

A quarterly scholarly journal and news magazine. September 2011. Vol IV:3  
From the Centre for Baltic and East European Studies (CBEES)  
Södertörn University, Stockholm

conference  
reports

# BALTIC WORLDS

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In Joseph Roth Land  
The project of Galicia

Karl Schlögel on  
displaced persons  
– Russia Abroad

Travels through  
a Russia in  
stagnation

## PUZZLING PATTERNS OF EUROPE

The limited effect of borders



book reviews

ILLUSTRATION: MOA THELANDER

BATTLE BEFORE POLTAVA / FEUDALISM & MODERNIZATION / LIFE-STORIES / DDR YOUNGSTERS REMEMBER

## Moa Thelander, born 1985

She feels like an artist, not an illustrator, but finds it very rewarding to do illustrations, since it involves dedicating herself to things she doesn't address in her own art.

Her "home" institution is Bergen National Academy of the Arts in Norway. She spent last year at the Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm, and is now commencing the third year of her bachelor's degree program.

That Moa Thelander sought an education in the arts was more or less a given. She grew up in an artistic home – devoting herself to art, but also to writing, has been the obvious choice for a long time.

Writing is important – her own and others'. For her there is no one single artistic exemplar, it could easily be language and literature that serve as inspiration as she works with her art; authors she would mention in this context are Sara Lidman and Djuna Barnes. Otherwise she is reading a lot of art theory at the moment, an active reading and searching for things that may be useful in her own artistic process.

As an artist, Moa Thelander uses many different forms of expression – preferably at the same time – currently including: sculpture, photography, text, and video. Not painting however; she doesn't see painting as her language.

When she does illustrations for Baltic Worlds, a different work method comes into play. She has a systematic approach and always starts with a concentrated reading of the text, yet tries not to ponder too much, but rather starts from the first impression, the first image that pops up, and then tries to refine it. Then things goes quickly, when she knows what she wants to convey.



In addition to her education in the arts, she thinks a lot about the future – to a great degree, deciding what to do involves the kind of life one wants to live.

To make a living from art is difficult. Moa Thelander says that it is very much (too much) about networking, marketing, and the now so-cherished entrepreneurial thinking.

Perhaps it is possible to buy time for art via other ways of earning money, such as working at a second-hand bookshop, as she is doing now. The essential thing is to find a space for one's own art, but she does not yet know what this space should look like, if she is to feel both safe and free. ✖

**MARIELOUISE SAMUELSSON**

Note: Moa Thelander has previously done illustrations for Baltic Worlds as Moa Franzén.

## Wikipedia warnings

“It is therefore striking that the history professor in Zubov's team who wrote on the Bolshevik terror during the Civil War of 1918-1921 referred to a newspaper published in Edinburgh in 1923. And Professor Zubov's defense of this historian's reference merely confirmed my first impression that neither of them had even consulted the source for their table.”

**Lennart Samuelson**  
comments on Andrei Zubov's  
comment on his review on  
[www.balticworlds.com](http://www.balticworlds.com).

## Correction

Last issue's cover artist Ragni Svenson was regrettably not mentioned by name.

Readers have made us aware of the dangers of using Wikipedia as an authoritative source of information and knowledge. We have, with a few exceptions, refrained from doing so when it comes to empirical evidence. If there is correct information on Wikipedia, it can always be found somewhere else. If the information is only available on Wikipedia, one cannot be sure it is correct.

We have not been persuaded that (as is occasionally claimed in the international press) Wikipedia is self-correcting; there are examples to the contrary. Nor do we maintain that other literature, online or in printed form, would, generally speaking, be more reliable. It is, however, subjected to a more exacting scrutiny, for example via reviews, but also public debates and controversies. This makes it easier to avoid inferior and unusable literature.

**WEB PUBLISHING** that is not quality-controlled is generally risky. Ideological elements seem to be more prominent here than in traditional book and magazine publishing, where there is a commercial motive for strict objectivity. Freedom of publication and free access must be dealt with wisely, for example when it comes to indicating primary sources on the Internet.

What we are talking about here is primarily the role of Wikipedia in the wide realm of scientific references. But this applies likewise to serious journalism. Wikipedia should be used primarily as a search engine, where it without question can be extremely useful. But it should not be used as evidence. ✖

**THE EDITORS**

## Modernization is much needed in Russia

Today, twenty years after the transition in Russia, there is a polarization between regions and between people.

This process is noted by Natalia Zubarevich, Department of Geography, Moscow State University, who is keynote speaker at Baltic Worlds Annual Roundtable, "Market Reform and Socio-Economic Change in Russia", October 6.

Via telephone from Moscow she says:

"To start business is difficult everywhere in Russia, but in Moscow there are more job opportunities than else-

where. At the same time you find the greatest number of poor in Moscow, more than one million people. Also you find large differences in income distribution, a factor of 32 and more. Here you find the richest and the poorest."

She argues that one reason for this development is that growth was based for many years on the export of raw materials. Profits were rarely invested in manufacturing.

To counter polarization between regions and people, the state has in-

troduced a compensatory tax system. Resources are redistributed from rich regions to poor so that people will remain there and receive social services. In the 2000s, this tax policy has meant that incomes have increased, and that the poverty rate has decreased. On the other hand, the tax policy, according to Zubarevich, has not given the regions an incentive to try to modernize and participate in socio-economic development: "Mobility is low – social, economic, institutional, indeed, mobility

at every level. There is a feeling of being stuck and not being able to change one's situation. People are focused on survival. Putin and the government say they will take care of people, that everyone should be able to live well. This makes many people take it easy and assume that the state will take care of all problems," says Zubarevich. ✖

Note: Read more about the Baltic Worlds Roundtable on the website.

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

Contact BW at bw.editor@sh.se.

Subscription is free. More information at www.balticworlds.com.

# The shrill fear



he better people feel, the more threatened they think they are”, wrote German Scandina-  
vianist Bernd Henningsen in a newspaper commentary on Midsummer Eve. “In this sense, it doesn’t matter how real the threat at hand is.” (*Der Tagesspiegel*, 2011-07-24) He was alluding to the Danish-German

border war that was looming in the spring and early summer, but also to the inflated Danish self-image – be it self-delusional or not – as the happiest people in the world, and now also one of the most threatened.

The issue is the concern of leading Danish politicians that unwanted elements, exploiting Schengen Agreement provisions on free movement, will enter by land from Germany or by sea or bridge from Sweden to a Denmark that in the eyes of the world is becoming, to an increasing degree, a xenophobic country. One has visions of bands of robbers from Poland, Latvia and Estonia who “abuse” the EU membership of their own countries in order to terrorize the encircled, innocent people of the Sound. For this reason, Danish Customs is hiring more people, and border controls are being tightened by the use of surveillance cameras.

TRAFFICKING IS A REAL problem (even if “sexual abuse” seems not to be a particularly burning topic in Denmark), but the stories of Eastern European gangs have often proved to be myths, legends that have spread far and wide. Sometimes foreign organized crime takes trucks packed with the furniture from an entire home and disappears eastward in a dark, inaccessible direction – strangely enough they are never caught on the way out there. Sometimes foreigners come and take jobs away from reasonably prosperous Western Europeans, who themselves do not want the worst jobs, and who, moreover, are in need of imported skilled workers, for example doctors, because they have not ensured (that is, have not seen themselves as able to afford) that a sufficient number are trained and educated at institutions in Denmark.

Western European banks that create financial oligopolies, with their attendant economic starvation cures, and tourists who live well off the reality of the economic crisis in certain Eastern European countries do not perceive themselves as immoral in any way, let alone, of course, criminal. And, obviously, when there are imbalances things are often measured by different yardsticks. Universal justice does not exist. International tribunals always cage in villains of a certain sort,

a certain nationality. The international community is a fellowship of the winners.

Still, the Danes can hardly be considered losers. They were among the most willing in the war against Libya – to be sure, perhaps not a self-evident triumph. (Germany declined.) For the last few years, a Dane has been Secretary General of NATO. (And many Danes have fallen in Afghanistan.) The threat to national sovereignty needs not be an imagined one – but this predicament is one Denmark shares with other countries that have joined the European Union. (Though certain people say, with some justification, that by EU as well as by NATO membership, Danes have received guarantees of national sovereignty.)

SO THEN: NEW imbalances in a world where differences tend to be filed down – where every major airport looks the same, where it is permissible that coffee tastes the same in all world cities, where all boys have to play football. Against leveling, there are both good arguments and a potential for resistance. Whoever it is that actualizes this potential will then prove decisive. All four “major” Nordic countries have had populist parties in their parliaments since 2010 – not yet in their governments. None of these parties, with the possible exception of the Swedish one, has any kinship with earlier fascist tendencies in Europe.

So they do not threaten parliamentary democracy, they do not assault the rule of law, they can also walk the streets safely. In a country like Sweden, it is not extreme but mainstream politicians who are murdered. Indeed, what is their concern, their shrill fear? ❌

ILLUSTRATION: KARIN SUNVISSON



BY ANDERS HAMMARLUND  
ILLUSTRATION RAGNI SVENSSON

# Inventing Galicia

The province that became a project



Josef Redlich, portrait by Emil Orlik, 1918.

**AUGUST 1914.** Europe is at war. Josef Redlich, politician, historian, and professor of public law in Vienna, wants to follow events close at hand in what is expected to be a swift operation against intransigent Russia. He takes the train east to the village of Dukla at the foot of the Carpathians. In a pocket-sized notebook, which by chance ends up being

preserved for posterity, he records his impressions of Galicia.

The beautiful but somewhat dilapidated palace of Polish Count Męciński in Dukla now serves as a press office and officer's mess. Eight days before the outbreak of war, the Count ignored warnings and traveled to inspect his estates on the other side of the Russian border and was unable to return.

Now he sits in Stockholm, penniless.

Dukla must rely on more or less reliable telegrams about the progress of the war. Redlich wants to get closer to the still relatively fluid front and accepts at once when invited on August 22 to accompany one Colonel Hoen to supreme command headquarters in Przemyśl:

I immediately went and packed a bag, took the loaded revolver and dashed over to the commander: in a few minutes we are ready for departure. I ride with the colonel in Director Belletz's car, who drives brilliantly. [...] Our trip through the slowly falling summer night was glorious. The road, a true mountain road after Jassenin, crosses the heights between Jasło and Przemyśl to the San valley, then to Przemyśl through mainly

poor villages. At once we see the many lights of the large fortress city in the distance, but progress necessarily becomes slower as one guard post after another calls us over; a guard officer stands at the entrance to the fortress; we smell all the timber felled in the forests alongside the road – clearings to create fields of fire for the advanced artillery – and then another outpost, we drive down a suburban street, then across a beautiful bridge to the other side of the San, where we hear at the city gendarmerie that the supreme command has been set up in the barracks of the 45<sup>th</sup> infantry regiment. [...] Broad-shouldered and dignified royal footmen take our coats, I open the door, see the huge, pure white and simple mess, the horseshoe-shaped table with all the officers surrounding General Conrad von Hötzendorf, who sits in the middle. I go to the right, Hoen to the left, Conrad sees me, jumps up, takes my arm and says: "Well now, this is a surprise, I am truly delighted to see you here." He then turns to [German] General von Freytag-Loringhoven sitting next to him and introduces me, saying, "This is Professor Redlich, one of our most important parliamentarians and scholars, now a volunteer military aide at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs". Now I must take my seat to the right of the chief of staff and Baron Conrad went so far as to wave down one of the doughty royal footmen – throughout the headquarters, the Court Treasury is providing for the sustenance of high-ranking officers – to serve me the evening meal. Three dishes, an excellent pilsner on tap, white and red wine are laid out before me.

Redlich sounds out the Austrian chief of staff Hötzendorf. There was then still the shimmer of heroism about the war; the officers were gentlemen in re-

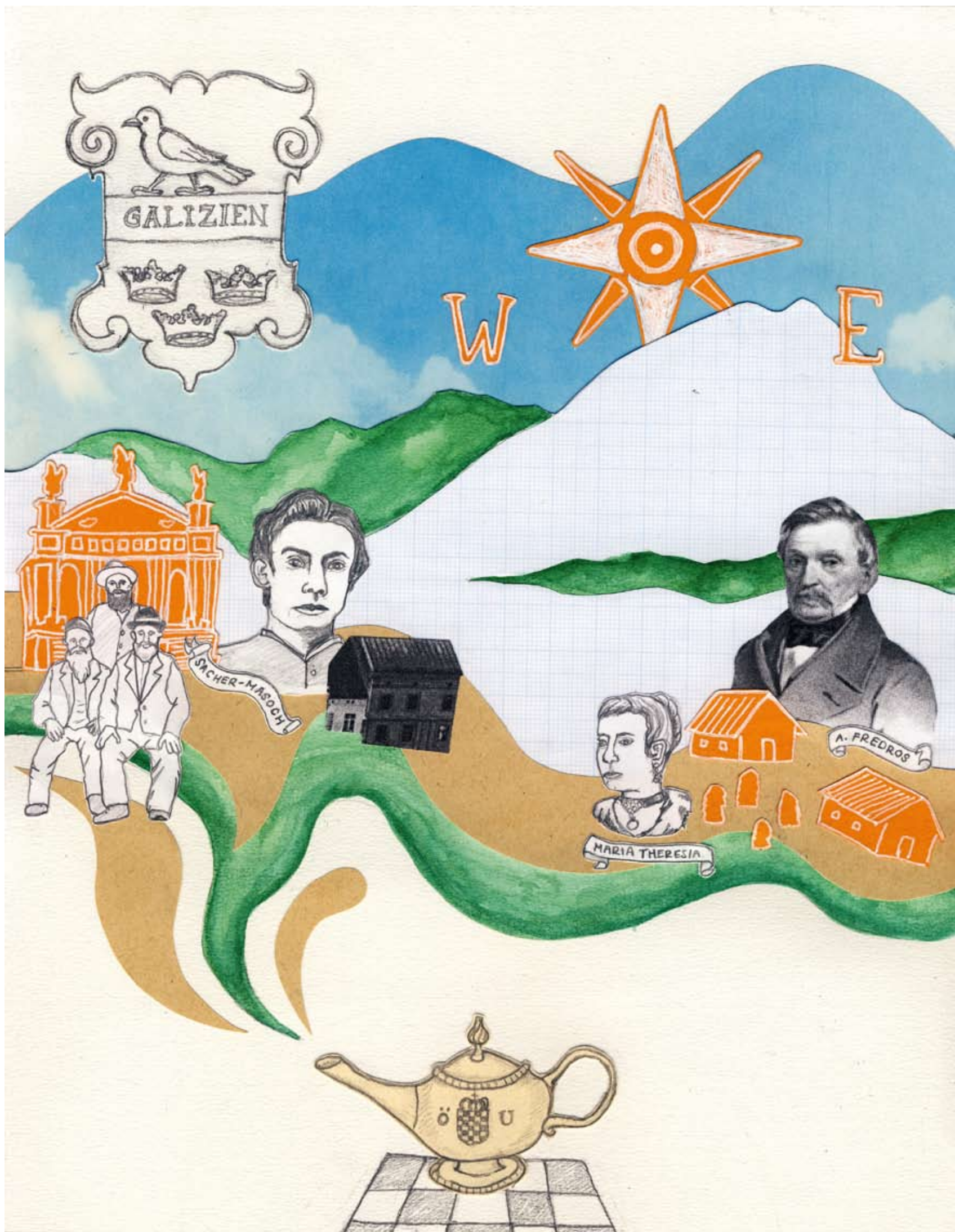
splendent uniforms, strategy a theoretical game. In a few efficient operations, the well-organized Imperial army would naturally be able to vanquish the Russian army, which while numerically superior consisted mainly of illiterate peasants! But how exactly was this to be accomplished? One can imagine this as the topic of discussion among the war correspondents seated at the picnic tables in Count Męciński's overgrown park. Now Redlich is sitting at the table with the supreme commander, but his statements are disturbingly vague and hardly inspiring of confidence:

Conrad repeatedly talks to me about the importance of luck to a field commander: he praises Auffenburg, whom I had imagined was a skilled unit commander, about which he replied: "Oh no, he is a good general staff officer, but, and this is more important, he is always lucky in everything he takes on." "You understand", he said, "my dear friend, the next four to six weeks will determine my life: you may see me again in some peaceful alpine valley, in a loden jacket, a man who has retired. Oh, everything depends on luck. It is a horribly difficult task. You must now almost cross your fingers." As soon as I touched upon the conditions for a victory, he said deprecatingly, "Just don't shout it out, don't talk about it." About the actual operations, he told me in so many words that the truly decisive events would take place in the next week or two.

**Fatalism.** Hötzendorf confides in Redlich that he is distraught, even paralyzed with dread in the face of his mission. The army is under-financed and far too poorly armed. He is being forced to put the lives of hundreds of thousands of conscripts at stake in some kind of poker game. To start with, one can bluff one's way forward with bold thrusts:

**A battle front is a border that is recognized by no one. An inner border can also become a front.**







Monday the 24<sup>th</sup> [. . .] A telegram arrives in the afternoon, notifying us that we have occupied Łysa Góra east of Weichsel and pushed back two Russian army corps at Kraśnik. The local Jews immediately gather and pay resounding homage to the colonel, who was fetched from the taroc game in the park. The Jews sing a ringing, utterly Oriental Imperial hymn, the children sing folk hymns, old men in kaftans dance a sort of victory *kolo*.

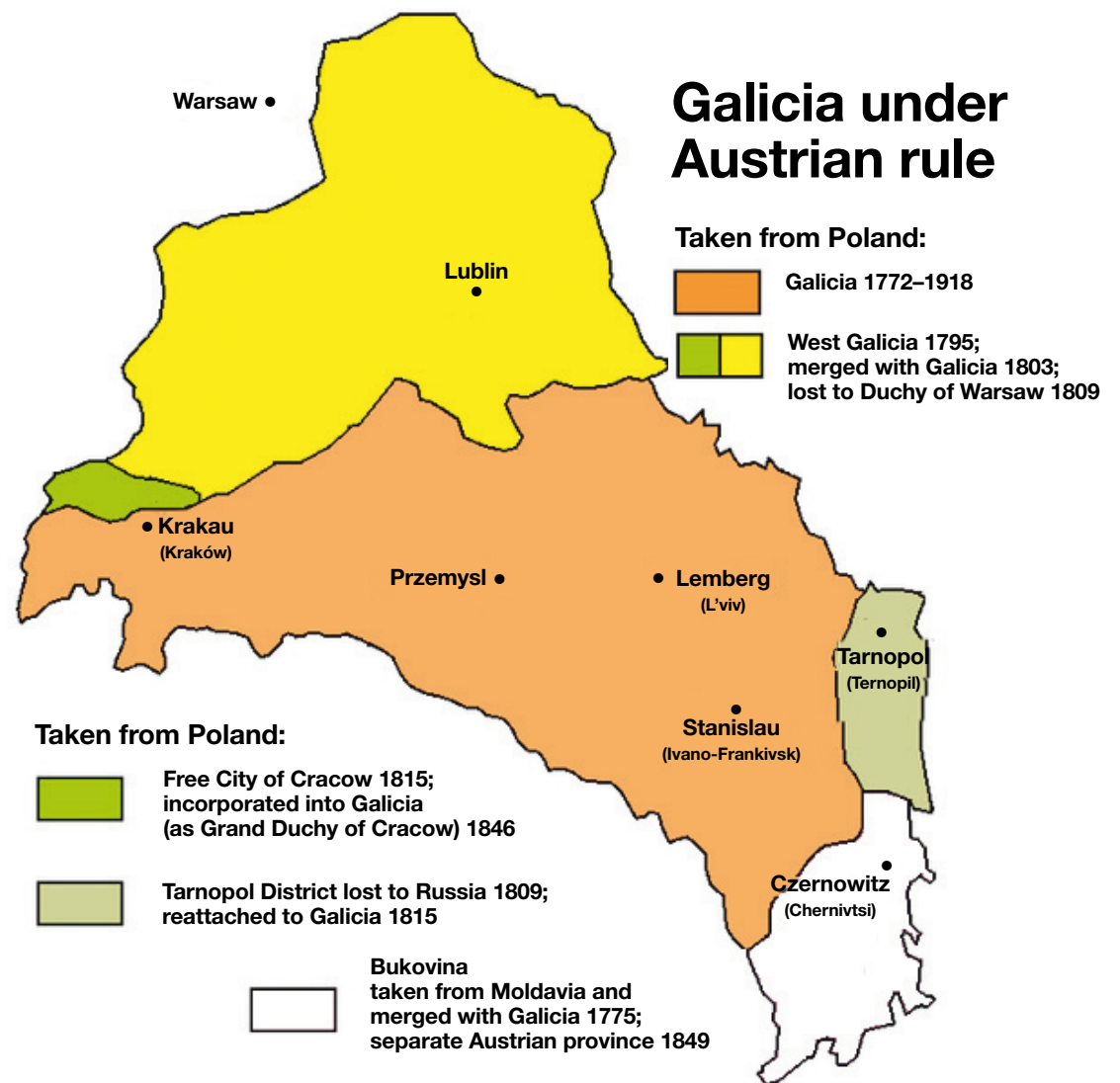
The Hasidic Jews rightfully fear a Russian occupation, which would bring pogroms and lawlessness down upon them. A victory for the armies of Franz Josef is the only option. But the situation in Galicia shifts rapidly. Only a few days later, it becomes difficult for reporters to get any reliable information about the situation at the Russian border. On August 27, Redlich writes:

A day of incredible tension! Yesterday evening, Colonel Hoen was notified by telephone from Przemyśl that the Russians were on full offensive and that battles are being fought along the entire line from Złoczów to Żółkiew. Today, all journalistic work has been put aside: the correspondents and all of us, officers included, are on edge. Most can hardly conceal the worry they feel deep inside. The Jews, who have heard about the great battle, have been praying for victory all day long in the synagogue. The few members of the local Polish intelligentsia are remaining very passive.

## HISTORY AND FANTASY

As I read the introductory chapter of American historian Larry Wolff's book *The Idea of Galicia: History and Fantasy in Habsburg Political Culture* (Stanford 2010), I am reminded of Josef Redlich's vivid depiction of the late summer days of 1914. What Redlich describes is the beginning of the end of a political project – Galicia – that began in 1772 and soon became an important element in the effort to legitimize the seemingly anachronistic existence of the Habsburg monarchy in modern Europe.

It was precisely the history and possible survival of the Habsburg monarchy that was the liberal Josef Redlich's central preoccupation as a scholar and politician. In 1911–1913, he was one of the driving forces in the Imperial commission for administrative reform appointed to study how the administrative structure of the realm could be modernized, in part to better meet the demands of an ethnically diverse population. As a rationalist cultural scholar and advocate of modernization, Redlich was to a certain extent a steward of the Austrian tradition known as Josephinism (*Josephinismus*), after the reformist Holy Roman Emperor Joseph II, although Redlich's pragmatic and decentralist approach also implied criticism of the excessive bureaucratism of the Austrian system. He wanted to study realities, which was why he had gone off to the Galician theater. But it is often clear in his notes from 1914 how ingrained Viennese *notions* and clichés about



The map above shows conquests made by Austria (and one temporary loss), from the first partition of Poland to the establishment of a sovereign Polish republic.

this special part of the country, despite everything, permeate his objective account.

Larry Wolff's book is about these *notions*, about how an arbitrarily defined region was incorporated into a larger political narrative that was about reason and progress on the surface but encompassed strongly irrational and regressive elements. It is also about how these in truth hardly realistic notions and ideas actually produce political and cultural realities and acts. The book is based on a deep understanding of the political history of the area, but also a staggeringly broad reading of fiction, in several languages, in which the ideas of Galicia were produced, shaped, and reproduced over 150 years.

**Since it will** soon be a hundred years since this Galicia ceased to exist as a political and administrative unit, let us orient ourselves in time and space. The apocalypse of the old Poland began in 1772 with the first partition. The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which had been the dominant power in Eastern Europe since the Late Middle Ages but had been declining since the 17<sup>th</sup> century, was dissolved by the neighboring states of Prussia, Russia, and Austria. Austria was apportioned the southeastern part, an area that extended along the northern side of the Carpathians, where it bordered on the Hungarian part of the monarchy (now Slovakia). In the northwest, the border was partially along the Vistula, but the annexed area otherwise had no distinct historical or geographical borders. It was thus the product of negotiations, a

purely geopolitical and cartographical invention.

What was Austria supposed to do with this territory? People were asking that question in Austrian government circles. Empress Maria Theresa was unenthusiastic about the acquisition, saying: "*Ce mot de partage me répugne*" ("the word partition is repugnant to me"). Participating in the "division" of booty like one more political robber baron seemed to her unworthy of an apostolic monarch, but the matter had to be accepted to maintain the balance of power; Prussia and Russia would otherwise become uncomfortably large and obtrusive. And when obsequious historians were able to show that the Hungarian crown had actually laid claim to parts of the area as far back as the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the morsel became a little tastier to Maria Theresa, whose titles included Queen of Hungary. But what would the new province be called? "Austrian Poland" was one possibility, but such a name was politically unthinkable, since the aim was to erase Poland from European history. Austria instead made a connection to the medieval principality of Halych, an heir of the state of Kiev that had encompassed part of the area before the eastern expansion of the Polish state. Galicia, *Galizien* in German, was bruited to be the Latinized form of Halych. (The old word stems of *hal* and *gal*, referring to the salt deposits in the region, echo in the name, which are also seen in the classical ethnic designation *Gaul*. Those with long memories will recall that Spain also has its Galicia. After the Habsburgs' abandoned claims to the Spanish crown, the name was available, so to speak, in the Imperial list of useable provincial names.)

**Borders are an intellectual endeavor. They come about via negotiations.**

Now that the name was settled, it had to be filled with meaning. Galicia became a project. There were two ambitions: to tie the new province more closely to the old Habsburg realm and distance it from the Polish tradition, and to demonstrate Austria's modernity and reformist spirit. Galicia was seen as a sort of adoptive child from the underdeveloped backyard of Europe that would, in a paternalistic fostering project, be offered upward class mobility from muddy village street to enlightened salon. Joseph II himself traveled to Galicia in 1773 to survey the situation. What was the best way to deal with the foundling?

And what was the situation, actually? In this southeastern part of the old Poland, there were three main ethnic groups – Ukrainians, Poles, and Jews. The largest group was the Orthodox Christian Ukrainians (or *Ruthenians*, as the Austrians preferred to call them). Somewhat fewer in number were the Roman Catholic Poles, followed by the Jews, who made up almost ten percent of the population there. There were several other small ethnic groups, such as the Carpathian mountain peoples (the Lemke, the Hutsuls, and the Vlach) as well as a German element in the cities. Roma and Armenians were also in the picture. Political and economic power in this agrarian society was held by the Polish or Polonized aristocracy, the *Szlachta*, who were the tip of a feudal pyramid whose broad but socially oppressed base was made up of the serfs and illiterate peasant masses. Religion was the central factor in identity; national awareness was mainly a current within the aristocratic Polish intelligentsia.

## ENLIGHTENED PROTECTION

Thus, the situation was one of marked social heterogeneity and inequality. How should order and dynamism be brought to this diverse yet stagnant region? To the Austrians, the Polish aristocracy seemed a bastion of reactionary irrationality; as a result, the dismantling of the *Szlachta's* feudal privileges and traditions became an important goal. The Austrians divided the country into new administrative areas, *Kreise*, and Austrian civil servants were appointed to leading positions. German immigration was encouraged. Galician calendars, reference works, floras, and history books were published, all to cement the idea of the province – whose borders had been drawn arbitrarily – as an accepted historical and cultural unit that had finally come under enlightened protection.

One of Wolff's central ideas is that the treatment of Galicia reflects the new east-west dichotomy in the view of European history that took shape during the Enlightenment. A traditional north-south polarity based on the classical notion of the barbaric north was exchanged for an evolutionary idea of a static, backward, and uncivilized Eastern Europe and a dynamic and progressive Western Europe. These ideas are related, of course, to the phenomenon now often termed Orientalism: the notion of the essential incompatibility of "Eastern" cultures with Western individualism and the idea of progress.

Even though they entailed significant interventions in traditional life patterns in the province, Austrian reforms to the education system, legal system, and public administration were met with relative enthusiasm, especially among the groups that had formerly

been disadvantaged. For the Ukrainians, the growth of a modern written language was made possible, and for reform-minded Jews the Toleration Patent issued by Joseph II was to be of great significance. Factions of the Polish intelligentsia also considered Austrian public administration more tolerant and acceptable than that of Russia and Prussia, which had taken over in the other parts of the divided Poland. A kind of Polish-Galician culture emerged, a process Wolff illustrates through the life and works of playwright Aleksander Fredro (1793–1876). To Fredro and his liberal circle, warding off Russian imperialism, which was considered a greater evil than the Viennese paternalism, was more important than anti-Austrian agitation. Under the increasingly liberalized conditions of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Galicia and Krakow also became a center of Polish art and culture.

A significant event discussed from several different angles in Wolff's book is the failed Polish revolution of 1846. The uprising had been planned by exiled politicians in Paris and met with initial success in Krakow, which was annexed to Austria in 1795 but was made a nominally independent city-state. The idea was that rebellion would spread across Galicia and from there to Russian-occupied Poland. But when certain aristocratic nationalists raised the banner of uprising, they were met with unexpected opposition among the Ukrainian peasants, who considered the Austrian administration their guardians against the feudal oppression of the Polish aristocracy. In some towns, the peasants took matters into their own hands and massacred their nationalist conspirator estate owners. Here, the Austrians had thus managed to foment a sort of Galician *Landespatriotismus* that was not built on national lines but instead (sometimes far too violently) emphasized socioeconomic and regional affiliations and interests. Krakow was punished for its role in the revolt with the loss of its autonomous status and was annexed to Galicia.

## LOWER EAST SIDE – GALICIA IN MANHATTAN

*Galitzianer tantzerl* was an often-seen song title on old 78 records played in New York in the early 1900s. The musicians were immigrant Eastern European *klezmerim* who brought their repertoire to a growing audience of *galitzianer* – Jews from Galicia – who usually settled in the working class districts of the Lower East Side on Manhattan. According to Wolff, the establishment of the term "galitzianer" in Yiddish, and Galician Jews' perceptions of themselves as culturally distinct from their Lithuanian and Russian co-religionists, was due to the special significance of the Josephinist reformers to Jewish living conditions.

With its Counter-Reformation, strongly anti-Jewish tradition (clearly visible in Maria Theresa, among others), the Habsburg state hardly welcomed the large Jewish population that happened to come along with the territorial acquisition of 1772. Jews were the majority population in many villages and communities, especially in the eastern part of the province, where there was a complete Jewish community with a multifaceted religious and cultural tradition. But the enlightened despot Joseph II saw the Jewish presence as a challenge more than anything else. In being so magnanimously tolerant that one wanted to include

the Jews in the enlightened, reasonable society, one could, almost to the point of excess, clearly demonstrate one's lack of prejudice. But there was also another, more pragmatic and calculating aspect of the emancipation project. The Jews could become allies of the Habsburgs in their struggle against the Polish aristocracy, and their mercantile tradition was also seen as an asset in terms of business policy.

**Liberation from** feudal absolute power and religious shackles engendered widespread enthusiasm and sympathy among the Jews, and many proponents of the *Haskalah* (the Jewish Enlightenment) and the various Jewish reform movements of the 19<sup>th</sup> century identified strongly with Josephine ideas and the Austrian state. Joseph Roth, the congenial delineator of the Habsburgian Imperial state's contradictory but culturally productive agonies in novels like *Radetzky March*, *The Emperor's Tomb*, and *Hotel Savoy*, grew up in the Jewish town of Brody and the town sets the tone for many of his narratives.

At the same time, demands for secularization and Germanification engendered resistance among the large Hasidic population in eastern Galicia. In reality, Habsburg policies also led to the impoverishment and proletarianization of large segments of the Jewish population, whose traditional livelihoods were taken away and not replaced by new structures as a consequence of the industrialization that essentially never came. To be a *Luftmensch*, to live on nothing, became a far too common occupation in small Jewish towns like Kolomea, Horodenka, and Tysmienica. Out of this came the strong migration flows into Vienna, where many prominent Jewish intellectuals, including Sigmund Freud, had Galician family roots. It was also the impetus for proletarian emigration to New York.

## WHIPPED INTO SUBJECTION

One of the most written-about works of Austrian literature, *Venus in Furs*, was published in 1870. With this literary depiction of the life and times of fictional Galician aristocrat Severin von Kusiemski, the author, Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, was to supply material for the definition of the sexual deviations described by psychiatrist Richard von Krafft-Ebing in his 1890 classic *Psychopathia Sexualis*: "I feel justified in calling this sexual anomaly 'Masochism' because the author Sacher-Masoch frequently made this perversion – which up to his time was quite unknown to the scientific world as such – the substratum of his writings."

Sacher-Masoch (1836–1895) and his literary oeuvre are given a central role in Larry Wolff's study of the ideas of Galicia. His reading shows that the Galician setting can actually supply a key to the author's distinct symbolism and worldview. Leopold von Sacher-Masoch belonged to an Austrian family of bureaucrats who had come to Galicia by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. His father was the chief of police in the provincial capital of Lemberg/Lwów/Lviv in the 1830s and 1840s, whose duties included managing the repercussions of the failed aristocratic revolt of 1846. With a "Ruthenian" peasant girl as his wet-nurse and nanny, Ukrainian was the language Leopold absorbed with mother's milk. The wet-nurse sacrificially left her own child

among the fur-clad peasants in the village of Winniki to save the frail child of civil servants in Lemberg with her healthy natural product. She also instilled into him a dose of the Ukrainian folk storytelling tradition, whose motifs recur in his works.

The boy more or less grew up at police headquarters in Lemberg, where his father devoted his free time to his herbarium and his mineral collection. A life-sized doll wearing the costume of a Carpathian robber stood in one corner of his office. The walls were decorated with bearskins and antique weapons. In his autobiographical *Erinnerungen*, Sacher-Masoch relates:

**Here my father sat when his serious charge, the uninterrupted struggle against Polish conspirators, gave him a free hour, and untroubled by the death sentence that someone had posted on the gate, he organized his treasures, which he had collected in the woods, meadows, swamps, and quarries around Lemberg; he took the beetles out of the alcohol flasks to stick them on needles and exhibit them in the cork-lined cases, like soldiers in formation; he worked on the stones with a hammer, and pasted the dried and pressed plants on white paper.**

Little Leopold played quietly in a corner of the room, anxious not to disturb his father as he meticulously arranged his collections. During the revolutionary year of 1848, the police directorate was moved to Prague and the Sacher-Masoch family left Galicia, but the twelve childhood years in Lemberg had shaped Leopold for life and the cultural atmosphere and traditions of the province became the source materials for the fantasies he not only put into print, but lived out in reality.

The masochistic hero of *Venus in Furs*, Severin von Kusiemski, meets Wanda von Dunajew, a widow from Lemberg, in a resort in the Carpathian Mountains. She invites him to become her slave and he is passionately taken with the idea. The pair write a contract whose clauses stipulate utter subjection. Mrs. von Dunajew has not only the right to punish her slave for the least infraction as she sees fit, she can also beat him for no reason at all, or simply to pass the time, according to her fancy; she can even kill him if she wishes. He is, quite simply, her property, over which she has unrestricted control.

**The feudal patterns** are inverted. The Galician aristocrat is transformed into a Galician serf. The obsession with the permutations of slavery was imprinted on Leopold during his formative childhood years in Galicia, according to Wolff. The brutal conditions of Galician serfdom were a topic of lively discussion in the 1840s within the Austrian administration. The Josephine officials, who wanted to limit the rights of the Polish aristocracy to *robot* (the obligation to perform day work), depicted serfdom as a kind of slavery. The whip was emphasized as an attribute of the arbitrary will of the aristocracy and became a general symbol of the Eastern European barbarism from which it was the Habsburg's mission to liberate its subjects. Wolff distills this when he writes: "The whip thus left its se-

miotic mark on Habsburg consciousness in Galicia and became for Sacher-Masoch the sexual obsession of his life and his literature."

Sacher-Masoch later married a woman who took the name Wanda von Dunajew. She wrote a slave contract with her husband which stipulated that she would whip him while dressed in furs. "Not a day passed", wrote Wanda in her memoirs, "without my whipping my husband, without proving to him that I was keeping my part of the contract." For Sacher-Masoch, Galicia was the realm of urges and expression, a "Half-Asia", to use the term coined by Karl Emil Franzos, the literary portrayer of Jewish folk life in the fictional town of Barnow, which was both seductive and frightening. This is also reflected in Sacher-Masoch's almost romantic fascination with Hasidic Jews, whom he erroneously perceived as an Oriental sect that had repudiated asceticism to embrace sensualism. His description of a visit in 1857 to the famous Rebbe Liebmann in Sadhora gives the impression of a harem interior from *A Thousand and One Nights*, with fur-trimmed caftans and Turkish divans as paraphernalia.

From the Russian-Jewish perspective, on the other hand, Galicia could also be understood as an outpost of the progressive West. The *Broder shul*, a synagogue founded in Odessa by Haskala-oriented Jews from Brody, represented the German-speaking Jewish reform movement. Here, "*digalitzianer*" were men of the Enlightenment in the spirit of Moses Mendelssohn, Lessing, Kant, and the von Humboldt brothers.

## ORANGE-COLORED PHANTOM PAINS

Beliefs often become prescriptions, mental maps of a sort after which reality is adjusted and structured. Even though, with the dissolution of Austria-Hungary, Galicia ceased to exist, the idea of Galicia has a kind of ghostly presence in contemporary politics. The area was incorporated in 1919–1923 in the resurrected Polish state, only to be divided twenty years later between Germany and the Soviet Union as a result of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact. This cleaving in two endured through the "shift" of Poland westwards after the Second World War. East Galicia became part of Soviet Ukraine and thereafter of independent Ukraine.

The still meaningful distinction between a Galician West Ukraine and a Soviet-stamped East Ukraine was clearly expressed, according to Wolff, in the Orange Revolution of 2004. In the more liberal West Ukraine, the old connection to Vienna and Krakow became a marker of identity and a resource for mobilization, despite the radical break in cultural continuity that the mass deportations and genocides of the Second World War entailed. The idea of Galicia as a Josephine West also lives among those born after the breakup of the Soviet Union, even in families and settings where past generations had never lived under the paternalistic protection of Habsburgian officialdom.

**Joseph II's project** thus seems to have a rare endurance and potency, even though it was carried out half-heartedly and left unconcluded. I return to Josef Redlich's Galician diary from the outbreak of war in 1914. The distinctive mix of order and incompetence, of pretense and reality, of realism and escapism often

seen as characteristic of the Habsburgian spirit, permeates his hastily scribbled observations and descriptions. "*Ce mot de partage me répugne.*" An empire that could not bear the position to which fate had elevated it.

In early September of 1914, Redlich takes another car trip to the fortress city of Przemyśl. Facing the risk of being surrounded by the advancing Russian army, the Austrians have now been forced to evacuate the provincial capital of Lemberg. Fleeing people are choking the roads, villages are burning. Rumors begin to spread that command headquarters will be withdrawn from Przemyśl. One last time, Redlich sits down to dine with the worn out Conrad von Hötendorf, who explains the difficult situation, but is inclined to turn to personal things and talks a great deal about his mistress, Gina von Reininghaus: "If I fail, I will also lose this woman, a dreadful prospect, for then I must retreat into loneliness for the rest of my life."

Finally, Redlich paints a picture of the officer's mess in Przemyśl that could be the final scene in a fateful drama about the decline and fall of the Austrian Empire:

**While this quiet conversation went on, most of the gentlemen had risen from the table and left the mess, at last even General Höfer, who sat across from us with his sad eyes. The two of us, Colonel Hoen, and two general staff majors in a corner, were finally alone in the room, which with its burned-down candelabras and cold white walls now looked very dismal. It was past ten o'clock when we rose and General Conrad once again bade me a cordial farewell. The fat royal footmen now looked at me with some hostility; they must have seen me as the reason for the long lingering in the room. We went home, shaken to the core, because I found my pessimistic opinion, which had been reinforced for several days, confirmed through the conversation with the chief of staff. Humanly, my heart went out to Conrad: he cannot bear the status to which fate has elevated him. ✕**

## LITERATURE

Josef Redlich's diaries are published in *Schicksalsjahre Österreichs 1908–1919: Das politische Tagebuch Josef Redlichs; Bearbeitet und herausgegeben von Fritz Fellner*. Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für neuere Geschichte Österreichs 39–40, Graz-Köln 1953–1954. The quotations are from vol. II, pp. 251–271.

Redlich's activities are depicted in Anders Hammarlund's *Människor bortom lustprincipen: Mähriska öden* [People beyond the pleasure principle: Some Moravian life stories] (Stockholm 2006), and in historian Fredrik Lindström's doctoral dissertation *Empire and Identity: Biographies of Austrian Identity in an Age of Imperial Dissolution* (Lund 2002).

Most of the English-language editions of *Venus in Furs* seem to go back to a translation by Fernanda Savage (possibly a pseudonym?), originally from 1921.

Note: See also Anders Björnsson's review of a book by Martin Pollack on mass emigration from Galicia on p. 34.

**The whip was the most prominent symbol of European serfdom. Later it became the hammer and sickle.**



## Making peace, not war. The emergence of a new post-Holocaust Germany

**T**he American political and intellectual elites have a myopic view of contemporary Germany. This view is framed by the constantly revived memory of the Holocaust and questions about the reliability of German politics. The fact that Germany is in the process of undergoing a major transformation of its political culture goes unrecognized.

The fixation on the Holocaust as a unique scene of terror and on Nazi Germany in general makes it impossible for the American elites to understand and appreciate that Germany today has one of the fastest growing Jewish communities in the world. The more than 300,000 members of this community, among them an estimated 6,000 Israelis, no longer sit on packed suitcases, waiting for signs of an impending anti-Semitic catastrophe. They insist on participating at all levels of German society. The German Jewish weekly and monthly newspapers demonstrate a degree of critical engagement in political analysis that is admirable. More importantly, these newspapers do not shy away from criticizing Israel's intransigent policies towards the Palestinians.

**Germany's recent** unwillingness to join the other Western powers in the NATO intervention in Libya has been commented upon as a sign of an emerging isolationism. The abstention in the UN Security Council's vote, however, reflects something other than an intentional withdrawal from global political responsibilities. The traumatic impact of the destruction wrought by World War II has turned Germany into a predominantly pacifist society. The deep-rooted aversion to involving German troops in foreign conflicts – not withstanding German participation in the Kosovo episode in 1999 and the 5,000 troops sent to Afghanistan – is also a consequence of the successful processing of the Nazi past and especially the role the German military played in this history of large-scale violence all over Europe. Germany's century-old love affair with militarism has ended. For that reason, American, British, or French prodding will always encounter resistance in German society. Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder's decision in 2003 to stay out of the Iraq war was widely popular in Germany long before it became obvious that the governments of



ILLUSTRATION: RAGNI SVENSSON

G. W. Bush and Tony Blair had manipulated intelligence data about weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in order to justify their reckless war policies.

**The remarkable** rebirth of the Jewish community and the widespread pacifism in contemporary Germany reflect the successful processing of the Nazi past since the early 1960s, when the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem (1961) and the Auschwitz trials in Frankfurt

(1963–1965) ended the great silence after 1945. As remarkable as these aspects are, even more important is the fact that Germany is the only European society today that is not troubled by the presence of a successful right-wing party in its national parliament. All Scandinavian societies, Holland, Belgium, France, Austria, Switzerland, Italy and most Eastern European societies are confronted with the emergence of rabid nationalist, sometimes proto-fascist (as in Hungary), always xenophobic and

racist and anti-European Union (EU) parties in their parliaments. These parties threaten not only the fabric of their respective societies, they endanger the survival of the EU with their anti-EU rhetoric. Germany is the only member state of the EU that is free of this scourge on their national scene, though there are right-wing extremists in a few state parliaments. American pundits occasionally register this absence of a right-wing party in the national sphere, but are unable to make sense of it. They

## Continued. Making peace, not war

are actually frustrated by the absence of political features that they have considered since World War II to be part of the German cultural DNA. They often try desperately to identify the features that should be there but can't be located. They do not understand that the processing of the Nazi past in West German culture from the 1960s to German Reunification in 1990 has successfully immunized that society against the resentment rhetoric of the extreme Right.

**After the events** in Oslo in late July, the American and European reporting about the events in Norway painted a European political landscape of growing right-wing extremism that included Germany by using Angela Merkel's earlier statement about the failure of multi-culturalism. Merkel's unfortunate remarks about the slow process of integration of immigrants into German mainstream political culture say more about her ignorance in this matter and her lack of political sensitivity than anything else. Her remarks certainly do not reflect the kind of denial that Scandinavian politicians, intellectuals, journalists, and ordinary citizens manifest when they refuse to recognize the growth of right-wing political parties in all Scandinavian societies as a backdrop of resentment that has tolerated ideological discourse like the ranting of the Oslo Nazi. Germans are far ahead on the historical-political learning curve. Yet many American and European commentators cannot resist constantly pointing to Germany as the perennial provider of paradigmatic illustrations of evil.

A German documentary about the former German foreign minister Joschka Fischer (*Joschka und Herr Fischer*, 2011) provides an impressive record of the transformation of German political culture. Joschka Fischer retraces his own biography by commenting on news clips and other film material that illustrates the various stages of his life. The drop-out high school student was attracted to the constantly changing menu of social movements in the 1960s and 1970s. He describes in vivid detail how and why he joined protests against the War in Vietnam, realtor greed in Frankfurt, police violence, the building of a new airport runway, environmental destruction, the stationing of Pershing missiles, and the building of nuclear

plants. When he finally becomes persuaded by his friend Daniel Cohn-Bendit (the "Red" Danny of the Paris events in May 1968 that almost brought down the de Gaulle presidency) to join the Green Party in the early 1980s, one can follow the intriguing political education and rise of a charismatic and rhetorically gifted political leader from his radical street fighting beginnings to the pinnacles of power. He freely admits that he did not know what it meant to be a politician until he became Minister of Environmental Affairs in the state of Hessen. The eighteen months of failure of this appointment and the collapse of the coalition government with the Hessian Social Democrats sent him into unemployment and the temporary career of a Frankfurt cabdriver. This encounter with the lifeworlds of ordinary citizens, he claims, cured him of his righteous and fundamentalist views about the world. He became the leader of the *Realo* wing of the Green Party that finally moved into the center stage of German politics by forming a coalition government with Gerhard Schroeder's Social Democrats from 1998 to 2005. A highlight in the documentary is Fisher's memorable confrontation with Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld at the Security Conference in Munich in January 2003, when he told Rumsfeld in a speech that he was "not convinced" by his arguments for moving against Saddam Hussein. One can see the grim and grimacing faces of Democratic and Republican US senators sitting in the front row during Fischer's speech. But the more fascinating dimension of this documentary feature is that one begins to understand through the medium of this biographical reconstruction why Germany stands today at the threshold of a political transformation that will have European and global consequences.

**This transformation** is reflected in the rise of the Green Party to the status of a major player in German politics. The recent election success of the Greens in one of the big states of the Federal Republic, Baden-Württemberg, has been interpreted in Germany as a watershed in post-War political culture. This state is the home of Mercedes-Benz and other major manufacturing and chemical companies and for decades has been one of the most reliable bas-

tions of Merkel's Christian Democrats. The sudden appearance of a Green prime minister in this traditionally conservative state has therefore led to speculations about the Greens becoming the majority party in the next general election in 2013. Names of future Green candidates for chancellor are already circulating in the media, a Turkish-German politician's name among them.

In order to avoid this sea change, conservative Chancellor Angela Merkel underwent her own dramatic conversion. Whether her decision to support the perennial Green cause to end the age of nuclear power in Germany was a Machiavellian calculation by a politician who is well known for her successful tactical power moves, or whether it was, as she claimed, a response to the triple catastrophe of Fukushima, remains unclear. In any case, she succeeded in preventing the Greens from running away with the nuclear power issue as their political trademark and she has opened the possibility of forming a coalition government with the Green Party.

Whether the other major party of post-World War II politics, the venerable Social Democratic Party (SPD), which produced three successful chancellors, namely Willy Brandt, Helmut Schmidt, and Gerhard Schroeder, will be able to regain a creative political vision for the post-industrial future remains uncertain. Despite the fact that trade unions still play a major role in the German political economy, they are no longer automatically delivering their membership as a voting block to the SPD. The rather sad present political condition of the SPD has no impact on the survival of the achievements of the post-War welfare state, for which the Social Democrats can claim partial credit. These achievements have become accepted by all political parties. In this regard, all parties that are represented in the Bundestag find themselves politically located to the left of the American Democrats. The only German party that would today find any resonance in the US is the liberal FDP, because they are pro-business libertarians. Yet they may not survive the next national elections to the Bundestag, and thus may become as irrelevant as the extreme Left (*Die Linke*), which is primarily a party of East German resentment.

Angela Merkel's decision to let Germany, the fourth largest economy in the

world, go anti-nuclear has been commented upon in international media as being anything from risky to irrational. Though these critical concerns were also raised in Germany, the general support for the move has been positive. Her belief that German technological, engineering, and manufacturing ingenuity will get an enormous boost from this decision received widespread support. The need for replacement technology would revitalize all kinds of industries in the near future and position them favorably in the global economy.

**Merkel, however, did** not discuss her move in advance with her European partners. As in the Greek and the other Euro-zone budget crises, she showed not only a lack of compassion but also an almost total blindness with regard to the European leadership role that Germany is expected to play as a consequence of its economic power and its location at the center of the EU. Merkel's upbringing in the communist GDR prevented her from sharing the European vision in her socialization that has informed the political design of most of her West German predecessors in the office of chancellor. For her, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of state socialism in the GDR, the rest of Eastern Europe, and the Soviet Union itself meant regaining access to a national space and imagining politics primarily from that perspective. Merkel's national blindfolds make it impossible for her to clearly see the trans-national European trajectory of West German, and, since 1990, united German politics.

Merkel's failure to recognize the European dimension of German politics will help the Greens in the next election. Fischer's repeated pleas during the euro crises for German pro-EU action and his passionate commitment to the EU make it clear that the Greens would be willing to let the spirit of the post-Holocaust phoenix energize not only Germany, but the EU as a whole. ❌

### manfred henningsen

Professor Emeritus of political science at the University of Hawai'i. Was born during World War II and grew up on the German side of the border between Denmark and Germany, near Flensburg. One of his recent publications is *Der Mythos Amerika* (2009).



## Tale of a Serbian general. The problem of simultaneousness

**M**y Croatian friend's mother was born on the island of Krk and wanted, after she turned eighty and was widowed, to move back there instead of being put into a retirement home.

Being a good son, my friend wanted to fulfill his mother's wish and buy the house she had in mind in the small harbor town of Omišalj. A Serbian general, living in Belgrade, was the owner of the house. The Serbian family had spent their summers in the house, but then war broke out and Yugoslavia was no more. Serbs were also not regarded as welcome neighbors in Croatia, especially not if they were wearing a general's uniform.

Furthermore, his – Croatian – neighbors had broken into the house and stolen as much as they could take with them. It is understandable that the Serbian family no longer wanted to spend their summers drinking coffee on the town square or lying on the beach, if they every time they left their home they were compelled to say a friendly hello to neighbors they had good reason to suspect were watching the weather report on a stolen TV, or were putting their milk into a refrigerator that had not so long ago belonged to the general.

But my friend's old mother had always been friendly towards the Serbian family (maybe because her deceased husband – a Croat – had been an officer in the armed forces) and, moreover, she knew the house was for sale. This was confirmed when the son phoned Belgrade and asked. The general wanted 80,000 euros for the house. Much renovation would be needed, but after a day of pondering my friend called and said, yes, he would buy it.

To his surprise, the asking price for the house had now been raised to 120,000 euros. Was it the same house? Yes. Had he misheard the sum on the phone last time they spoke? The phone wires between Croatia and Serbia are not always the best. No. Had another buyer expressed interest in the house? No.

**The latter wasn't** very likely – the empty house was for sale at a time when the global financial crisis had started spreading, a crisis everybody in this part of Europe thought had nothing to do with them whatsoever. But as it was, houses were neither sold



ILLUSTRATION: RAGNI SVENSSON

nor bought in Croatia. To find a buyer, someone willing to pay 80,000 euros, was a gift from heaven.

But the general had two adult children, one son and one daughter, and they each needed an apartment in Belgrade. This need was now the deciding factor for the price. My friend did not understand how this could have anything to do with the prospective transaction. A price, he explained to the general over the phone, is what somebody is willing to pay for something, not a reflection of a need or a wish. That is just a fantasy.

Nonetheless, he raised his offer to 85,000 euros. The general regarded this as a direct offense, since he needed 120,000 euros, not 85,000. Shortly thereafter, negotiations broke down.

Since then a few years have passed. My friend's mother has already moved to a retirement home. How the Serbian general solved his family problems is not known. And nobody from Belgrade has turned up in Omišalj to inspect the house. It is decaying: The little garden is

completely overgrown, no one is heating and airing out the house in the winter, no one keeps a check on the electricity and on the water pipes. The roof will soon start leaking, then holes will appear in it, and finally it will cave in.

Then the house will quickly be transformed into ruins.

**To me, the** fascinating thing about this sad story about the destruction of capital is that which is so contrary not only to all literature on economics, but also to plain common sense. We like to see so-called common sense as something universal and obvious, but this is not the case. Because what I describe here is a process and a set of reactions I myself keep witnessing again and again in this part of Europe. The rationality of common sense and market economy (I almost wrote "instinct of self-preservation") has to give way to a sense of honor, agreements, time, and "economy" that relates rather to the Homeric era than to the modern world.

I don't know whether it is better or worse than ours, but I used to believe it was long since extinct. This is obviously not the case – people from all times can exist simultaneously, in the same room, and this takes place every day in our Europe.

But this has also made me less sure about what a European is. Nowadays I am only sure about this when I am in North America. This has even worse consequences for the EU; in Brussels, they speak continually – and very solemnly – about common values and a common identity. But what does this really mean? In real life, very little. For one person the state is a provider of safety, for another, a threat; here taxes are an expression of solidarity, there, confiscation and something to be avoided; for some work is the meaning of life, for others it's a millstone. And so on. And we all have to fit into the mold of the "European" for the EU to function.

**My friend has** learned from others that the general is walking around Belgrade holding him accountable for his children having to still live at home, and for his house in Krk not only being plundered, but also in a state of decay. But you could not expect less of the Croats, a people who destroyed Yugoslavia and who were all fascists during World War II.

And the Croatian side is happy to get revenge: How are you supposed to be able to do business with the Serbs, who have never sold anything but a pig or two? Who do not know anymore about economics than what they learned at the Turkish bazaar?

Somebody points out that neither the Croats nor the Serbs are members of the EU – yet. My answer is: Those already in are not one iota better. ❌

**richard swartz**

For almost forty years the East European correspondent of the Swedish daily *Svenska Dagbladet*, stationed in Vienna. Studied in Stockholm and Praha, where he took his PhD. A regular contributor to international newspapers and magazines, including *Süddeutsche Zeitung*.

Note: This article was previously published in *Dagens Nyheter* (Stockholm).

# TOO MUCH NITROGEN OR TOO MUCH PHOSPHORUS? CONTROVERSY IN BALTIC WATERS

BY ANN-LOUISE MARTIN

**"IT IS THE SUNRISE** I remember, and the sunset, the strong light over the sea", says Enno Hallek, who has, with greater mastery than most, captured the soul and colors of the Baltic Sea in his paintings.

As a little boy, he lived half the year on his father's fishing boat in Estonia, where the fyke net gathered the catch into the well in the middle of the boat. The entire family lived in the slim, agile vessel, which his father had built with his own hands, the boat that in the 1930s had taken them to Finland and Sweden to sell eels as far in as Slussen, the lock that separates Lake Mälaren from Saltsjön, the Baltic, right in the middle of Stockholm.

Enno has seen the sea, the green sea teeming with fish, and since reaching adulthood has been concerned about what happened to life in the sea in the last century. This is within Enno's living memory, and that of many others.

So, what happened? Scientists have not always agreed on either the causes or the possibility of restoring the cloudy, fish-poor, partially oxygen-deficient, algae-blooming, oil-slicked Baltic Sea.

Wherein lies the disagreement? There seem to be two main controversies:

1. The Baltic Sea is eutrophic. Or is the Baltic Sea not eutrophic?
2. Algae blooms are controlled by the nutrient phosphorus. Or is the bloom controlled by both phosphorus and nitrogen?

**THERE IS ANOTHER** core question: Can the Baltic Sea return to the ideal status it had around the middle of the last century?

In addition, there are the questions having to do with the Baltic Sea biota: seals, fish, zooplankton, phytoplankton, and bacteria. As well as the fact that the sea is being polluted by things other than nutrients: primarily industrial discharge, and environmentally hazardous shipping. Then there is the problem of overfishing.

To approach the issue of the health of the Baltic Sea, you have to consider essentially all these components. But if you start with the question related to the



amount of nutrients in the sea – whether the Baltic is eutrophic or not – you must first agree on a time frame. The Baltic is a young sea, which was for long periods quite deficient in plant nutrients by its nature – oligotrophic, to use the technical term.

During the last hundred years, the anoxic seabeds have increased five-fold: they now take up an area the size of Denmark. In chemical terms, oxygen deficiency on the seabed is an on/off switch for more nutrient-rich conditions. The explanation is that when dead organic material sinks down to the bottom, it should preferably encounter a healthy, oxygen-rich environment, where the material is converted to sludge, nutritious sludge.

**WHEN THE SURFACE** of the seabed lacks oxygen, the precipitated organic material will essentially rot instead. Chemically, this means the nutrients will not remain in the bottom sediment – phosphorus will be released and carried up into the body of water again.

What creatures want this nutrient enrichment? The only types of organism that can absorb nutrition

in this form are phytoplankton and algae along the shores. The sea becomes a billowing smorgasbord for species after species to thrive in. Green algae and cyanobacteria (formerly called blue-green algae), for example, eat until they die and in turn sink down to the anoxic seabeds. This goes on all summer, and as soon as the sun peaks out after the ice breaks up, it is time for the next spring bloom.

Where do the nutrients come from? From us. In the last hundred years, phosphorus and nitrogen have been flowing out, ever faster, from toilets, agriculture, and livestock farming, along with nitrogen pollution from vehicle traffic and combustion. We have some control over sewage when it is routed through waste treatment plants, but it isn't treated everywhere.

That the Baltic has become more nutrient-rich is beyond doubt. The question is whether it can be called eutrophic or whether it is out of balance in relation to its former self. A hundred years is nothing in the life cycle of the Baltic Sea. But everything we have done in the last hundred years to improve crops, transportation, heating, and urban hygiene, and to expand livestock farming – all of this is doubtless a burden on the Baltic, which has been reshaped.

We must reduce the nutrient load – that is the theme of the second distinct controversy.

**IS THERE TOO** much phosphorus? Or nitrogen? Should waste treatment plants be expanded to deal with nitrogen as well? Is the whole thing due to traffic, which loads nitrogen pollutants in exhaust fumes? Should waste treatment be required only of the big cities? Or is the problem the uncontrolled – and perhaps uncontrollable – diffuse emission sources that here, there, and everywhere ooze out their nutrients into the nearest straightened watercourse, which in turn delivers them swiftly and efficiently to the Baltic? Might the problem be the straight, dredged, and drained rivers and streams that no longer work as natural water purification systems, as a winding river does?

First: nitrogen versus phosphorus.

Proponents of expanding phosphorus treatment

**Phosphorus or nitrogen – is the culprit urban or rural?**



and ignoring nitrogen base their arguments on the following: The phosphorus content is stable in the water. It cannot be eliminated naturally from the water or the bottom sediment. However, it is easy and relatively cheap to treat wastewater to remove phosphorus.

Nitrogen purification, on the other hand, is an expensive process, one where we also encounter the problem that nitrogen moves chemically between air and water. Certain plants, such as cyanobacteria and land plants like beans and peas, do not need to be served nitrogen in the water or the soil. They can take nitrogen out of the air themselves – they are nitrogen fixers. Thus, some scientists argue that there is no point investing in nitrogen purification of sewage. All we need is massive separation of phosphorus to restore the nutritive balance of the Baltic Sea.

But this happy news does not hold up to scrutiny. The argument is far too simplified according to Rutger Rosenberg, professor of marine ecology with Marine Monitoring in Lysekil on the west coast of Sweden.

The thing is, the Baltic Sea does not behave the same way all year round and in all the subregions. In the spring when the ice breaks up, the Baltic Sea proper is packed with both nitrogen and phosphorus and the spring bloom explodes – it blooms, and wilts, sinking to the bottom. Afterwards, there is no more accessible nitrogen in the water, but some phosphorus is still there and additional phosphorus seeps out from the anoxic seabeds – and so it is time for a massive bloom of cyanobacteria, nitrogen-fixing blue-green algae, instead. However, there are very few nitrogen fixers in the saltier regions of the Baltic: the Danish straits and the Kattegat (see map).

**THE IMPORTANCE OF** nitrogen purification is thus seasonal and regional: it is least important in the northern Gulf of Bothnia, and considerably more important in the southern parts.

Professor Fredrik Wulff of Stockholm University adds:

“If the spring bloom can be reduced by lowering the nitrogen content of the water, less organic material will sink down to the seabeds, resulting in anoxia. But the connections are complex and difficult to describe in simple terms. In addition, the Baltic leaches nitrogenous water into the Kattegat, which is highly undesirable. Increased nitrogen content there causes other blooms than blue-green algae.”

This controversy has begun to wane; the need for nitrogen purification is more widely accepted today, with certain exceptions. But it is not enough to concentrate efforts on urban waste treatment plants and skip the extremely neglected issue of fertilizer and livestock farming in the eastern Baltic countries. Waste from cows, pigs, chickens, and people also play in different emissions leagues, so to speak. Emissions from people, all 85 million of them around the sea, are significantly lower than emissions from animals. Farmyard manure combined with commercial fertilizers used on the fields account for the bulk of the nutrient supply to the Baltic Sea.

And the Baltic is not a single water area. It is divided into three parts: The Gulf of Bothnia, the Gulf of Finland, and the Baltic Sea proper, which all have different depths and salinity. There are shallows between these areas that limit the exchange of water and nutrients between the basins, but also deep sea trenches

that are hardly touched by surrounding movements. The inflow is from two directions: from freshwater rivers, and from the south in completely unpredictable deep-water currents of saltwater from the Kattegat. The body of water is always layered, with a more saline sub-surface layer and a brackish surface layer. This is one of the reasons the deep trenches are almost always anoxic in the deepest parts. But increased nutrient loads and plankton blooms during the last century have caused the drastic expansion of shallower anoxic regions as well.

**EVERYONE WHO WORKS** with the Baltic Sea knows this – it is a highly complex system that scientists have been trying to model ever since computers allowed such large calculations.

With a grant from the Ministry of the Environment in Sweden, Fredrik Wulff has been able to expand on his previous success in modeling the Baltic in the Mare Project. He has now been able to establish the Baltic Nest Institute (BNI), located at Stockholm University, where predictive modeling is being done.

Fredrik Wulff:

“One of our first assignments was a job for HELCOM, the Helsinki Commission. How much should the nutrient loads be reduced to restore the environment? How should the load reductions be allocated among the different countries? Along with my colleagues and using the models and databases we have developed, I was able to perform these calculations, which HELCOM included in BSAP (Baltic Sea Action Plan), which was signed by all the countries in Krakow in November 2007.”

If we go back within living memory, that which tells us what the Baltic was like during the last century, the fishing is what we remember. It was so easy to reel in a beautiful pike for dinner, the codfish banks bubbled with life, the fishing boats landed laden with their catches. We all know how the discussions about cod fishing have sounded, how fishing quotas have been exceeded, how the eels have disappeared – what happened?

Everything is connected. Take cod for example: Cod cannot reproduce in the Baltic Sea without sufficient highly saline water. Inflow of salty water from the Kattegat is necessary, since cod eggs develop suspended in a water layer between the saline bottom water and the merely brackish surface water. If the salty, oxygen-rich inflows from the Kattegat are absent for too long, the eggs do not survive: they die of lack of oxygen and too low salinity.

**THE ANNUAL SUCCESSFUL** reproduction of cod is thus somewhat uneven, which is not a disaster as long as the fishing pressure is moderate. When it increases, and the market prefers large fish, the parental generations of cod that are the source of regeneration vanish.

The cod is our sea's top predator fish – it is at the top of the food chain. It eats the sprat that we do not want. When the cod decline in number, we have an excess of sprat, which devour all the animal plankton upon which many other fish depend. The balance is disturbed. No other creature will eat sprat, it is too pointy. Zander (often called “pikeperch”) and pike prefer herring, and suddenly the herring decline as well.

Everything is connected. And with its low salinity,



Part of the work “Mina åror från Estland och minnen” [“My oars from Estonia and memories”], Enno Hallek, 1975. The left pair of oars is from the boat Hallek rowed as a child.

PHOTO: ENNO HALLEK

**ENNO HALLEK** was born in Estonia in 1931 in the coastal town of Rohuküla. His grandfather was a farmer, his father a fisherman. The entire family lived on the boat during the summer months. The family fled to Sweden in 1943 and settled in Blekinge. Enno won a drawing competition early on, which took him to Paris. He later studied at Signe Barth's school of painting and the Royal Swedish Academy of Fine Arts in 1953–1958. His first one-man exhibition was held in 1963.

Enno Hallek's use of color is rich, bright, and austere. His art spans painting, sculpture, reliefs, and mixed media. His love of the sea is deep and wide: it shines through the works and embraces marine attributes, simplified and clarified.

Hallek in 2010 with a self-portrait from 1961.

PHOTO: MARGARETA HALLEK



the Baltic is a more sensitive environment than most. Baltic Sea researchers at the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency's Marbipp Project on marine biodiversity compared the species-rich North Sea to the species-poor Baltic and determined that species loss is considerably more severe in the Baltic:

"If you eliminate a species on the west coast of Sweden (such as the blue mussel), it might be analogous to losing one letter of the alphabet, while on the east coast it would be like losing a large chunk of the language."

It could be that the cod is on the way back, helped along by fishing regulations that, this time, have met with better compliance. But this is, as said, just one example of the difficulties involved in keeping the Baltic Sea in balance. As for the eel, it seems to have given up hope for the Baltic. This is partly the fault of the hydropower plants, where the silver eel have been caught in the turbines for many years – but the main problem is probably the grotesque overfishing of elvers along the entire coast of Europe. They do not even make it up to the Baltic.

Another problem is that the sea has been fouled with substances that stay in the animals, and plants, and are stored in the bottom sediment. Organic chlorinated substances of various kinds, of which the most well-known are DDT and PCB, which destroyed seal reproduction, bullhead skeletons, the protective wreath of the seaweed belt around newborn life on the shore, and the sea eagles that took their sustenance from the sea. These particular problems are slowly declining, or being embedded in the sea floor, but new substances are always threatening – fire retardants are one of the current concerns.

But what we see, and what we react to, are the plankton blooms. It is that repulsive soup of algae and cyanobacteria that thwarts life in the archipelago in summer, invasions that are not predictable and about which it seems nothing can be done. A warmer climate does not help the situation – on the contrary. So,

where should we start? Is there something wrong with the joint international action plans? What is required of the nine coastal nations and the 85 million people who live in them for visibility to improve in the Baltic and the balance to be adjusted?

What we can say is that the focus of the problems is changing. While the coastal city of Kaliningrad is still dumping all of its sewage into the Baltic untreated, it looks like the waste treatment plant in St. Petersburg will, with outside help, soon be finished. And waste treatment plants are being expanded in Poland as well.

**WHAT HAS BEEN** added to the mix is the voluminous growth of intensive agriculture and livestock farming around the coast and along the rivers, which are adding nutrients to the sea, completely uncontrolled. Fredrik Wulff estimates that this will become the predominant addition within ten years. Opportunities to use the large manure volumes for energy production are as yet unexploited.

Engineers have suggested various large-scale technical methods in recent years for addressing the problem of dead seabeds in the open Baltic Sea. A project called "Simulation of the effects of some engineering measures aimed at reducing effects from eutrophication of the Baltic Sea" used modeling programs to test some of these measures.

A report signed by Rutger Rosenberg and Anders Stigebrant, head of the Marine Systems Analysis Group in Gothenburg, is expected in the autumn of 2011. It will assess the effects of pumping oxygen down into the Bornholm trench and the Gotland trench. Wind-driven pumps are one idea for making a costly project of this kind possible.

In the future, deepwater oxygenation of the Baltic may make it possible to stabilize cod production, for which there is such high demand.

But can we return to the Baltic Sea as it once was within living memory? Enno Hallek's father did not

give up until he was very old. After the Russians invaded Estonia during the war, they scuttled his boat so that he could not leave the country. When the Germans later held the country, he salvaged the apple of his eye from where it lay beneath the ice, repaired it – and fled Estonia with his family in 1943. And he kept fishing, though now in Blekinge in southern Sweden, where he built yet another boat of the right size for eel fishing in Hanö Bay. But the eel was already on the decline – something Enno sees as his wake-up call to what was happening in the Baltic. His pictures are testimony of his love for his polluted sea and his yearning for change.

"Can we have a cleaner sea?" I ask Fredrik Wulff.

"Of course we can, if the political will is there", he answers. "But that will require a different kind of agriculture, which will result in higher food prices."

Are we ready for that? 



In a previous issue of BW, Thomas Borchert wrote on Baltic Sea fishery policy.



## Life and work, world literature and Soviet history. Exploring the moral necessity of Varlam Shalamov

**D**uring two scorching hot days in the middle of June, a diverse assembly of scholars from Russia and beyond converged in Moscow in search of answers to two questions: *What* is Varlam Shalamov? And *why* do we need him? The international conference's dichotomous approach to the Russian twentieth-century writer appeared even in its title: "Sud'ba i tvorchestvo Varlana Shalamova v kontekste mirovoi literatury i sovetskoi istorii" [the fate and works of Varlam Shalamov in the context of world literature and Soviet history]. The focus was not on his factual life or his fictional production, but on both – an academic synthesis of the common combination or separation of the two. Where one might have expected a strict division between such different scholarly aspects as Shalamov's poetics in the light of literary tradition and the writer as an individual in the historic reality of his country, this summer's ambitious conference tried to bridge the gap between them – and succeeded.

**HOSTED BY** the Moscow School of Social and Economic Sciences, the seventh Shalamov conference was dedicated to the memory of Irina Sirotinskaya, the writer's muse and later copyright owner of his works, who passed away in January this year. Supported by the Russian State Archive of Literature and Art, the Memorial Society, and Moscow State University of Psychology and Pedagogy, as well as financially by the Mikhail Prokhorov Fund, the conference was primarily organized by the group of young Shalamov scholars who founded the website <http://shalamov.ru> in 2008. The majority of these enthusiastic young professionals – all still in their mid-twenties to early thirties – emerged from the Russian scientific-educational journal *Skepsis*. According to the journal's editor, Sergei Solov'ev, it was after seeing the published collection of papers from the conference commemorating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Shalamov's birth in 2007 that a collective decision was made: "We can do better than this." Their service of making Shalamov accessible to the public began with a Russian website, the extensive searchable archive of which has become an irreplaceable resource for



ILLUSTRATION: KARIN SUNVISSON

anyone and everyone conducting research on Shalamov. The international conference in June was the culmination of their commitment to spreading knowledge about him.

Not all young Shalamov scholars originated through *Skepsis*, though; at least one came to be a part of the group almost accidentally – I'm speaking here of myself. In the summer of 2009, I was but a curious Master's student in Yekaterinburg who had only begun reading Shalamov some months before. Yet I was already addicted to his prose and to his person; thus, it seemed almost natural that I should travel alone to the northern Urals, to the towns of Solikamsk and Krasnovishersk, where Shalamov spent parts of his first concentration camp sentence in 1929–1931. When I noticed that <http://shalamov.ru> lacked one picture from Krasnovishersk – the billboard at the city limits with a large photograph of the writer and a telling quote from *Kolyma Tales* – I offered to supply it.

**SOON I FOUND** myself absorbed in correspondence with these scholars, and twice in 2010 I made the journey to them in Moscow, as well as to Vologda, Shalamov's birthplace – this time accompanied by them. In January of that year, I went to meet with Russia's leading Shalamov scholar, Valery Esipov, about a generation older than the average young Shalamov scholar, for the first time. Valery Esipov lives and works in the same town where Shalamov was born, in a building that now houses a museum dedicated to the writer's life and works. To make the pilgrimage up north to Vologda has become something of a ritual among Shalamov schol-

ars; this summer's conference further affirmed the trip's ceremonial status as the two days in Moscow were immediately followed by two days in Vologda. After academic work, the participants transferred directly from the closing banquet on Friday evening onto an overnight train to wake up on Saturday morning for cultural diversions. Thus, in the very structure of the conference a fruitful dichotomy prevailed as well.

A writer of Shalamov's breadth demands just such a merger of two seemingly irreconcilable yet complementary features: since his works continue to be taken as factual rather than fictional, his prose must be approached within the web of discrepancies it creates. Shalamov cannot be read merely through the prism of the tragic aspects of Soviet history it depicts, though the abundance of authentic names, places, and dates makes it tempting to do so; rather, he should be read as an integral part of the greater tradition of world literature. And yet Shalamov may never be stripped entirely of his role as a historical witness: we *know* that he was there, and that *his* Kolyma was also everyone else's. At the opening plenary session, John Glad, the first English-language translator of Shalamov, expressed the view that even if Shalamov's Kolyma had been a fabrication of the writer's imagination, his works would still have to be considered great literature.

**THIS ACCURATE** observation, however, is at the same time inappropriate: there is value in the authenticity behind Shalamov's art, not because people, locations, and events can be verified as true, but because the presence of such a truth forces us to alter our custom-

ary manner of reading. When we read Shalamov, we move from observing *them* to exploring *us*, ourselves. *Us* is here, of course, taken to mean a particular people – the Russian people – but is far from limited to it: it is rather us in our capacity as humanity. His is a literature that is intimate and immediate; it is no artistic depiction of some hypothetical past – this is *where* we have been, *who* we have been and what must *never* happen again.

Perhaps there was another, a third, question lurking beneath all of the conference's neat methodological approaches, the at times heated polemics, and meticulous poetic analysis, namely: *How* do we read Shalamov?

**AFTER A LIFETIME** spent in various states of opposition, Shalamov continues to be a representative of resistance: culturally and politically, but most of all morally. The moral necessity of Shalamov is especially acutely felt in the Russian Federation of today, where the state's interpretation of World War II has escalated in its glorification of the Victory on May 9<sup>th</sup> to the point where lavish military parades throw some of their glittery shine on Stalin. In a political climate where a figure like Stalin may become ambiguous, a figure like Shalamov must continue to be controversial. Often compared to or even equated with Solzhenitsyn (after all, they did write about the same Gulag, did they not?), Shalamov remains the less comfortable choice when it comes to camp literature. His prose cannot be tamed for official use nor framed for the general masses; it does not serve the intents of church or state, and will never succumb to scripting for a romantic blockbuster drama. Shalamov's works, as he himself put it, constitute every individual's own uncompromising guide to behaving in a crowd. His literary trademark is short stories that appear as simple slices of camp life but through the act of slow reading transform into an experience of the depths of what it means to be human.

The kind of "slow reading" required by Shalamov's "new prose" is today an unpopular pastime. In a cultural climate where even serious works of art are created for quick consumption, his works seem to be a rather unlikely

**The heroes of our age don't have time for suicide. They are at risk of being overrun.**

## Continued. Exploring the moral necessity of Varlam Shalamov

option among the multitude of mainstream entertainment offered today's reader. In a world where we consume bite-size texts within seconds only to affirm our appreciation of them by clicking "Like", Shalamov is definitely not the hero of our time.

Though not intending to establish him as such, this year's Shalamov conference might have come close – close in with respect to the impressive amount of obstacles it assigned itself to overcome: First, to affirm a writer who is still not a household name in Russia nor widely read as worthy of a much different fate. Second, to place a far from fully researched writer in world literature as well as in Soviet history. Only twenty years after the first Shalamov conference was held in Vologda, "shalamovedenie" ("shalamovistics") is still a young science. With one section called "Shalamov and Soviet History", two sections on the poetics of Shalamov's prose, and a round table of translators from Germany, the United Kingdom, Slovenia, the Czech Republic, and France, the conference managed to address the need to uncover further biographical details as well as to discover more about his writing.

**IN MANY WAYS**, the conference marked a beginning, without actually being one. By continuing previous scholarship, the conference participants showed through their presentations and papers that *shalamovedenie* already has a past. Something in the friendly atmosphere and something in the challenging discussions revealed that we have arrived somewhere. There is a firm foundation to fall back on; it is not the end of the road and at the same time not the journey's first step. Several literary scholars directed their attention away from the familiar Kolyma aspect of Shalamov's prose to his less famous antinovel *Vishera*; in this regard Elena Mikhailik's paper "Prose Experienced as a Document: 'One Ought to Tell the Saga as it Happened'" at the opening plenary session was especially noteworthy. On the second day of the conference, the esteemed academic Vyacheslav Ivanov turned the conference's attention to Shalamov's poetry. Ivanov presented both an innovative view of the writer's poetry, a side of his literary production

that has yet to receive the scholarly research it deserves, as well as perceptive suggestions for future investigations.

During such a fusion of the prospective with the retrospective, it seemed only natural that *Chetvertyi shalamovskii sbornik* [The fourth Shalamov collection] was published in connection with the conference. The edition contains materials from the writer's archive, little known reminiscences about him, and recent articles by scholars prominent and old as well as novice and young.

I myself most certainly fall in the latter category. When I saw my own article published in the same collection – "Otlik cherez stoletie, cherez prostuiu baniu (k teme 'Shalamov i Dostoevskii')" [a response after a century, through a simple banya (to the topic "Shalamov and Dostoevsky")] – it occurred to me that the girl who wrote it had been twenty-three years old at the time. When I produced my first contribution to *shalamovedenie*, I was but a child who did not ask herself *what* Shalamov was or *why* she needed him. At the time I never wondered *how* to read Shalamov; I understood his voice intuitively and soon said to myself, "This is what I'm going to spend my life exploring." Had someone asked me then what exactly *this* was, I would probably have answered: "Varlam Tikhonovich Shalamov. Russian writer. Born 1907, died 1982." Today my response sounds a little different. *This* is everything indispensable to understanding his works in their complete context – and *that* is always within literature and history and never without the moral necessity of Varlam Shalamov.

**IN THE 1980S**, John Glad told Mikhail Gorbachev that he would not believe in perestroika until Shalamov was published in the Soviet Union. Shalamov's importance for Russia as a measurement of health – political, cultural, moral – could stretch well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century: as long as Russia doesn't know how or why Shalamov should be read, it is bound to be a country in denial. A simple writer who is more than simply a writer, Shalamov's significance will always reach beyond his words. Instead of ending a dialogue of controversy, the conference's search for answers made

possible more questions.

The woman whom the conference commemorated, Irina Sirotinskaya, once asked Shalamov: "Kak zhit?" [How to live?] Perhaps this third question might now rightfully be added to the two famous questions "Chto delat'?" [What is to be done?] and "Kto vinovat?" [Who is to blame?] that have haunted Russian literature since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. And it is with his answer to the third question that Varlam Shalamov will be granted an undisputed place in the Russian canon. ✕

Josefina Lundblad

PhD candidate, University of California, Berkeley

Note: This is a report from the International Shalamov Conference in Moscow, June 16–17, 2011.

## Narratives on privatization in Eastern Europe.

Social scientists use seminars and conferences as "test runs", where narratives and incomplete theories are presented and tested through examination in light of the experiences and aggregate knowledge of other researchers. A test run provides inspiration and guidance for further work with studies and presented texts. Everything takes place in the encounter with other scholars. It is fruitful if the conference contributions lead to a discussion that takes both the author and other seminar participants further in their work. The editors asked Björn Rombach to attend the "Privatization and Liberalization" conference arranged by Södertörn University and the Stockholm Institute of Transition Economics (SITE) held June 16–17, 2011, and to share his reflections.

**T**o privatize is to make private. Someone makes something more private and thus less public. When it comes to the arts and culture, being private is normally not desirable – if one wants to be appreciated by one's critics, that is. Real and personal, yes, but not overly private. The public, on the other hand, is often driven by curiosity and thus drawn to private affairs – especially if they are already known to the public.

One question is whether excessively private cultural expressions have been privatized, or not made public. Why should everything be perceived from the outset as something private that needs to be made public? Private affairs may be as real as it gets, but have been privatized by the author, or dancer, as the case may be. It works the same way with operations, programs, or services that have been privatized. Some have previously been deprivatized and taken over by the state. Others have been started and run for a long time by the citizenry through the state.

If something that has been made public is regarded as too private, it comes up for discussion on the arts pages of the newspaper or in a blog somewhere as soon as the judgment is made. The question of what is actually private is also open to debate when it comes to organizations. Is a company owned by a neighboring state really private? And what about corporate groups that are as



## Reflections after attending a conference

big as countries and buy the enterprises privatized by the state? Does the property become private? Individuals who want to make a difference now have a longer road to travel. On the one hand, this is a matter of definition. If by “private” we mean one thing and not the other, the questions are easy to answer. On the other hand, one can easily be amazed by how the private and the personal drift apart in this way.

A conference entitled “Privatization and Liberalization” at Södertörn University could have been given a broad approach. The limitation was put in place by indicating the focus on “Network Industries and Eastern Europe”. The collaboration with SITE at the Stockholm School of Economics also seemed to set limitations by contributing to the focus on narratives from the field and the practical lessons learned from them. Perhaps the limitations were a sign that the climate in both directions has become tougher in recent years.

**THE APPROACH** and focus during the two conference days in mid-June became very narrow – sometimes to the point of being private. That is not a criticism, however, and this is not a conference review. In the academic world, the answer to the question of what is narrow is in the eye of the beholder. It is easy to agree on depth, but that much harder to agree on breadth.

A lot of us have taken an interest in the privatization of activities previously performed by the public sector. In countries like Sweden, where large areas of operations were dominated by public works, privatizations have led to massive changes. Over the past twenty years or so in the research field, a great many narratives have been collected and a substantial body of theory has been developed. This knowledge is relatively unknown outside academia, which is due to the fact that the issue of privatization of public sector production was politicized early on. Whether privatization was good or bad was a given for the policymakers and the political opposition. Non-normative research was marginalized and theories were regarded as serving no useful purpose.

But the subject of this conference turned out to be privatization in coun-

ILLUSTRATION: KARIN SUNNIVSON



tries that, to a great extent, formerly did not have market economies. The narratives were taken from Eastern Europe, mainly from the former Eastern Bloc, but Turkey was included as well. On the other hand, despite the limitation, quite a lot of material dealt with matters other than network industries.

Privatizations in states with no actual market economy obviously become legislative matters. For instance, matters related to property rights may need to be re-regulated. The role of EU law in privatization was brought up at the conference. The law does not regulate privatizations, but contains a great deal on liberalization, which in turn affects privatization. Matters related to the alignment of legislation have made law more interesting for all of us who usually categorize legislation among the restrictions.

**THE POST-PRIVATIZATION** role of the state is another interesting question. Here, the role was discussed in relation to privatized network industries, where the state always has a role to play, as regulator and examiner if nothing else.

That the state is not marginalized here has more to do with the distinctive nature of the industry than with the fact that it was mainly state-owned before privatization. The wider question of the role of the state in areas that have been privatized was left for discussion during the break. Schools and health care providers were brought up as examples of areas where the role of the state changes – but does not end – after privatization.

Now that we nonetheless are concentrated on network industries, we can easily determine that there is a need for huge investments in Eastern Europe. Infrastructure is important. Investments in networks are normally paid for by the taxpayers, not the users. And willingness

to pay can decline in times of greater austerity. Investments in networks do not create jobs on a large scale, which makes them less interesting in rhetorical terms.

**PRIVATIZATION IN** Turkey is an interesting case in itself. On the subject of historiography, it is to be hoped that Jonas Prager (New York University) and Bulent Acma (Anadolu University) will get back to us with an article in *Baltic Worlds*. Accounts were presented at the conference on state entrepreneurship, where state-owned enterprises engage in market-like conduct, and on privatization driven by red figures in the books of state-owned enterprises. The significance of who it is that buys these enterprises when they are privatized is an interesting question. The state-owned enterprise may be sold to a foreign or domestic company or it may be sold to or distributed among the citizens, with or without restrictions. The discussion became extremely heated when the Turkish Army's purchase of companies came up. To the relief of all present, things cooled down again when the

chairman noted that this was, after all, not a privatization.

Privatization processes and their effects showed palpable similarities from one state to the next. There were many parallels in narratives from Poland and Turkey, which differ in many respects. In this way, some parts of the narratives could be generalized. And that is as far as we got. With respect to the link to theory and the development of theory, the conference's indications could perhaps have been clearer. There has to be more than simply narratives about privatization and network industries in Eastern Europe for researchers who are unmoved by such to manifest any interest. When everyone is dealing with the same problems, the limitations of the seminar become clear to outsiders, but almost impossible for the participating scholars to discern.

**AFTER THE SEMINAR** day at Södertörn University, the character of the conference changed. We moved to SITE, the suits and ties multiplied, the technical problems became less obvious in connection with the presentations, business cards were distributed without asking, and the parallel sessions were exchanged for panel discussions in plenum. And yet everything was much the same. The narratives were again in focus at this half-day event. Theories would have felt out of place, and they were not brought up. It was perhaps surprising that more expert advisers were not invited to attend.

We heard narratives about CSC Telecom in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Looked at very close up, developments obviously differ even in these states, which are so often clumped together. And then there's Kazakhstan. The difference compared to the previous day's presentations was that the focus was now on corporate roles and strategies. We also heard about the role of regulation, but from the consultant perspective and the state perspective on this day of the seminar. The narratives were tinged with personal elements, and the lack of theory was not disturbing here, but expected. One might perhaps think the advertising elements unnecessary.

A second panel discussed electricity and energy, with electricity markets the main topic. There were many nods

**What is private and what is public is often an empirical matter. But not what *should be* private or public.**

## Continued. Eastern Europe

of recognition in response to Milko Kovachev's (Worley Parsons) narrative from Bulgaria, where privatization was followed by sharp decreases in state subsidies – exactly as intended. The goal was to reduce government spending. But since privatization does not in and of itself result in lower production or distribution costs, the outcome was services that are more expensive. When citizens become consumers, this is the price they pay. This generates criticism, even though the tax levy for this particular service is reduced by a roughly equivalent degree. Privatization is not always the villain.

And so it was time for lunch, an Asian buffet shared with my friend Hans, who works at the address where the conference was held. After catching up about our respective families, he wanted to know what he had missed. How much can you cover by the time after-lunch coffee is served? That we had taken away several narratives about privatization in Eastern Europe, a hope that theory development will have made more progress the next time we meet, and thoughts about the difference between the private and the privatized. And there you have it. ✕

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## Cultural studies travel. To (and from) East Central Europe

On June 15–17, 2011, the Advanced Cultural Studies Institute of Sweden (ACSIS) organized its biennial conference, this year dedicated to “Current Issues in European Cultural Studies”. Together with the Department for Studies of Social Change and Culture (Tema Q), ACSIS forms a vibrant research and educational milieu for urban, youth, and ethnic subcultures, as well as gender and cultural policy studies, at Linköping University. Spotlight panels discussed the recent development of cultural studies in five geographical areas: Central, Eastern, Northern and Southern Europe, and the UK. This report highlights some of the issues that were discussed at the panel session “East European Cultural Studies: The ‘New’ Europe”, chaired by Professor Irina Sandomirskaya of CBEES.

**T**he development of cultural studies as an academic discipline was embedded in the process of the democratization of higher education and cultural research. Groundbreaking studies by Richard Hoggart and Raymond Williams presented the cultural practices of the British working class as legitimate objects of academic inquiry, and fought against treatment of these cultural practices as inferior and unworthy of the proud name “culture”. The “lowly” fields in question included television programs, romantic novels, and pop music. The emancipating and democratizing agenda of cultural studies was later extended to embrace other marginalized categories: gender, non-Western cultures in the West, immigrant communities, and youth subcultures.

The democratization of Soviet bloc countries in the 1980s and 1990s saw the introduction of cultural studies as a liberal Western mode of knowledge production. Scientific research under state socialism was notoriously conservative and compartmentalized in clearly delineated disciplines, which rarely interacted with one another. Furthermore, social sciences had a notorious lack of empirical research: empirical data was ideologically dangerous. In addition, the cultural field was strictly hierarchical. State socialist cultural policy was built on the principle of the “democ-



ILLUSTRATION: KARIN SUNVISSON

ratization of culture” by distributing high culture, previously accessible only to the elite and upper-middle classes, to the working class. Consequently, the notion of “culture” was identified with “high culture” – opera, drama, literature, orchestral music (it has to be added that folk and amateur cultural practices were also perceived as legitimate, though less valuable than the professional arts).

The spotlight panel session questioned several aspects of this picture. First, critical cultural research was not completely absent under authoritarianism. Second, after 1989, the introduction of cultural studies into post-state-socialist academia was not always emancipating because of the hegemonic character of Western science. Further, as Sandomirskaya argued, the concepts and methods of cultural studies were quickly adopted by the growing ranks of public relations experts. Finally, it is by no means certain that cultural studies was ever exclusively “Western European”.

**JOHAN ÖBERG**, research secretary at the Arts Faculty, University of Gothenburg, tackled the issue of the absence of democratic approaches to studying culture in Soviet Russia. According to Öberg, there was some space to question the established cultural hierarchies, even under the authoritarian regime, something that is revealed in the work of Moscow conceptual artists. Curiously, although Soviet academic disciplines could not afford to risk engaging in empirical studies of contemporary culture,

several innovative conceptual artists created parallel academic or pseudo-academic universes (Collective Action, Medical Hermeneutics), tapping into the highly legitimate rationalist rhetoric of science and constructing powerful interpretations of the Soviet canon.

**THE DEMOCRATIZATION** of Eastern Europe saw the introduction of neoliberal principles into the economy and higher education that in many ways worked towards maintaining the marginal status of local actors and, to put it crudely, subjected them to the hegemony of Western standards. Allaine Cerwonka, chair of gender studies at the Central European University in Budapest, discussed the development of gender studies in East Central Europe as a neoliberal project that resulted in marginalization. Although many gender studies departments emerged in Eastern European countries thanks to generous funding from the American philanthropist George Soros, the new Eastern European gender scholars were disenfranchised from the global academic community in some ways: the influence of publications in local languages was limited and local case studies were regarded as insufficient to make generalized claims. Western cultural studies, a politically motivated project of knowledge production that is meant to give voice to subalterns and emancipate them, seems to reinforce the hegemony of Western science by reducing Eastern European voices to “only” empirical data.

On the other hand, the contribution

**If all culture becomes popular culture, there is perhaps little reason to distinguish the one from the other.**



## The Russian context. Broken dreams and political engineering

of scholars from Eastern European countries to “Western” cultural research is often underestimated. The history of structuralism and post-structuralism, particularly semiotics and actor-network theory (ANT), is an especially apt example. I myself noted in the seminar that linguistic structuralism, traditionally regarded as “the negative other” by cultural studies, supplied Soviet cultural researchers with analytical tools that enabled them to legitimately bypass Marxist-Leninist doctrines. Particularly interesting is the case of French semiotics developed by Algirdas Julius Greimas (1917–1992), who was born to Lithuanian parents in Tula, Russia, and educated in Kaunas and Grenoble in the 1930s. His father was deported and perished in the Gulag, but Greimas escaped from occupied Lithuania to France in 1944. Starting in 1965, Greimas was the director of studies of general semantics at the *École des hautes études en sciences sociales* in Paris. Greimas’s seminars inspired Bruno Latour to apply the Greimasian theory of actants to study the socio-material organization of science. In the words of Latour, the ANT perspective treated the semiotic organon as ontology.

Although the Greimas Centre for Semiotics and Literary Studies was established in Vilnius in 1991, academia in Lithuania has so far failed to recognize ANT as a potential part of Lithuania’s intellectual heritage. Since the 1970s, Lithuanian semioticians have continued to restrict the use of Greimas’s theory and methods to explorations of mythology and literature. Elsewhere, however, ANT has come to be seen as an influential approach that transformed much of sociological and cultural research. ✕

**eglė rindzevičiūtė**

PhD in cultural studies; post-doctoral researcher at the Gothenburg Research Institute of the Stockholm School of Economics, the University of Gothenburg, and Tema Q, Linköping University, Sweden

Talking about stability in Russia with any credibility is only going to get harder for Prime Minister Putin and his cohort, President Medvedev. A picture emerged at the “Russia After the Soviet Empire conference” at Lund University of a society where various factions are moving in parallel towards a breakdown in consensus with the Russian government. The government is struggling to regain the confidence of both the middle class and right-wing nationalists. Minority groups, such as Russians of “non-Slavic appearance”, as the euphemism goes in Russia, are risking their lives in the process.

“Putin is seen as a traitor by the ultra-nationalist movement; he is no longer seen as a role model”, says Elizaveta Gaufman, one of whose research interests is the influence of growing ethnonationalism on Russian migration policy. The political repercussions of nationalist riots in Manezh Square, Moscow, in December 2010, played straight into the hands of nationalist elements. About 5,000 nationalists and soccer fans participated in the riot, and two guest workers died in the disturbances. One of Putin’s first measures was to tighten migration regulations.

“Unfortunately, the government is pretty much doing whatever it can to either conceal this ethnically motivated violence or try to profit from this nationalistic popularity”, Gaufman says. In her research, she has seen a pattern in which the government imposes restrictions on migrants in situations when nationalism poses a threat.

**TRYING TO UNDERSTAND** where post-Soviet Russia is going seems to be a matter of understanding how the society is redefining itself: contradictory pictures are circulating of what precisely Russia and “Russianness” are. The official picture of a united and multicultural Russia is being challenged from several directions.

“In Russia, 15,000 people and some CNN cameras on Red Square would be enough to start political changes”, says Russian BBC reporter and analyst Konstantin von Eggert, the introductory speaker at the conference, which was arranged by the Center for European Studies.



ILLUSTRATION: KARIN SUNNIVSON

He describes Russian society as cynical and easily manipulated due to the lack of a clear sense of self. “The media image can change very quickly, depending on the interests of the political class”, he says.

**SEVERAL RESEARCHERS** are focusing precisely on how the Russian identity has changed in the last twenty years and the role of the state in this process. Bo Petersson discussed two myths that political powers are using to legitimize themselves and their image of Russia: the myth that Russia is by its very nature a great power, and the myth that the country is repeatedly thrown into difficult times and hence cannot always realize its inherent potential as a great power.

Putin has used these myths to explain the developments of the last twenty years to the Russian people. The years under President Yeltsin are painted as one of these recurring periods of predestined decline. During his time in power, Putin has bounded onto the stage as the one who will rescue the nation from chaos. This figure of the savior who materializes just when things seem the darkest, to once again lead the country into a new period of

greatness, is part and parcel of the myth of recurring difficulties.

“In my interpretation, one key to the understanding of Putin’s popularity figures is that he has been very capable of latching onto this popular myth-making about the rightful great power status and cyclical, recurrent periods of difficult times”, says Petersson, who has studied Putin’s speeches to the nation. For example, Putin has said: “Russia is not claiming the status of a great power; it is a great power, by virtue of its huge potential, its history, and its function.”

Is the need for a stable, long-term, and cohesive national identity the chord Putin has managed to strike that can explain his popularity? These are the questions asked by Flemming Splidsboel Hansen, whose research interest is Russia and its sense of ontological security. He portrays Putin as the successful psychotherapist to the Russians, and calls the phenomenon of insecurity that has benefited Putin the “search for ontological security”. The term is taken from psychology. Ontological security is developed in the first years of life, and without it, individuals lack a sense of continuity in their lives; there is no pattern and no meaning. Security theorists have elevated ontological security from the individual level to the collective level, which is considered controversial.

**THROUGH HIS** “psychotherapy”, Putin has shifted the collective sense of what Russianness is. The Russian identity has moved away from the anti-Soviet and Western-oriented tack of the early 1990s to increasingly viewing the West as its putative opposite. Splidsboel Hansen describes how the process started when the collective ontological security was shaken during the Yeltsin era immediately after the fall of the Soviet Union, when neither foreign responses nor domestic developments turned out as expected. When ontological security has been lost, the need to reestablish it becomes a psychological imperative – which opens the doors to searching for – and being receptive to – other new identities.

“If I should answer the question ‘What is Russia?’ in one sentence, I would say: Russians today perceive themselves as the ones Westerners

## Continued. Broken dreams and political engineering

don't like", says Splidsboel Hansen. He sees the move over two decades as a mix of broken dreams and political engineering.

The change in identity is of relevance for marginalized groups who are struggling for their human rights. It is easy to talk about what Putin is homogenizing, perhaps harder to show the consequences for minorities in Russia. Minorities are paying the price of the new ontological security and catchwords like liberalism, individualism, and cooperation with the West are being replaced by order, collectivism, and rivalry with the West.

"That is why there can't be gay parades in Moscow", says Splidsboel Hansen. Given that Russia is promoting human rights, a banned and attacked gay pride parade seems a failure, but if one applies the search for ontological security as an explanatory model, it may appear as a creation of meaning. Liberalism and the West may connote something negative, while order and the rejection of Western influences may instill a new sense of ontological security.

**THE SECURITY THAT** a ruling power tries to infuse into a population is unevenly distributed among different social groups. The multicultural Russian society may now be caught up in a process in which the search for ontological security divides rather than unites. Putin's "therapeutic method" of providing a homogeneous sense of self seems to be meeting with increasing antagonism from the actually heterogeneous "patients".

There was a recurring focus on ethnicity at the conference in relation to understanding contemporary conflicts in Russia. The ethnicity filter of the conference could be a reflection of current Russian domestic policy. Twenty years after the fall of the Soviet Union, class issues are being put aside and attention is aimed at the issues of ethnicity that many of the papers addressed. This perhaps leaves scope for narratives that naturalize ethnicity as a problem.

The absence of discussion about the material and economic prerequisites for different lives, in Russia, must be put in relation to the alternative interest in identity-creating processes. With no

clear picture of what Russian identity is, the prerequisites for discussing the role of distribution policy in social development seem to end up in the shadows.

Discussing identity-creating processes without discussing the structure of the material world might seem paradoxical, and can appear to give a severely limited picture of the world where these identities are created and, ultimately, of the identities analyzed by scholars. But dismissing the focus on identity seems an oversimplification. Part of Splidsboel Hansen's point is that everyone, both individually and on the collective level, needs and seeks ontological security, that is, a clear sense of who they are and their role in life. It follows, as Splidsboel Hansen says, that "people may value ontological security over material security".

Groups with a "non-Slavic appearance" are beleaguered. And nationalist forces no longer support the official picture of who is Russian and what Russia is. There are European ideas like ethnopluralism found among the right-wing extremists. In the Russian version, this means that what Russia needs to become the "true great Russia" again is to become ethnically pure, rather than be restored as a vast geographical territory. In his paper, focused on ethnopluralist trends, Niklas Bernsand described how this worldview fits together.

An ethnopluralist perspective may emphasize the non-hierarchical nature of differences between cultures, and seem to refrain from judging cultures as better or worse: it is assimilation itself that is thought to be a bad thing. The nationalist version creates an idea of rights as follows: "You will have your independence in exchange for deportation." This is an ethnopluralist message aimed, for example, at Russians from the Caucasian republics.

**ONE CONFERENCE** participant who reacted strongly against studying phenomena in Russia from a general human perspective, in terms of the "search for ontological security" for example, was Professor Aleksei Malashenko of the Moscow State Institute of International Relations:

"This is my private opinion; maybe I am mistaken, but never compare Europe and Russia. Look at the map, look

at the history; I cannot imagine parallels for instance between Poland and Russia or somebody else and Russia. In my opinion Russia is a very, very special case."

However, the restraint he sought on comparisons with regard to what Russia is, has been, and can become did not apply when he outlined the evolution of Islam in Russia since the fall of the Soviet Union: "When I am in Dagestan or another Caucasian republic, I feel that practically it is not a big difference from maybe Egypt. More and more they are becoming Islamized."

**MALASHENKO DESCRIBED** how the struggle for independence in the Caucasian republics has been changed by gradual Islamization. And that this can be understood as a reaction to the war in Chechnya, corruption, and injustice from the Russian state. He also emphasized that the Russian majority's negative images of their Muslim countrymen are a major problem that should be taken seriously.

But more than anything else, he painted a picture in which Muslims in Russia constitute a growing threat, and he expressed no hope for a solution in the Caucasus, nor for sympathetic dialogue among the population groups:

"I think this problem has no solution, the point when one could have been found was missed about five years ago.

"But, indeed Islam is becoming, despite all the blah blah blah [sic!] about dialogue between civilizations, an obstacle in the path of mutual understanding."

In the discourse of this model of thought, a person's Muslim identity ends up on an immediate collision course with the "Russian" identity, and rhetoric reminiscent of that used by nationalist political leaders in Europe is generated.

"It spreads among all Muslim communities", says Malashenko, who in his talk vacillated between knowing how "they" and "all" Muslims are, choose, think, and orient themselves, and on the other hand giving personal examples of people whom he has met.

As a listener, you are left wondering about a great deal: can you, for example, be Muslim and at the same time

a human rights activist in Russia, in the world he describes? Is it possible to be Muslim, not want Sharia law, but still want an independent Chechnya? The main thing you as a listener want to ask is what perspectives are *excluded* by the narrative. What repressed understandings about the situation in the Caucasus are implied by the understanding presented by Aleksei Malashenko?

With such an exclusive narrative, it becomes difficult for us as listeners to look critically at ourselves and acknowledge our personal roles in xenophobic societies. How does our examination of Russian nationalist movements work, for example? It is perhaps easy to point the finger at Russian right-wing extremism as "the constitutional Other" in order to avoid dealing with our own culpability in the evolution of such thought structures.

**RUSSIAN POLITICAL** forces that are finding it increasingly difficult to uphold their image of Russia as stable and united was a recurring picture at the conference. As more and more information becomes available on the Internet, the image of Russia is also being decentralized as a more open media climate is forced into existence. Even on state-owned TV stations, there is a growing tendency to address perspectives other than the government's – as the stations must do to maintain any credibility.

"When the state channels are covering stories that are delicate subjects for the Kremlin, they are also forced into more objective reporting, where both sides of the issue are allowed to speak", says Konstantin von Eggert.

Many groups are making progress in expressing their views on issues. Controversial subjects like the Khodorkovsky trial, the Khimki Forest, and Putin's palace, as well as populist expressions like "ethnic crime", are covered in the news nowadays. von Eggert refuses to make any predictions about which groups will be most successful, saying: "Russia is an unfinished project." ✕

**joakim andersson  
& tove stenqvist**

Freelance journalists



# INVESTIGATING RUSSIAN BERLIN IN WEIMAR GERMANY

## CULTURE AND DISPLACEMENT IN THE AGE OF WAR AND REVOLUTION<sup>1</sup>

BY **KARL SCHLÖGEL** ILLUSTRATION **KARIN SUNVISSON**

When I did my first research project on Russian Berlin – that is, on the community of Russian émigrés in Berlin in the 1920s – one could hardly imagine that Berlin would again have a large Russian community.<sup>2</sup> Everybody living in Berlin today has the impression that there must be thousands of Russians or at least Russian-speaking people in town. At newspaper stands, you can find dozens of Russian newspapers, dailies, weeklies, yellow press, and highbrow. Russian sounds can be heard everywhere, but more intensively in special locations such as KaDeWe, the upper part of Kurfürstendamm, in bus number 19 or 29, called “Russenschaukel” in the 1920s – the Russian roundabout. One of the most popular writers of the younger generation is Vladimir Kaminer, who came to Berlin in the early 1990s and who has published a

series of bestselling books like *Russendisko* and whose Cafe Burger in Berlin-Mitte is one of the attractions for EasyJet tourists from all over the world. You can find Russian kindergartens, schools, bookstores, and large sections with Russian food in supermarkets if you don’t prefer shopping in one of the central places where you can get almost everything Russian, from everyday products to video-blockbusters – for instance in the Rossija shop at Charlottenburg station on Stuttgarter Platz. You can discover the infrastructure of widespread community life, with subtle differences reflecting the diversity of the Russian-speaking colony: the urban Jewish immigration of the 1970s and ’80s, the post-1990 immigrants, the Russian Germans, and the people in transit. You can listen to Russian conversations in the steam baths and fitness clubs, you

can navigate through Russian cafes and restaurants, attend openings of Russian galleries and exhibitions. Sometimes you can get the impression that Berlin has become the twin city of Moscow, with people moving back and forth – even on planes that take off in Berlin-Schönefeld at midnight, timed to land in one of the Moscow airports at sunrise.

**Twenty years ago,** Russians entering Berlin used to be called the “New Russians”: this was the label for the rich and superrich, people who had made money overnight in the “troubled time” of the collapse of the Soviet Union. In the meantime, the picture has changed slightly. The rich and superrich do not settle down in Berlin, but in Kensington and similar neigh-





borhoods. The Russians of Berlin are quite wealthy, but more of the upper middle class. There are also masses of tourists and a lot of young people, among them many students. If you have a Schengen visa, you can move around – from Helsinki to Berlin or Paris. You can buy anything from a cup of coffee to an apartment without significant problems, and everything is cheaper in Berlin than in Moscow. The official statistics of the Berlin authorities do not reflect the number and the presence of Russians in the town. I am quite sure that the numbers are much higher than usually assumed, maybe around 150,000. But this reappearance of a Russian community is only one cause of the new interest in this issue, and at the end of this talk we have to discuss in what respect the community of today differs from that of the interwar period.

When I started research, we had brilliant studies on Russian Berlin. I will mention only Robert C. Williams's *Culture in Exile: Russian Émigrés in Germany 1881–1941*, published in 1972, and Hans-Erich Volkmann's *Die russische Emigration in Deutschland 1919–1929*, published in 1966.<sup>3</sup> The new situation in the late 1980s and the early '90s came about with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the reassessment of the Russian emigration and the cultural heritage of "Russia Abroad". For the first time since the Revolution and the Great Exodus, the fate of Russia outside Russia was not only debated by historians but by the public at large. The Russian public, not just historians, discussed the topic without restrictions. For the first time the archives were opened up to research, and the treasures of the captured Prague archives, transferred to Moscow after 1945, were declassified. This was a revolution in the approach to the émigrés who, in Soviet propaganda, had always been stigmatized as "White Guardist" and "counterrevolutionary". Thousands of documents, books, and works of art have been published, reprinted – decades and generations after their publication abroad. They include famous writers, poets, artists, politicians, scholars of all disciplines. The late 1980s and 1990s were a time of homecoming for a culture hitherto banished and exiled, forbidden and stigmatized. The great names of Russian culture finally returned home – sometimes with their bodies from the cemeteries in Paris, Monte Carlo, and Prague. The discovery and reevaluation of the cultural heritage of Russia Abroad can be understood as a substantial element of the reintegration of a culture that had suffered heavily from the consequences of civil war and international conflicts, especially from the Second World War and the subsequent Cold War. The rediscovery and reconsideration of Russian emigration constituted a kind of reconciliation for Russia at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>4</sup>

**It was Marc Raeff** who took the lead in this reassessment with his *Cultural History of the Russian Emigration 1919–1939*, published in 1990.<sup>5</sup> I had the good fortune to meet him and to work with him. Raeff, born in Moscow in 1923, lived with his family in Berlin in the '20s, then moved to Czechoslovakia, France, and finally the United States, where he taught for decades at Columbia University. There he made ample use of the treasures of the Bakhmeteff Archive, representing in many regards the fate of this generation in exile. So

in close cooperation with Russian colleagues we did some basic research on the Russian diaspora and its centers: in Constantinople, Sofia, Belgrade, Helsinki, Riga, Prague, Paris, New York and other places. Many monographs have been published since then in Russia and elsewhere.

But when I go back to this subject now, I do so with a new interest and new intention. Let me briefly explain.

**When I started** my research on forced migration in Central and Eastern Europe, ten or so years ago, I discovered that the best and often sole publications on this subject were written by Russian and mostly Russian-Jewish authors. Most of them were familiar to the specialists on demography and migration, but not to a broader audience. I have in mind Eugene Kulischer, with his monograph *Europe on the Move*, which was published in 1948; Joseph Schechtman, with his two-volume work *Forced Migration in Europe*; and Jacob Lestschinsky's work on Jewish migration.<sup>6</sup> None of these works have been translated into German despite the fact that they represent the most detailed studies on forced migration and population transfer, including the expulsion of Germans from Eastern Europe and the former Eastern provinces of the Reich. Three observations came together here: Eugene Kulischer was the author who invented the term "displacement" and "displaced persons". Joseph Schechtman was the author who wrote the most detailed study on forced migration to this day. Jacob Lestschinsky was the demographer and scholar who first analyzed the human losses of the Shoah, which he estimated at about six million lives. All three of them were Russian Jews, all three of them spent most of the 1920s in Berlin, all three were in close contact with the German scholarly world, all three of them succeeded in escaping Europe under Nazi rule. Alexander Kulischer, Eugene's brother, was arrested crossing the border in Southern France and died in a German concentration camp.

This was the main impulse for me to go back to Russian Berlin. I had the strong impression that the discovery of the huge migration processes of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as a core element of modern demography has to do with the personal experience and collective fate of those who moved through the turmoil of the Russian and German revolutions, and that Russian Berlin was the intellectual place for the emergence of this new theme, new in scholarship and in politics.

But this attention placed on Kulischer, Schechtman, and Lestschinsky was to a certain degree the trigger for new and not-so-new questions and discoveries. Going back into the intellectual fabric of Weimar Berlin, I realized that there were many more networks, nodes, hubs. And I want to talk here about some of them. I am convinced that Berlin has been the transition point for very specific insights that shaped and revolutionized our perception of the epoch, which Eric Hobsbawm called the "Age of Extremes". I will try to show this in the impact Russian scholars in exile, many of them Marxists, had on the development of modern Russian and Soviet studies in the United States. But it is necessary to keep in mind that intellectual transfer and transmission went in both directions, not only into the United States. With some examples, I

will show the fate of those scholars and scientists who returned to Russia.

Michael Marrus, in his great study on exiles in the 20<sup>th</sup> century – *The Unwanted* – focuses on the émigrés/refugees of Hitler-dominated Central Europe.<sup>7</sup>

I am convinced that, if we include the history of the Russian émigrés into our panorama of emigration, we will not only get a more comprehensive picture, but the picture itself will somehow be transformed. And that is essential in the process of creating a "pan-European memory" which has overcome the great East-West divide of our perception and the asymmetry of attention usually linked to it.

## INTERWAR RUSSIAN BERLIN – THE STAGE, THE ACTORS, THE TIME

The Berlin of the Weimar Republic has found its historiography: from Peter Gay and George Mosse, from Fritz Stern to Heinrich August Winkler, it was called "Faust's Metropolis" and "Grand Hotel Abyss". The impact of the Russian communities – the White and the Red – is best reflected in Walter Laqueur's study of the intimate German-Russian relations in that period.<sup>8</sup> The fascinating aspect of Russian Berlin in Weimar is that Berlin for a very short period was the "capital of Russia outside Russia" and simultaneously an outpost of the Russian revolution, represented by the Comintern, German communists and the Soviet representatives in Germany. In Berlin both factions of the Russian Civil war could meet – and they did. Both factions had their impact on cultural and intellectual life. Both factions did their best to fight for their aims. Weimar Berlin was a transitional period, covering a bit more than a decade. But for few years Berlin was the home of 200,000 to 300,000 émigrés, and proletarian neighborhoods like Wedding and Moabit were called "Little Moscow". For a short period Berlin was the informal capital of Russia Abroad with the former political elite, army representatives, provisional institutions in touch with German official institutions, networks of organizations, professional associations, more than 100 publishing houses, dozens of newspapers, dailies featuring the most prominent writers and analysts of prerevolutionary Russia, literary circles, magazines, shops, hotels, travel agencies, etc. – a parallel world inside Berlin, a community functioning quite well, based on traditional prerevolutionary loyalties and suffering from prerevolutionary factionalism and partisanship. All the maladies of an émigré community that is kept alive by despair and the hope of returning home. And all kinds of alliances can be observed, extreme-right terrorists from the Russian "Blackhundred" movement and the extreme-right terrorists from the German Freikorps and the early Hitler movement. We do not have time and space here to give an overview of Russian Berlin; it may suffice to generalize as follows.

For most Russians – and I have in mind the citizens of the former Russian Empire, including ethnic non-Russians such as Ukrainians, Georgians, Armenians, Jews, Balts, etc. – Berlin was the place of a double displacement. They had to move twice: the first time after the defeat in the Civil War in 1920/21, and the second time in the wake of the crisis and after the col-

lapse of the Weimar Republic. For most, the demise of the Weimar Republic was a reiteration, a kind of déjà vu of the Russian Revolution. They were experienced in studying the impact of war on the disorganization of social and political life. They all had gone through periods of disobedience, rebellion, insurrection, destabilization, the radicalization of the masses. They were “experienced observers”. They all had experience with forms of military dictatorship and the impact of arms and violence. They felt that prewar Europe had passed away and that conventional wisdom did not help in finding solutions. They could observe a process of exhaustion of the institutions of civil society and the emergence of a new type of mass politics. Their experience was international and transnational. In Berlin, two organizations – or more precisely, two worlds of transnational, and international character – were operating. The Russian emigration was by definition a transnational and international phenomenon, and the sections of the Communist International were also, by definition, operating across national borders. Reading the émigré press with correspondents in almost all countries of the diaspora reminds one in many respects of the press of the Communist International. The Russian Berlin of the émigrés as well as the Russian members of the Comintern contributed a lot to the specifically international, cosmopolitan spirit of the German capital at that time. Investigating the intellectual and cultural topography of Weimar Berlin, we make the discovery that, up to now, most research succumbs to the partitions that are the result of the division of academic labor: research on German Communism and Soviet Russia is one thing, research on White Russia and German culture is another. The really fascinating subject, however, is the entanglement and interrelationship among them all. For example, we have Mensheviks working in the Soviet Embassy. One of the greatest archivists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – Boris Nicolaevsky – worked for the Marx-Engels Institute in Moscow and simultaneously for the Menshevik delegation in exile. The editor of the leading liberal Russian daily, *Rul*, Iosif Gessen, encounters the Soviet ambassador at diplomatic receptions and parties. On the street or in the barbershop, the victim of an anti-Jewish pogrom in the Ukraine could easily meet one of the perpetrators, an officer of the White Army, now in exile. Many such situations are recounted in the memoirs of Russians in Berlin.

**What I wanted** to say is that despite all antagonism, rivalry, and factionalism, Berlin was the stage for a very mixed society, and that in this mixture, in this belonging to two or even more cultural fields, lies the productivity of Weimar Berlin in general, and of Russian Berlin in particular. Thus, it was a short period, but a period of radical ruptures, discontinuities,

extremely disparate experiences – the experiences of one or two generations in “normal” time, telescoped into a few years. In short, the Berlin years were extremely intensive and instructive.

## LABORATORY BERLIN – THE PRIVILEGE OF PLACE

It was the young George F. Kennan, who clearly described the advantages, or, I would say, the privileges, of the place. As a member of the US mission in Riga, he came to Berlin in 1929 in order to get “training for Russia”. He found everything he needed here: academic surroundings, linguistic training, contact with everyone involved with Russia – Soviet or émigré – and finally a Norwegian girl who later became his wife. He participated in the seminars of the outstanding professors of Russian history, Otto Hoetzsch and Karl Stählin. His private tutors were for the most part simply highly cultured Russian émigrés. He heard lectures on strictly Soviet subjects: Soviet finance, Soviet political structure – Berlin was the only place where he could study this at that time. Building on this training in Berlin in 1929–1931, Kennan became one of the greatest experts and diplomats the United States ever had.

**It seems to be** a paradox that Berlin became the first center of the Russian diaspora – Germany was the enemy country in World War I, and after the Rapallo Treaty in 1922 was on good terms with Bolshevik Russia. But there are reasons for Berlin to be the center of Russia Abroad. Berlin was close, easily accessible. The city had a good Russian infrastructure of printing and publishing houses. And there were more important reasons. One of them was that, for many Russian intellectuals, Germany had been a home in prewar and prerevolutionary times. The universities of Berlin, Freiburg, and Heidelberg, the technical universities of Charlottenburg, Darmstadt, and Karlsruhe were traditional places of study and training of the intellectual elite, sometimes the only places where Russian women or Russian Jews could go. So many prominent representatives of Soviet Russia as well of the Russian exile community graduated from German universities. The poets Osip Mandelstam and Boris Pasternak were students at Heidelberg and Marburg, respectively. The philosopher Semen Frank was a student of the Frederick William University in Berlin. Sergei Gessen, the son of the editor of the Berlin-based Russian daily *Rul*, Iosif Gessen, was student of the universities in Heidelberg, Freiburg, and Marburg, and called himself a Neo-Kantian from the school of Windelband, Emil Lask, and Friedrich Meineke. Iosif Gessen’s brother was a student of the universities of Zurich and Dresden. Alexandre Koyré, born 1892, studied in Göttingen – under Edmund Husserl and David Hilbert – and later at the

Sorbonne. There were many others: Mark Vishniak, a former social-revolutionary and prominent figure of Russian Berlin, was a student in Freiburg and Heidelberg before World War I. So for many émigrés the exile was a kind of homecoming.

The research institutions of Wilhelmine Berlin, above all the university (for the humanities) and the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gesellschaft (for the natural sciences), had an international reputation, and even in the Weimar period there were centers which attracted young Russian students – expatriates as well as Soviet citizens. The young Wassily Leontief, the Nobel Prize winner in economics in 1973, was attracted by the seminar of Werner Sombart and Ladislaus von Bortkiewicz at the Berlin University and defended his inaugural dissertation *Die Wirtschaft als Kreislauf*, on December 19, 1928. It was later published in *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, the most prestigious journal in the social sciences of the time.

Alexander and Eugen Kulischer, the sons of the great Russian scholar of economic history and anthropology Mikhail Kulischer, wrote their fundamental study *Kriegs- und Wanderzüge, Weltgeschichte als Völkerbewegung* under the influence of the great German sociologist Franz Oppenheimer, and published their monograph in one of the most renowned publishing houses, Walter de Gruyter, in 1932. This work was also the basis for the letter of recommendation the Kulischers got from Marcel Mauss after 1933 when they applied for an academic post and visa for the United States.

Another center of attraction was the Seminar für osteuropäische Geschichte and the journal *Osteuropa*, directed by Otto Hoetzsch, a famous historian and Russophile deputy of the Deutsch-Nationale Volkspartei in the Reichstag. Many people from the émigré community found some work in and around the institute and found ways of publication. This was also the place where George F. Kennan found contacts.

**From the Russian** side, the Russian research institute was the most prestigious. Assisted financially by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, prominent scholars, exiled from Soviet Russia, could find jobs there before most of them left Berlin for Prague, where conditions were much better as a result of president Masaryk’s “Akcia Russka”. Around the Russian Scientific Institute, we find all the prominent figures and personalities who arrived in Berlin after being deported from Leningrad to Stettin: Nikolai Berdyaev, Fedor Stepun, Boris Vysheslavtsev, Ivan Ilyin, Semyon Frank, and many others who later on became quite famous in the West.

Another center of attraction and encounter was the close contact between the intellectuals of the Menshevik organization abroad and the SPD, especially in the editorial boards of the journals *Vorwärts* and

Iosif Gessen, editor of a leading liberal Russian daily, George F. Kennan, American diplomat, and Osip Mandelstam, poet.







Unter den Linden, Berlin, 1922, with the famous "Café Kranzler".

*Die Gesellschaft.* The leadership of the Russian Mensheviks, the rival Marxist party, banned and forced to go underground in Soviet Russia, had been in exile in Berlin since 1922. So the legendary figures of this revolutionary party – Martov, Abramovich, Stein, David Dallin, Fedor Dan, Boris Nikolaevsky and others – were in close cooperation with the leadership of the German social democrats, direct colleagues of Rudolf Hilferding, Eduard Bernstein, Rudolf Breitscheid and others. The Russian Mensheviks in Berlin were not only comrades in the struggle for a just society, but the most distinguished experts on Soviet Russia, and, as we will see, the hard core for future Soviet Studies in the United States.<sup>9</sup>

**Berlin in those** years was the privileged place of encounters between Russians with the "Red passport" of the USSR and the émigrés with the Nansen passport, given to stateless people. Thus Berlin was the place where filmmakers from the Soviet Union could meet actors in exile, artists and painters like Leonid Pasternak could visit the vernissages of their colleagues who preferred to stay in Soviet Russia, and a writer who hated all things Soviet – like Vladimir Nabokov – could observe the success modern Soviet literature had in the Weimar culture.

The '20s were still years of the open door, and scientific exchange was still possible between Germany and Soviet Russia. One of the most prominent representatives of the cooperative movement in Russia and a fascinating author of utopian fiction, Alexander Chayanov, visited Berlin several times and met other specialists in the field of agrarian economics, such as Professor Otto Auhagen. He also published in German journals such as *Schmollers Jahrbuch*. The other example is the geneticist Nikolai Timofeev-Ressovsky, who was on academic exchange in Germany and decided not to go back when he was recalled in 1937. To-

gether with his wife and sons, he lived and worked in Berlin's Buch district, and became one of the pioneers of genetics. We will see that Chayanov's and Timofeev-Ressovsky's fates ended in catastrophe: Chayanov was killed with some of his relatives and pupils in 1937, together with his colleague, the famous economist Nikolai Kondratiev, who devised the "Kondratiev cycles". Both perished in the year of the Great Terror, 1937/1938.

Timofeev-Ressovsky, whose son was killed in Mauthausen for his active underground struggle against the Nazi regime, was deported in 1945 to the Soviet Union and forced to work in a special camp for scientists – Solzhenitsyn describes him in *The Gulag Archipelago* – and only in his last years was he able to publish the results of his pathbreaking research, much respected by the elite of Soviet natural scientists and Nobel Prize winners such as Petr Kapitsa, Lev Landau, Igor Kurchatov and others.

Besides institutes, Russian Berlin had created journals for historical documentation and analysis, the first scholarly journals dealing with contemporary Russian history – *Archiv russkoy revolyutsii* and *Nachuzhoi storone*, up to our days a source of eminent importance.

What I wanted to show in this part of my presentation is the networks, the nodes and the hubs of intellectual encounter and cooperation, the fertile ground and environment for intellectual innovation – salons, institutes, journals, boards, seminars, centered on activities and personalities, representing the modernity of Berlin.

## MODERN TIMES, NEW QUESTIONS

Russian Berlin had become a hotbed of new experiences. Russian Berlin was Russia outside Russia, beyond Soviet censorship. In many respects, Russian

Berlin opened up a third space for reflection and reconsideration of what had happened to Russia and Europe. It was George F. Kennan who characterized World War I as "the great seminal catastrophe of this century". This feeling had been articulated by various authors almost simultaneously and independently of one another. The German cultural philosopher Oswald Spengler published his *Untergang des Abendlandes* [The Decline of the West] in 1918, almost simultaneously with the Russian-Jewish thinker Grigory Landau's book carrying almost the same title – *Summ-erki Evropy* [the twilight of Europe].<sup>10</sup> It was a common feeling in the post-World War I period that old Europe and the bourgeois world had come to an end. The spiritual and artistic world during the Weimar years of Berlin reflected the seismic repercussions of the age of war and revolution. There was no single problem which was not untouched by radical reinterpretation and reevaluation. A time of "Umwertung der Werte", to use the Nietzschean term, a general sense of a global crisis, political as well as spiritual, resurfaced again and again: in the financial and economic collapse after Black Friday in 1929, in the rise of the Nazi movement in Germany, in Stalin's revolution from above with forced industrialization, warfare against the Russian village and subsequent famine with millions of deaths.

**For most members** of the intelligentsia it was quite clear that the fall of the empires was not just the result of a mistake by this or that statesman or party leader, but something more fundamental: that a way of life, a way of thinking had come to an end. The fall of the empires and the birth of a Europe of dozens of minor nation-states created an entirely different outlook. The transnational structures of dynasties were replaced by nation-states in which territory, state, and people were to coincide, and where this was not the case, a process of forced homogenization and assimilation had to transform the existing society. The fall of the empires provided space for the rise of nationalism and the creation of the minority question all over Europe. From Wilson's declaration of the 14 points of self-determination and Lenin's proclamation of independence for all nations of the former Russian empire, the new postwar order may be said to have begun. Everywhere in Europe, ethnic conflicts and minority problems emerged, and the minority that suffered most, because it had no territory, no state, and no legitimate representation, was the Jewish minority. The new order after the fall of the empires and the Paris peace treaties produced a new class of human beings, the *apatrides*, the stateless people, the outcasts. Many of the refugees in the interwar period were outlaws, *Vogelfreie*, as Hannah Arendt called them in her book *Elemente und Ursprünge totaler Herrschaft*.<sup>11</sup>

The falling apart of age-old empires and the new



Boris Pasternak, poet, Nobel laureate, Wassily Leontief, Nobel laureate in economics, and Nikolai Berdyaev, philosopher.

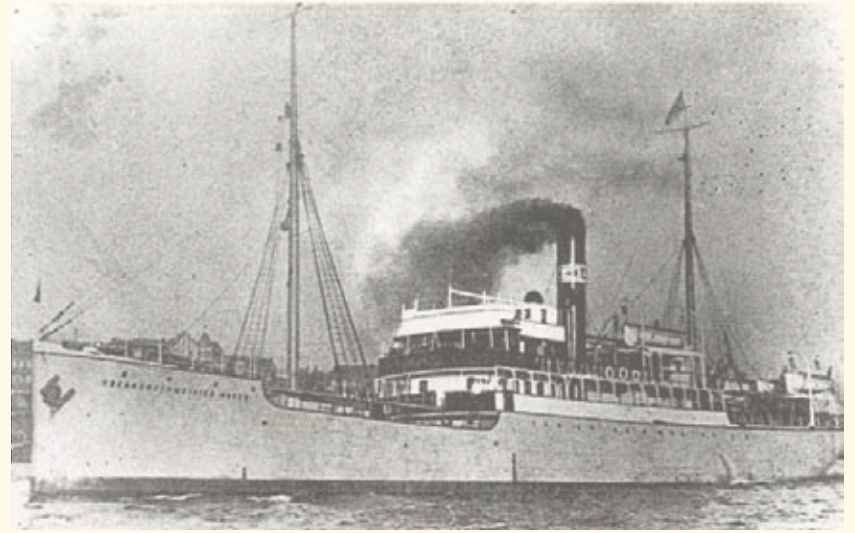
borders, the new front lines between new nations and new social orders, provoked a series of movements all over Europe. “Europe on the Move”, the summary of the great analysis of Eugene Kulischer, reflects perfectly what had been going on since the prelude to World War I: the Balkan wars and the first experiments in mass population transfer. The new Europe would be one of redefining borders and citizenships, of inclusion and exclusion, of privilege and persecution. It is quite clear why Jewish authors like Eugene and Alexander Kulischer, Schechtman and Lestschinsky were particularly sensitive: the handling of the Jewish question was the most precise indicator of respect for universal rights.

At the same time – the early 1920s – waves of anti-Semitism raged over Europe. Somebody had to be responsible for the apocalyptic disasters, for the fall of the empires and the old classes. Pamphlets like *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* attracted public attention, an international of anti-Semites was organized, and the simultaneity of the assassinations of Walther Rathenau and Vladimir Dmitrievich Nabokov in 1922 by German and Russian right-wing terrorists was not just a coincidence. Many among the Jewish intellectual elite all over Europe immediately perceived the deadly threat of the new combination of Anti-Semitism and Anti-Bolshevism, and some of them started a campaign to explain that despite the presence of prominent Bolsheviks of Jewish background – Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev and many others – the Bolshevik regime and the social upheaval in Russia were in fact radically undermining the social and cultural foundations of the Russian Jewry. One of the most shocking controversies, initiated by prominent liberal and conservative Russian Jews in Berlin in 1923 and 1924, concerned the struggle against identifying Bolshevism with Jewry in order to fight the rising tide of anti-Semitism all over Europe, especially in Germany.<sup>12</sup>

**It is no surprise** that Russians who had been eyewitnesses to the explosive rage of the masses had a specific sensitivity to the new dangers of populism, mass violence and ochlocracy, the dictatorship of the lower classes. And it is no surprise that Russian thinkers like Nikolai Berdyaev were trying to find a way to transform the old system by means of consensus and through corporativistic institutions. Ideas of a “third way”, of organized capitalism, planned market economies, even monarchies of the people and national bolshevism, were commonplace in that time.

Finally, the exiles of two dictatorial regimes, of the “Red Dominicans” and the “German National Socialists”, as the Jewish historian Simon Dubnov called them, contributed to the early diagnosis of the new phenomenon of totalitarian rule, of unlimited power and despotism, in combination with ideological manipulation and the ruthless use of violence. Thinkers who had passed through both the Soviet and the German systems were confronted with a new phenomenology and unseen forms of political power. And it is obvious that the new terms of “total” or “totalitarian” states date back to the 1920s and 1930s, long before the Cold War was staged. We find the new word, coined for a new phenomenon, in texts of Simon Dubnov, Waldemar Gurian (who was, by the way, the author

The steamer  
“Oberbürgermeister  
Haken”.



who characterized Carl Schmitt as “Kronjurist des Dritten Reiches”), and prominent Russian Mensheviks.<sup>13</sup>

To summarize we can state that Russian Berlin had been the laboratory or the studio in which central experiences or implications of the “great seminal catastrophe” were reflected. But the time was short, too short. The circumstances forced people to move, to save their lives, to escape. Berlin was stimulating, but too dangerous to stay in. It ceased to be a haven for refugees. Berlin in 1933 is the place from which Russian refugees started anew in order to save their lives.

Let’s have a look at the directions and destinations of survival and transfer.

## PARTING OF WAYS, FINAL DESTINATIONS, NEW JUNCTIONS

There is no event more symbolic of what happened to Russian intellectual life and Russian culture than the systematic deportation of a huge group of Russian intellectuals in the autumn of 1922. The deportation put into practice the decision of the Soviet leadership, and of Lenin personally, to get rid of any possible focus of autonomous spirit. The decision was prepared and formulated in the summer of 1922 by the inner circle – Lenin, Trotsky, Dzerzhinsky, and others. The individuals selected for deportation from Russia were highly representative of the Russian intelligentsia. The 225 people in question represented almost all disciplines and professions, political parties and religious confessions; they came from all ethnic groups of the former empire. The sole criterion was that they could be a risk, a danger – that they could become an element of opposition of which the leadership was so frightened even after their victory at the end of the Civil War. The lists of deportees encompassed philosophers, writers, physicians, scientists, journalists, political leaders, sociologists and economists, and lawyers, among them well-known figures. Since we have the lists, the records of discussions and interrogations, and the application forms for German visas, we can reconstruct the whole process of extradition, deportation, and dislocation of representatives of the Russian intellectual elite. In the list we find the sociologist Pitirim Sorokin, who later held a chair in sociology at Yale; the philosophers Nikolai Berdyaev, Nikolay Lossky, Boris Vysheslavtsev, and Semyon Frank, who were successful in continuing Russian thought in France; brilliant journalists of the leading newspapers of Petrograd and

Moscow like Alexander Izgoev; writers like Michail Osorgin; and representatives of the local political and intellectual elites outside the capital cities. This fairly representative body was placed on board two rented steamships, the *Preussen* and the *Oberbürgermeister Haken*, bound for Stettin in Germany. They continued on by train to Berlin, where they were received by the Berlin émigré community at Stettiner Bahnhof, now the site of Nordbahnhof in the central borough of Berlin. Some members of this group established the Russian Scientific Institute in Berlin; some continued on to Prague, where the government of the recently founded Czechoslovakian republic had the intention of creating a kind of Russian Oxford. In retrospect, we may say that this act of deportation saved the lives of many among this group of Russian intelligentsia. Others who did not have the good luck to get on board perished in the Stalin era, while their colleagues made their way into scientific institutions and built their reputations. But the act itself, in its surgical precision, in its ruthlessness and shamelessness, was something new, unthinkable under the old regime, which had indeed made frequent use of internal exile, prison and other forms of persecution, as we all know. But the surgical act, of dislocation and displacement, was something new, and a very carefully calculated measure.<sup>14</sup>

The ways out of Berlin were much less clear. The Russian émigrés had to go where they could find jobs, in order to make a living for their families. There were institutions in other centers of the Russian diaspora – in Belgrade, Prague, Paris, later in the United States. For a very important and influential group in Russian Berlin in 1933, the Russian Jews, Hitler’s rise to power was the last exit. The Russian community was now – and in 1937, completely – under the control of pro-Nazi Russians like General Vasily Biskupsky, who had been collaborating with the Nazi party since the Munich putsch of 1923. In 1937, Vladimir Nabokov and his Jewish wife, and the philosopher Semyon Frank and others left Germany. Where did they go? Or, more precisely: To what places were the intellectual and cultural heritage of Russian Berlin transferred?

To a minor degree, it was to Paris, as a traditional center of Russian life with its very effective religious world of churches, monasteries, libraries, and theological institutes. Many prominent Russians settled in Paris.

Another way out was to go to Palestine. Since the 1920s, there had been lively communication between Berlin and Palestine, encouraging not only German intellectuals like Gershom Scholem to move to Eretz



Israel, but also members of the *Ostjuden* community, the Yiddish-speaking Hebraic community that existed in Berlin. Some prominent figures of Russian-Jewish Berlin turn up again in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, including Vladimir Zhabotinsky and Joseph Schechtman, repeated visitors to Berlin, the eminent economist Boris Bratskus, and others. The center of this “East European Jewish connection” was the house of Simon Dubnov in his Berlin years. Research on this Berlin between *Charlottengrad* and *Scheunenviertel* was subject of a fascinating research project in recent years, sponsored by the German Research Foundation, and based mainly at Freie Universität Berlin.<sup>15</sup>

**The center of** the Russian diaspora moved overseas. We do have some analyses of the impact of the German and Austrian refugees on American life and culture, for instance Martin Jay’s great book on the Frankfurter Institut für Sozialforschung, but not one of the Russian colony.<sup>16</sup> To a certain degree, this has to do again with the self-perception of Russia Abroad. The Russian diaspora in the European capitals regarded itself as in transition, on a provisional stopover on its way home, it fulfilled the mission of preserving Russian culture as the émigrés understood it from communist and Soviet depravation. They promised to bring back the real, authentic Russian culture. The situation in the United States was entirely different. Millions of emigrants had moved to the United States between the 1880s and the First World War, millions of Russian Jews from the shtetls in the Pale of Settlement came to the United States in search of a better life and in pursuit of happiness. The Immigration Act of 1922 drastically reduced the numbers of immigrants. But the main fact remained: Russians came to the United States not in order to create centers of Russia Abroad, or a diaspora, but to leave Russia behind and enter American society, to become Americans. Russians coming to the United States had no intention of returning, but wanted to plunge into the melting pot of a new society.

Having said this, it is of great interest to follow the traces of Russian immigration, or to be more precise, immigration from the Russian empire and its successor states. We could show a list of prominent scholars and scientists, actors and film directors who come from Russian backgrounds: the great aviation engineer Igor Sikorsky, the pioneer of electronics and TV, Vladimir Zworykin, the great man of twentieth-century chemistry Vladimir Ipatiev, engineers like Stepan Timoshenko, the great economist Wassily Leontief, the conductor of the Boston Symphony orchestra, Serge Koussevitzky, the founder of New York City Ballet, George Balanchine, the Hollywood movie star Yul Brynner, who was born in Vladivostok – they are all representatives of the first wave of emigration

after the October Revolution and Civil War. Or take the much-discussed case of Ayn Rand, the Leningrad student, pupil of the Russian philosopher Nikolay Lossky, bestselling author and initiator of an intellectual group to which people such as Alan Greenspan belonged.

Significant centers of research in the field of Russian history, war and revolution were established in the United States. I have in mind the depositories of the Hoover Institution, a unique archive in all respects, the Bakhmeteff Archive at Columbia University, and many other important places. To a certain degree, they represent the memory of Russia outside Russia. The archivists and especially the great Boris Nicolaevsky represent this heroic effort of preservation in a century of destruction and oblivion. Boris Nicolaevsky was the man who saved the archives of the German Social Democrats as well as the papers of the Russian Mensheviks. Berlin played a central role in the making of this great pioneer of the archival science.

The place for training for Russia, to use George F. Kennan’s phrase, were transferred from Europe, from Germany, from Berlin, to the United States, due to the Nazi rise to power. If we look at the prominent figures in teaching Russian history since the 1930s, we cannot avoid mentioning the scholars of American universities who quite often came from a Russian background and quite often via Berlin.

**George Karpovich**, born in Tbilisi, Georgia, formed an entire school of historians focused on Russia at Harvard, as George Vernadsky and Georges Florovsky did at Yale, and as Michael Rostovtzeff did for the field of Byzantine history. John Normano, the brilliant economist, also a Berlin émigré, made a career for himself at Harvard. Vladimir Nabokov found a good place at Wesleyan College for teaching and writing in his “American years”, as his biographer Brian Boyd called his life after leaving Berlin in 1937. And Leopold Haimson, the child of a family that was founded in exile, in Harbin, Manchuria, then moved to Berlin and Brussels, was the teacher of at least two generations of historians of Russia in the United States.<sup>17</sup>

Important new ideas and concepts for rethinking the Russian and Soviet experience and seminal books dealing with interpretations of the contemporary Soviet Union came from authors with Russian or Russian-Jewish backgrounds, who settled down in American institutions after they had been forced to leave Europe. Here should be mentioned some of the themes and authors: forced labor in the Soviet Union (David Dallin), labor in the Soviet Union (Solomon Schwarz), memoirs of Russian revolutionaries (Nikolai Volsky/Valentinov: *Encounters with Lenin*), the Great Retreat (Nicholas Timasheff), input-output analysis (Wassily Leontief), German rule in Russia (Alexander

Dallin), Soviet espionage (David Dallin), Europe on the move (Kulischer), a theory of the advantages of backwardness (Alexander Gerschenkron), the crisis of Western civilization (Pitirim Sorokin), the collectivization of Russian agriculture (Naum Jasny), Russia in the age of absolutism (Marc Raeff), the Menshevik movement (Boris Sapir, Leopold Haimson). In the curriculum vitae of most of these authors, Berlin left an important mark.<sup>18</sup>

Also essential for the shift of Russian studies is the rise of authoritative journals, published in the United States: *The Slavic Review*, *The Russian Review*, *Novyi zhurnal* [New journal] and others.

The institutionalization of generously funded Russian and Soviet studies reached its peak at the end of the Second World War and the beginning of the Cold War, with the second wave of Russian, or more precisely, Soviet emigrants and refugees, non-returnees after the end of the war and displaced persons who refused to go back to Stalin’s Russia. The foundation of the Harvard Russian Research Center and the Ukrainian Research Center and the expansion of area study institutes dealing with Soviet communism – including such different regions as Eastern Germany, Russia, North Korea, and China – marked the peak in the evolution of Russia and communist-centered studies. In the first phase these were very innovative and original both in theory and method; in the later period, rather redundant and even dogmatic. In the context of the Cold War, findings and insights accumulated earlier, in prewar times, were reactivated. In 1946, George F. Kennan sent his famous telegram, leading to the publication of his article “The Sources of Soviet Conduct” under the pseudonym “X”, which again became a point of reference at the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991. Some of the Russian refugees who had found shelter in Berlin in the early twenties visited the city under siege in 1948, as did Alexander Kerensky, the prime minister of the Provisional Government in 1917. Some experts trained in Russian Berlin in prewar times came back to a Berlin in ruins to take part in the Congresses for Culture and Freedom in the early 1950s. And some left the United States for Europe because they preferred a place like the Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenes in Amsterdam to American institutions, as Boris Sapir did. Twenty years later Alexandre Kojève (Aleksandr Kozhevnikov) the Russian-born Hegelian with a Freiburg and Heidelberg education, visited Berlin 1967 on his way back from China for a discussion with the leaders of the radical left student movement – his recommendation to Rudi Dutschke was: learn Ancient Greek and study the Greek classics!

The way out of Russian Berlin before World War II was the way to the United States; the way to the East led many émigrés of Russian Berlin into a trap. The case of Simon Dubnov, the representative of Russian-Jewish Berlin and the most authoritative scholar



Alexander Chayanov, agricultural economist, Pitirim Sorokin, sociologist, Boris Vsheslavtsev, philosopher, and Ayn Rand, a Leningrad-born libertarian thinker. To the right: members of the Russian Scientific Institute in Berlin, 1923 or 1924.

on the history of Eastern European Jewry, may be regarded as symbolic. He first moved in 1922 from Petrograd via Kaunas and Danzig to Berlin, where he had the most productive period of his life, and when he was forced to emigrate a second time, he decided to go from Berlin to Riga in order to be close to Eastern Europe and the centers of Eastern European Jewry. There, in the ghetto of Riga, he was killed in 1941 when the Germans entered, whereas another brilliant representative of Russian Berlin, the philosopher Grigory Landau, was deported and perished when the Soviet secret police, the NKVD, and the Red Army occupied Riga.

**Concluding remarks:** If we want to tell the story of expulsion, forced migration, emigration in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, we have to bring together the many different currents and movements of this chaotic and tragic process. And this is not because I want to demonstrate a specific theoretical approach or a certain method, but because real history has entangled the paths of refugees and emigrants. All over the world, we encounter the refugees of both dictatorships: in Shanghai we meet the White Russians and the Jews from Central Europe, in Prague German Social Democrats and Russian émigré scholars settle side by side, in Paris we find Nikolai Berdyaev and Walter Benjamin, Alexandre Kojève and Leo Strauss, Hannah Arendt and Eugene Kulischer. The German invasion destroyed this exclave, as Weimar Berlin had been destroyed years before. It seems to me that there were places where the refugees, the outcasts of both totalitarian states, could meet, encounter, and reflect. Such was for instance the ocean steamer, when Ernst Cassirer and Roman Jakobson, both fleeing from Europe, tried to reach the New World. And such was probably a place like the New School for Social Research, and New York City in general, with its cosmopolitan society. There we can find the key for a comprehensive study of displacements and cultures in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**And what about** Russian Berlin today? Many features are reminiscent of the Russian Berlin of the 1920s – for instance the size of the Russian community, the emergence of a differentiated infrastructure, the media networks, etc.<sup>19</sup> According to a brilliant study, based on opinion polls conducted in the spring of 2011 by the Levada Center, about 50% of the respondents wanted to leave the country; the percentage among the younger and best qualified generation is even higher. One and a quarter million people have left Russia forever in the last three years – for Great Britain, Germany, France, and Austria, but also for countries like the Czech Republic, Croatia, Thailand, and, of course, the United States. In Germany we have a community of more than four million Russian-speaking people. Russian demographers compared in an issue of the journal *New Times* the emigration of the last five years or so with the Great Exodus after the Civil War.<sup>20</sup> And the consequences are frightening indeed, because it is the middle class, the highly motivated and most dynamic and most entrepreneurial elements of the Russian society, that has left the country: businessmen, IT specialists, scientists, artists – a brain drain which

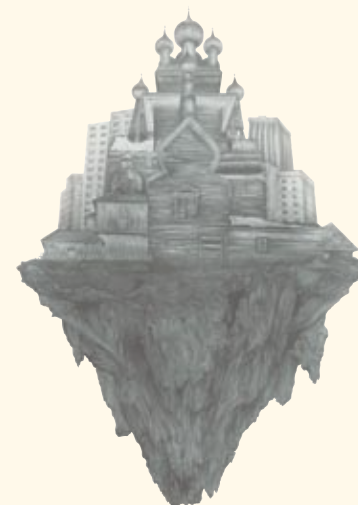
is dangerous in the long run for any country. But at the same time, the difference from the first-wave emigration is striking: there is no political structure, no government in exile, there is no expulsion similar to the deportation of 1922. Post-Soviet Russia is quite different from the early Soviet power. The situation of the revisionist “Unholy Alliance” between the Soviet Union and Germany of the 1920s has passed. There is not even a shadow of the spirit of Rapallo; the entire scenario has changed. In more general terms, I would say: despite the disastrous effects of the enormous brain drain for Russia’s development, the emergence of Russian communities abroad can also be seen as an indicator of a normalization resulting from the opening up of the country after a long period of isolation. For Berlin, it is the regeneration of the mixed and more cosmopolitan society of the pre-Nazi and prewar epoch. ✖

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## Birth of the Russian Empire.

### Tenacious retreat of Sweden as a great power

**Pavel Konovalchuk & Einar Lyth**  
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**Slaget vid Lesnaja**  
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**Vladimir A. Artamonov**  
**Poltavskoye srazhenie**  
**K 300 letiyu Poltavskoy**  
**pobedy**

[The engagement at Poltava:  
In commemoration of the tercentenary of the victory at Poltava]  
MPPA BIMPBA  
Moscow 2009  
640 pages

**Valery A. Moltusov**  
**Poltava 1709 –**  
**vändpunkten**

[Poltava, 1709:  
the turning point]  
Svenskt militärhistoriskt  
bibliotek  
Stockholm 2010  
213 pages

**Pavel A. Krotov**  
**Bitva pri Poltave**  
**K 300-letnej**  
**godovsjtjinje**

[The Battle of Poltava:  
On the occasion of the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary]  
Istoricheskaya  
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Saint Petersburg 2009  
397 pages

**I**N 2009, THE three-hundredth anniversary of the Battle of Poltava was marked in Sweden, Russia, and Ukraine. In addition to a Swedish-Russian anthology whose main focus was on the consequences of the battle for Sweden's and Russia's historical development and long-term relations, the tercentenary saw the publication of new literature about the course of military events. In addition to new source material, the latter studies benefited from unprecedented collaboration among Swedish, Russian, and Ukrainian scholars.

The prelude to the Battle of Poltava is the subject of *Vägen till Poltava: Slaget vid Lesnaja 1708* [The road to Poltava: The battle of Lesnaya, 1708], written by Russian military historian Pavel Konovalchuk and retired Swedish Brigadier Einar Lyth. In the foreword, the authors thank Professor Vladimir A. Artamonov of the Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow and Russian-Ukrainian historian Valery A. Moltusov for their kind assistance, while Artamonov thanks Konovalchuk and Lyth for the same in the foreword to his book, *Poltavskoye srazhenie: K 300 letiyu Poltavskoy pobedy* [The engagement at Poltava: In commemoration of the tercentenary of the victory at Poltava]. Artamonov also thanks Bertil Wennerholm, who, along with Lyth, made significant editorial contributions to the presentation of Valery A. Moltusov's *Poltava 1709 – vändpunkten* [Poltava, 1709: the turning point] to Swedish readers. Wennerholm, a former Swedish Air Force colonel, is a prominent expert on Caroline military history. His research on the Swedish standards captured at the Battle of Poltava has cast doubt on previously established beliefs about the size of the Swedish army and thus the number of fallen Swedish soldiers. According to Wennerholm, there were between 8,000 and 9,000 casualties, rather than the accepted figure of 6,900.

Finally, it must be said that Moltusov's Poltava book is a reworked version

of his 2002 master's degree thesis at Moscow State University – for which Artamonov was his academic adviser!

Such is the intricacy of the interconnectedness of the various projects.

**ANOTHER WORK THAT** can be added to the circle of new Poltava studies is Pavel A. Krotov's book, entitled *Bitva pri Poltave: K 300-letnej godovsjtjinje* [The Battle of Poltava: On the occasion of the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary]. Krotov is a professor at Saint Petersburg State University, whose previous work includes studies of Peter the Great's navy.

One problem confronting scholars studying Charles XII's Russian campaign is that Swedish field records were lost after the battle. Given, however, that Charles XII, the absolute monarch of Sweden, was not in the habit of justifying his decisions to anyone, it is uncertain whether we would have known that much more about the plans for the Swedish campaign if the records had survived. But there is abundant contemporary source material preserved on the Russian side, which includes not only orders and reports, but also minutes of meetings of Peter I's councils of war with his generals. The Tsar



*Battle of Lesnaya* by Jean-Marc Nattier.

was wont to listen to his generals and compel them to argue in defense of their positions. Once the decisions had been made, they were also forced to sign the minutes along with the monarch so they would be unable to disclaim responsibility later. Even though the most important Russian documents from the campaign of 1708–1709 have been in print for at least a century, the Russian perspective has been surprisingly absent from Swedish scholarship. *Karolinska förbundet* (The Society for Research on the Swedish Caroline Age) made significant investments in order to translate Russian documents from the 1708–1709 campaign into Swedish. Nevertheless, interest in the project waned after World War I, and the documents that had been translated were published finally in the society's 1933 yearbook. At that point, the project had not yet gotten as far as the actual Battle of Poltava.<sup>1</sup>

According to the interpretation brought out in Sweden by 19<sup>th</sup> century historians critical of Charles XII, such as Julius Mankell and Ernst Carlson, the battle in June 1709 was a desperate undertaking. The Swedes, who had laid siege to the city of Poltava in Ukraine, were weakened by starvation and disease and lacked ammunition. When Peter I arrived with a numerically strong relief army, the Swedes were aiming for a swift conclusion by means of a bold attack on the Russian camp, but Charles XII and Field Marshall Rehnskiöld had not clearly communicated the plan to their subordinates. Russian redoubts in the path of the advancing Swedish army came as a total surprise: the Swedish battle array was fragmented and the initiative lost.

## Continued. Tenacious retreat of Sweden as a great power

### REVIEWERS



**Gunnar Åselius**

Professor of military history at the Swedish National Defence College in Stockholm. Among his books are *The Russian Menace to Sweden* (1994) and *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Navy in the Baltic 1921–1941* (2004).



**Fredrik Eriksson**

PhD in history, researcher at the Institute of Contemporary History, Södertörn University. Has written on agricultural policy and the Swedish Conservative Party.



**Andrea Pető**

Professor at the Department of Gender Studies at the Central European University, Budapest. Her book on Júlia Rajk, *Geschlecht, Politik und Stalinismus in Ungarn*, came out in 2007. Awarded the Bolyai Prize by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 2006.

When Peter I's superior forces moved out of their fortified camp and began to form battle lines for a counterattack, the Swedes were forced to stake everything on a single turn of the cards and attack. The Swedish onslaught was shattered in a downpour of artillery fire, the soldiers scattered, and it all ended in crushing defeat. The capitulation of the defeated army at Perevolochna three days later was depicted as the logical conclusion to what had been a reckless military operation from the outset.<sup>2</sup>

**AFTER 1900**, WHEN nationalist currents in Swedish historical research led to more favorable estimations of Charles XII as king and military commander, Lund University professor Arthur Stille and Swedish general staff historian Carl Bennedich instead contended that the Swedes had voluntarily elected to fight at Poltava and had every prerequisite for victory, if only the king had not been wounded before the battle and forced to relinquish command to his less decisive generals. Despite the setback, the army had also been in good shape afterwards and the capitulation at Perevolochna was thus needless. Bennedich's version, in which infantry commander General Lewenhaupt was assigned the lion's share of blame for the defeat, went down in the official history of the General Staff and later influenced the accounts in Frans G. Bengtsson's and Ragnild Hatton's classic biographies of Charles XII.<sup>3</sup> There was no reevaluation of the battle until Gustaf Petri's essay in *Karolinska Förbundets Årsbok* of 1958, which revived Mankell's and Carlson's pessimistic assessments of Swedish prospects.<sup>4</sup>

Peter Englund's *The Battle that Shook Europe: Poltava and the Birth of the Russian Empire* still bears traces of Bennedich's account. Unlike Bennedich, Englund has no desire to heap encomiums on the warrior king, but still aims to keep the excitement alive for his readers, and thus describes the final engagement outside the Russian camp as a relatively open question. Here and there in the book, it is obvious that Englund's text was based on the general staff history.<sup>5</sup>

**HOW THEN DO** the recently published works on the Battle of Poltava relate to the earlier, traditional interpretations?

Peter I described the victory at Lesnaya in September 1708 as "the Mother of Poltava". General Lewenhaupt – who

had departed Riga in June with 13,000 soldiers and a supply convoy of 4,500 wagons, 1,000 pack horses, and 13,000 head of cattle – was meant to join Charles XII's invading army, which had marched from Saxony, somewhere south of Smolensk. The plan might have been to use these supplies to mount an offensive against Moscow, where there were further stores available to prepare for the winter. Lewenhaupt was attacked by the Russians at Lesnaya in present-day Belarus, and when he was able to join the king two weeks later, all the supplies and half of his troops had been lost. In the classic manner, Konovalchuk and Lyth examine the commanders' words and deeds, but also recreate the mundane concerns of war, with its marches and transports, its bread baking and foraging. Although much remains shrouded in mystery, no one has previously devoted this kind of scholarly effort to the logistical conditions of Charles XII's Russian campaign. Lewenhaupt's supply column had a theoretical length of 83 kilometers, but really was closer to 150 kilometers, we are told. It seems obvious that it was more or less impossible to protect it effectively. And it was hardly possible to exploit local resources to supply an invading army in these sparsely populated outlands of Europe, especially not when the Russians systematically laid waste to the land in the path of the Swedes. As a result, the Russian campaign of Charles XII was a highly doubtful enterprise from the start.

**KONOVALCHUK AND LYTH** not only calculated wagon space and feed consumption, played war games, and climbed the terrain, they also made use of previously almost entirely neglected source material – records, found in the archives of the Justice Council in the Swedish National Archives, of interviews with 1,100 soldiers and officers who managed to get back to Swedish-controlled territory in the Baltic region after the Battle of Lesnaya. In order to clear themselves of suspicion of desertion, each and every man had to recount his experiences before a military tribunal in Riga. As with the Cathar village of Montailou in French medieval historian Roy de Ladurie's famous book of the 1970s, the Swedish Caroline army is brought to life through court records – a fascinating community that was at once multicultural and orthodox Lutheran, strictly hierarchical and Swedish egalitarian. The recounting of the thoughts and memories that may have crossed the minds of soldiers and officers on the morning of the day of battle – Michaelmas Day – with detailed descriptions of contemporary customs related to the holiday in various parts of Sweden, Finland, and the Baltic region – is beyond doubt one of the highlights of the book.

Lesnaya demonstrated that Peter I's military reforms after his defeat by the Swedes at Narva in 1700 had begun to bear fruit. According to Artamonov, Menshikov's victory at Kalisz, Poland, in the fall of 1706, must be regarded as an early turning point. The number of Swedish prisoners taken there – 2,600 – would not be exceeded until Poltava. The reorganized Russian cavalry in particular was a force to be reckoned with. The bulk of the lightning-fast "flying corps" (*corps volant*) that took Lewenhaupt

by surprise at Lesnaya was made up of special dragoon regiments, which could not only fight on foot, but also brought their own mounted artillery. The Swedes had no mounted artillery, nor any mounted reconnaissance units comparable to the Russian Cossack units. The lack of cavalry and concomitant weak intelligence service explain much of the Swedish misfortune in Russia.

Peter I, however, felt healthy respect for the Swedes, and was unwilling to meet them on the open field without support from field fortifications. Accordingly, he ordered the building of the Naryshkin line – a fortification line of redoubts and abatis stretching a full 750 kilometers and laid the entire way from Pskov down to Sevs at the outskirts of the steppes. Moltusov contends that the Naryshkin line contributed to Charles XII's decision in the fall of 1708 to veer south and down into Ukraine instead of continuing via Smolensk along the main road to Moscow, the route that followed the wide Russian rivers Don and Dnieper, which both Napoleon and Hitler would later choose.

Field fortifications were also used on the battlefield at Poltava in the form of the ten famous redoubts southwest of the Russian camp. Unbeknownst to the Swedes, construction of the last four began the night before the battle. The position and formation of the redoubts is still an unresolved issue. The last remnants of them were torn down in 1817, and the sites marked with monuments on the terrain at the bicentennial commemoration in 1909 are incorrect, as far as can be judged. The question of whether the redoubts were grouped in a T or a V is essential to assessing the Russians' intentions, and not merely a silly academic dispute. Saint Petersburg historian Pavel Krotov, whose aim is to shed light on the founder of his home city, Peter I, and the Tsar's knowledge of classical and Byzantine military authors, speculates that the redoubts were built as a deliberate stratagem to splinter a Swedish attack. He thus supports the T-formation theory. Moltusov, who holds that the redoubts were built as a purely routine measure to protect the Russian camp against surprise attacks, is more inclined towards the V-formation. Whether or not the Russians had planned it, however, one third of the Swedish infantry – six battalions under the command of Major General Roos – became bogged down in a fruit-



less onslaught against the third of the four newly built redoubts. (Six battalions may sound insignificant, but it is noteworthy, by way of comparison, that the total battle force of today's Swedish army is seven battalions!) After suffering heavy losses, Roos surrendered his command to a Russian detachment in a ravine south of the city. According to Moltusov, the detachment that accepted the capitulation had actually been dispatched to relieve the garrison in Poltava and happened to be in the area mainly by coincidence.

**THE REST OF THE** Swedish army waited for two hours on the other side of the redoubt line for Roos's battalions to join them. When the Russians were about to attack, the Swedes were finally forced to advance on the Russian camp. The element of surprise was utterly lost. The Caroline tactic of charging the enemy with edged weapons had worked against Russian troops before, but now the Russian army had another kind of confidence and an astounding mass of artillery – according to Krotov, a full 282 guns including the artillery on the redoubts. The Swedish army had four guns, none of which were used in the final battle. That the Swedish cannons were left behind had to do with the need for speed and surprise. The Russian tactic of dominating through superior firepower seems, at least in hindsight, more modern and forward-looking than the Swedish tactic of subduing the enemy by charging with swords.

**THE ENORMOUS RUSSIAN** firestorm unleashed over the Swedes in the final stages of the battle makes Krotov skeptical of the accepted wisdom that the Royal Swedish Life Guard – broken down and routed before the attack – nevertheless managed to break through the Russian front line. Krotov also doubts the notion that the Tsar personally commanded the Novgorod regiment in the famous counterattack that is supposed to have pushed back the Swedish Life Guard. No such feat on the part of the Tsar is mentioned in the original dispatches from the battle: the story was told for the first time in the 1750s by Russian historian Pyotr Kryokshin. Artamonov, who like Moltusov has faith in the report, objects that the original victory bulletins were extremely laconic and that Peter I would hardly have found Swedish bullets in his scarf

after the battle if he had not personally fought on the front line.

In other words, there are still things about Poltava open to debate. In their remarks on Moltusov's book, Lyth and Wennerholm list additional unresolved issues.

Old-fashioned patriotic tones sometimes ring through in Artamonov's book – especially when the Ukrainian Cossack hetman Ivan Mazepa, who chose to collaborate with the invading Swedes, comes up. It is easy to see why the publication of the work was granted financial support from the state program for the "patriotic education of the citizens of the Russian Federation". Still, no one can deny that Artamonov is one of the foremost authorities on Russian military history of the epoch and that he fully understands both the Russian and Swedish source material on the Russian campaign of Charles XII. To some extent, his judgmental evaluations of Mazepa are part of a polemic against certain Ukrainian historians who have chosen in recent years to describe the events of 1708–1709 in an at least equally patriotic context. However, the close collaboration now established among scholars in different countries provides hope that further advances are possible. Broad consensus prevails among the authors that the battle became a turning point in the Great Northern War and laid the foundations for the Russian Empire. But here as well, there is latitude for gradations of meaning. The war continued for another eleven years. The Swedish Empire put two additional armies together after this original army had been lost down in Ukraine. Caroline Sweden thus proved surprisingly tenacious, even after an unimaginable military disaster like the one at Poltava. ✖

gunnar åselius

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## REVIEWERS



**Anders Björnsson**

Editor-in-chief of BW and translator of short stories of Joseph Roth into Swedish. Awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Gothenburg last spring.



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PhD in general linguistics; since 2008, researcher in Scandinavian linguistics at Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg. Among the topics he has written on are Sami culture and linguistics.



## The ability of the Old World to survive. European nobility on the threshold of modernity

András Vari  
Herren und Landwirte:  
Ungarische  
Aristokraten und  
Agrarier auf dem Weg  
in die Moderne  
(1821–1910)

Studien zur Sozial- und  
Wirtschaftsgeschichte  
Ostmitteleuropas 17  
Wiesbaden: Harrowitz  
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273 pages

**T**HE ROLE OF agrarian elites in history is a recurring theme in research that reflects the existence of a more fundamental question: Is historical change dependent on a grass-roots development or is it the result of decisions made by elites? There is no obvious answer to this question – one that becomes highly pertinent in relation to the modernization process and especially to agrarian aristocratic elites.

The landowning aristocracy in 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe has been thought to be an elite in decline, mainly as a result of the expansion of the market economy, which brought new groups, rooted in a capitalist mode of production, to the forefront of power. The modernization process also entailed the increasing integration of industry and agriculture. Taken together, this should have led to the undermining or marginalization of the status of the aristocratic elites. The traditional conflict between the hierarchical system of the nobility and the increasingly powerful non-noble groups has not, however, always resulted in loss of status for the nobility.<sup>1</sup>

**NORWEGIAN HISTORIAN** Francis Sejersted has defined modernization as a project of liberation made up of factors that have included technical/economic progress, ideological differentiation, and nation-state consolidation.<sup>2</sup> With liberation, scientific rationality came to replace various mythological explanations of the world. This was not a process where the mythological explanations broke down; instead, new dimensions were added to the general explanations of the world. Technical/economic progress did not immediately lead away from poverty but prepared the foundations for future economic and societal development. Differentiation meant that society went from a common worldview to more diverse perspectives and the individual saw the world through new, group-specific eyes. The nation-state was reinforced and became the framework of modernization.

Similar processes challenged landowning elites in Europe. When multiple groups were included in decision making and the shaping of public opinion, the aristocracy lost its clear leadership position. Social differentiation was based on the technical/economic progress that laid the material foundations for the new groups. Technical development and capitalist ownership structures changed the very

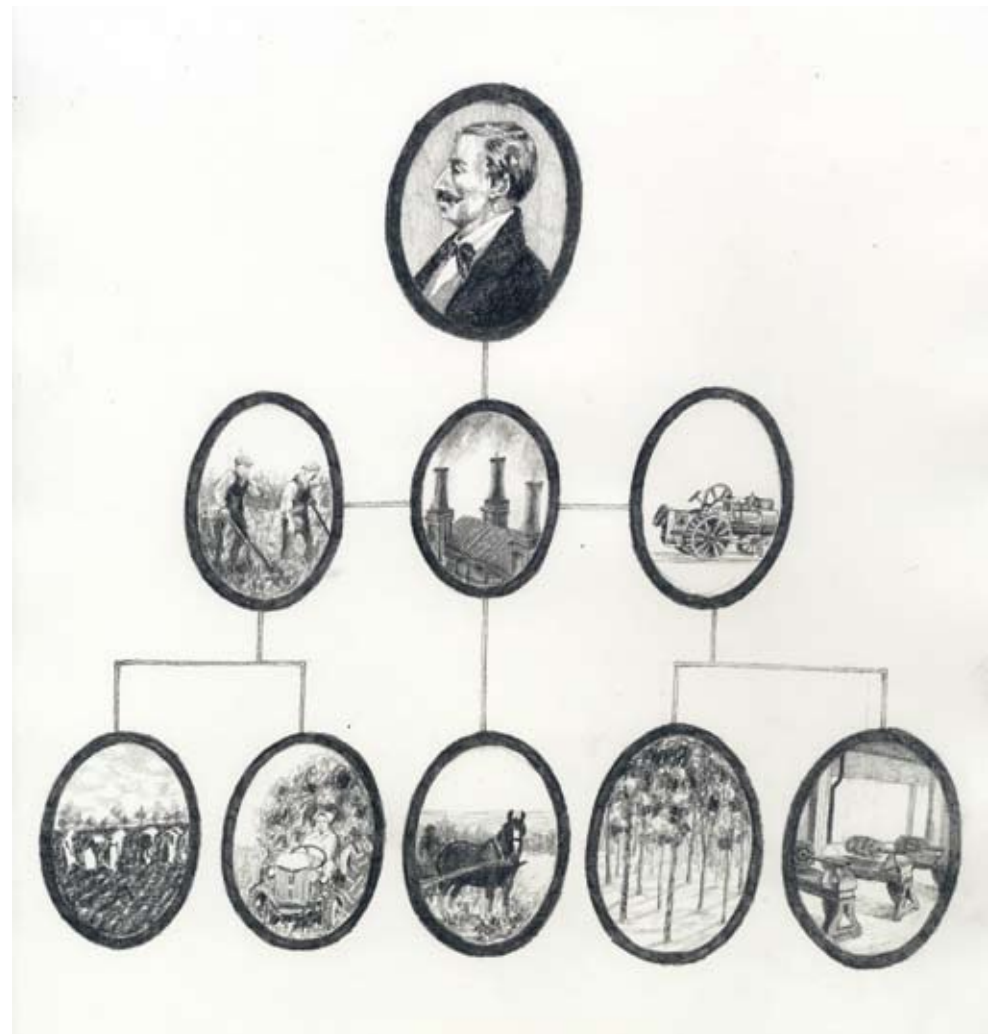


ILLUSTRATION: MOA THELANDER

premise of the landowning elites. Consolidation of the nation-state, on the other hand, did not necessarily strip the elites of their status: avenues of influence remained there longer.

**HISTORIANS ARNO MAYER** and Dominic Lieven have shown that the emergence of the bourgeoisie in Europe did not immediately lead to the decline of the aristocracy. Aristocratic preserves survived.<sup>3</sup> Lieven argues that the aristocracy generally had three strategies for building a front against the increasing influence of urban business and of family farmers: The nobility could choose to resist through violence, ally with its opponents through adaptation, or forge an alliance with the church in an antiliberal front. In Prussia, it was the bourgeoisie that had to adapt to the nobility, while Swedish nobles coexisted with an influential group of family farmers.

Hungary and other parts of Central Europe have been considered a region where the traditional nobility preserved its social standing the longest and where modernization had the most difficulty taking root. These were also societies where modernization presented huge challenges to the traditional hierarchies. András Vari, professor at the University of Miskolc, provides a new interpretation in his book, where he argues that the Hungarian agrarian elites underwent

a process of change during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Central European nobility has generally been regarded as an atavistic, conservative, and traditional power that defended its position against demands made by other groups. Vari presents a picture of a much more diverse Hungarian elite that closely monitored international trends and sometimes followed its own path of development.

The study of the Hungarian aristocracy encompasses the entire 19<sup>th</sup> century and thus covers the period usually called the shift to liberal reform, from around 1820 to 1870. This process is characterized by a tension between conservative aristocratic groups and liberal civil servants. This tension has been found in research on other countries, including Sweden.<sup>4</sup> Economically, the Hungarian aristocracy was liberal, like European nobility in general. The international depression in agricultural markets that began in 1873 prodded agrarians all over Europe to take to state interventionism and protectionism, but on this point, Hungary departs from the

general trend. The leading Hungarian politician during this period was the estate owner Kálmán Tisza, from the high nobility, whose governments during the period of 1875–1890 gave strong support to industrial development. The more typical reaction to the agrarian crisis of the 1870s and 1880s was a more activist conservatism.<sup>5</sup> But Hungary broke this pattern to a certain extent by preserving a more liberal political stance. Vari's findings consequently give us a new picture of Hungary, which has, in earlier research, often been described as rife with social conflicts. The point is that the Hungarian aristocracy partly accepted the modernization of society; it was not only an estate-owning nobility that strove to preserve the status quo in social respects and defended its privileges. The group was diverse and consisted in equal measure of industrialists and estate owners. But the traditional hierarchies were in general not meant to be shattered: what they wanted was economic development without more serious social reforms.<sup>6</sup>

But despite everything, Hungary was characterized by grave social and political unrest. In some cases, the Hungarian nobility attempted to assert itself in relation to the German-speaking nobility of the Habsburg Empire. It even achieved a kind of status quo after the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867 (*Ausgleich*), which established the dual monarchy. One of the Hungarian aristocracy's opposition forces was the agrarian socialists, who built their support on the large groups of the rural landless. Despite the modernization of the aristocracy, the social antagonisms in Hungary were never fully resolved; instead, they exploded into civil war and revolution after the breakdown of the dual monarchy in the aftermath of World War I. Béla Kun's communist regime of 1919 was defeated by admiral, nobleman, and estate owner Miklós Horthy, himself an integrated part of the aristocratic culture. This culture was an international phenomenon whose tone was set by English aristocratic culture in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Horseracing and casino gambling were part of a European trend, and horseracing was also a link to modernity through horse breeding. Breeding became a noble prerogative.

In the spirit of Braudel, Vari argues that cultures are slow-moving phenomena. The aristocratic culture is one of the long waves of history, while liberal-

ism and protectionism are part of its quotidian ups and downs.

**THE STRENGTH OF** the book is the overall approach. To understand how estate owners acted and reasoned, Vari compares them with the farmers. He augments this with studies of agricultural policy and relationships between the elites and the state, and analyzes dependencies between industry, trade, and banking, as well as organizational formation. In the latter respect, the aristocracy was a driving force in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, initially involving scientific and/or financial associations. Their primary task was not political, but rather business-oriented. Their aim was economic modernization, even if they later evolved into political groupings. Noble societies and other types of aristocratic clubs were therefore transformed into political bodies to promote aristocratic interests, even though the original purpose had been something else. This was also part of the modernization process, wherein modern organizations were required to preserve the aristocracy's position of power and the old clubs were thus reshaped into political organizations.

**CLEARLY, THE HUNGARIAN** aristocracy of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century no longer possessed the unquestioned leadership of the realm. Its corridors of power narrowed, even as aristocratic identity strengthened. But aristocratic thinking is not synonymous with conservatism. By adopting economic modernity and liberal trade, the representatives of the aristocracy elevated other groups to positions of power, sometimes inadvertently. The high aristocrats were dispersed in the ideological space. The antagonists were primarily non-noble groups and, to an equal extent, the low nobility. They could find their allies within the agrarian intelligentsia: professional groups of agronomists, engineers, and economists. In some cases, aristocrats changed their bearings and were designated in more professional terms, something that also occurred in countries like Sweden.<sup>7</sup> The reason for the change was the need to establish an identity in the international agrarian market. Suppliers had to compete on the basis of quality and the path to quality went through science. Professional groups became more important, partly in concert with the aristocracy's attempts to bring about economic development of their businesses. But despite the economically modern stance, the relationship between the aristocracy and their employees was informed by the more patriarchal relationships of the premodern age, in a mix of the modern and the traditional.

András Vari's study of the Hungarian aristocracy provides an intriguing glimpse of 19<sup>th</sup> century Hungarian history and an elite that blended economic liberalism with social traditionalism by remaining true to aristocratic values. It presents an elite that was threatened by economic change, but managed to preserve its status relatively intact. ✖

**fredrik eriksson**

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## Exodus from Galicia. Inferno of the swindlers and the swindled

**Martin Pollack**  
**Kaiser von Amerika:**  
**Die grosse Flucht aus**  
**Galizien**

Vienna: Paul Zsolnay  
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285 pages

**P**HILIPPE HALSMANN (1906–1979) was one of the greatest photo-journalists and portrait photographers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He took pictures for *Life*, *Time*, and *Vogue*; it was he who took the iconic photograph of the melancholy Einstein.

As a young man, he came very close to disaster. Together with his father, a wealthy dentist from Riga, he had gone hiking in the Austrian Zillertal Valley. His father fell down a cliff. Philippe ran immediately for help, and when help arrived, his father lay on the ground, robbed and murdered.

For some reason, suspicion fell on the son, Philippe. Despite a lack of evidence or motive, he was convicted of murder, later commuted to manslaughter. An international campaign was launched to have the conviction overturned, backed by luminaries including Sigmund Freud and Thomas Mann. It was suspected that local businessmen had reason to make what was probably the work of robbers look like a family conflict in order to prevent tourists from fleeing. Anti-Semitic attitudes were widespread in the Tyrol, and the Halsmanns were a Jewish family.

**WHEN PHILIPPE WAS** finally released, he himself fled, encouraged by lifetime banishment from Austria – first to France, and later, after the German invasion of France, across the Atlantic to America.

Many young Europeans had preceded him on this journey. The Halsmann affair took place in 1928 and the convict was released three years later at a point when Europe was on the brink of a new wave of Jewish persecution. Martin Pollack told the story with meticulous precision and literary brilliance in *Anklage Vatermord: Der Fall Philipp Halsmann* (2002). In his new book, Pollack limns the background to one of the major waves of emigration – the exodus from Galicia, the poorest of the Crown lands of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy – which was most intense during the period of roughly 1880–1920.

This was an exodus in which the Jewish population was strongly overrepresented, among both the travelers and the businessmen and agents who made fortunes on ticket sales, swindles, and violence, as poor and ignorant Eastern Europeans ventured out into the great unknown. Pollack describes the process with great empathy, always on the microscopic level and with the people

mentioned by name, in journalistically effective scenes based on source material taken directly from official archives. These are the people and the settings one encounters in Joseph Roth's short stories. The economic deprivation was endemic, the precariousness of day-to-day life was interrupted only by failed harvests and pogroms (although not as murderous as those in Russia, on the other side of the border), and ordinary people were utterly lacking in education. The situation deteriorated drastically when this remote corner of a sprawling empire was dragged into the modernization process through the expansion of the railways and expanded markets for industrial goods. Village tailors and shoemakers lost markets. Prices for agricultural products dropped and field allotments shrank dramatically in size. Vodka sales were the only lucrative business in the villages and small towns. And almost all publicans were Jews (who often doubled as moneylenders), as were for that matter many stewards (*Pächter*) of large estates. Not a good mix.

**BUT IT WAS A** splendid basis for enticing and fooling the most miserable of the miserable to sell what little they owned and make their way to a new country of infinite riches and enough milk and honey for everyone. Illiterate emigrants who crossed the ocean often had no idea where the new country was located, and perhaps not even what it was called, how far away it was, or in what direction it lay; they knew nothing of any exchange rate when they went to change their meager gold for marks or dollars; they had to pay for everything in advance, and if there was anything left over after they had received their tickets and other documents, that, too, was taken from them by force.

In often painful detail, Pollack describes this dirty, stinking racket, which played out in a corruptive black-market economy during the infancy of European-Atlantic robber baron capitalism. The whole enterprise was perilous for most of those involved. The emigrants were not only robbed, fleeced, and sometimes beaten, they were also in danger of being arrested by the Austrian authorities who did not routinely permit emigration and often judged it as an attempt to evade military service and thus as a form of desertion and treason. (The majority of emigrants were men, either young or in early middle age; most of those arrested were sent back to their home districts, poorer than they were when they left.) And in steerage in the big ships (most sailed from Hamburg and Bremen, although traffic to South America also left from Trieste and Le Havre, where competition was cut-throat among the emigration agents in both ports) the food was poor, sanitation dreadful, and the death toll high. No jobs were waiting in the port on the other side.

**OR ELSE THEY** were waiting. On Brazilian plantations, where working days were unbearably long, slavery widespread (legal until 1888 but still practiced thereafter), and wages never paid. And there were jobs, of a sort, at the brothels in Constantinople, Bombay, and Rio de Janeiro. Human trafficking constituted a special trade, organized mainly by Jewish madams who offered mainly Jewish beauties to brothel owners

of mainly Eastern European origins. (The first shipment of 67 young Jewish girls had been sent to Brazil in 1867.) These people had no future, whether in the new country or in the old: for the vast majority, returning was out of the question. Naturally, there are counterexamples, even among the "Galicians" (whether Poles, Jews, Ukrainians, Germans, Slovaks, or even so-called "Northern Hungarians"), and the society that seems to have been the most welcoming to the new arrivals was Canada, discovered as a destination in the 1890s by Ruthenians or Galician Germans (sometimes called "Swabians"). These people never had a choice to voluntarily move eastward toward Russia like 19<sup>th</sup> century Finns, for example, who had been subjects of the Tsar since 1809, and a number of enterprising Swedes who were happy to settle temporarily or for good in the world city of Saint Petersburg and other parts of the vast Russian Empire. A group of humble, land-hungry people from Podolia, the most wretched district in all of wretched Galicia, who left in 1892 for the paradise of "Rozalya" on utterly false premises, returned disappointed to a brutal homecoming. In point of fact, horrible stories had been told about life under the Tsar and the whip by fleeing Jews who had become the targets of state terror and officially sanctioned pogroms after the anarchist assassination of the "reformist" Emperor Alexander II in 1881. Russian Jews came over the border to Brody on the Austrian side, the town where Joseph Roth was to grow up. From there, they journeyed to gather in places with subsequently fateful names like Auschwitz and Birkenau. These were destinations for not only Russian Jews, but also Jews from Romania, a country afflicted since the early 1870s by officially staged anti-Semitism.

**AND IT IS NOW** that things begin to happen in the demographics. In the 1880s, sixty percent of all Galician emigrants were Jews, although they made up only ten percent of the population. During the thirty years from 1881 to 1910, no less than forty percent of the Jews of Galicia chose to call on the United States. The Lower East Side of Manhattan in New York City then became in reality a Jewish city.

There were other reasons beyond the economic and cultural that set these human masses in motion. The





ILLUSTRATION: RAGNI SVENSSON

social structure in Galicia, controlled by landowners, guaranteed backwardness and stasis. Opportunities for advancement for the ambitious subsistence farmer, the day laborer, the peddler, and the tradesman, were marginal at best. Poverty was so close to the limit of prostration that people simply did not have the strength to work, and since they were unable to work, they lost the opportunity to support themselves. Or it wasn't permitted. Pollack states that in Galicia in the 1870s, there were 100–120 established religious holidays in thirty-four districts of the province, 120–150 in twenty-two districts, and 150–200 in the remaining six districts, according to a report by a government authority. Lethargy was chronic and the Crown land was bleeding economically. The only thing that increased was the population. Actually, one other thing increased: antagonisms between population groups through the national unification movements. All of these had one thing in common: they regarded Jews as a foreign species. This was an inferno where both the swindled and the swindlers were victims, each in their own way. These districts would later endure the worst suffering of all in the murders of the *second* world war.

*Kaiser von Amerika?* One of the many legends that swept through the anguished Galician countryside around 1900 is the one about Emperor Franz Joseph's son, Crown Prince Rudolf. According to the story, Rudolf had not committed suicide along with his lover, seventeen-year-old Baroness Mary Vetsera in 1889, but had actually traveled to Brazil and become the ruler of this remote kingdom. Now he received all Galicians who went there with open arms. This wild imagination, this singular belief in completely unexpected everyday miracles, is another thing one constantly encounters in the works of Joseph Roth. And it certainly was a miracle that so many managed to survive nonetheless, at home and in foreign lands. Galicians were also a prime commodity close to home – as seasonal labor on the East Elbian latifundia (and yes, on manor farms in Denmark and southern Sweden, where they worked picking and cleaning beets for several months until winter arrived). For a liberal like Max Weber, in the 1890s, these “Poles” were a veritable national scourge, since they were willing to work for less than the wage German subsistence farmers had previously been able to count on as day laborers – and thus hastened the emigration of *ethnic Germans*!

**BUT THE BIGGEST** emigration shipping king of them all, Albert Ballin, must also be counted as a Kaiser of America. His agency in Hamburg, Hapag, went under as a direct consequence of the outcome of the Great War, the defeat of Germany, and the decline in transatlantic travel. Ballin, son of an insignificant Jewish emigration agent, head of the world's largest shipping

line, was taken away by revolutionary sailors and died on November 9, 1918, the same day the republic was proclaimed in Germany. With the German defeat and the simultaneous dissolution of the Habsburg monarchy, the contemporary equivalent of the “Fall of the Wall,” all Galicians had become Poles. But that is another story altogether.

The former *Spiegel* reporter Pollack's book is a first-rate work and a worthy successor to his breakthrough *Galizien: Eine Reise durch die verschwundene Welt Ostgaliziens und der Bukowina* (2001), although there are no references to the literature and source material he made use of, which makes the book less useful in scholarly contexts. What Pollack so clearly shows is how so-

cieties under great duress and distress can react en masse and utterly lose their bearings. Many of the phenomena he addresses, such as human trafficking of various types and forced mass emigration, are not entirely things of the past. ❌

anders björnsson

Note: See also Anders Hammarlund's review essay on p.4.

## Negotiating Soviet gendered reality in Lithuania. Among superwomen and alcoholics

**Adopting and  
Remembering  
Soviet Reality:  
Life Stories of  
Lithuanian Women  
1945–1970**

Edited and adapted by  
Dalia Leinarte  
Amsterdam & New York:  
Rodopi  
2010  
234 pages

**“U**LTIMATELY, SOVIET memory no longer has a place, nor any significance, in this world.” (p. 16) This is a rather resigned closing sentence for the first part of a volume that reflects on the complexity and inexpressibility of Soviet women’s experience in Lithuania, analyzed by Dalia Leinarte, an internationally renowned expert on Lithuanian family history and women’s history. For more than a decade, Leinarte has been working on an oral history project that is in the process of collecting narratives of Lithuanian women about Soviet times. For the present publication, she selected ten stories out of fifty for publication in the book.<sup>1</sup>

In the first part of my review, I would like to reconstruct the complex task of the volume, and then will offer some critical reflections on the main themes and theses of the book.

The volume begins by reviewing other works that use the method of oral history in analyzing Soviet and post-Soviet experience. From the start, Leinarte makes it clear that “a precise account of past events is not the important task of oral history” (p. 9), so she focuses on the formation of subjectivity in a historical context. This orientation is the exception in the field of oral history, especially in the field of post-Soviet studies, where the histories are very often interpreted as “true stories”. Leinarte never questions the “authenticity” of these stories; instead she analyzes the frames and rhetorical strategies, and more importantly, the constraints of available rhetorical strategies of speaking about past experiences. This opening literature review section, like the book as whole, is characterized by unusual parsimony. The reader is left wanting to know more about the opinions and thoughts of the author, but her approach was probably the only way to keep this volume elegantly slim.

**IN THIS FIRST** part, she also addresses the main theoretical challenge for the interpretation of oral histories: the issue of silence. She collected a large archive of oral histories, and, based on an examination of them, she divides the women granting interviews to her into three categories. To the first category belong those whose nostalgic narrative depicts the Soviet period as better, in the second are those giving narrations of the suffering under communism, and to the third, the most numerous cate-

gory, belong those who wanted to share with her their “true experiences”. Leinarte decided not to include any of the stories in this third category, since their narration is incoherent and illogical in the context of the overall project of the book, but she very often uses some segments of interviews conducted with this group of women to illustrate certain points. This editorial move is understandable – the goal being to grasp the complexities of women’s lives – but it leaves the reader wanting to know more about the subject.

**THE SECOND PART** of the book, “Women, Work, and Family in Soviet Lithuania”, is an overview of the Lithuanian social welfare system during Soviet times. It shows how the Soviet egalitarian family model, introduced with the hope of eliminating the discrimination against single mothers, met with major opposition from the traditional, Catholic Lithuanian population. This part of the book also analyzes gender roles and family life, everyday practices of family and work life, and the “Soviet” concept of romantic love and friendship. Leinarte uses interview segments to illustrate her points and underlines that no matter how much official state policy advocated equality between men and women, the pay gap was still 40 percent (p. 28), but the sphere of employment became a space for women to exercise their agency.<sup>2</sup> The complexity of this topic is also revealed in the contradictory statements related to happiness. The women who were interviewed pointed out that they were happy in their work life (p. 34), but for them, the most important element of their life was family (p. 198). Leinarte notes that other scholars also found that talking about one’s family life proved to be difficult, which is likely not unrelated to the ideological-rhetorical pressure constituted by the image of the working mother as superior to the non-working mother. In the next section of the second part, on gender roles and family life, she points out that life was difficult not only for women, but also for men, because “yesterday’s peasant sons, who were today’s Soviet plant and factory workers, were unable to adapt to a new model of gender roles. Raised in patriarchal families, they had difficulty accepting modern gender roles based on partnership” (p. 37). This difficulty manifested itself in broken marriages, and very often in alcoholism and violence. For women in Soviet times, and not only in Lithuania, the only role they could strive to comply with remained the superwoman who copes with all responsibilities at home as well as at the workplace, as well as with the “neo-patriarchal hierarchy of gender roles” of Soviet propaganda.

The third part of the book consists of ten life stories with an introduction and carefully footnoted explanations of the narratives – which don’t unnecessarily interrupt the flow of the text – followed by a conclusion. It is difficult to reconstruct the category of “Lithuanian women”, but with the selection of ten stories, Leinarte has tried to complicate the picture as much as possible by selecting atypical, invisible, and “invisibilized” women: an orphan, a mother of a child with disability, a political prisoner, an artist, a member of the nomenklatura, a barmaid, an exemplary role model

of the Soviet woman, a wife of a party leader, a wife of an alcoholic husband. She conducted the interviews herself by the narrative interview technique, a method she carefully describes in the methodology section of the book. The stories also contain the questions asked, illustrating the intervention of the interviewer, which is necessarily unbalanced: sometimes there is a lot of intervention by the interviewer; sometimes the narration just rolls smoothly without further questioning.

**THE LAST SENTENCE** of the conclusion points out that “erasing the Soviet past from Lithuanian women’s memory is an ongoing process, and, most probably, former ‘ordinary Soviet people’ will not pass on their Soviet experiences to future generations” (p. 200).<sup>3</sup> This statement raises not only the question whether memory can be erased, and if so, with what consequences, but also what this “Soviet past” is that is now being erased. Leinarte’s summary makes it clear that the Sovietization of Lithuania brought mixed results as far as a transformation of gender roles is concerned. Partly this is because it was only from the 1950s on that more money was invested in social welfare infrastructure, enabling more women to work outside the home, which caused a major transformation. The concept of romantic love was also replaced by a pragmatic deal between partners. Interestingly enough, this emotional deal supported not only women’s participation in the labor market but also increased men’s participation in the household work and stabilized relationships, moving them to a practical level. This shift from emotions towards a practical arrangement was an important step towards constructing equality of partners in heterosexual marriages. But we learn from the stories of Lithuanian women that, in practice, this equality was not open to all. In working class families, women were still subjected to violence and exploitation, a condition which, I suspect, would not have been significantly affected by whether a Soviet or bourgeois regime was in place in Lithuania. With the narratives of women, the book proves that “Soviet memory” or “Soviet reality” is contextualized and negotiated over time. Some had more negotiating power, some less. An important argument of the book is that the Sovietization of Lithuania, which had an enormous





ILLUSTRATION: KATRIN STENMARK

impact on gender relations, happened relatively smoothly, especially after the 1950s – for two reasons. One was that the Soviet occupying forces ideologically discredited the “bourgeois model” of gender relations in interwar Lithuania, which otherwise would have offered, with its hierarchical Christian traditionalism, a strong basis for resisting Sovietization. The second reason involves demographic factors. Lithuania suffered significant losses during WW II because of forced displacement, the Holocaust, the war itself, and emigration. In 1951, after the World War II deportations, the population of Lithuania was ten percent less than it was in 1945. (p. 19) The rural population, which suffered less forced

displacement and change in the elite, remained less resistant to the Soviet ideal of the woman worker as far as women’s employment is concerned.

**LEINARTE CLOSES HER** book with an interesting claim: she argues that while resistance to the Soviet occupation was very much present in the attitude of much of the Lithuanian population, Soviet propaganda “was difficult to resist in the private sphere”.<sup>4</sup> This is precisely the opposite of what scholars of gender studies found in Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia, where family proved to be a successful site of resistance to Sovietization.<sup>5</sup> It was impossible, she argues, to avoid state intervention into family life, and the women whom she interviewed were narrating their lives from the mid-1950s onwards using Soviet clichés, such as the canonized figure of the heroic Soviet woman worker. Leinarte argues that women “internalized”

these clichés. (p. 199) I would explain this phenomenon differently, by raising the question of the unspeakability of memories of the Soviet past. There is no other narrative frame available for these women to talk about their private lives and feelings than the vocabulary of their youth. After 1991, this narrative was replaced by the interwar traditionalism, which had been alien to them, since they had spent their lives with paid labor. The victorious neo-liberalism combined with re-traditionalization did not offer any space of identification for them other than victimhood and consumption. It is left to the reader to rethink the consequences of the slow disappearance from the women’s narratives of the element of employment as a space of happiness and pride. What remains is the habitual practice of suffering and self-sacrifice, which is the perfect setting for a conservative backlash.<sup>6</sup>

This book is an attempt to create a space for the memory of Soviet times, thus lending this period greater significance. ✕

andrea pető

## REFERENCES

- 1 The structure of the book is similar to that of Jehanne M. Gheith & Katherine R. Joluck (eds.), *Gulag Voices: Oral Histories of Soviet Incarceration and Exile*, New York 2011. – Both volumes leave out an analysis of the extremely valuable visual material.
- 2 See similar findings based also on other sources interviews with women in heavy industry in Malgorzata Fidelis, *Women, Communism, and Industrialization in Postwar Poland*, New York 2010.
- 3 Leinarte, p. 200.
- 4 Leinarte, p. 197.
- 5 See for example: Andrea Pető, *Geschlecht, Politik und Stalinismus in Ungarn: Eine Biographie von Júlia Rajk*, Herne 2007.
- 6 On the neo-conservative turn in post-communist Eastern Europe, see Andrea Pető, “Anti-Modernist Political Thoughts on Motherhood in Europe, in a Historical Perspective”, in Heike Kahlert & Waltraud Ernst (eds.), *Reframing Demographic Change in Europe: Perspectives on Gender and Welfare State Transformations*, Berlin 2010, pp. 189–201.

## Dissertation review. When the border between East and West becomes a border between now and then



ILLUSTRATION: RAGNI SVENSSON

**Sofi Gerber**  
**Öst är Väst men**  
**Väst är bäst:**  
**Östtysk**  
**identitetsformering**  
**i det förenade Tyskland**

East is West but West  
is best: East German  
identity formation  
in unified Germany  
Stockholm University  
(Stockholm Studies in  
Ethnology 5) 2011  
248 pages

**I** A SWEDISH ethnologist investigates East German identity and describes how former GDR citizens are adjusting to life in a united Germany, and how they think about their own history and their environment before and after the unification of the two German states. . . . Reviewing this book represents an exciting but challenging task for me personally. On the one hand, my path and that of Sofi Gerber are diametrically opposed, because as a German student from the former GDR, I once took a great interest in Sweden, and was able to observe myself in Sweden negotiating “Eastern” and “Western” identities. At the same time, I belong precisely to that generation of East Germans upon whom this extremely fascinating investigation focuses. Since I am not a colleague of Sofi Gerber, and approach this topic principally from a personal point of view, my review should be understood less as an objective critique

than as a reader’s critical contribution.

Sofi Gerber is investigating the development of East German identity in the unified Germany. The most important questions are how people define the categories “East” and “West” and which concepts with regard to identity contribute to the self-image of former GDR citizens. Gerber chooses a discourse theory in the tradition of the political theoreticians Laclau und Mouffe as the theoretical-methodological framework for her investigation. Central concepts are *dislocation*, which causes subjects to define themselves in totally new identity categories because of changed social and historical hegemonies, and the *articulation* of these identity categories in verbal, non-verbal, or material discourse. Using the example of the historically different levels of East-West discourses, Gerber examines and describes how identities are established and at the same time how they must constantly change.

**FOR HER INVESTIGATION**, Gerber interviewed 25 East German men and women born in the 1970s, asking questions about the course of their lives in the GDR during the *Wende* (the collapse of the communist system, which led to the dissolution of East Germany in 1990), and in the united Germany. In order to tap into and describe the structural connections of the world her subjects remember living in, Gerber drew upon a number of other sources, among them

research literature on recent German history and identity history, popular versions of the topic in literature and the press, and, in particular, her own observations during her stays in Germany. As a result, the book also presents a good historical overview of East German history over the last 40 years. In doing so, it also places the interaction of identification processes and social change in Germany in the much broader context of late capitalism and globalization.

Central topics in the life stories Gerber recorded are the end of the socialist GDR and its transition to a capitalist system. For those who were part of this process, these social and political transformations involved opportunities, challenges, and also restrictions, and are sometimes described simultaneously as a liberation and a disappointment. The study exposes these and other dichotomies in their life histories, and reconstructs how those interviewed develop a reflexive position in relation to themselves, their history, and their social environment by negotiating the various identity discourses, historical and current.

**GERBER’S STUDY SHOWS** that the categories “East” and “West” do not have a firmly fixed significance but can be assigned meaning only by means of identity articu-

lation on the basis of other categories, particularly “class”, “nation”, “place”, and “gender”. The terms “East” and “West” as identity categories have been outdated since the end of the GDR, but at the same time, these categories still have meaning in the social realities of East Germans today.

The study begins with a general introduction that explains the theoretical and methodological framework, and positions the study in the history of research (chapter 1, pp. 9–39). The main body of the study consists of six chapters in which different aspects of identity development are presented based on the subjects’ life memories between their childhood in the GDR and their personal life conditions in the Germany of today. These chapters are organized chronologically and begin with material aspects of the “modern GDR”, for example life in the *Platte* (suburban residential area of large apartment buildings built from prefabricated concrete slabs) and how people deal with the lack of goods (chapter 2, pp. 40–68). Chapter 3, “Disciplining and Resistance”, revolves around the subjects’ experiences as schoolchildren and members of socialist youth organizations, as well as their memories of the Stasi, among other things. Chapter 4, about the *Wende*, deals with the events between 1989 and 1990 and the end of the GDR (chapter 4, pp. 101–139). Chapters 5 through 7 look at various aspects of life in the Germany of today: “The New Country” describes, for example, attitudes toward the consumer society and *Ostalgie* (nostalgia for aspects of life in the former GDR). Chapter 6, “Changed Life Circumstances” focuses on the changes in the school system and life at work (chapter 6, pp. 170–192). Finally, chapter 7, “Conformist Antagonists”, revolves around topics related to identification in late modern society, such as the differing individual treatment, flexibility and insecurity of men and women in their present working life (chapter 7, pp. 193–211). The final discussion (chapter 8, pp. 212–221) and the summarized results of the study in English (Summary, pp. 222–232) are followed by a list of the published and unpublished primary and secondary sources (pp. 233–241), and a list of the interview subjects with (pseudonymous) first name, year of birth, and a few short pieces of biographical data about their current work and their place of residence and place of birth. In addition, the book contains four



photos by the author, illustrating some of the “materialized discourses”, such as the *Platte* in Berlin-Marzahn (p. 45; discussed p. 40 ff. and elsewhere) and the *Ampelmännchen* (the East German pedestrian crossing light with a little green man) (p. 142; discussed p. 141 f., and elsewhere). All interview texts used in the analysis are transcribed in Swedish, and the excellent (almost literary!) Swedish translation takes into account all of the relevant linguistic and stylistic features of the original, which itself is also reproduced in footnotes. Where necessary, the cultural/historical or politically relevant background of the topic under discussion is explained briefly in footnotes.

The study succeeds wonderfully in terms of content and style, and the material is presented clearly. Because of the chronological organization of the topics under discussion, the reader follows the life histories of the interviewees eagerly. Their personal reports and the historical explanations that accompany them are skillfully built into the convincing analysis. Nowhere does the analysis, continuously theoretical, become taxing – on the contrary: Gerber’s conscientious reconstruction of East German identity formation convinces even the reader who is not schooled in discourse theory.

## II

**THERE ARE ONLY** a few details in the analysis that I personally could not understand, and on the whole, they were of rather minor importance. Some of them have to do with the age of the people questioned. According to Gerber, her interviewees are representative of the last generation of GDR citizens who can give us information about both the time before and the time after the *Wende*. The age of the interviewees varies so greatly, however, that at the beginning of the peaceful revolution the youngest, Inge, was just beginning her fifth year of school at the age of ten. The oldest, Georg, aged 19, had finished his schooling long before. In my opinion (and in my personal experience with comparably younger people), these nine years encompass worlds of difference. Gerber’s subjects can all offer plenty of memories of the former GDR, but I would hardly consider the youngest among them as “completely socialized in the GDR” (p. 223). My own feeling, therefore, is that the interviewees belong in two groups: those who

in 1989 were already young adults (roughly those born no later than 1973; 12 people) and the younger ones (13 people).

I am not familiar with all of the interview material that was recorded and analyzed, but it strikes me that in the case of the topics specific to the GDR (school, Stasi, etc.), it is mainly the statements of the older interviewees that are quoted, and that most of the youngest interviewees do not appear until much closer to the end of the investigation (except for the youngest, Inge, who says something about almost every topic). Indeed, in a couple of places Gerber herself talks about the age range of her interviewees and reflects on the differences in their memories during the *Wende* (p. 102). In the chronologically earlier chapters, however, the relevance of the age range must reveal itself even more clearly. For example, children will more likely have learned about the repressions of the Stasi indirectly (perhaps hearing about it from their parents while the GDR was still in existence, or even not until much later). Young adults, on the other hand, most certainly compared notes about it among themselves, even if they had not personally come into contact with the Stasi in some way.

Of course, what is important is not how true the memories are, but the personal standpoint that the interviewees chose in the discourse. The reconstruction of an appropriate historical context is, however, of significance for the correct interpretation of the subjective statements. For example, Gerber tries to interpret why Steffi did not take an active part in the protests in the fall of 1989 (p. 108). One banal reason could be that Steffi at 14 was possibly too young to think about going to the demonstration. Jana’s statement that she never went shopping in an Intershop (shop for high-quality goods paid for with hard currency, p. 119) also seems unremarkable from the perspective of that time, because 12-year-olds would go to these shops only with their parents.

It also seems that Gerber may not pick up too easily on some indirect clues about relevant personal differences in the biographies. A good example is a passage about Inge, who describes her own childish image of the West as “naive and distorted”. Gerber cautiously concludes that from today’s perspective Inge could certainly be described as politically indoctrinated (p. 64). In fact, it seems very likely that Inge and her family must have been indoctrinated by the socialist system. Her father was apparently a career soldier (pp. 51, 185) and therefore a comrade with privileges; in addition, soldiers and their families were forbidden, among other things, contact with West Germany, and therefore had to sever relations with any West German relatives.

**IT IS POSSIBLE THAT** other biographies also mention issues that were extremely interesting but were not expressed in the study. Karl is described in several places as fitting in well in the GDR and at the same time being critical of the system. He had been admitted to university in medicine before the *Wende* (p. 177). Yet, to fulfill his career choice, it is possible that membership in the FDJ (Free German Youth) and good marks through

his early school years were not enough on their own. Normally people preferred to sign up right away for a longer period of military service (three years instead of the basic military service of a year and a half) for a “dream” course of study like medicine. In addition, many candidates competing for university courses that were particularly in demand also joined the SED (Socialist Unity Party of Germany) “voluntarily”. What would Karl’s stance have been in relation to these issues of conformism and resistance during the existence of the GDR?

## III

**A FEW OTHER DETAILS** also demonstrate that although Gerber understands the big picture very well, she only reconstructs the details indirectly or at second hand. Yet many details are absolutely relevant to her analyses. Without a doubt, schoolchildren in the GDR, as members of the socialist organizations for children and youth, conformed to the GDR regime. However, to interpret this “fellow-traveling”, we must take into consideration that the *Jungpioniere*, *Thälmannpioniere* (socialist children organizations), the FDJ, and other organizations such as the Society for German-Soviet Friendship (DSF) functioned differently than member organizations today. Personally, I do not find it at all remarkable that almost all of those interviewed were members of the socialist youth organizations of the GDR (p. 80). Much more remarkable are the very few exceptions (among Gerber’s subjects these include only Tanja, who from time to time withdrew from the FDJ, and Erich, whose Christian parents did not allow him to become a member of the youth organizations). As Gerber argues, the regular flag ceremony at schools and the youth organizations clearly illustrate the socialist discipline. She is also right when she says that the subjects, from their current perspective, have an ambivalent position on this: on the one hand, it was normal, and on the other, it was “socialist discipline”.

Yet, given the social reality of that time, some of Gerber’s analyses rest on shaky ground. It does not matter whether Andrea expressed it explicitly, it is certainly clear, for example, “who honored the partisan fighter with flowers and whether Andrea herself was one of the pioneers who participated in the flag ceremony” (p. 72). Of course Andrea participated in the flag ceremony! The whole school took part and laid flowers at the memorial because it was a regular part of the school program.

However, in summary, it must again be emphasized that my criticism does not affect the central theses of this extremely interesting study. Sofi Gerber is without question a specialist in her field and in addition has an excellent understanding of recent German history. I have gained personally from the opportunity to read this study and to reflect on my own life history while doing so. Putting her research results into a popular science format is of course not the author’s priority. However, it would be interesting to observe how the emotionally laden East-West discourse of the German feuilleton would receive Gerber’s theories. ✖

michael rießler



# Where can freedom be found

Where can freedom be found.  
Is it matter, a concept, or a fantasy.  
Can it be found in particular places,  
Or does it inhabit our heads.

What is freedom.  
In the Old Testament it appears rather to be the weaker part of a duality.  
As opposed to  
captivity, servitude, slavery, serfdom,  
dependence, exploitation,  
feudalism, yoke,  
subjugation, oppression,  
it stands quite alone,  
gives the impression of being fragile.  
One is simply displaced, sold, shackled,  
thrown into dark dungeons.  
God! What darkness here!  
O dreadful silence!  
In Psalm 80, too, there is a call for liberation:  
Stir up your strength  
and come and save us!  
God, comfort us again  
and cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.  
The radiance, the light in the darkness is  
indispensable for freedom.  
Freedom is light –  
that is my manifest experience from dictatorship.  
When we know that this fragile thing has receded

into the far distance,  
we are gripped by a deficiency disease.

Lack of light,  
that means depression.  
As once a friend in Rome mercilessly said  
in the Termini railway station,  
You crawled out of the dark hole of the Cold War.  
Although I had simply arrived by train.  
He was one of the later generation, handsome, gifted, he wore white linen  
trousers, a salmon-colored silk shirt,  
he didn't even notice that still earlier I had crawled out of the dark hole  
of the Second World War.  
I was only slowly cured of my lack of light  
after the Warsaw Pact troops had occupied Czechoslovakia  
on the 21<sup>st</sup> of August 1968,  
and I, moved by this,  
finally dared  
to give up my career as a journalist  
and to turn my back on my home town.  
I could barely pay  
my absurdly low rent to a farmer's wife.  
When I really did not know which way to turn,  
I cautiously asked a girlfriend –  
Behold the fowls of the air,  
she replied, they sow not, neither do they reap,  
yet your heavenly Father feedeth them.  
That was really funny. We were just going for a walk.





ILLUSTRATION: MOA THELANDER

## BY PÉTER NÁDAS

Laughed out loud.  
 That was radiance, this laughing, light. Light is matter and  
 wave, charisma and energy.  
 Oh, what joy,  
 Oh, what joy, to breathe easily  
 in the free air.  
 Freedom is light and air and word.  
 Whether this light is reflected on the features  
 of a smiling Buddha or a girlfriend  
 or on the angry face  
 of an occidental god  
 is of little significance.  
 Words are bodies of sound, they make the air vibrate.  
 Through the body of the word, through the vibration of the air  
 and through the radiance of joy,  
 person and community are bound  
 to a phenomenon of unknown origin.  
 Freedom is a constant.  
 That is roughly how I would describe freedom.  
 Admittedly, we have our ongoing problems with it,  
 individual and communal, local and global.  
 For example, for more than two hundred years  
 we have linked freedom to individuality,  
 and by doing so have come up against hard boundaries.  
 While we desperately struggle with the terrible inheritance of  
 the collectivist societies, the possibilities of the  
 individual seem to have been exhausted.

INTELLECTUAL  
TEMPTATIONS AND  
DISAPPOINTMENTS

“**FINALLY, THE GROWTH** of direct communication between the socialist sector of the globe and the rest, if only in the form of journalism, tourism, cultural interchange and the creation of significant bodies of emigrants from socialist countries, influenced developments in Marxism inasmuch as it swelled the body of information about them accessible to Western Marxists, which could only be overlooked with increasing difficulty. If such countries were nevertheless still turned into models, sometimes almost utopian, of what Western revolutionaries aspired to, it was largely because Western revolutionaries knew little about them, and sometimes were in no position, or did not care, to learn more.

“The idealisation of the Chinese ‘Cultural Revolution’ by many Western revolutionaries had about as little to do with China as Montesquieu’s *Lettres Persanes* had to do with Iran, or the eighteenth-century ‘Noble Savage’ with Tahiti. All used what purported to be the experience of a remote country for the social critique of another part of the world. Nevertheless, with the growth of communication and information, the tendency to see utopia under some already fluttering red state flag diminished markedly.

“The period since 1956 is one in which most Western Marxists were forced to conclude that existing socialist regimes, from the USSR to Cuba and Vietnam, were far from what they would themselves have wished a socialist society, or a society in the process of constructing socialism, to be like. The bulk of Marxists were forced to revert to the positions of socialists everywhere before 1917. Once again they had to argue for socialism as a necessary solution for the problems created by capitalist society, as a hope for the future, but one only very inadequately supported by practical experience.

“**CONVERSELY, THE MIGRATION** from socialist countries of ‘dissidents’ reinforced the old temptation to identify Marx and Marxism exclusively with such regimes, and especially with the USSR. It had once served to exclude from Marxist community anyone who failed to give total and uncritical support to whatever came from Moscow. It now served those who wanted to reject all of Marx, since they claimed that the only road which led forward from the Communist Manifesto, or could lead forward, was that which ended in the gulags of Stalin’s Russia or their equivalent in some other state governed by Marx’s disciples. This reaction was psychologically comprehensible among disillusioned communists contemplating ‘the god that failed’. It was even more comprehensible among intellectual dissidents in and from socialist countries, whose rejection of anything to do with their official regimes was total – starting with the thinker to whose theory these regimes appealed. Intellectually, it has about as much justification as the thesis that all Christianity must logically and necessarily always lead to papal absolutism, or all Darwinism to the glorification of free capitalist competition.” ✕

From Eric Hobsbawm, *How to Change the World: Tales of Marx and Marxism*.  
 London: Little, Brown 2011

# Memories of a land in stagnation

During the final years of socialist stagnation, dissident culture in the Soviet Union reawakened. Everyone listened to the songs of Vysotsky, most people had a distrust of official statements. And Sabina Spielrein's fate began to unravel in unfathomable ways.

BY **MAGNUS LJUNGGREN**

## THE USSR IN 1983

In the spring of 1983 I spent a few months in the Soviet Union, working at Moscow State University on a research grant. I tried to make maximum use of my time to perform essentially three different tasks: to conduct research in government and private archives related to Russian Symbolism; to converse with colleagues – and survivors – in my particular field; and, finally, on behalf of Amnesty International, to give aid and succor to political prisoners and their families. During the day, I traveled back in time and lost myself in the bottomless well of the Russian archives. In the evening, I often lived very close to the struggle for civil rights that was to lose momentum so definitively that very year of 1983.

At that point, it was nearly impossible to breathe in Russian society. Everything seemed to have stagnated. Leonid Brezhnev had died in November of 1982. Power had been passed on to Yuri Andropov, head of the KGB. At his last public appearance, Brezhnev had almost staggered onto the Kremlin podium. Andropov was so sick that he was nowhere to be seen. The war in Afghanistan ground on. Several of the leading cultural figures had been driven into exile and successively stripped of their citizenship. The figurehead of the civil rights movement, Andrei Sakharov, and his wife Yelena Bonner were in domestic exile, isolated and watched around the clock in an apartment in Gorky. More civil rights activists were constantly being ar-



Singer and poet Vladimir Vysotsky's (inset) grave in Vagankovo Cemetery, still heaped with flowers three years after his burial.

rested. One friend of mine, historian Arseni Roginsky (now executive director of the organization Memorial), had been in a camp since the decade began; another, literary scholar Konstantin Azadovsky, had just been released – he could testify first-hand about the bitter cold in Kolyma.

I felt the grotesqueness of the situation the moment I crossed the Finnish-Soviet border by train. I had with me a three-volume American edition of Vladimir Vysotsky's songs and poems in the original language: songs and poems of corruption and queues, of the black market trade and vodka tippling, of despair and the reality of imprisonment. The whole thing was a gift

to Yelena Bonner from Russian émigré friends. In those days, Vysotsky's gravelly voice sounded all over the country on tape recordings – *mag-nitizdat*. Three years after his death, people were still gathering at his grave in the Vagankovo cemetery in Moscow. He lived in the hearts of the people – but he could not be published. Naturally, the customs officials immediately pounced on the three-volume set: most likely, the truth was that they loved Vysotsky as much as everybody else in this country. I was bold enough to ask them if they were not ashamed to steal such a precious thing from me for their own gain. Something utterly unexpected then happened: they gave the volumes back.

And so I installed myself at Moscow State University and began my work in the manuscript department of the Lenin Library. I had recently defended my doctoral dissertation on Andrei Bely and wanted to keep writing about his friend, publisher and music writer Emili Medtner, who had ended up in therapy with C. G. Jung during the First World War. My work was also done in private family archives, where I was kindly given free rein. One day, the Medtner family gave me permission to take 700 pages of letters to the Swedish embassy for photocopying. I rarely felt watched, but could sense a few shadows that time. When my taxi driver understood our predicament, he took on a gleeful expression, stepped on the gas, and made sure he left the shadows in the dust.

Everything in the Land of Andropov was built on paradox. Nothing was really clear-cut. The ideology





Sabina Spielrein with her family. The year is 1909, the photograph was probably taken in connection with the celebration of her parents' silver anniversary. From left to right, Sabina's mother Eva, Sabina, Sabina's father Nikolai, and her three brothers Emil, Isaak, and Yan.



Above: Linguist and ethnologist Vyacheslav Ivanov and his friend, psychiatrist Viktor Gindilis.  
Left: Linguist, ethnologist and literary scholar Vladimir Toporov.



was so weakened that the powers that be had been forced to seek support from symbolist Aleksandr Blok, whose birth centennial had recently – in 1980 – been celebrated, and who was lauded as an important patriotic poet. Meanwhile, Chingiz Aitmatov had published a novel, *The Day Lasts More than a Hundred Years*, which had garnered a state prize, even though it related an old Kyrgyzian myth about “mankurts”, slaves made to wear caps of raw hide that dried and shrank, compressing their heads like iron bands until they lost all memory. The Soviet Union was existing in a kind of mankurt reality. Stalin's Terror was taboo, the opposition silenced, the great artists driven out. And yet dissenting voices trickled through. When I was not buried in the manuscript archive, I was allowed to work in a reading room for professors, where I could take from the shelves a physics journal that included Andrei Sakharov's most recent scientific paper, published even though the man now had been elevated nearly to the status of an enemy of the people.

**One day I was** invited to give a lecture on Medtner and the early Russian interest in psychoanalysis at the Institute of Slavic and Balkan Studies. The two mainstays of the department, Vyacheslav Ivanov and Vladimir Toporov, both possessed encyclopedic knowledge of the kind one could perhaps only find in the Soviet Union. Ivanov – now an octogenarian who commutes between Boston and Moscow – is primarily a linguist, ethnologist, and literary scholar. He has written about the two halves of the brain, the film theory of Sergei Eisenstein, and the dialogic philosophy of Mikhail Bakhtin. He is equally at home with Tocharian as with Strindberg's plays (since he also reads Swedish). Toporov – who died a few years ago – was, if this is even

**“Ivanov finished the evening by doing something quite remarkable. He brought a little blackboard and chalk to the dinner table and began to lecture while sketching on the board.”**

possible, still broader in his erudition. He had been the foremost contributor to the recently published, very fine dictionary of mythology (a total of 1,400 pages). All told, he wrote 1,500 works (without a typewriter, much less a computer) about ancient Slavic literature, Russian saints, Old Prussian vocabulary, the Siberian Ket language, Slavic locatives, and the literary Petersburg myth from the semiotic perspective, as the challenge of the periphery against the center. Ivanov and Toporov had close ties to Yuri Lotman's cultural studies in Tartu – the Tartu that was, of course, itself a periphery that was ideologically balanced against (and would in the end overcome) the center in Moscow. Their institute stood out as a unique free zone.

Ivanov and Toporov soon extended invitations to their homes. At that moment and in addition to everything else, both were writing about symbolism. Ivanov, it turned out, was particularly keen to ask about current psychiatric theory in the West. He was interested because young people in Soviet society (where some were losing themselves in occult speculations and others had become Oblomovs) had such pal-

pable personal troubles that people were crying out for new psychodynamic ideas. Ivanov and his wife's dinner guests included a young woman psychologist and a psychiatrist named Viktor Gindilis and his wife (of Swedish ancestry). Gindilis was a fascinating acquaintance, since he had dual roots in the healing arts and the struggle for civil rights. He was Jewish and had grown up having a father in a Gulag camp. He was able to tell stories of the political mental hospitals from the inside and about how the diagnosis of “insidious schizophrenia” applied to dissidents had once arisen at the notorious Serbsky Institute.

Eventually, the conversation turned to Sabina Spielrein. There had been a powerful upsurge of outside interest in this key figure in the early history of psychoanalysis, the Russian link between Freud and Jung, after her letters and diaries had been found in a basement in Geneva. I had planned to get in touch with any surviving relatives who might be in the Soviet Union to gain clarity about her fate. The prevailing opinion in the West was that she had died in Stalin's Terror. At dinner, I was told there was a biochemist in Moscow, whose first name was Menikha, who was apparently the daughter of Sabina's brother Isaak, a professor of psychotechnique.

**Ivanov finished the** evening by doing something quite remarkable. He brought a little blackboard and chalk to the dinner table and began to lecture while sketching on the board. In all seriousness, he discussed whether a high-tech civilization might have existed in Africa sometime around the time of the birth of Christ that later fell and left few traces. Perhaps the spirit of the times, the chimerical Andropov society, allowed greater scope for speculations like these.



Sabina Spielrein back in the Soviet Union. The photo is from the 1920s.



Sabina Spielrein in the early 1890s with her mother Eva and her sister Emiliya, who died young.



Sabina Spielrein's three brothers: the physicist Yan, the psychotechnician Isaak, and the biologist Emil. Photos from 1937 and 1938.

At Toporov's house, the walls were all covered in books. He seemed gravely preoccupied, his gaze far off in the distance. Based on my lecture, he noted that the Russians – who had been the leaders of the aesthetic avant-garde at the beginning of the century – were also the first to adopt the new psychotherapeutic ideas of the times. Afterwards, the situation progressively declined. He saw the communist epoch as an appalling national cataclysm. The country was now in a painful phase of decadence. “But one thing you should remember”, he added. “Sooner or later, Russian literature always overcomes power. It is invincible in the long run.” And he gave me an example: in 1937, at the apex of the Terror, Stalin was forced to seek legitimacy from Pushkin. The commemoration of the hundredth anniversary of the poet laureate's death was celebrated in parallel with the murdering.

Toporov believed there were only ten or fifteen people in all of Russia with insight into the real state of society. The odd thing was that I found the same words in the Lenin Library in an unpublished section of Andrei Bely's memoirs, which remarked on the status of Russia during the years that particularly interested me: 1913–1914. In hindsight, I am inclined to believe that I – and all of us – semi-consciously used the past as a filter to form an understanding of what was happening around us. The crash came very soon, as it had done then. Things were not so petrified. Gorbachev gained power just eighteen months later. Soon – under glasnost – previously banned literature rolled in like a shock wave that carried everything before it.

**I eventually found** Menikha Spielrein. She lived in a dismal concrete suburb called Tyoply Stan. Suddenly, there I was on her doorstep, describing for her in a single breath the dawning world fame of her aunt. She had a very hard time connecting this information to an aunt she had, as a young member of Komsomol, per-

**“[Menikha] could only sputter out three words: ‘*Suma soiti!*’ – ‘I think I’m going mad!’”**

ceived as impractical and out of step with the times, almost helpless in everyday Soviet life. She could only sputter out three words: “*Suma soiti!*” – “I think I’m going mad!”

Now I was told that Sabina – in her utter disillusionment with communism, which had executed her three brothers, all of whom worked in various scientific fields – had believed German assurances and thus refused to flee from Hitler's troops when they occupied her home town of Rostov. Ultimately, she, both of her daughters and hundreds of other Jews were shot in the “Snake Ravine” outside the city. Quite simply, Stalin and Hitler had divided the family between them.

Menikha remembered her father's arrest in 1935, when she was 19 years old. As a pioneer in psycho-technique, he was very close to Sabina. Menikha had loved him above all else in life. But she had also been fostered to become a Soviet woman, full of enthusiasm for the building of the new society. She could not rationally interpret the dreadful events. Her father's disappearance and her mother's subsequent expulsion remained a mystery: it was as if the family had been shattered by a force of nature. Despite general difficulties, she remained active in Komsomol. And then came Khrushchev, who ripped apart the myth of Stalin. Her father's name could once again be spoken aloud. The Nobel laureate Igor Tamm himself delivered an emotional speech commemorating her father at the House of Scientists. As she sat there in the first row with her mother and listened, the horrible wound split wide open. She wept inconsolably – 25 years of repressed anxiety flowed out.

In later years, Menikha increasingly devoted her energies to the memory of Sabina. She translated texts and attended conferences. She had been born in Berlin during the First World War and was given a name that meant “peace” in Hebrew. Her lifelong dream was to see this Berlin once again. When she finally made it, at more than 80 years of age, she suffered a stroke that led to her death.

After my homecoming (on July 15), I published an article in the Swedish evening paper *Expressen* about the meeting with Menikha that included the new information about Sabina and her brothers' deaths. It was illustrated with the first known pictures of her – taken from Menikha's personal files. It turned out that shortly before (on June 30), the famous Bruno Bettelheim had, in the *New York Review of Books*, publicly sought Sabina's relatives. Eventually, he rather slyly took credit for the scoop in his memoirs, where he implied that he had dispatched me on the mission. That was not true.

**A woman lecturer** from a state research institute soon came to the university to drone on about Poland's unhappy situation. Interest was minimal: out of a student body of thousands, the audience numbered a total of eight. Poland was declared “the center of the international class struggle”. Solidarity was mentioned only in passing as the “underground provocateurs”. The lecturer expressed her fears about the Pope's forthcoming summer visit to Poland, designed to incite new “social explosions”, with the class enemy – the CIA in cahoots with the Vatican – acting as the undercover director. The interesting thing was that her representation of the Polish church perfectly described the state of the Soviet Communist Party: a massive propaganda machine that forced people into subjection, disengaged youth caught up in empty rituals, a belief utterly diluted and dead. Afterwards, a visiting student from Ireland asked: “How can it be?





Menikha Spielrein, biochemist and Sabina's niece. When she retired, she devoted herself to the life and work of her aunt. She translated Sabina's German texts and participated in conferences about her pioneering work.



Menikha Spielrein in Berlin with her father Isaak and her mother Rakhil, around 1917.

Why have I never met a single Polish communist?"

The lecturer answered: "That shows the seriousness of the situation. Leninism will have to be beaten into the entire Polish society."

After this, she most likely went home and complained like everybody else about the misery around her – perhaps while listening to Vysotsky on the tape recorder. Was she schizophrenic? No, she was simply equipped with a Soviet double consciousness. It was the same situation with the much-admired artist who shocked my Danish neighbor (in the adjoining room at university). He appeared on television and praised the Party's policies, while privately he had just warned the Dane about "socialism".

I met the Byzantologist Sergei Averintsev at the Department of World Literature. Some years before, he had garnered attention for an erudite and completely non-Marxist article about Sophia, the Divine Wisdom, in the major Encyclopedia of Philosophy. He was another giant of scholarship. In her memoirs, Nadezhda Mandelstam mentions that Averintsev and Ivanov, in particular, had been able to acquire such broad knowledge because both had, as a result of illness, been spared a Soviet education. Now we talked about Jung, another of Averintsev's areas of expertise. He regarded the double consciousness as an obvious trait among essentially all Soviet men and women.

**One early morning,** I dropped in to visit art historian and literary scholar Ilya Silberstein. He was then well advanced in years and diabetic, but still worked like a horse. He received me at exactly seven o'clock. It was he who had once upon a time (1932) started the scholarly literary publishing series *The Literary Heritage*, weighty tomes that excelled in footnotes and factual details in that specifically Russian way. Now he was deeply involved in a magnificent five-volume publication of material related to Aleksandr Blok and symbolism, the 92<sup>nd</sup> volume of *The Literary Heritage*.

He seemed utterly unaffected by the opposition against which he had to struggle now and then. He could imagine eventually including Bely in the series. Priceless art hung on his walls. He had landed in acute political difficulties on one occasion. He had then walked up to the Central Committee and quashed the grumbling at the price of "one Aivazovsky" – a work by the renowned marine painter now valued so highly in our auction rooms. Silberstein was born to succeed. His status was not exactly hurt by the fact that he had also been married for some time to the female head of the State Archives of Literature and Art.

I was able to learn more about Andrei Sakharov's peculiar life in exile at the home of mathematician Yuri Shikhanovich, a close friend of Yelena Bonner. Since 1980, he had been one of the secret editors of the samizdat bulletin *Khronika tekushchikh sobytiy* [Chronicle of current events], while "officially" he wrote articles for the popular mathematics journal *Quantum*. *Khronika* had been distributed by the chain letter method in typewritten copies every other month since April 1968, reporting on all that was unseen in the Soviet reality: new arrests and trials, new samizdat literature, current conditions in camps, prisons, and political mental hospitals. It was an essential source of information, the very mirror of the struggle for civil rights.

Shikhanovich looked frail, but he was tough as nails. He knew what he had taken on and was prepared to pay the price. He held a 50<sup>th</sup> birthday party one evening, where despite the serious situation, the activists met in great cheer: Yuli Daniel's son Aleksandr (now one of the driving forces behind Memorial), the talented balladeer Pyotr Starchik, Leonid Vul, editor of earlier editions of *Khronika* and grandson of one of the later executed camp commandants of the 1930s ("As long as I have my Vul, I am secure", said Stalin before the reversal of fortunes), theater scholar Yuri Eichenwald, disabled rights activist Yuri Kiselyov, and others.

I happened to end up sitting between Eichenwald and Kiselyov, who had the same first names and patronymics. I was told this meant I had the right to make a wish. My wish was for us to gain final clarity about the fate of Raoul Wallenberg. Kiselyov, who had no legs and rolled around on a board, was the maximalist among us. He looked me straight in the eye and said:

"The Swede on Russian soil who is not constantly seeking information about Wallenberg is derelict in his duty."

Shikhanovich, Starchik, and Eichenwald had an experience in common: they had all at various times been victims of repressive psychiatry. Eichenwald was declared mentally ill as early as 1952, towards the end of Stalin's reign. While at the hospital, he had jotted down Gorky's dramatic poem *The Song of the Stormy Petrel* on a scrap of paper. The doctor treating him took this socialist classic to be a flagrant manifestation of his mental illness. The attitude toward him reportedly did not become more benevolent once the error was discovered. When we met, he had not been visited by the KGB for a long time, not even for the tiniest raid, even though he had published his satirical study *Don Quixote on Russian Soil* in the West. He interpreted this as a particular strategy on the part of the security service: to seemingly pay no attention and feign disinterest, only to suddenly swoop in.

"Shikh" introduced me to Natalya Sarmakesheva, wife of his mathematician colleague Vadim Yankov. Her husband's research in the field of hyperintensional logic had gradually taken on increasingly stronger leanings toward moral philosophy. Shortly before the military coup in Poland in 1981, he had sent out a seven-page samizdat letter in which he encouraged the Soviet working class to follow Solidarity's example in order to (1) regain self-respect, (2) recreate the sense of social participation, and (3) demonstrate non-violence as a way to take back personal freedom. He was sentenced in January 1983 to seven years' deprivation of liberty for those seven A4 sheets. When I was there,



Vadim Yankov with his wife Natalya and daughter Anastasiya, 1981.

he was still in remand detention at the Lefortovo prison. I interviewed Natalya – at home with three kids in the Moscow suburb of Dolgoprudny – about the high price the family had had to pay for his exceptional courage. She declared, curtly: “To be able to stand tall and tell it like it is at least once in your life – that’s worth seven years.”

Natalya had the right to send Vadim two one-kilo packages of food per year to supplement his meager prison diet. She and I went to a special “Beryozka” store (to which ordinary citizens did not have access and where the shelves were groaning with luxury foods) and bought sausage and chocolate. She also got a bottle of wine for herself. On their wedding anniversary, she took the bottle in hand and took a symbolic walk around Lefortovo before going home to drink the wine with great ceremony.

**Once or twice** I ended up in a quandary. Literary scholar Mikhail Meilakh came in from Leningrad. He had published annotated editions of the absurdist works of Daniil Kharmis and the OBERIU (Union of Real Art) writers in the West. He told me that he could feel how the KGB was slowly tightening the noose around his neck. I decided on behalf of Amnesty International to invite him to a fabulous lunch at the unlikely International Hotel, jerry-built in the old working class district of Krasnaya Presnya by the Soviet Union’s favorite American capitalist, Armand Hammer. The brand new building housed seven fine restaurants, three saunas, a specialty food store, a perfume store, and a Beryozka bookstore (selling literature that was very hard for Soviet citizens to get hold of). There sat the OBERIU expert in the midst of all this excess, browbeaten, unemployed, unable to publish a single word in his native country – thoroughly enjoying himself.

I received word shortly after I arrived home: Meilakh had been arrested. He was later sentenced to seven years in a camp followed by exile. Shikhanovich was arrested that autumn and also got seven years – and *Khronika* had to cancel its publication. A 15-year epoch was over. As for me, a year and a half later, oddly enough in conjunction with Gorbachev’s coming to power, I was declared persona non grata. The KGB had caught up with me. The visa ban was not lifted for five years. By then, the new era had come and all political prisoners had been released. A few months later, the Soviet Union collapsed. Absurdistan was no more. ✕

## FEMINISTS IN EASTERN AND WESTERN EUROPE – RESEARCHERS AND ACTIVISTS

“Why is there no happiness in the East?” was the, according to many, provocative title of a conference put on by CBEES and Södertörn University September 8-10 of this year. The organizers of the conference, Teresa Kulawik, Renata Ingbrant and Youlia Gradszkova, wanted to bring together feminist scholars for a discussion about conditions facing feminism in the East and in the West after the Berlin Wall, as well as the role of the EU and politics in the development of feminism.



Agnieszka Graff.

Agnieszka Graff, Warsaw University, said that the situation is quite distinct in Eastern Europe. In the West, namely the United States and northern and western Europe, the academic feminism was an offshoot of the feminist movement; in the East it is rather the other way around.

**IN POLAND**, however, being a gender researcher and being an activist is the same thing. In post-socialist countries, communism and feminism are also linked.

“Viewed today, communism seems like an upside-down world, an incorrect order of things. Now, when society needs to be recreated as a capitalist society, patriarchy is also re-created”, Agnieszka Graff explained.

Under communism, there was a well-established childcare system and women participated in professional life. When the communist system fell, public childcare disappeared. Today, people who push the issues of greater possibilities for parental leave and expanded childcare facilities risk accusations that they are communists. The backlash was, in certain areas, so profound that in the Eastern Europe of today, one must fight for basic rights.

There is a paradox here, noted Marina Blagojevic, of the Institute for Criminological and Sociological Research, Belgrade: “Feminists in the West experience a certain fatigue or feeling of déjà-vu when confronted with the issues that feminists in the East are struggling with today. They have already dealt with these questions and do not want to be reminded of their struggle by joining in as activists. They want rather to use Eastern Europe as a testing ground for their theories, formed in the West. But they do not understand the particular history here. They do not take the time to study that reality.”

Marina Blagojevic also says that she and other researchers in Eastern Europe must devote considerable time and effort to translating theories and concepts from the West into their own language and their own reality – in order



Conference invitation.

then to have to translate their results and findings back to the audience in the West.

There is another paradox that was highlighted at the conference. Gender equality is a value Europe claims to stand for. The EU nonetheless accepts patriarchal oppression, as an expression of unique cultural characteristics and a part of national identity.

Take for example the Polish legislation that has been drafted which would prohibit abortion even in cases of rape. According to Agnieszka Graff this bill is a consequence of the nationalistic movement that has given the church a strong political position. The Polish Church is now claiming that embryos should be regarded as living people and protected by law.

**AS A DISCUSSANT** at the lively panel “Conceiving Bodies”, Jenny Payne Gunnarsson, Södertörn University, posed the question “whether it is a human right to be a mother, whether everyone with fertility problems should be offered treatment, and if so, how many, by no means cheap, fertilization attempts should be offered”.

What values lie behind the notion that a woman who cannot give birth to children should be entitled to help from society? asked Kathrin Braun, University of Hannover. Isn’t there a presumption here that motherhood means true happiness for women, that which unites all women? Kathrin Braun: “Neoliberalism regards happiness as the norm. The next step is that all people must be happy. This can lead to measures such as the state paying all addicts who sterilize themselves. For us German feminists, the idea of setting a value on human



life, who shall be born and who shall not, generates ugly associations. Even fetuses should have some protection.”

That neoliberalism has not been advantageous to the women’s movement is a theme many at the conference took up. Socio-economic changes have led to hierarchies between the sexes, and between minorities and different groups of women. Nation-building in Eastern Europe has been based on the idea of men as citizens and women as resources that can give birth to new citizens for the nation, says Teresa Kulawik.

Gail Lewis, Open University, UK, noted the importance of an intersectional analysis: “We must always ask ourselves who is represented and who is made invisible. Variables such as ethnicity, race, and class cut across the division between the sexes. That women are present in decisions does not mean that minority women are involved, nor is there a representative of the specific situation of minority women if minorities are represented by a man. Minority women remain without a voice.”

**THERE EXISTS A** division in status between the Eastern Europeans in Western Europe and non-Europeans in Europe. Common to many people who, as migrants, find themselves in the geographical space of Europe is a lack of protection and rights. This was shown by Aleksandra Sojka, University of Granada, who has studied the situation of Polish domestic workers in Spain.

Second-rate citizens, all those citizens who do not have the same opportunities and the status others have, are partly a result of the post-transition neo-liberalism. There is a division between those who have information and resources to make choices that make them happy, and those “others”, who, as a result of various factors such as class, race, and gender, do not have choices available to them that lead to successful results. Is the regional integration of Europe thus primarily adapted to the needs of white men? Is that why there is no happiness in the East? ❌

ninna mörner

### Ann-Louise Martin



Worked for many years as a science journalist, primarily at Swedish

Radio. Limnologist by training, previously a researcher at the Swedish Environmental Research Institute (IVL), (Stockholm). Has written for BW on subjects such as marine archeology (II:1).

### Anders Hammarlund



Associate professor of musicology, and works at the Centre for Swedish

Folk Music and Jazz Research (Stockholm). His latest work is *Intet: Musiker, medier, mystiker* [Nothingness: Musicians, mediums, mystics] (2011). Currently working on a book about a cantor in the Mosaic (Jewish) community in Göteborg. Has written about and done radio broadcasts from central Europe. Previously contributed to BW III:1 with an article about the “Amber Road”.

### Karl Schlögel



Professor of East European History at European University Viadrina

Frankfurt (Oder). His most recent published works are *Moskau lesen* (2011) och *Terror und Traum* (2008). Among his awards are the Lessing-Preis der Freien und Hansestadt Hamburg (2005), Leipziger Buchpreis zur Europäischen Verständigung (2009) and Samuel-Bogumil-Linde-Preis (2010, together with Adam Krzemiński). Schlögel was interviewed in BW II:2.

### Magnus Ljunggren



Professor Emeritus of Russian at the University of Gothenburg.

Contributed to BW IV: 2 with two Russian travelogues, one from 1968, and one from 1974. At [www.balticworlds.com](http://www.balticworlds.com) there is a related report from this year’s Yuri Lotman Symposium in Helsinki.

## in memory

# COSMOPOLITE HAMMARSKJÖLD



Dag Hammarskjöld, 1959.

**FIFTY YEARS AGO**, on September 17, 1961, Dag Hammarskjöld, a prime example of the international civil servant, died while on mission in Africa, in his capacity as secretary-general of the United Nations.

Rebel activities had unleashed a civil war in de-colonialized Congo, where the UN was supporting efforts of the central

government under controversial prime minister Patrice Lumumba to keep the country together, putting pressure on the self-proclaimed leader of the mineral-rich Katanga Province, Moïse Tshombe, who was aided by foreign interests, to accept a negotiated peace settlement.

Nobody on board Hammarskjöld’s aircraft survived the so-called Ndola

Catastrophe. Was it a pure accident, or was he, his staff, and the crew of the aircraft deliberately assassinated, shot down, by rebel or foreign forces? The matter has come to the surface once more, after half a century.

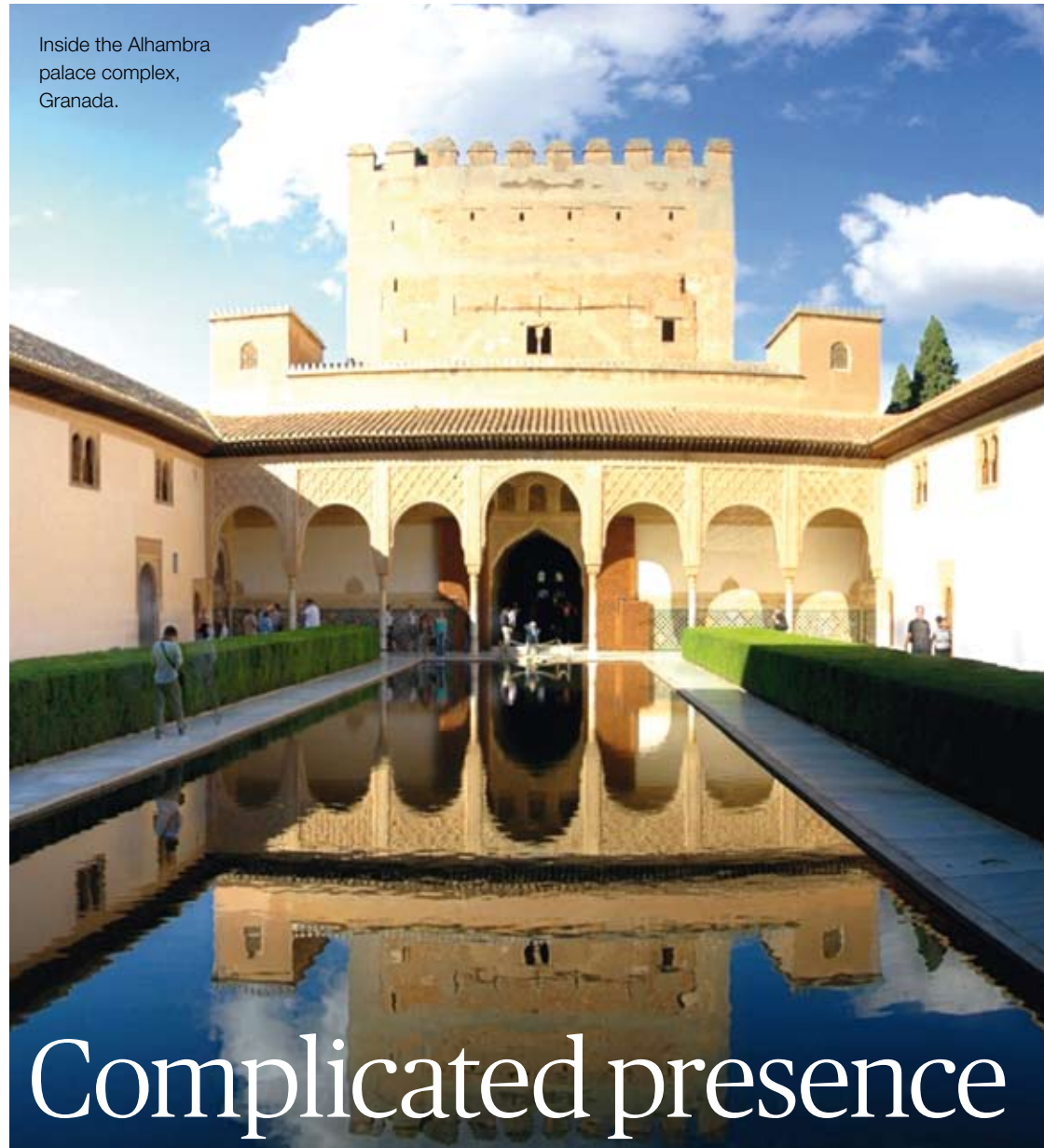
**HAMMARSKJÖLD**, educated as an economist in the tradition of the famous “Stockholm School”, to which Bertil Ohlin and Gunnar Myrdal also belonged, was for several years an under-secretary of the Swedish Ministry of Finance, and then effectively a deputy foreign minister, before he was elevated to the UN top job in 1953. Later on, he was expected to be given the position of permanent secretary of the Swedish Academy when his second UN term had expired. It is known that Martin Buber was one of his favorites for the Nobel Prize in literature.

On this occasion, Birgit van der Leeden has written an essay on Hammarskjöld’s posthumous book *Markings*, a collection of poetic aphorisms, translated into English by W. H. Auden. ❌

Note: van der Leeden’s essay can be found in the original German at [www.balticworlds.com](http://www.balticworlds.com).

PHOTO: RA-SMIT

Inside the Alhambra  
palace complex,  
Granada.



## Complicated presence

Europe is the only continent that has named itself (and all the others), and it wants to continue to decide who gets to be called a European. It is a political conceit and has very little to do with culture. Cultural boundaries within each part of the world can be just as sharp as those between them. One could also put it thusly: certain cultures do not have better access to progress and civilization than others do; it is a matter of different kinds of progress and civilization. In Europe, not long ago, the most brutal wars of all time were fought.

Neither can one say that Europe is simply synonymous with war and brutality. But Europe must be placed in relation not only to its own past but also to its surroundings. Sometimes its surroundings, however this might be defined, enter into European life; sometimes Europe later pushes away what feels

inauthentic, alien, its stepchildren. Roma and Jews have experienced this, and are still experiencing it. In many European countries, the Muslim presence is particularly complicated, primarily for the Muslims themselves, who always assume an inferior position there.

**Always? It was** not so obviously the case every now and then. In certain historical epochs, Muslims could be numbered among the ruling people of Europe. And before there were any Muslims anywhere, there were people in the Eastern Mediterranean with whom people by the Baltic Sea had commercial and other contacts. In the world of Norse sagas, there are reminiscences of ancient Troy. The Ottoman sultan considered himself to have taken over the dignity of the Roman emperor. But from the Arab world came

Muslim influences, to Sicily, to Spain. They ruled from metropolises such as Cordoba and Granada.

In *Tales of the Alhambra* (1832), Washington Irving writes, with the eyes of a romantic charmed by the mild manners of the Moors once they got a foothold on the southern European part of the continent:

Repelled within the limits of the Pyrenees, the mixed hordes of Asia and Africa, that formed this great irruption, gave up the Moslem principle of conquest, and sought to establish in Spain a peaceful and permanent dominion. As conquerors, their heroism was only equaled by their moderation; and in both, for a time, they excelled the nations with whom they contended. Severed from their native homes, they loved the land given them as they supposed by Allah, and strove to embellish it with everything that could administer to the happiness of man. Laying the foundations of their power in a system of wise and equitable laws, diligently cultivating the arts and sciences, and promoting agriculture, manufactures, and commerce, they gradually formed an empire unrivalled for its prosperity by any of the empires of Christendom; and diligently drawing round them the graces and refinements which marked the Arabian empire in the East, at the time of its greatest civilization, they diffused the light of Oriental knowledge through the western regions of benighted Europe.

The driving out of the Moors was no charming little story, even if Washington Irving's overly sunny picture of their rule can stick posterity in the eye. But where is one at home and where is one a stranger? Who is the intruder and who is the doorman? Where is tolerance the greatest: among those who are visiting, or among those one who are forced to be hospitable?

**The threat of** an "Islamized Europe" is discussed from time to time. But it is not always clear what is being threatened. Professor Andreas Wirsching, newly appointed director of the Institut für Zeitgeschichte in Munich, has reported on an official investigation in the Federal Republic of Germany that indicates that four percent of German Muslims object to their daughters receiving sex education in schools: in the German population as a whole, the corresponding figure is 15 percent. "Obviously", says Wirsching, "the percentage among Catholic and other fundamentalisms in this matter is higher than in the Muslim population." (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 2011-04-27)

No one owns modernity. No one can monopolize tolerance. Anyone can suffer setbacks or be left behind. And Europe no longer controls the fate of the world. Just as well. ✖