to modernity

*rial Germany* (Totowa, NJ, 1963). I will otherwise refrain here from going any deeper into the widespread controversy that followed Wolfgang Mommsen's famous dissertation on Max Weber and German politics (1959, English translation of the second edition, as *Max Weber and German Politics 1890–1920*, Chicago 1984), regarding Weber's pragmatic "contextual" approach to the appropriate balance between parliamentary power and presidential authority. See also Sven Eliaeson, "Constitutional Caesarism: Weber's Politics in their German Context", in Stephen Turner (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Weber*, Cambridge 2000.

- <sup>20</sup> Helmut Steiner: "‘Russia in Europe’: A Historical and Topical Debate", in Sven Eliaeson & Nadezhda Georgieva (eds.), *New Europe: Growth to Limits?*
- <sup>21</sup> In common with Prussia, Tsar Peter's role model was the Swedish Oxenstjernian state bureaucracy, impartial and rational, which has perhaps not been given the attention it deserves. But transferring the Swedish model to the conditions of the peasants was difficult because of translation problems, since the relevant words do not exist in the Russian language. Torkel Jansson writes on the subject in *Rikssprängningen som kom av sig: Finsk-svenska gemenskaper efter 1809* [An unsuccessful dismemberment of a realm: Finnish–Swedish relations after 1809], Stockholm 2009.
- <sup>22</sup> Yuri N. Davydov & Piama P. Gaidenko, *Russland und der Westen*, Frankfurt/Main 1995. (Heidelberger Max Weber-Vorlesungen 1992.)
- <sup>23</sup> It was formerly believed that the "twin addresses" were given in quick succession in Munich during the revolutionary winter of 1918–1919. Later research has persuasively shown that "Science as a Vocation" had been delivered by November 1917. "Politics as a Vocation" was meant as popular education, rather than an academic lecture in the strict sense. Weber had been induced to appear, since *Freistudentischer Bund* had otherwise threatened to invite Kurt Eisner, whom Weber despised; he considered Eisner a traitor because he had in correspondence with U.S. President Wilson accepted the idea of Germany as being to blame for the outbreak of war in 1914, something Weber moreover considered a tactical move intended to wrest Bavaria from the Little Germany created by Bismarck.
- <sup>24</sup> Pitirim Sorokin is one of the most influential migrants in sociology. His life trajectory is dramatic. Among else, he was sentenced to death in Russia and put on the "philosophers' ship" in 1921 with intellectuals expelled from the Soviet nation. His background is partly Finnish.
- <sup>25</sup> Igor S. Kon, *Der Positivismus in der Soziologie: Geschichtlicher Abriss*, Berlin 1968.
- <sup>26</sup> Alexander von Schelting, *Max Webers Wissenschaftslehre: Das logische Problem der historischen Kulturerkenntnis: die Grenzen der Soziologie des Wissens*, Tübingen 1934, and *Russland und der Westen im russischen Geschichtsdenken der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts, aus dem Nachlass herausgegeben und bearbeitet von Hans-Joachim Torke*, Wiesbaden 1989.
- <sup>27</sup> Weber's work on the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism was published first as an essay in two parts in *Archiv ...* 1905 and in a second edition as a book in 1920. It is included as the first section of *GARS (Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie)*, Weber's main historical-empirical work. His so-called sect essays of 1906 ("‘Kirchen’ und ‘Sekten’"), were written under the impression of having visited hillbilly relatives in Mt Airy, NC, during his long journey in America, were published in two parts in *FZ*. The text is a shortcut to Weber's Calvinist thesis and its routinization ("Der Puritaner wollte Berufsmensch sein, wir müssen es sein"). English edition (Max Weber, "Churches and Sects in North America") in the ASA journal *Sociological Theory*, vol. 3:1 (Spring 1985). Weber's method here can most closely be characterized as participatory observation and the predestination doctrine of the Calvinist thesis becomes very clear.
- <sup>28</sup> Bernhard Weßels, "Religion and Economic Virtues", in Eliaeson & Georgieva (eds.), *New Europe: Growth to Limits?*
- <sup>29</sup> Karl Schlögel, *Im Raume lesen wir die Zeit: Über Zivilisationsgeschichte und Geopolitik*. Munich & Vienna 2003.
- <sup>30</sup> The person who has most thoroughly studied the theme of Weber and Tolstoy is probably Edith Hanke; see her *Prophet des Unmodernen: Leo Tolstoj als Kulturkritiker in der deutschen Diskussion der Jahrhundertwende*, Tübingen 1993. Hanke is one of Wolfgang Mommsen's many close collaborators and one of the driving forces of MWG.

**Max Engman**  
**Gränsfall: Utväxlingar**  
**och gränstrafik**  
**på Karelska näset**  
**1918–1920**

[Borderline case:  
Exchanges and border  
traffic on the Karelian  
isthmus 1918–1920]  
Helsinki/Stockholm  
Svenska litteratursäll-  
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## On guard against red perils

**F**INLAND DID NOT have to struggle much to gain independence once the old order in Russia crumbled when the Bolsheviks seized power in the fall of 1917. Securing the newly won sovereignty proved far more difficult. A civil war soon erupted that threatened the new nation and only intervention by the German war machine enabled the country's legal government to ride out the storm. For six months, until the defeat of the German kaiser, the young republic was in practice a German vassal state, after which the political elite, who were overwhelmingly sympathetic to Germany, were forced to cast their lot with the entente powers to gain a modicum of security in the face of a dreaded Soviet Russian expansion. The situation was no uncomplicated matter. As history tells us, England and France intervened on the side of the White generals in a prolonged Russian civil war, while the Finnish governments willingly participated in the efforts to politically isolate and economically starve the young Soviet state. However, had the Russian Whites prevailed, they most certainly would have tried to seize Finland, the former Grand Duchy, once again. This is why the Czar's General Mannerheim, who was Finnish, never marched on Petrograd. He allowed no campaigns in that direction – despite his pro-Russian, pro-British orientation.

For almost three years, up until the Treaty of Tartu in October 1920, a latent state of war existed between Finland and Russia. At least, that is how those in power in Helsinki viewed the situation, while the Soviet government, eager to break out of isolation and become recognized as an equal party in international circles, had every reason to quell the conflict, especially since their internal struggles were troublesome enough. The Bolshevik terror campaign against political opponents, initiated in earnest in the fall of 1918, was counterproductive in this regard, since it provided a hostile world with clear propaganda advantages and gave neighboring countries ample excuse to oppose any overtures to communist coercive rule. The situation triggered its own paradoxes. Finnish politicians could endeavor to achieve a western-type democratic mentality, but at the risk of appearing superficial as soon as zealous national interests take priority and civil liberties are curtailed at the first sign of any threat. Psychologically, the matter is easy to understand. The government was a fragile plant. The existence of the nation took priority over individual suffering. Finland's birth as a nation among nations may simply have been a matter of chance. The founding of the state was largely an ideological process. The republic remained vigilant to the east against barbarism and political piracy. The power of the commissars was in obvious conflict with all propriety: communists, Russians, and Jews were all alien elements, potential sources of infection against which protection was needed.

Such was the self-image and the face of the enemy, painstakingly documented in Max Engman's ambitious book about the vulnerability and tumultuousness of the borderland. No other researcher is as familiar with Finnish-Russian interactions over the past two centuries. In a number of monographs, as well as in



more casual and impressionistic works, Max Engman has studied Finland's relationship to an overwhelmingly powerful Russia – which at times had teetered on the verge of collapse – along with the position of Finns in the Russian economy and the Russian labor market, their position in Saint Petersburg, the capital of the Russian empire, and their role within the Russian army and government bureaucracy. With his knowledge of the peculiarities of the Russian Empire, its character as a despotically governed yet simultaneously unwieldy conglomerate state, he has conducted a comparative study of empires, where the fallen empire formed a significant background for how modern empires – like the Soviet empire – were first able to persist and then be dissolved and the implications such epoch events have had on more recent inheritor states. Finland is actually the only inheritor state after the break-up of the Czar's empire that has succeeded in retaining uninterrupted national sovereignty since gaining independence and that has also been able to preserve its democratic constitution intact. This accomplishment did not occur without enormous human challenges. At times the foundations of the constitution have trembled, as happened during the glory days of the Lapua movement in the early 1930s. That was also when *Finnish* territorial expansion became a theme on the national agenda. And yet the bloody East Karelian uprising was put down in the autumn of 1921, with over 10,000 rebels on the run to Finland.

Max Engman's book focuses on the first three years of independence. They were rather chaotic. The stream of refugees had to be handled and the new national boundary with Soviet Russia needed to be guarded. Both countries had citizens who were left behind in the other country; some had quite simply lived there for most of their lives, in what was no longer a reasonably integrated nation. Another problem involved the prisoners of war resulting from the gains and losses of the First World War, and although the exchange of prisoners, when the time came, did not necessarily solely affect Finnish and Russian citizens or Finnish and Russian national interests directly, the border crossings at the Karelian isthmus often became a natural route even for repatriated citizens of other nationalities or from other countries (Germany, England, France). Such



The bridge across the Sestra River.

traffic was far from easy to maintain under war-like conditions, and enough people in leading positions on both sides found it undesirable because complications would keep arising. Imposition of quarantine and hostage-taking were everyday occurrences in this small-scale cold war that had crystalized at the bridge across the Sestra River, which served as the boundary between Russia and Finland. Smuggling of people and goods was carried out tirelessly; the old nation lived a shadowy existence. In general, the political class in Finland considered the Bolshevik government to be an unpleasant fact that would soon disappear through its own inner decay. Each acknowledgment of its legitimacy would only prolong the suffering of the oppressed. Repression of the extremism and excesses of the revolutionary regime through business ties and expanded human contacts appears to have been a minority position in Finland at this time. Isolation was the primary strategy and intentionally provocative methods were not uncommon.

Max Engman organized his book in thematically grouped case studies, the product of more than thirty years of research on and off. The method of presentation is narrative rather than theoretical and synthesized. The view of history consistently neither glorifies nor condemns; in fact, it is almost ironic that the author allows himself a telling silence personally, rather than indulging in lecturing moralism, a sad practice that has insidiously crept in here and there in present-day modern historical research, especially when abominable systems and individuals are under discussion. Engman is capable of doing this due to the power of his superb mastery of archival sources, newspapers, and a massive library of primary and secondary literature that transforms his narrative into both drama and symphony. The case studies intricately intertwine with one another. Well-known names, such as the Bolshevik leaders Litvinov and Kamenev, sometimes on the wrong track and in custody, sometimes in the middle of real financial negotiations with a foreign counterparty, share space with an unhappy Swiss train dispatcher, Fritz Platten, who seated Lenin and his entourage in the sealed train from Zurich and who in the autumn of 1918 saved Lenin from an assassin's bullet, but who nevertheless was arrested on his way home from a Comintern meeting in Moscow by

the Finnish authorities as “a dangerous person spreading the Bolshevik infection everywhere,” a process not fully in compliance with international law. Emma Goldman, along with 248 other American anarchists (“communists”), was deported from the United States after involvement in violent strikes, placed on a ship whose first port of call was the Finnish harbor town of Hanko, before deportation to Russia was completed. US journalist John Reed remained with the Turku police after trying in vain to get from there to Stockholm stowed away in the coal box of a steamship, with gemstones and political propaganda in his luggage. A throng of people and institutions march past. The thorough investigation Engman devotes to the Danish Red Cross and its Russian director, Doctor Camillo Martiny, inspires respect and understanding for the conditions under which humanitarian work had to be carried out when the entire operation was viewed with general distrust, not just by the country's authorities, but also by its adversaries.

And finally. Max Engman has an eye for the unusual and the obscure. Major Georg Elfvengren was a monarchist of half Finnish and half Polish descent, “whose Finnish was poor and his Swedish even worse, nor were his Russian or French without fault”. He was involved in Kornilov's attempted coup of September 1917, fought alongside the Crimean Tatars against the Bolsheviks, and headed the breakaway Republic of North Ingria, which backed his unsuccessful attack on Petrograd in July and October 1918, carried out in direct disobedience of orders from the Finnish military leadership. Engman does not portray Elfvengren as a lunatic soldier of fortune, but rather as a fairly normal expression of the societal confusion that was the legacy of the senseless murdering of the First World War. Guilty of terrorism; shot in Moscow as a spy.

Among the book's merits are beautifully sketched short biographies, abundant illustrations, and detailed captions. Strikingly, considering the lengthy period during which the book was conceived, almost no repetitions can be found.

**anders björnsson**

This review, in a slightly abridged version, was originally published by *Nordisk Østforum* (Oslo).

## Not with a bang but with a whimper. The Soviet era in world history

**Archie Brown**  
**The Rise and Fall of  
Communism**

London: Vintage  
Books 2010  
(First edition 2009)  
752 pages

**T**WO DECADES AFTER the demise of the Soviet Union, Archie Brown, dean of British Soviet experts, has presented his final account of the history of an ideology in *The Rise and Fall of Communism*. He asserts that the rise of the Soviet state and its emergence in the international arena imbued two metaphorical concepts in international politics with particular meaning: the Iron Curtain and the Cold War. Each of the two metaphors depends upon the other.

Originally, an “iron curtain” was a fire curtain meant to protect the audience if the candles and torches that lit the theater stage should happen to set it afire. According to Brown, the metaphor was first used to designate the line between Bolshevik Russia and the West in 1920 by Ethel Snowden, whom Brown presents only as the wife of a future British Labour Minister (even though it was hardly that position that made her statement politically interesting). A well-known Christian Socialist, Snowden campaigned for women’s suffrage and temperance, and was a peace activist during the First World War. She used the Iron Curtain metaphor in her travelogue, *Through Bolshevik Russia*, which Brown does not bother to mention. Critical of the Soviets, the book did not endear her to her fellow members of the Independent Labour Party.<sup>1</sup> This minor incident is a clear example of how controversial it was throughout the Soviet era to express critical opinions about the first proletarian state.

Swedish readers otherwise became acquainted with the Iron Curtain metaphor through Kremlinologist and lieutenant Per Emil Brusewitz’s account of his motorcycle trip from Petrograd to Tbilisi in 1923 in *Bakom Rysslands järnridå* [Behind the Iron Curtain of Russia]. The metaphor first came into general use to describe the conflict between the communist Soviet Union and the Western democracies thanks to former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill’s 1946 speech in Fulton, Missouri, hometown of US President Harry Truman. Churchill declared that Europe was divided into two blocs separated by an iron curtain, from Stettin on the Baltic Sea to Trieste on the Adriatic. The curtain was moved to Lübeck when Germany was divided into West and East, and the German city of Stettin became the Polish city of Szczecin. The metaphor became even more powerful when on the 13th of August, 1961, the

East German regime built a wall along the border between East and West Berlin, which became symbolic of what its proponents called the socialist society.

Brown posits that the Iron Curtain was effective. It prevented the ideological struggle between the East and West from culminating in a veritable hot war – a war in the usual sense of the word. Brown says the precise date the Cold War began cannot be established. He turns the Cold War into an epochal concept that gave a name to the period of 1945–1991 in international politics. The division of Europe was the single most significant manifestation of the concept. Brown presents the Soviet Union as chiefly responsible for the continued division of Europe rooted in the Bolshevik takeover of power in Russia in 1917: “The Soviet imposition of Communist regimes on the countries of east-central Europe, with no regard for the wishes of their peoples, was the cause of the division of Europe – and that was the most important manifestation of what became known as the Cold War” (p. 178).

What Brown calls “communist systems” were kept alive by the Cold War. Without clearly expressing the thought, he seems to assign the same meaning to the Cold War concept as the Soviets had done: a manifestation of the Western struggle against the Soviet Union. Brown suggests that the omnipresent threat from an outside enemy was used to justify an extremely authoritarian and intermittently totalitarian government. He adds that since dissident opinions were painted as treason against the socialist fatherland and because there was an outside threat, the powers that be could justify censorship and restrictions on the freedom to travel abroad. His general conclusion is that communist systems cannot survive close contacts with more prosperous democratic countries or international détente.

**OFFICIAL SOVIET TERMINOLOGY** treated the Cold War as the Western world’s economic and ideological war against socialism in general and the Soviet Union in particular. The peace-loving Soviet Union was not waging any war. The communist state was guided by the doctrine of “peaceful coexistence” (*mirnoe sotsusjtjestvovanie*). However, the doctrine that had become official policy under Nikita Khrushchev’s rule (1953–1964) maintained the thesis of the necessity and inevitability of the socialist world revolution. The Iron Curtain was needed to protect the worker’s paradise from revanchist West Germans in particular and Western capitalists in general, but Soviet military power was employed only in the name of proletarian internationalism to prevent established socialist states like Hungary (1956) and Czechoslovakia (1968), and the recently converted Afghanistan (1979), from abandoning socialism and leaving the Soviet camp by slipping under the Iron Curtain. States allied with the United States were not subjected to Soviet military intervention.

Both the Suez and Hungary crises of 1956 were overcome under the banner of peaceful coexistence. The United States forced France and the United Kingdom to abandon their claims to global political power, and saved friend of the Soviet Union Egypt from

collapse, while the Soviet Union was left unmolested to quash the Hungarian revolution. Thereafter, the Soviet Union opened its doors to influences from the democratic world. Western social sciences were introduced and an academic exchange program with the United States began. Alexander Yakovlev was one of the first Soviet exchange students. Born in 1923, Yakovlev was badly wounded and disabled in World War II, rose through the ranks of the Communist Party, became a member of the Central Committee, attended Khrushchev’s de-Stalinization speech on February 23, 1956, and studied history at Columbia University in New York from 1958 to 1959. He was the Soviet Union’s ambassador to Canada for 10 years from 1973 to 1983. In 1985, he was one of Mikhail Gorbachev’s closest advisors. In 1987 he became a member of the governing Politburo.

Yakovlev’s advancement gave a person intimately familiar with the workings of the mass media and their impact on political life and social development in the democratic states of the United States and Canada critical influence over developments in the Soviet Union. As interpreted by Yakovlev, glasnost now encompassed the concept of freedom of speech in the sense that it had in the democratic West.

Brown devotes the requisite attention to Yakovlev’s efforts to pull down the Iron Curtain. He notes that Yakovlev was sent to Canada as the Soviet ambassador under Brezhnev but does not suggest that it was precisely this breach in the Iron Curtain opened by Khrushchev, when he let people like Yakovlev get to know the West from the inside, that ultimately caused it to rust and crumble from the Soviet side. Loren Graham, American historian of ideas and a Soviet expert, was a classmate of Yakovlev’s during his year at Columbia and stayed in touch with him until his death in 2005. In his memoirs, Graham pithily sums up Yakovlev and his contribution: “He helped change history.”<sup>2</sup>

Brown’s thesis is that hardliners in the Soviet leadership, including the military, profited from the tensions of the Cold War. Brown points out that isolation prevented communist societies from evolving into viable alternatives to the West and, thus, from gaining legitimacy among the non-Russian peoples inside and outside the Soviet Union.

Until Gorbachev was appointed General Secretary in 1985, the Soviet leader-



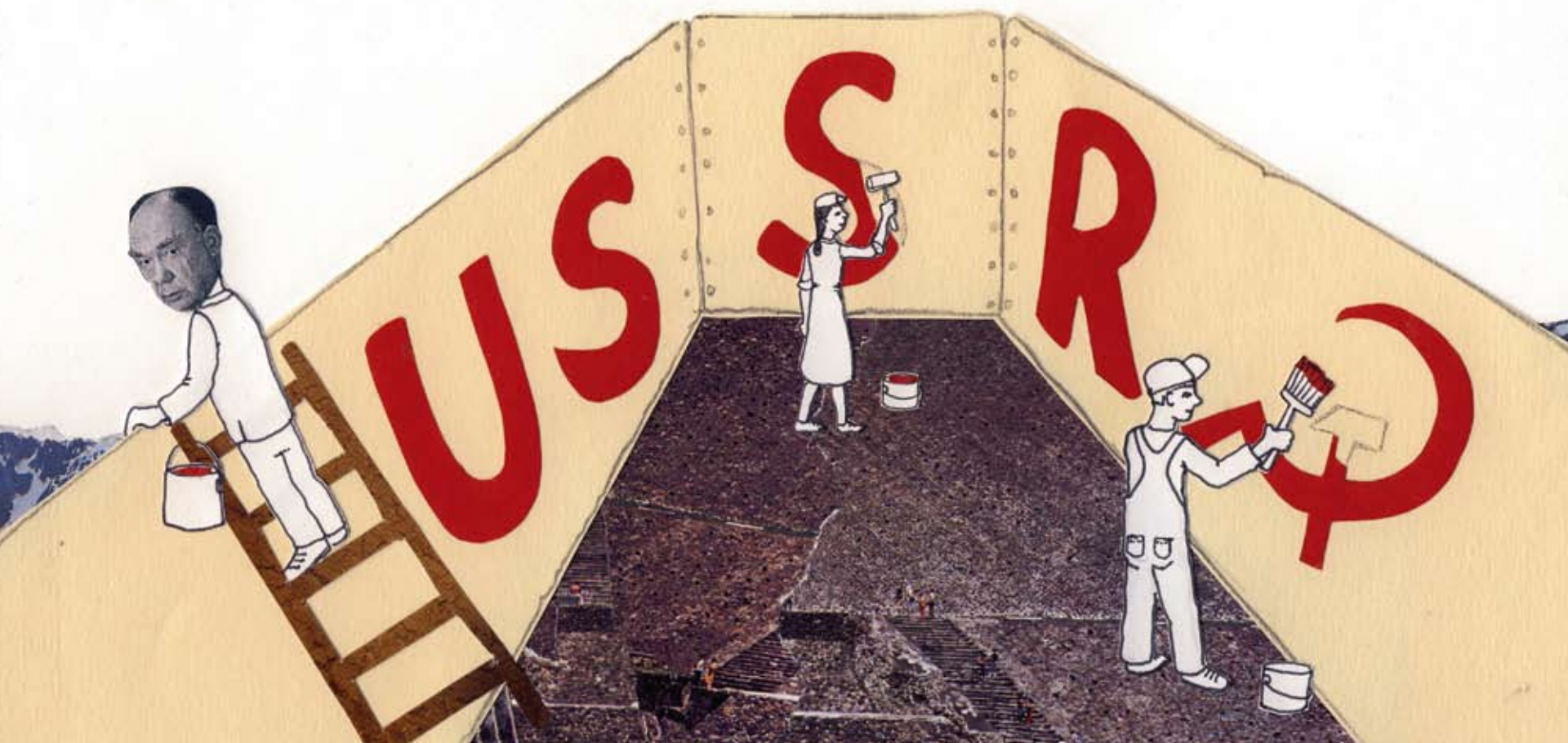


ILLUSTRATION: RAGNI SVENSSON

ship gave their allies in the Eastern Bloc the impression that there really was a military threat from the West. Chief of the Soviet General Staff, Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov, perceived US President Ronald Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) as a military mobilization of the kind whose outcome is war. He described the rise of Solidarity in Poland as part and parcel of the strategy underlying SDI, and cited as an argument Soviet Marshal Boris Shaposhnikov's book *The Brain of the Army* from the interwar period in which Shaposhnikov posited that large-scale mobilization is an immediate preparation for military attack.<sup>3</sup> Brown does not delve into this purely military line of argument, although he does mention the internal ideological antagonisms toward Gorbachev's reform policies.

**THE COLD WAR** threat scenario and relative isolation of the Soviet Union were meant to prevent, and did for decades, the serpent of democracy from slithering into the Soviet paradise, where the citizenry lived in happy ignorance of the rest of the world. The Cold War was an Elysian era for Russia. But when Columbia University allowed Alexander Yakovlev to taste the fruit of knowledge, the fall was made ready. Thirty years later, Gorbachev ate of the delectable

apple, and Paradise was lost when the Berlin Wall was breached in November 1989. The people of the communist states were forced to face the world.

Loren Graham has noted that it took a couple of decades, including the sojourn as Soviet ambassador in Ottawa, before Yakovlev understood his mission. While he was certainly impressed by the political freedom and flourishing market economies in the two North American societies, and although he was already known by 1972 for his criticism of Russian nationalism and chauvinism, Yakovlev still took umbrage at the anti-Soviet tone of North American Sovietology. For this reason, in his capacity as a Soviet expert on the United States, he wrote scathingly critical books about that country. He explained why:

**[B]eing an impulsive man, when I read newspapers and books criticizing my country, well, this hurt me deeply. For example, I know that I am crippled. But when people every day tell me, "You are crippled, you are crippled", I get furious. And then I answer back: "You are crippled! You yourself are the fool!"<sup>4</sup>**

Most people, including politicians and intellectuals, are emotional beings who, for good or ill, identify with the state in which they were born and reared. It was not the American Kremlinologists' critical analyses of the Soviet Union that made Yakovlev a communist apostate, but rather his personal analysis of why the United States and Canada were better societies than the Soviet. Under the banner of the new buzzwords glasnost and perestroika, Yakovlev carried the fruit

of knowledge to the Soviet paradise. His contribution was made possible by a number of well-meaning but misdirected attempts at reform on the part of God – that is to say, the Party.

During the Brezhnev epoch (1964–1982), Yuri Andropov was Director of the Russian Committee for State Security. He updated the KGB's repertoire in two ways. Firstly, Andropov introduced political psychiatry as a means of dealing with open opposition. Domestic social critics who took an anti-regime stance were given diagnoses like "suffering from reformist delusions" or "insidious schizophrenia" and locked up in mental hospitals. The most famous examples were geneticist Zhores Medvedev and General Piotr Goncharenko.

Secondly, Andropov put sociology at the service of the KGB. Social policy was to be based on survey studies of the population's attitudes and analyses in the form of time/budget studies of its behavior. To this was added faith in the national computer system for central control of the planned economy.<sup>5</sup> All of this was distilled in the phrase "the scientific/technical revolution", which under its Russian acronym NTR was the word of the day in the Party's platform documents of the time, but Brown makes no mention of this. He is a good

## Continued. The Soviet era in world history

historical storyteller and scholarly analyst, but essentially neglects to look at the communist system from a sociological perspective. In so doing, he overlooks this key dimension in its desperate fight for its existence: faith in the big computer as savior. For that matter, the death struggle was very real and far from merely abstract. The leaders, those meant to point the way, were dropping like flies.

**LEONID BREZHNEV** WAS in dire physical and emotional condition when he was led up to Lenin's mausoleum on the anniversary of the Revolution on November 7, 1982, in the bitter cold. He died just a couple of days later. Andropov was already terminally ill when appointed Brezhnev's successor and died in February 1984. During his brief time in power, he was able to put "scientific government" into practice only in the area of alcohol policy. Citizens were forbidden to come drunk to work and to run around town during working hours in the always arduous and time-consuming hunt for consumer goods. Sobriety and attendance checks were implemented in workplaces. But a cheap vodka of decent quality – popularly known as Andropovka – was available for use during non-working hours.

Andropov was followed by an interregnum of just over a year under the likewise terminally ill Konstantin Chernenko. Once Chernenko had drawn his last emphysemic breath, Gorbachev was appointed General Secretary of the Communist Party on March 11, 1985. He took up – but profoundly modified – Andropov's line. Political psychiatry was abolished and dissenters were accepted in their roles as social critics. Andrei Sakharov, father of the Soviet hydrogen bomb, peace activist, and champion of human rights, could leave his enforced exile in the closed city of Gorky, return to Moscow, and appear before the public with his criticism and suggestions for reform. This was part of the policy called glasnost. Using people like Sakharov as examples, Brown manages to show that politics in the single-party communist dictatorship become manifest in entirely different forms than under democracy. He makes Sakharov into one of the most important *politicians* in the story of the Soviet Union's path toward the fall.

When people like Yakovlev, Sakharov and other like-minded individuals were given influence in the name of glasnost over developments in the unintended phase-out of the Soviet Union, faith in the big central computer was definitively abandoned in favor of the law of supply and demand. The planned economy would be succeeded by the (illusory) socialist market economy. This was the central import of the policy called perestroika. The third novel element was called "new thinking", the content of which was not only that peaceful coexistence must be succeeded by global cooperation. A contributing factor behind the launch of the new doctrine was the understanding that environmental problems did not respect national borders, and made it necessary for the socialist and capitalist camps to merge into a new, higher fellowship of the noosphere.

The theory of the noosphere that Gorbachev made his own, and laid as the ideological foundation of his plan for an international "Green Cross" for the conservation of the natural environment, as a prerequisite for continued human life, had been devised by Soviet mineralogist and geochemist Vladimir Vernadsky, building on the philosophical theory of the French theologian Teilhard de Chardin. According to this theory, human existence was built on processes in three levels: the geosphere or matter, the biosphere or physical life, and the noosphere or the sphere of human thought and reason. In a 1990 speech, Gorbachev proclaimed that under his leadership humanity had entered the noosphere – the age of reason.

Like virtually all social scientists and historians who have written about the Soviet Union under Gorbachev, Brown also overlooks this aspect of the story. The explanation is simple. As social researchers and as ordinary people, we can only see what we can name. One

might say that it takes a certain liveliness of imagination to be able to discern a French priest as the source of inspiration behind the policies of the last Soviet leader. One cannot blame Brown for having missed this fact.

Obviously, Gorbachev and his colleagues supposed that the entry into the age of the noosphere would take place under the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, with the General Secretary himself in the vanguard. Gorbachev held what cannot be called other than a naïve belief in the Soviet Union. He seems to have believed that all the various peoples of the multinational empire both loved each other and the state as such.

However, several centrifugal movements were the outcome of encouraging people to express themselves freely and organize grass roots social movements, to take responsibility for the quality of the goods they produced and ensure they found consumers for those goods, along with the opening toward the capitalist world.

**BROWN EXPLAINS HOW** various peoples – with the Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians leading the way – began to demand political autonomy; how republics began, following Estonia's example, to draft plans for market economic reforms in their own territories; and how so many people under the banner of freedom of information found that the capitalist Western world worked better than the Soviet Union. The movements on the three levels of politics, economics, and ideology were intertwined. The entire social system became dynamic. The stagnated "actually existing socialism" became an "actually existing cybernetic system". Finally, the solution to the Soviet problems seemed to some actors to be to leave the Soviet Union. Loyalty was already a thing of the past and voice gave way to exit. In early 1988, popular fronts for perestroika arose in the three Baltic Soviet Republics. Before the year was out, they had become popular fronts for sovereignty.

The upheaval under Gorbachev was an event of the same magnitude as the Protestant Reformation in Christianity. This dimension of late Soviet history has also eluded Brown probably because it seems to a sober western European scholar of communism as absurd as the talk about the noosphere. However, Alexander Yakovlev himself formulated this thesis in a speech at the University of California at Berkeley on February 22, 1993:

This posture was also based on the assumption that perestroika is not only to solve the problems of the economy, political system, or foreign policy, but also it was assumed that perestroika could function as a sort of socialist Protestantism, without which perestroika would not have historical prospects. We assumed that perestroika not only needed this sort of reformation but as a matter of fact it started this reformation and it was a stimulus to its development. Next, perestroika's central goal was democracy. It was

precisely a central goal, not a tactical one. It was seen as a strategic task, which stemmed from the understanding that it is precisely the lack of a democratic beginning that is the source of all the difficulties, all the troubles, and all the problems that we have in the country. Even the introduction of the market economy was considered not a goal in itself but as a kind of guarantee for the establishment of democracy.<sup>6</sup>

Brown provides a fine and detailed description of the rise and fall of communism but does not avail himself of the Hegelian rhetorical device of referring to the vagaries of history to explain the fall. For this reason, I will complete Brown's account with an ironic twist of the arguments. Mikhail Gorbachev's operation was successful, but the patient died. The Soviet era in world history ended, not with a bang but a whimper. ❌

kristian gerner

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## Maturity and blindness. Germany-Europe-America

German author Christa Wolf spent the 1992-1993 academic year in a university ghetto on the American west coast, or at least she does in her novel, *Stadt der Engel oder The Overcoat of Dr. Freud* (2010). During this period she is reminded by fax from Berlin of her short-lived association with the East German security service. And she pokes around in the memory of reading through her own Stasi files, where she finds herself informed on by people close to her, and images pop up of her family constantly under surveillance.

Nevertheless, she has difficulty – then and now – coming to terms with the fall of this state, without caring for the regime. She could not be part of the final rupture with the old system, since she was a patient in a cardiac clinic during the critical days, but she finds comfort in the circumstance that no soldiers in the “people’s army” opened fire on their own people. It became an utterly peaceful uprising. And the heart held out, whereas the spirit suffered.

**In Los Angeles**, she, the author of the novel, encounters material excess, and it is almost always hard to resist. Of course she also sees the beggars, the contrasts. In the flashbacks, the contrasts are rarely stark. Christa Wolf’s own torments recur, but they can hardly be generalized. And she is made accountable for racism and hooliganism in the “new” German federal states. The author allows a fictional European philosopher to cogitate about whether the price of affluence is a loss of maturity.

The subject here is, of course, the United States.

Her countryman (of a sort) Manfred Henningsen, a professor at the University of Hawaii in Honolulu since 1970, addresses the European inability to understand the complexities of American society in his book *Der Mythos Amerika*

(2009). He uses the German socialist diaspora as an example. These disappointed social subverters expected to be able to carry out in North America what they had failed or been forbidden to do in their homeland. But they lacked the will to assimilate. They continued to speak and write in German. They ended their meetings singing *La Marseillaise*. They failed to comprehend that farmers and artisans had a freer position in American society than in many European societies, and they condemned the populism of ordinary people in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century as a petty bourgeois political movement, instead of allying themselves with it.

Should one thus be surprised, asks Henningsen, that a European-style Left has found it difficult to put down roots

in the United States? The problem in the land of the future has been poverty, hardly landlessness. Nor did the immigrant European or German, disadvantaged or persecuted in his native country, see an ally in the black population of America. This is striking, because, as Henningsen says, racism was a more conspicuous and threatening element in American society than in German society, for example, until Hitler’s rise to power. Politically accepted lynch mobs were an American (and East European) phenomenon, not a (West) European one.

**Slowly but surely**, America managed to liberate itself from this legacy and, unlike Europe, avoid genocide – against the blacks. The extermina-

tion of the indigenous cultures is partly another matter: against them, a war had been waged. Here one can talk about a maturity gain, without the society having necessarily become more peaceful (in terms of crime rates and the executions of capital punishment) or fairer (if we think of unequal access to health care). To what extent the Europe of ethnic conflicts has matured since 1990 – and now we are not focusing primarily on the former GDR – remains an open question.

Is social blindness something universal? Is the one standing next to you always more dangerous than the one far removed? Perhaps. ❌



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