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BALTIC WORLDS

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commentaries: Poland and Russia

Survival Kit in Riga

Women's Solidarity

Maria Janion A great European intellectual

The dividing Christmas tree

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also in this issue

RUSSIAN INFRASTRUCTURE / YUGOSLAVIAN WAR MONUMENTS / WITTE / NEW SPATIAL HISTORY / MOSCOW FASHION

global week

More diatribe than dialogue when old top dogs deliberate

"Dialogue", said Gennady Burbulis, first deputy to the chairman of the government under Boris Yeltsin, at a top-level seminar with former heads of state in Soviet-ruled Europe convened at Jonsered Manor (right) north of Gothenburg on November 23, "dialogue must permeate political life if Russia is to have a chance".

He rejected the idea of authoritarian modernization in Russia and a return to imperial ways. This will just splinter and destabilize the Russian state. The basis of progress is the constitution, adopted December 12, 1993, which according to Burbulis is "superdemocratic". The one thing that needs be done is to convince citizens it is an instrument they can use.

BURBULIS MET WITH opposition during the discussion. Former Lithuanian president Vytautas Landsbergis retorted that Russia has never wanted dialogue, only to give orders. A sham dialogue can go on for a hundred years and yet lead nowhere. "When I listen to the Russian national anthem", Landsbergis said, "there is always someone who has to force me to stand up. I object to this!"

It is a question of mentality, in his opinion, and the problem goes back a long way, to Russian rule. "The territory was always more important than the state. The state had to infinitely expand because the realm was always surrounded by enemies." Landsbergis was concerned about an informal Russian expansion today, in the backyards of the former Empire. "Isn't Israel Russianized, too?" he asked rhetorically.

Burbulis replied that Russia is not uniform. "It is a country of many worlds." But many Russians see themselves as losers – of the Cold War. This is why there is a noticeable sense of collective fear in Russia today. "But we must not be fatalists", Burbulis said. "We have to work towards consensus and the rest of the world should understand that Russia is no longer a threat."

Per Månsson of the University of Gothenburg replied, "Russia did not lose the Cold War. It ended through an agreement between Presidents Bush and Gorbachev". And Andrzej Olechowski, former foreign minister of Poland, pointed out that the EU, not just Russia, is also weak these days. The perspective in relations between Russia and Europe should be pan-European, "from Vancouver to Vladivostok". And Russia must be invited to participate in the European project, just as Eastern and Central Europe were invited: otherwise, one cannot expect good decisions from that area.

Former Swedish ambassador to Moscow Örjan Berner asked politely whether it might actually be Russia that once again has reason to feel threatened, which could explain certain expressions of neo-imperialism. And Åke Petersson, assistant undersecretary at the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, argued that there has been far too much castigation of Moscow, "and that has come back to haunt us".

LUND HISTORIAN KRISTIAN Gerner speculated as to whether the post–Cold War world might have to deal with several Russias, just as the world had to deal with several German states (the GDR, the Federal Republic of Germany, Austria) after the Second World War. Could one possibly imagine Kaliningrad as a visa-exempt zone of Europe?

Once Gennady Burbulis had finished boasting about the swift and smooth transition from socialism to capitalism in Russia, Lennart Samuelson of the Stockholm School of Economics asked whether it might have been a little too swift. "It took five hundred days. Wouldn't it have been healthier if it had taken five years?" The people who lost their savings under the waves of state collapse and privatization received no compensation whatsoever.

Burbulis denied that there was any alternative – other than chaos. "We are being accused of something we have not done!" The Russians had already lost all their savings by 1990. "They had nothing left to lose", he said. "It was all fictitious money." And the former engine of growth, the military-industrial complex, could no longer be relied on. For that reason, new economic entrepreneurs had to enter the race.

IN THIS OFTEN-HEATED exchange, the discussion was sometimes reduced to the level of diatribe, rather than dialogue. But the parry and thrust were played out in a spirit of civility and sociability. It was a meeting among masters of contemporary history. ■

Note: Baltic Worlds was one of the organizers of the seminar on the breakup of the Soviet Union during the "Global Week" at the University of Gothenburg last November, under the guidance of our Warsaw correspondent Peter Johnsson. Another report, by Johan Öberg, from the "Global Week" arrangements can be found at www.balticworlds.com.

editors' column

Culture in the periphery

Ekaterina Kalinina finds revanchism, or a certain measure of megalomania, to be the reason that two independent fashion weeks have been held in St. Petersburg in the last two years. Despite several similar events held in Moscow as well, the fashion industry is not an up-and-coming business in economic terms.

An imaginative and not nearly so costly initiative on a cultural theme was born in Riga, where artists and performers were given free rein to do anything they wanted with and inside commercial spaces standing vacant in the wake of the financial crisis. The result was an art festival called Survival Kit.

One finds more permanent artistic works in Tito's Yugoslavia. Monuments commemorating the World War II dot the landscape: gigantic futuristic creations that in some cases have been spared destruction. Jan Kempenaers has taken pictures of these "Spomeniks", and is interviewed by Sara Bergfors.

In addition to a number of reviews and other commentaries, this issue also features the last of the popular travelogues by Magnus Ljunggren, this time from a trip through Russia during perestroika in 1991.

Also in this issue: an essay by Maria Janion, with an introduction by Teresa Kulawik and Renata Ingbrant; an essay on Russia's problems with investments in infrastructure written by Katri Pynnöniemi; and an essay about Estonia's endeavors to become part of the staid but stable Scandinavia – an effort based on the belief that the country actually has a special affinity with Scandinavia. One sign of this, Pärtel Piirimäe points out, is the use of the word *jõul* (cognate to English "Yule"). The Estonians, like the Swedes, Norwegians, Danes, and Finns, thus live in Yule Land.

Whether or not you are in Yule Land, Baltic Worlds wishes its readers *God Jul* – Merry Christmas! ■

THE EDITORS

Yuri Lotman Symposium on the web

This fall, it was Helsinki's turn to host this year's Yuri Lotman Symposium, the theme of which was "The Writer and Power". About forty Slavists from seven countries met over the space of three days to discuss this utterly inexhaustible topic.

Professor Magnus Ljunggren was there, and wrote a report (it can be found at: balticworlds.com/empire-builder-and-rebel) where he notes:

"The Russian writer is often Janus-faced. Dostoyevsky was the revolutionary who in the end kissed the feet of the Tsar. When Russian writers stormed the barricades in 1905, the young Mikhail Bulgakov, of all people, professed himself a monarchist. Andrei Bely dreamt of enrolling in the Terror and suddenly became – for a time – a cheering patriot." ■

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Age of unexpected revolts

ILLUSTRATION: KARIN SUNVISSON

World War I saw the dissolution of three dynastic empires in the eastern reaches of Europe: The Habsburg, the Romanov, and the Ottoman. They were all multinational. (The German Empire was also dynastic and multinational, and its capital city was situated in the east, but it survived mainly as a state unit, albeit shrunken, less multinational, and more Western-oriented, after the fall of the Empire; in addition, its colonies had been in other parts of the world). In the first two cases, popular uprisings and revolutions were triggered in several of the successor states. They all were less successful, although it would take seven decades for the revolutionary defeat in Russia proper to occur.

THERE WERE NO comparable events in the Ottoman Empire, except in the core country, Turkey, which threw off the bonds of foreign occupation through a war of liberation and Mustafa Kemal's (Atatürk's) subsequent national revolution (after the bloody skirmishes of 1911 and 1913 and the cruelties against the Armenians). This empire, whose government had picked the wrong side in the European showdown, was instead carved up by the victorious powers of the World War, and the former Ottoman provinces became subject, in one way or another, to colonial dominance. The most important province, Egypt, had previously been separated from the "realm" and was already a de facto British colony. The Greek War of Independence in the 1820s was not lacking in support from the great powers.

The North African and Arabian revolts in 2011 in colonial successor states may be regarded as a dual repercussion – of Ottoman oppression and of Western imperial oppression, the latter no less hard on the populations of these countries than the former. Europe, whether Western or Eastern, cannot beat its chest here. Its catalogue of crimes is far too long. If the High Porte, the Ottoman sultanate, was once seen as the "sick man of Europe", colonialism and neocolonialism did nothing to cure the disease. Pestilence and suffering were spread to parts of the non-European world.

ONE COULD VERY well ask then: how healthy is Europe, today's Europe? Obviously, it is economically shakier and more unbalanced than its jovial leaders have cared to admit. Not only Greece, but also Italy, one of the founding states of the European Union, stands on a rotten foundation; not only the Irish tiger, but also the Spanish bull have been financially gorged. A great deal of this is self-inflicted – the result of muddled economic-structural thinking and action at the Union level. Other things may well be the consequence of historical legacies and traditional endemic psychological blocks.

APART FROM CERTAIN southern European countries (and apart from certain promenades on Wall Street), there have been no noticeable tendencies toward unrest in the wake of the capitalist crisis. The uprisings against crisis-ridden socialism are far too close in time, and the system transitions there have surely been exhausting. One might possibly see the parliamentary system revolt in Hungary as a political protest against a liberal hegemony whose guarantor has been placed in Brussels, the capital city of the ungovernable Belgium. (Poland avoided one of these during the short-lived twin parenthesis that was distinctly anti-Brussels.) Can popular revolts then be ruled out forever?

Of course not. They are already going on, in the backyards – although they are usually called terrorism (Basques, Kurds, Chechens, IRA members and sympathizers). If convulsions like these were to affect whole countries, how would "Europe" react? If, shall we say, a financial crisis were followed by a violent political protest against the prevailing order in one or more authentically European – EU, that is – countries, of the kind we have seen in Northern Africa and the Middle East? This is, of course, to think the unthinkable. But the dissolution of the Soviet Union and real socialism was also "unthinkable". And who can say how Europe is being affected by the Chinese challenge?

FINALLY, WILL SUCH events be perceived as a European civil war? The events of 1848–1849 were apparently regarded as one by contemporary observers, for example when Russia, the "gendarme of Europe", intervened and suppressed rebellious Hungarians on behalf of the Austrian emperor. In the Balkan civil wars of the 1990s (fallout from the Ottoman–Habsburg conflicts), European powers did not intervene militarily until relatively late. One thing we know for sure: there has never been any shortage of patrons in Europe. ■

Europe – a continent where foreigners are terrorized. It also spreads terror to foreign lands.

BY **MARIA JANION**
ILLUSTRATIONS **RAGNI SVENSSON**

Farewell to Poland?

The uprising of a nation

I deliberately paraphrase the title of the famous Romantic work by Maurycy Mochnacki, *Powstanie narodu polskiego w roku 1830 i 1831* [The uprising of the Polish nation in 1830 and 1831]. In 2004, we saw the last vestiges of the thoroughly trivialized Romantic paradigm trail away into oblivion before our very eyes. Perhaps this procession of stragglers would not have appeared in this exact formation if it had not been for the urge to provide a kind of quasi-definition of Polish identity, experienced on the occasion of our joining the European Union. Those who caution us against Europe are acutely aware of the need to explore the concept of Polishness. They say, however, "What's the use, we all know it anyway", and that there is no reason to stir the primeval loamy depths of our national soul. What transpires here is an extremely typical phenomenon, namely a reluctance to undertake the difficult task of defining Polishness because, obviously, defining it implies a redefinition, a process of debate and a new self-understanding, a possible deconstruction of stagnant beliefs, and an attempt to decipher the subtext of our culture.[1]

In an editorial debate published in *Dekada Literacka* [Literary decade] under the significant title "My do Europy" [We, to Europe], Zbigniew Pucek, sociologist and cultural anthropologist, pointed out a typical Polish paradox, which he expressed in very strong terms: "The process of our joining the European Union was dominated by the struggle to obtain subsidies for farmers. [...] The idea of Europe was reduced to the trivial issue of financing the thoroughly irrational business of our completely non-European peasantry, who cannot boast that their labor productivity is even acceptable."[2] And it is not by pure chance that such belittling of the European idea, such lack of any widespread discussion concerning its content and meaning, coincides (along with other social phenomena) with the emergence of a process of landmark changes in consciousness, first and foremost in the patriotic consciousness of young people – those between the ages of 20 and 30. As it happens, many of them decided, in short, to bid farewell to Poland.[3]

After this prelude, let us proceed to the context of the matter, namely a brief analysis of the rhetoric of the "defense of Nice" and the battle against Europe (as

MARIA JANION. A TREE SPREADING SEEDS

Maria Janion is Poland's undisputed intellectual authority – but she is relatively unknown abroad. She is frequently cited in international publications, sometimes with a brief annotation along the lines of "if this invaluable work were translated into . . ." or "what a pity it has not been translated yet" (words we read, for example, almost verbatim in *The Guardian*, 2011-04-21). Why have her works not been published in other languages? When that question is posed to colleagues outside Poland, the answer is often, "But what she writes pertains only to Poland". How is that any different from Miłosz, Gombrowicz, or Michnik?

IT'S THE SAME OLD STORY. Women represent the concrete, local experience; men are ascribed universal wis-

this is indeed the proper name for it) during the campaign for elections to the European Parliament.

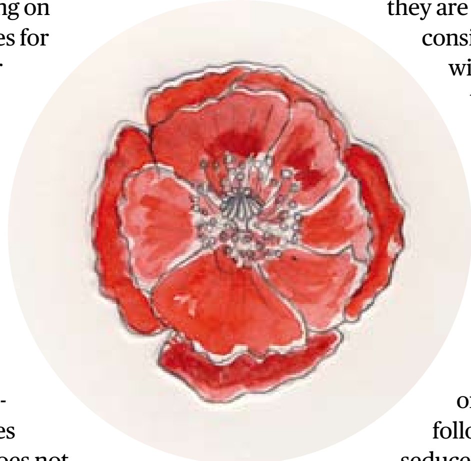
The ill-conceived slogan "Nice or death", which dominated the political imagination at the turn of 2003–2004, is a device typical of the rhetoric of Romanticism and revolution, even of Jacobinism, which revels in extremes. The watchword "Fatherland" followed by the response "or death" smacks of an attempt at a last-ditch resistance. This uncompromising "or else" is a very convenient excuse for the creation of an aura of "national treason" around those who would like to place themselves outside such an alternative. These people consider it absurd because they would believe, for example, that European politics should rely on negotiation and compromise. Even thoughts of this nature are deemed highly reprehensible. Such thoughts were believed to lead directly to the formation of the "white flag party", which advocated surrender, even though defending the position "to the bitter end" was a must. As usual, we have been "abandoned by Europe", particularly by France, a specialist in desertion, and by the cunning, aggressive Germany. The "treacherous Albion" failed to exhibit this basic trait of hers this time, but perhaps this is only for the time being. As a "proud and great nation", we will always manage somehow, going to battle "without weapons" (as in the song dating back to the January uprising[4]), but with the faith of our forefathers on our banners, which bear the words "God, Honor, Fatherland". The political scientist Aleksander Smolar aptly compared Prime Minister Leszek Miller's departure for European negotiations in Brussels to "setting forth as if to join another Polish uprising, with the heroic wounded commander leading the party" (Miller had earlier been injured in a helicopter crash).[5]

This post-Romantic rhetoric intensified during the election campaign to the European Parliament. Let us examine the motifs appearing on the faded banners of our candidates for the Parliament. These motifs recur continually, at present mostly in the politics of history pursued by the Law and Justice party (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwosc*):

1. Struggle, fight, and uprising everywhere; we are setting off to fight Europe, to rise against her, we are going to battle, Poland has to defend herself, Europe is threatening her. Only Jan Kułakowski from the Freedom Union (*Unia Wolnosci*) declares that joining the European Union does not mean defending another Ordon's redoubt[6], but no one listens to him; Poland is being inundated by addled post-Romantic parlance.

2. We take up arms because Poland's suffering must be avenged; deputy Michał Kamiński from Law and Justice, a man respected for his pluck and courage, the very man who brought a gorget with Our Lady as a gift to Pinochet, declares amid applause that we would go to Europe to recover what is ours – we suffered because of her, she sold us out and now we would extract from her what is rightly ours – thankfully, not "get it back with sabers", as in our national anthem; the Polish Labor Party (*Polska Partia Pracy*) announces that we are condemned to perish and demands that Europe subsidize our retirement pensions; the ethos of national martyrdom is usually combined with messianism – the majority of Polish parties emphasize that our Euro-parliamentarians' effort should not contribute to the world but to the greatness of Poland.

3. Finally, the insurgents' tokens include Christian faith and customs; we will not depart from them but we can also bring them to Europe as the values she has forgotten; admittedly, we are poor but we must show Europe "the dignity of a Christian and a Pole" before the might of which she will surrender; what we are witnessing here is somewhat akin to a crusade – not only a defense of pure faith against European miasmas but also a message to the unfaithful or indifferent.[7]



The most popular Romantic templates: national uprising, messianism, the ethos of martyrdom, the Christian Crusade. Significantly, although they are completely inappropriate for the situation – working for the European Parliament is clearly not a national uprising, with all its attributes and justifications, nor is it a grandstand for messianic delusions – they are commonly employed with considerable license and by groups with various political orientations. It becomes apparent that a collection of Romantic stereotypes is generally considered to be the foundation of Polishness. Despite the fact that they are at times evoked with no rhyme or reason, they are apparently employed with the hope that the recipients, on hearing a familiar tune, will follow it; that this particular note seduces them and gains applause. Both right and left-wing parties have locked themselves into the same trap of incautiously employed Romantic rhetoric, which breeds the mood of a redoubt under siege. This goes to show that the language of political debate is somewhat undeveloped here, while the debate itself is being reduced to thrashing around a few platitudinous staples and is radically at odds with the mindset of the young generation.

THE FATHER

The monopoly of Romantic stereotypes of "the Catholic Pole" has achieved a characteristic blockage in the realm of ideas. In the public media, particularly radio (and here, of course, I leave Radio Maryja aside – a nationalist, xenophobic, homophobic, pro-life Catholic radio station that wields significant influence in Poland, run by the Redemptorist rector Doctor Tadeusz Rydzyk (called "Father Director" by his followers), the number, significant even before, of broadcasts devoted to the church and religion, Catholic information and worldview programs, increased. My own reactions coincide with Bronisław Łagowski's comments: "Those interested in books will be surprised by the sheer number of Catholic publications and of priests writing scientific books, which are quite often of excellent quality. Catholic diocese radio stations, Catholic dailies, weeklies, periodicals of various frequency are pitched at the masses and at the elite. [...] Priests are present in places traditionally secular, preaching the word of God to businessmen and policemen [...]. The Church has its own version of the history of Poland – both remote and the latest. This version is obligatory in school textbooks."

The tradition of the Enlightenment in Poland, that is, the rationalist tradition, is dying, Łagowski writes.[8] Messianic ideas and the ethos of martyrdom usually amount to a compensatory response in the sense of undeserved social harm, which was brought about by the transformation towards the free market. This particular response quite often includes the suspicion, or even certainty, that there is a European, and perhaps simply Jewish, conspiracy directed against us, as well as the conviction that a "defense of Polishness" is necessary to avoid being overwhelmed by strangers.

The cultural community of Central Europe, so-called, a culture that was still being kept alive even recently, primarily by intellectuals, has now begun to crumble. The war in the Balkans has brought to Europe and Poland an extremely acute awareness of the power of ethnic nationalism and its criminal consequences in post-communist countries. Speaking of Hungary, Imre Kertész said something that could apply to Poland as well: "It seems that the soul of a small Eastern European nation, the soul that suffers from the father complex and is immersed in sadomasochistic perversion, is unable to exist without a great oppressor, whom it could blame for its historic failures, nor without a national minority, this scapegoat, on which it could vent, releasing the surplus of hatred and resentment, which accumulated in the course of daily defeats. Without anti-Semitism, what kind of identity would a person have who is incessantly preoccupied with his or her specifically Hungarian identity?"[9] We could easily replace "Hungarian" with "Polish" and say the same about the soul of the most populous Eastern European nation.

"Young" Polish prose does not neglect the formulation of a cultural diagnosis of this aspect of the contemporary reality. The strength of such novels as *Wojna polsko-ruska pod flagą biało-czerwoną* [Snow White and Russian Red] by Dorota Masłowska, *Czwarte niebo* [The fourth heaven] by Sieniewicz, and *Gnój* [Muck] by Kuczok consists of a virtually brutalistic depiction of present-day Poland. These are the realities. I am certainly well aware that the form of these works is not that of a naturalistic reportage but rather that of a symbolic novelistic construction. They are, however, based on the knowledge, which I will now briefly summarize, of the realities of life and people's views, knowledge laced with fear of the specter of destructive capitalism and of the stagnation of national myths.

On the occasion of *Wojna polsko-ruska* appearing in French, a female journalist from the magazine *epok* traveled to Gdańsk and wrote the reportage "Gdańsk, terminus". The hallmarks of this text are the description of the present state of the legendary Gdańsk Shipyard and the statement by Przemek Gulda, age 39, a journalist and a teacher, and the guru of Gdańsk nightlife: "Young Poles today are torn apart. They are not rooted in communism, nor in capitalism, which tends to be exclusionary. They are neither in the West, despite the imminence of Poland joining the European Union, nor in the East, but rather in some unspecified environment".[10] This statement reflects very well the sense of being suspended, but also of being disinherited and excluded. Andrzej Brzeziecki, a participant in the well-known debate on the young generation, published in *Gazeta Wyborcza* [Election Gazette] in early 2004: "What threatens Poland today is not an occupation but an exclusion of a fairly large part of the society". Under communism, the number of those affected by exclusion was significantly smaller. He believes, however, that young people have a chance of ending this "degraded and degrading" reality. All this was published under the telling title "Ja się stąd nie ruszę" [I will not move from here].[11]

Masłowska[12] rendered the state of suspension and exclusion in a stream of fabricated language, which depicts Polish consciousness as grotesque and most of the time intrinsically contradictory. The author herself describes her method as follows: "This is the manner in which I think. There is something in my head that's not right; a surplus of data, which I am unable to handle. I never listen to the radio and yet I know all the songs by heart, like a hairdresser. And my thinking goes like this: one-third of a sentence from a commercial, then a scrap of a poem and a fragment of catechism from grade three, elementary school. The truth for me is not a solid whole, it is a million little crumbs, for which I search with a magnifying glass among the worst dross. These crumbs are often mutually contradictory. Because of this, my inner life is extremely wearisome."[13]

Masłowska demonstrates that the language of hatred and violence is being established, first of all, against "the Russkis". "Russki-foe" (whether a "Russian" or a "communist") is the glue that holds the Polish identity together. We are "bad" but they are still worse, and also represent the terrible might of the Great Oppressor.[14] Andżela recounts: "Then she asks if I know that there is a Polish-Russki war on our land by the white-and-red flag, which is between the Poles and the Russki thieves, who are robbing them of the excise band, of nicotine. I say to her that I know nothing about it. She replies that this is so, that there are rumors that the Russkis want to con the Poles out of here and establish a Russian state here, maybe even Byelorussian; they want to close all schools, public offices, kill Polish newborns in hospitals to eliminate them from the society, impose tributes and forced contributions on consumer goods and food products."[15] This is a truly excellent collection of persecution phantasms.

The magnificent display of the comic "world in language" ends in disaster: the girls set fire to a dumpster as if setting fire to the world. On the last pages, in a different style, a manifesto of death appears. The narrator creates some kind of lyrical, girlish "dugouts" ("empty packages remaining after us, after us, who had been eaten out of them", p. 201), adding up to a Bruno Schulz esque plan of escape into a lateral corridor of time. The image of a dead girl, which dominates the ending of the novel, recreates the state of breaking up with reality in which you can become only a "crazy woman without a tongue" (paraphrase of the sentence on p. 198). "Everything amounts to the threat of everything else; life contains the threat of death" (p. 202).

Masłowska accomplished, among other things, a demystification of Polish xenophobic mentality. However, as Kinga Dunin aptly states, "continually constructing our collective identity around the same axis, namely 'the Polish-Russki war under the white-and-red flag', makes it difficult for other discourses to evolve, while this one is becoming less and less satisfactory".[16]

The novel by Mariusz Sieniewicz is also grotesque but in the fantastic-expressionistic-paranoid way. *Czwarte niebo* [The fourth heaven][17] depicts the defeat of provincial "shrinking violets" at the time of the so-called capitalist transformation: "a fine team of messed-up emigrants from everyday life", "drifting aimlessly" (p. 83). The decision deeply concerning their fates was made behind their backs.

The family home cannot provide any refuge. "It's

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dom. Her biography may contribute to the explanation. She is courageous, but not a hero. She was neither imprisoned nor exiled. She endured communism in Poland and acquitted herself meritoriously. She was a member of PZPR, the Polish United Workers' Party, from which she was expelled in 1979. She was involved in underground education. Janion also stayed mainly in Poland after the fall of the Wall. What could have been a path to international renown, a stay abroad at the "world's" leading universities, did not appeal to her. Janion loves her work, but is devoid of vanity. She is an intellectual cosmopolitan, but in this way, she resembles Immanuel Kant, the man who never left Königsberg.

Maria Janion is a professor emeritus of literature. She was born in 1926 in a small town in northeastern Poland and spent her youth during the war in Vilnius. Now the capital of Lithuania, Vilnius was a part of Poland during the interwar period and an important center of arts and culture, with a truly multinational and polyglossic character. As a scholar and university teacher, she worked primarily in Warsaw at the Polish Academy of Sciences, but also at the University of Gdansk. She is the author and co-author of some thirty books and hundreds of articles, as well as the editor of numerous volumes.

HER STUDIES OF Polish and European Romanticism are what made her reputation as a scholar. What placed her among the major intellectual authorities of the country is that she functions as an archeologist of Polish culture and national identity. Her excavations focus on what people would rather remained forgotten. Her reinterpretations touch upon national shrines and monuments.

TAKE THE WARSAW UPRISING. In the national mythology, it functions as the ultimate proof of the heroism and willingness to sacrifice that Poles showed in the Polish nation's struggle for freedom. As a young woman, Janion came to a Warsaw in ruins. The city had been virtually obliterated, since the Germans had exacted revenge by burning it to the ground.

Decades later, she asked a simple question: Was it right to sacrifice so many lives and trigger this devastation for the sake of symbolism?

Janion's dissecting perspective on the painful history of Poland is reminiscent of Hannah Arendt's questioning of Jewish history during the Holocaust. Is it the estrangement of women from "their own culture" that makes this possible? Her studies of Romanticism led Janion to see the specificity in Poland's cultural development. European Romanticism took on a special twist there. The individual uprising and the pain became linked to the national question. Something similar occurred in Germany, but the difference is that Poland was not only divided, but butchered and annihilated as a state. The romantic uprising was interwoven with the national struggle for liberation. The worship of heroism and martyr-

always the same thing. If they are not talking about the Jews, television, or gay people, it's always about money – credits, rebates, salaries, jobs, and debts. The ways to make money, have stuff, survive. Dough in your ears, dough in your eyes, dough on your hands" (p. 146).

The dough is also the foundation for the alliance between capital and the Church. "In this country, only churches and banks are being built quickly. Churches, in order to resist the moolah, and banks, in order to save and to provide for the church collection plate, baptism, marriage ceremony, and funeral" (p. 146). Towards the end of the novel, a blasphemous transposition takes place, leaving us with: "Strangers and our own kind; Europe and Poland; tradition, God, honor, rot" (p. 311). Subverting, and often destroying, the meanings becomes the result of an all-embracing disgust against the entire world in all its forms. Rebellion had been destroyed ("Straight from the innards of existence! And this 'I am shitting into the stocking of my mother' a sign of the young generation's rebellion (as in: shit – mother) and of protest against the tyranny of sex (as in: shit – stocking)! But all this together – as old as the added-up years of Bataille, Genet and de Sade. This is nihilism in a modern stocking! Ha! Ha! Let's go, brothers, let's move the shit from the world's foundation!" p. 286). Despair morphs into a terrorist attack. All that remains afterwards is, as in Masłowska's novel, death.

Gnój (Muck) by Wojciech Kuczok[18] was artistically inspired by Thomas Bernhard and his terrible, hyper-realistic and concretist narrations featuring the bourgeois family and the violence pervading it. *Gnój* is a revelatory story told by a beaten child, presenting the subtlest, if this term can be used, shades of beating, and later, when the child has already become a boy, seeking to crush "the grown cub of the human race in entirely new ways" (p. 180). This is an extended metaphor of the world of violence – social, religious, political. The subtitle "anti-biography" is aimed at the image of the "bucolic, angelic" childhood. The "Muck" to which the title refers means both the beaten child, nicknamed "Muck", and the entire parental, or rather paternal, home, which at the end of the novel is literally flooded by excrement in a revengeful oneiric vision. In his review called "W imię ojca" [In the name of the father], Przemysław Czapliński stresses, as do other critics, that this is not a case of some pathological family barely existing on the margins or on the very bottom of the social hell: "Absolutely not. Kuczok depicts a phenomenon that is as normal as dust and as monstrous as a nightmare, invisible and all-pervasive at the same time: the patriarchal model of education. This is a model based on violence and – in its average version – having nothing to offer except violence. The model is present at home first of all, but is also embedded in the Church, the school and all the authoritarian institutions, geared towards producing obedience".[19] Kuczok said in one of the interviews that the resentment of the protagonist of *Gnój* towards religion ("Wierzyłem w Boga" [I believed in God], p. 152) stems from the fact that "God the Father is one of the fathers".[20] The book is directed against the toxic "Polo-Catholicism".[21] In *Gnój*, there is also a longing for a war or, preferably, an uprising, even if it were of a very short duration. To what end? In order to kill "old K." on this occasion, meaning the father (whom the protagonist never calls "father"). Obviously, this is a very consistent story of a patriarchal father and his phantasmic murder. The protagonist is well aware that if he kills his father during a war, or an insurgency, he will not be a patricide, having acted on the strength of the same sanction of violence in the name of which he was tormented by his father.

There have been many fathers in the Polish novel but to date there has been none like "old K". This is because Kuczok reached, without flinching, into the very core of power and violence, depicting the family as a "concentration camp", to quote Marcin Świetlicki, to whom he refers, and considers this expression to be "an ideal definition of growing up in the so-called healthy Polish family".[22] As with other young authors, his objections to the father here reflect upon the fatherland. Kuczok admits that for him the word "fatherland" has a disturbing ring to it "as if it were not the land of the fathers but rather the father in the feminine gender. I prefer 'motherland'. Mothers are nicer".[23] The mother alone will survive the apocalyptic flood of excrement in *Gnój*.

THE MOTHER

During the last 200 years, when Romanticism reigned supreme, Polonia was depicted as an allegory, a symbol, a myth.[24] The female embodiment of the fatherland was usually a suffering body; tormented, unhappy, chained, put in the stocks, pushed into a grave, even crucified. She was dying before our eyes, but it was obvious that she would be resurrected. She sent her sons to death for the cause of her resurrection, and they willingly accepted their fate. Garbed in black, the mourning mother, Polonia evoked horror and abject fear, but also compassion and a love that trembled with terror. "O Poland, you holy specter", Stanisław Wyspiański[25] exclaimed in *Legion*. The mournful mother, the mother-specter, ruled supreme in the Polish imagination until the Second World War, until the period of martial law, and it sometimes appears even today.

Her face was often shrouded in a black hood or a black veil. Everyone knew, of course, that there is something wonderful concealed under it. When her face was revealed, it was most often in the full glory of beauty: young, innocent, and noble. This was because in her concealment, as in a grave, she underwent a metamorphosis, and when she appeared to our eyes she was always beautiful and sublime. She was also identified with Polish nature in all seasons, equipped with the combined charms of spring, autumn, winter, and summer. She was always pure in all possible meanings of the word. Admittedly, foreigners – and not only foreigners – created "the black legend of Poland", pointing out the impassable roads full of mud (which they had to use), dirty inns, poor houses, drunken peasantry and noblemen who did not shy away from strong liquor either. The metaphor of the famous Polish anarchy was a tangle (*plica polonica*).[26] It was, however, always possible to idealize Poland as the noble mistress of our hearts, deliberately ignoring the somewhat grim reality.

Meanwhile, a spectacular breakdown occurred at the railway station in Oświęcim, Auschwitz. Michał Olszewski, age 26, the initiator of the discussion in *Gazeta Wyborcza*[27] which was eventually reduced to the question: to leave or not to leave Poland, confessed that everything at that station moved him to revulsion and disgust. He enumerated: "cold, snow, this damned tea, the color of a very light beer, in a plastic cup, reduced to mulch by hot water"; the black

and white mosaic floor; the uneven surface of the oil paint, the freezing Krakow-Oświęcim passenger train, "the heat from burned cooking fat and from bodies too seldom washed". And overall, thick mud around it and the pervasive grayness. Perhaps the author failed to consider the fact that the place itself (Oświęcim, Auschwitz) was marked with grim significance and may still bear traces of its tragedy. And that in Poland places like this, which were the scenes of genocide, are many. And that this fact may be somewhat relevant today as well.

The scales fell from his eyes. He admits that it was "as if only after the political change that the transient, makeshift nature of this country became apparent". He is also fed up with the symbolic "woman shrouded in mourning", wandering around those muddy parts. She is irritating not only because she had been there but also because she left, no longer demanding anything and leaving nothing behind. The antidotes to this abomination are, according to Olszewski, the sunny beaches of the South, the Atlantic, and the Mediterranean, life in warmer countries, suffused with color and appealing to the senses.

The phantasmal flesh of Poland turned out to be sad and dirty. Disillusion is obviously related to the crumbling of ideals. "After the traditional road signs – faith, family, patriotism – only empty holes in the ground now remain, which I must fill on my own, even though no one taught me work of this kind." It does not help to have "a set of Romantic notions slowly collecting dust, such as patriotism, the nation, and patrimony". Disinheritance is experienced very acutely in view of such realities of existence, such an ugly body of the fatherland, such emptiness of ideas. Yet you can still live freely in countries that are warmer and more beautiful. What has kept the author in Poland and continues to do so is a sort of illusion, which one should cast away as soon as possible.

THE CRISIS OF CULTURE

We know from school that alternating Romanticism and positivism in Polish culture has always come to our rescue. Romantic rebellions and exaltations were followed by the positivist's steady effort to plough the fallow land. Nowadays, however, this alternating rhythm does not seem to apply. In vain, Magdalena Miecznicka, in the debate after "Kraj sportów ekstremalnych" [The country of extreme sports], implores: "Michale, daj się uwieść" (Michał, allow yourself to be seduced) and tries to tempt him with "Poland A, the Poland that strives to catch up with the West, Poland without banners and Styrofoam, the Poland of professionals, globalization, modernity".[28] People like Michał Olszewski can no longer be seduced by Romanticism, but "positivist" work towards the country's modernization does not appeal much to him either. Judging from his collection of short stories *Do Amsterdamu* [To Amsterdam], which describes the drugged poverty of the Second and Third Poland, his narrator turns out to be more susceptible to "pangs of conscience", to some kind of family sentiments, to fatalistic premonitions, than he would seem at first glance. However, Przemysław Czapliński is rather uncompromising in his assessment of this collection of short stories by Olszewski. The author, he writes, provides not so much a rendition of a generation as a rendition of generational newspaper myths, "which determine the way of seeing the world, participating in the public life and building the private life". To him, this book is "very superficial and myth-permeated in its reconstruction of consciousness".[29]

In any case, what is known as social concern affects Olszewski to a greater extent than it does the authors of the article published, also in *Gazeta Wyborcza*, after the end of the debate triggered by "Kraj sportów ekstremalnych" under the categorical title "Żegnaj Polsko" [Farewell, Poland]. Wiktor Ferenc, age 28, and Jakub Wojnarowski, age 26, the former the president, the latter a member of the board of the Polish Association of Political Consultants, firmly declared that "among the lamentations over the poor condition of the Polish economy, in the face of the political crisis, growing divisions into a poor country and a very poor country, the time has come for the young generation to part with Poland, because Poland has nothing to offer to young people".[30] The reason for breaking the contract, the authors argue, is that Poland was allegedly the first one to say farewell to the young.

The dramatic striving to part employs the excuse that Poland is continuously represented by the same people and elites from before 1989, and that the former opposition became entangled in "post-communist methods of action, pervaded with corruption and dirty political struggle" (I had no idea that these were "post-communist" methods). The authors propose that a new party should be created which would endeavor to rebuild the state and allow a generational change of the political class. It would also have to liberate itself from the perspective of the "national person" who does not understand the necessity of and the conditions for European integration. This diagnosis is, eventually, too general to render any useful conclusions – other than the demand for a generational change of guard in politics – and fails to provide any sufficient motivation for such a categorical parting with Poland. The authors do not realize what their contemporaries write in their novels: that in this culture young people feel stifled. We are witnessing a cultural crisis here, which thus should be discussed precisely in terms of culture.

POSTCOLONIAL BURDEN

Edward W. Said, one of the most outstanding writers of postcolonial criticism, was accused of limiting himself in his works to colonial and postcolonial relations between the cultures of the "First" and the "Third" World. According to Clare Cavanagh, contemporary postcolonial criticism ignores "the so-called Second World, that is, Russia and its satellites from the recent past, in Europe and Asia". The postcolonial experience of Eastern Europe is not being considered at all. The fate of Poland, nevertheless, deserves to take its place among studies of postcolonial culture.[31] Understanding Polish postcolonial and colonial complexes might, among other things, contribute to clarifying the present relationship with Russia and to shaping a new attitude towards that country. Historian Janusz Tazbir, when recently reflecting on the myth of the bulwark of Christendom, which is both significant and enduring in the Polish collective consciousness, quoted the bitter words directed by Jacques Maritain to Józef Czapski: "You maintain that you are the bulwark of Christendom and, at the same time, you believe the Russians to be half-human; you harbor a deep contempt for them."[32] This statement still holds true.

I will now reflect on a certain coincidence. Fred Halliday, the author of the book *Islam and the myth of confrontation*, emphasizes that he was born and to a significant extent raised in Ireland, the country "whose political and social prob-

dom has been carved deeply into the national identity ever since. The salient characteristic of Poland's Romantic paradigm, as Janion calls it, is also that it does not end in the 19th century, but continues today. The "posthumous life" of the paradigm recurred in several waves, most recently during the days of Solidarity. The romantic "phantasms" are still alive, she argues, even among those who have consciously rejected them. "Phantasms" that slip and slide between conceptions, fictions, and even ghosts, are a central concept in her work.

AFTER THE FALL of communism, Janion wrote several books specifically about these historical continuities in the Polish collective conceptual world, in which she lays out how certain figures are represented as "the Other": women, lunatics, Jews, and – in particular – Slavicness, and how this affects contemporary public life and politics in Poland.

Her intellectual cosmopolitanism was manifest in various ways: as early as the 1980s, she introduced thinkers like Michel Foucault, Georges Bataille, Susan Sontag, R. D. Laing, and others to Poland. In collaboration with her students, she edited the now legendary anthology *Transgresje* [Transgressions], a work of seven volumes that grew out of readings of Polish and foreign scholarly and literary texts.

FEMINISM WAS THE next project. The motive was simple. It was the abortion issue that led her to understand the effect of the repressive forces of gender relations in the free Poland and that the new authorities were not "us", as she put it. In her book *Kobiety i duch inności* [Women and the spirit of otherness] from 1996, she identifies the key role of allegories of womanhood and the symbolism of women's bodies in notions of Poland's national identity. This also constitutes a key theme in the essay "Farewell to Poland", which first appeared in 2004 in *Gazeta Wyborcza*.

HER ANALYSES FORMED a foundation that enabled the younger generation of gender scholars to link feminist theories with Polish history and everyday life. Janion became the nestor of gender studies in Poland – Janion's gender

Professor of literature Maria Janion is seen as an archaeologist of Polish culture and national identity, and is recognized as the nestor of gender studies in Poland.

lems are to a certain extent the same as those of the Near East".[33] This statement seems quite surprising at first glance. The matter becomes clear in the course of the argument. The author, too, criticizes Said for not seeing the colonial syndrome in Ireland or in Eastern Europe. In the history of Ireland, however, the consequences of this syndrome are apparent. I will quote the description of some of them since certain symptoms of postcolonialism are reminiscent of the Polish case:

1. "The destructive and creative role of foreign domination and settlement." Let us merely say that undoubtedly this ambivalence in Poland is less pronounced in the territory of the former Russian partition, where the occupation is considered to be unequivocally destructive, while the case is entirely different with Galicia, which used to be part of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy and, as we know, drew a certain advantage from that fact.

2. "The illusions and disillusionments of nationalism." This is particularly evident at the time of the so-called emergence from communism, since post-communist countries are becoming susceptible to nationalism. Kertész writes in his "chronicle of the change" about the resurgence, after 1989, of the fascist Arrow Cross Party, founded in Hungary in 1937. He describes young people marching under the Arrow Cross banner; beside them appears "an old man with a white beard, wearing a yellowish uniform of a gendarme, an armband in national colors, with a black double cross in the center, a scout's hat on the head, the stipa grass, colorful feathers, scars ... a nationalist Winnetou". Everything looks as if these were the same people that he viewed as persecutors in the 1940s: "They are completely lacking in any subtler instinct of assimilating; they have sealed themselves and can only eliminate, and when the culture of a certain community is unable to keep pace with the world culture, it stares blankly into the abyss that opened at its feet, and yet the abyss is there on purpose, precisely in order to engulf it".[34] A similar statement can be made about "our" All-Polish Youth, with its origins harking back to the 1930s.

3. "An awkward union of national and religious identity with democracy and gender equality; which accounts for a major stumbling block on the road to European integration." These difficulties are readily detectable in our culture, considering its traditionally patriarchal and Catholic character, demonstrated by the official, institutionalized domination of the male, national, heterosexual element.

The defining aspect of our condition is the fact that we are Slavs. As the "Orientals", we are counted among the "organically imperfect" nations from the point of view of the Western European civilization. The Latin psychological complex results in a sense of expropriation from the Slavic culture. At the same time, the image of a Slavic cultural union evokes the fear of imperial Russia, together with her once officially sanctioned love of the Slavic. Jerzy Pilch in his *Rozpacz z powodu utraty furmanki* [Despair caused by the loss of a wagon], which has been described as a story of a political and mental transformation after 1989, in which the stress is placed on political changes and unchanging mentality, begins with the section "Europejczyk w prasłowiańskich gaciach" (A European wearing ancient Slavic underpants) and precedes the essay so entitled with an epigraph from Czesław Miłosz:

> **In the shadow of the empire, housed with chickens, wearing ancient Slavic underpants**
> **You must learn to like your shame, because it will be with you always,**
> **And will not abandon you even if you move to another country....[35]**

Miłosz reveals an attitude laced with fatalism, which permeates Slavic genealogy and Polish-Russian relations. Nevertheless, the conditions are changing, although the famous "Slavic sadness" remains. It is absolutely necessary to break free from the magic circle of alternating suspicion of either Russophilia or Russophobia.

MALE AND FEMALE

Studies of cultural gender identity reveal associations between sexuality and the national and nationalist ideal. Nationalism is a male movement, which dissociates itself from any contamination or deviation. George L. Mosse writes that the nationalistic male ideal has been strengthened in its striving for perfection by isolating itself from the despised femininity, seeking out phantasmal "countertypes": a Jew, a homosexual, a pansy, a hysteric.[36]

From the point of view of postcolonial criticism, the struggles between Poland and Russia can also be conceived in terms of male versus female. The sovereign is a male, the subordinate a female. Here is a very interesting proof of such thinking.

Alexander Koshelov, dispatched as an official to the Kingdom of Poland, prepared a note for Tsar Alexander II in 1866, in which he assessed the situation in Poland within the Russian Empire and the proposed methods for the unification of Poland with Russia. Since he believed that he had become thoroughly familiar with the nature of the Poles, he deemed it his duty to express himself on the subject. Here are the results of his honest efforts: The Pole is unreasonable, mendacious, false, dependent, and cunning. "Women in Poland share all of the same vices, perhaps even to a more advanced degree than the men. [...] This is the reason why the domination of women over men is easily explicable. Given that the vices mentioned above occur as a rule more frequently in women than in men, 'femininity' is the best term to describe the character of the Poles most exactly. Consequently, it is evident why, during their independence, the Poles were unable to possess a self-reliant state and why intrigues, both internal and foreign, were the basis for their entire state and social life." It is, likewise, quite obvious to Koshelov why Catholicism, with its hypocrisy and intrigues, is so well adapted to the nature of the Poles.

To this world of hypocrisy and feminine intrigues, the author opposes the straight and direct "virility of the Russian spirit and the holiness of our Orthodox Church". A Russian is virile, prudent, sagacious, and trusting, and the Orthodox Church righteous and tolerant. The conclusions from this confrontation are obvious in their political simplicity: "We are in possession of all the means to conquer the Poles, to overcome Poland and completely subdue her".[37] This reads exactly like the many passages quoted by Said, which contemptuously feminize the nations of the Orient, conquered and colonized by the British or the French. The colonial discourse assumed that the male West must conquer the female East and needed no further justification. For Koshelov, Poland was such an "East".

AN INTRICATE PATTERN

Poland, however, was capable of "being a man". It was one also when colonizing the eastern areas of Ukraine and Belarus. Even until the present day, Poles retain colonial impulses with respect to these countries, treating them as culturally lower and obliged to submit to the "more right" Polish reason, particularly in the assessment of the historical past. This is the tradition of Sienkiewicz, the eulogist of imperial beauty.[38] Stefan Swieżawski understood very well the risks to the society and to the Church in Poland which flow from this: "Deeply ingrained in us is the Poland which I call 'Sienkiewicz-like'. Henryk Sienkiewicz[39] was certainly a genius as a writer but the models which he left us and on which entire generations are mindlessly raised are terrible. They are full of contempt and hatred towards other nations, other cultures and religions, which are, after all, close to us, since they are our neighbors. Living these ideals, we will never become an open, tolerant, ecumenical nation. The Church will be an exact, reflected image of the society."[40] Sienkiewicz provides the basis for the myth of the Eastern Borderlands, so important to the Polish national identity, which must cast off its fantasies of cultural superiority. The persistence of the Sienkiewicz and post-Sienkiewicz mentality reveals the tension, often drastic in its manifestations, between the "integrity" of nation and creed, set against the growing cultural "diversity" of contemporary societies.[41]

The ideas of a superpower bulwark were revived during the twenty-year period between the two world wars. The resistance against them was weak but witty. According to Janusz Tazbir, Antoni Słonimski, who lived in England as an emigrant in 1941 and was weary of the superpower thrashing, wrote: "We want to live in an ordinary country. Not on an entrenchment, not on a bastion, not on a barbican, not on a bulwark, but in an ordinary country. We do not want any historic missions, or leadership, we do not want superpower or imperialism."[42] This could be applied also to the present-day rhetoric expressing Polish pride in being a great nation.

A glance at our contemporary cultural consciousness from this perspective allows us to detect a certain intricate pattern inherent in it. We are a postcolonial country, which simultaneously experiences – this is a fairly common occurrence – a superiority over our colonizer, Russia. At this point, we have believed and still believe ourselves to be European, engaged in a struggle with Asian barbarism. As the real Latin, Catholic, Mediterranean Europeans, we cannot identify too much with the Slavic world, since this would bring us close to the "inferiority" of Russia. Nevertheless, being a postcolonial country, we are not real Europeans either, since – as Slavs – we are secondary with respect to them because the Russian-Slavic mongrel nature is reflected in us. We were at the same time a colonial country and a country that colonized the fraternal Slavic world. To this day, we feel superiority over it, but also a certain kinship with its "inferiority". Similar traits are inherent also in the attitude of Poles towards the Jews.

In this terribly intricate tangle, the national, male megalomania takes the upper hand now and again, which ostensibly allows us to settle, to our advantage, the issue of "inferiority" and "superiority", of being "worse" or "better", the issue that, in fact, is in this case one of rule and power.

This is what renders our life unbearable in the vicious circle of domination, imposition, enslavement, elevation, and humiliation, of continual struggle for acknowledgment of some mythical superiority and better status, of constant show of pride and desire to rise above the others. Witkacy[43] called it a run-to-the-dogs noble legacy, also inherited from the Eastern Borderland "kinglings": "Hence every Pole tends to climb, even if only on his toes, in order to appear taller, and to create what I call 'a puffed-up nobleman's hat' for himself, an artificial self-extending superstructure, ornamental and empty, which is aimed at confusing the others as to the real value of the head concealed by this headgear. [...] Eternal dissatisfaction and eternal inflation over the limits of feasibility, living above one's means, both physical and, to some extent, spiritual, with respect to the sense of one's importance and power, has become the fundamental mental trait of almost every Pole."[44] Let us hope this "puffed-up nobleman's hat" finally breaks and explodes!

The crisis of Polish identity, the crisis of patriotism, the crisis of traditional culture, which is apparent in the declarations of parting with Poland, seems indicative of the process of shaping a new Polish imagery. It has to come to terms with the relics of the national megalomania, which is the legacy of a messianic vision of Poland. Not only is this megalomania blatantly at odds with the real economic and political weakness of Poland, but it also makes it impossible to attain a distanced, objective idea of self, and prevents our giving up the ambition to dominate and despise "others". In order to understand them, a new narration must be created; "another story" must be told. Is it possible – taking into account the mechanisms, embedded in capitalism, of absorbing the cultural sphere into the system of capitalist economy and of converting spiritual values into goods – is it possible to attempt rebuilding social trust and the ability to empathize?[45]

Poland, despite the pious wishful thinking and the mendacious assurances, is not a multicultural country today. It is precisely the uniformity of the patriarchal "Polo-Catholicism", as Kuczok called it; the aversion to diversity; the inability to loosen the armor of a megalomaniac, vain Polishness, that stifling band of moralizing control over all aspects of life that contributes to the acute sense of cultural crisis. Poland is a poor and flat monolith, predominantly national and Catholic. This is why she feels so tedious to her citizens, who wish to part with her and leave for Europe, conceived of as the space of cultural freedom. It would be possible to endure living even here, without the southern sun, if our culture were more diverse, free from colonial and postcolonial obsessions, more "colorful" in fact.

POSTSCRIPT

I wrote the major part of this text in 2004. Two years later, the rate of emigration from Poland has increased significantly since European labor markets opened, and those who emigrate are mostly young. In mid-2006, the number of those living and working abroad was estimated to be between 1.1 and 2 million, that is, about 5 percent of the total population. The press is debating whether those emigrating still are considering the possibility of returning to Poland, or whether they have left for good. In any case, this is considered to be one of the phenomena most characteristic of contemporary Poland.

When asked about their reasons, those who emigrate say that they leave in search of "work",[46] a "better life", "freedom" from the stifling atmosphere here, from politicians interfering with people's personal lives.[47]

From the perspective of the history of Polish spiritual life, the highlight of the recent period was John Paul II's death. Mirosława Marody and Sławomir Mandes are right in stating that, due to the ideas of

girls, as the growing band was called.

She was later inspired by the postcolonial thought of Edward Said. In the books *Wampir: Biografia symboliczna* [Vampires: A symbolic biography] from 2002 and *Niesamowita słowiańszczyzna* [Uncanny Slavdom] from 2006, she studies the Slavic mythology and cultural tradition that constitutes the Other for Europe, but also for the Poles themselves. She uses the postcolonial perspective to decode the self-othering upon which Polish culture – as a kind of repressed polar opposite to heroism – rests.

IT WAS ACTUALLY the Polish poet laureate Adam Mickiewicz who coined the phrase "strangers to ourselves" (*sami sobie cudzy*), which later became associated with feminist philosopher Julia Kristeva. He differentiates between two incompatible worlds within Slavicness – the Russian "Asian" despotism and the Polish ideal of freedom.

THE ROOTS OF POLES' warped relationship to their Slavic cultural heritage are found here, Janion argues: "We" want to be part of the West; it is Russia that represents Slavicness and "we" have nothing in common with Russia. The drawing of a boundary separating Poland from Russia is still today an expected subtext in political rhetoric, as her essay illustrates. It is, Janion posits, precisely the alienation from their own origins that makes Poles so receptive to the xenophobia and anti-Semitism she is so anxious to counteract. Memory work and heresy are her methods: reconstructing and reinterpreting. *Do Europy tak ale razem z naszymi umarłymi* [Towards Europe yes, but together with our dead] is the somewhat disturbing title of a book from 2000, in which she begins to explore the place of Jews in Polish history. And again she asks a question that is actually forbidden. She wonders whether the language of Polish anti-Semitism during the interwar period encompassed the possibility of eliminating Jews. But she also aims to restore to Jews their place in the historical narrative. In her 2009 book *Bohater, spisek och smierc* [Heroes, conspiracy, and death] she examines the classic triad of Polish patriotism from every angle. She dives into the past and comes up with a Jewish hero. Is that a contradiction in terms? Can one celebrate a Jew as a Polish national hero? She studies what happened along the way when conspiracy, a natural practice in the independent struggle, became "Jewish". And then Death. What meaning does it acquire when what is a sacrifice for Poland's freedom on the "field of honor" in the patriotic canon is preceded by the adjective "Jewish"?

WHAT SHE WANTS to achieve is a shift in the accepted parameters of Poland's symbolic order by digging, dislocating, reinterpreting. In so doing, Janion is utterly unsentimental and ruthless. She does this in a constant, ongoing dialog between the past and the present – between the historical legacy and how the younger generation is struggling with the free Poland and the posthumous life of Romanticism. The essay "Farewell to Poland" is a clear expression of this.

On her 80th birthday, Janion's large band of "apostles" dedicated a volume to her called *Ksiega Janion* [Jan-

organic unity of the Polish nation and Catholicism that he had been proclaiming for a quarter of a century, "the Pope became the emblem and the guarantor of Polish identity, and as long as he lived this identity could be manifested only through religious rituals. This is why John Paul II's death was for the Poles the moment of the most powerful manifestation of national unity since the first 'Solidarity' movement – Whether we want this or not, John Paul II's death broke the connection between the national unity and the religious unity of the Poles, which had lasted since the beginning of the modern era. [...] Limiting the 'national' public sphere to religious rituals fostered the idea of the nation which united the Poles around 'moral rightness' and not around publicly negotiated interests". This will now have to change. A debate on contemporary national identity is necessary, and so is forming "broader communities, which offer a secular platform for uniting the people".[48]

Marta Dzido, a young female writer who debuted with an interesting novel, *Małż* [A clam] (2005), was interviewed by a journalist from *Gazeta Wyborcza* [Election Gazette]. The relevant fragment reads as follows:

> **Marta Dzido: But Poland doesn't move me either. I don't define myself through nationality.**
> **Wojciech Staszewski: How come? How about the flag, the anthem, the Eagle, the national soccer team?**
> **Marta Dzido: This doesn't move me at all. Neither the anthem, nor the Legia soccer team, nor the Pope. Since childhood, I've felt oppressed by all this "God, honor, fatherland". Jesus hanging from the cross, transfixed with nails. Poems from grade school, concentration camps, glorification of martyrdom, 123 years of struggle for national liberation. This is only a fraction of our history; there is also, for instance, the razing of Ukrainian villages. Still, all that is being said is that they've been robbing and tormenting us. If a person who is 12 years old reads poems such as "Warkoczyk" [Pigtail] (by Różewicz), she gets the shivers for the rest of her life.**[49]

Here is The Confession of a Child of the Century, who is, rather significantly, a young, well-educated girl. ■

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2. "My do Europy" [We, to Europe], *Dekada Literacka* [Literary decade], No. 2 (1994). The press confirmed the sociologist's concerns. It recently reported the reasons for the refusal by the European Union to subsidize Polish farmers: "Farmers received subsidies even though many of them did not comply with the so-called good agricultural practice, which is the requirement for receiving subsidies. The term refers to keeping the farm clean, recycling liquid waste, rotating crops, protecting groundwater from fertilizer runoff, and proper care of animals." Poland may have to pay back the money already paid out to farmers, and perhaps Brussels will even cancel payments under the program of Aid to Farmers in Less Favored Areas. The reply by the representative of the Agency for Restructuring and Modernization of Agriculture is pathetic: "We cannot penalize the farmers, whom we won over for the integration with so much effort" (Krystyna Naszkowska, "Unia się zezłościła" [The union got angry], *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 2006-07-27).
3. Hanna Świda-Ziemba, "Trzeba skończyć z martyrologią" [We should end with the ethos of martyrdom], *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 2006-09-07). When reporting the results of a study on values upheld by university students, conducted in 2006, Hanna Świda-Ziemba, sociologist and educator, declares that patriotism took 78th place among 80 concepts. But what is understood as patriotism? Perhaps the reason behind the lack of success of "building the sense of civic action" in Poland is the fact that for many young people Poland is a foreign country. "I wouldn't call it resentment but rather a sense of alienation." Prof. Świda-Ziemba has nothing against the myths of Solidarity or the legend of the Warsaw Uprising. In her opinion, however, they must not become "the core of the new identity". "We must banish the ethos of martyrdom from our official discourse; we should emphasize our accomplishments instead of our failures and defeats. Unfortunately, we have wasted the wealth of social confidence that was there in the early '90s. Let us finally begin to stress that nowadays shedding your blood for the fatherland is unnecessary. Today volunteering in a hospice and local initiatives are the ways to show patriotism and serve your country." "Let Polishness mean civic spirit", Professor Świda-Ziemba concludes.
4. This is the last Polish uprising against the Russian Empire in 1863, which ended in total defeat on the side of the Polish insurrectionists.
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6. "Ordon's Redoubt" ("Reduta Ordona" in Polish) is the title of the poem by the Romantic poet Adam Mickiewicz (1798–1855) about Juliusz Konstanty Ordon, who distinguished himself as a commander of the final redoubts when the Tsarist army was storming Warsaw during the Polish uprising against the Russian Empire in 1830–1831 (called the November Uprising).
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8. Bronisław Łagowski, "Władza kultury" [The rule of culture], *Przegląd* [Review], 2004-06-27.
9. Imre Kertész, *Ja, inny: Kronika przemiany* [Someone else: a chronicle of the change]. Translated into Polish by A. Górecka. Warsaw 2004, p. 71 (my emphasis – M. J.).
10. S. Cessou, *epok*, No. 42 (Dec. 2003 – Jan. 2004).
11. *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 2004-02-25.
12. Dorota Masłowska (b. 1983) is a young Polish writer and a journalist. Her debut book, *Wojna polsko-ruska pod flagą biało-czerwoną* (translated into English as "White and Red" in the UK and "Snow White and Russian Red" in the US; literally "The Polish-Russian War under the White-Red Flag"), was generally considered controversial, mostly due to the language, which was regarded by many as vulgar, cynical, and simple.
13. "To ja, dyletantka" [This is me, a dilettante], Magdalena Michalska interviews Dorota Masłowska, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 2003-09-25.
14. Compare the reflections on Masłowska in the text "Ruskie i polskie" [Things Russian and Polish] in Maria Janion, *Niesamowita słowiańszczyzna* [Uncanny Slavdom], Krakow 2006.
15. Dorota Masłowska, *Wojna polsko-ruska pod flagą biało-czerwoną*, 2nd ed., Warsaw 2002 p. 40. Subsequent quotations are localized in the running text.
16. Kinga Dunin, *Czytając Polskę* [Reading Poland], p. 237.
17. Mariusz Sieniewicz, *Czwarte niebo* [The fourth heaven], Warsaw 2003. Quotations are localized in the text.
18. Wojciech Kuczok, *Gnój* [Muck], Warsaw 2003. Quotations are localized in the text.
19. *Czytelnik* [Reader] 00, 2003. Trial issue.
20. "Moją magdalenką jest nahaj" [My madeleine is a horsewhip], Wojciech Kuczok interviewed by Krzysztof Masłoń. *Rzeczpospolita* [The republic], 2003-06-21 – 2003-06-22.
21. "Polska skołtuniała" (Priggish Poland), Wojciech Kuczok interviewed by Ewa Likowska. *Przegląd*, 2004-06-20.
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23. "Cierpienie mężczyzny" [The suffering of a man], Wojciech Kuczok interviewed by Katarzyna Kubisiowska, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 2003-06-03.
24. See the study "Polonia powielona" [Polonia duplicated] in Maria Janion, *Niesamowita słowiańszczyzna*.
25. Stanisław Wyspiański (1869–1907) was a patriotic writer who created a series of symbolic, national dramas within the artistic philosophy of the Young Poland Movement.
26. This is brilliantly demonstrated by Maciej Forycki in his book *Anarchia polska w myśli oświecenia: Francuski obraz Rzeczypospolitej szlacheckiej u progu czasów stalinowskich* [Polish anarchy in Enlightenment thought: French vision of the Republic of the Nobles at the dawn of the Stalin era], Poznań 2004. He quotes, from the famous Encyclopédie by Diderot and d'Alambert, a description of the Polish tangle (*plica polonica*): "tangled mass of hairs resulting from lack of washing and combing of the hair", which is also a sign of sickness in the head – "the evil that is the source of Polish anarchy has its origin in the sick Polish heads" (pp. 52–60).
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33. See Fred Halliday, *Islam i mit konfrontacji: Religia i polityka na Bliskim Wschodzie* [Islam and the myth of confrontation: religion and politics in the Middle East], translated by R. Piotrowski, Warsaw 2002 (the original appeared in 1995), p. 199.
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37. *Unifikacja za wszelką cenę: Sprawy polskie w polityce rosyjskiej na przełomie XIX i XX wieku* [Unification at any price: Polish issues in Russian policy at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries], studies and materials edited by A. Szwarc & P. Wieczorkiewicz, Warsaw 2002, pp. 204–205.
38. Daniel Beauvois, *Trójkąt ukraiński: Szlachta, carat i lud na Wołyniu, Podolu i Kijowszczyźnie 1713–1914* [The Ukrainian triangle: The nobility, the tsarism and the peasants in the Volhynia, Podolia and Kiev region 1713–1914], translated by K. Rutkowski, Lublin 2005. Here we read: "Until the present day Ukraine has been an awkward topic. Emotions replace the truth. Polish presence in Ukraine, which is entirely history now, resembles Polish presence in Lithuania. Every reference to it means entering the realm of myth, evokes the enchantment of a lost world, in which one used to live so happily." (p. 11) Beauvois believes that the Romantics played an immense role in the creation of the myths of Polish hegemony in Ukraine, along with Sienkiewicz and his "beautiful historical romances of adventure, which have little in common with history" (p. 423). In another statement, Beauvais admits that the works by Sienkiewicz "contain toxic seeds. They imbue the youth with the false pretense of an alleged superiority of Poles." ("Demokracji szlacheckiej nie było" [There was no noblemen's democracy], Daniel Beauvais interviewed by Jarosław Kurski, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 2006-01-28/29.)
39. Henryk Sienkiewicz (1846–1916) was a Polish novelist and a 1905 Nobel laureate. He is best known for his epic historical novels *The Trilogy* and *Quo Vadis*.
40. Stefan Świeżawski, *Lampa wiary: Rozważania na przełomie wieków* [The lamp of faith: Reflections at the turn of the century], selection and foreword by A. Ziernicki, Krakow 2000, pp. 144–146. Świeżawski considered Sienkiewicz's ideas to be archaic, "pre-Vatican Council". A completely different opinion is expressed by Dariusz Gawin, who embarks on an argument in favor of the "progressiveness of Sienkiewicz". In his polemic with the liberal, left-wing thinking and with the "black legend" of Sienkiewicz, which in his opinion originated "in the circles of the Polish radical left", Gawin declares that "Sienkiewicz contributed decisively to the creation of modern national consciousness on a mass scale" (in *Trilogy* and *Quo vadis*). With reference to *Rodzina Połanieckich* [The Polaniecki family], we read: "The world of the collective imagination respects and fully accepts as the embodiment of the very essence of modernity all the virtues with which Sienkiewicz endowed Stach Połaniecki and which drove Brzozowski raving mad" ("Sienkiewicz – nasz współczesny" [Sienkiewicz – our contemporary], in *Polska, wieczny romans: O związkach literatury i polityki w XX wieku*, pp. 33–60).
41. Krzysztof Koseła, *Polak i katolik: Splątana tożsamość* [Pole and Catholic: a tangled identity], Warsaw 2003.
42. Janusz Tazbir, *Polska przedmurzem Europy* [Poland, the bulwark of Europe], p. 187.
43. Witkacy is a pseudonym of Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz (1885–1939), a Polish playwright, novelist and avant-garde painter.
44. Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, *Narkotyki: Niemyte dusze* [Drugs: unwashed souls], Warsaw 1975, pp. 267–268.
45. Jeremy Rifkin, *Wiek dostępu* [The Age of Access], translated by E. Kania, Wrocław 2003, pp. 259–260.
46. "Although the unemployment rate for the young is higher than that for older people everywhere in the world, nowhere in the civilized world are these discrepancies as drastic as in our country. At the end of the year 2005, the difference between the unemployment rate among people below the age of 25 and the population in general in Poland was as high as 18 percent. In Ireland, this difference was only 4.6 percent; in Germany, 5.5 percent; and in the USA, 6.2 percent. In Poland, in the first quarter of 2006, with the overall unemployment rate of 16 percent, the unemployment rate among the youth was 34 percent!" (R. Antczak, P. Dobrowolski, R. Petru, "Najgorzej mają młodzi" [The young are the worst off], *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 2006-07-28).
47. *Gazeta Wyborcza* published, in 2006, entire collections of statements by young émigrés, looking for a chance to breathe more freely abroad. I will, however, quote domestic statements here. Przystanek Woodstock [Woodstock station] in the year 2006, as in the previous years, stands for the station of freedom in Poland. One of the participants, hailing from Poznań, confesses: "Life is poor, but I am not taking offense against Poland. All I want from her is freedom. Let's not exaggerate, president Kaczyński is not the tyrant Bush, although under Kaczyński we are gasping for air, it feels stifling here. These uniforms in schools, the obligatory patriotism, it's a backwater here, it makes no sense. Woodstock is such a gulp of freedom, and I would like to have this every day." Another one, from Grudziądz, says that he dreams not about being rich but about tolerance and friendly people, A. Łukasiewicz, P. Żytnicki, "Wkurzeni na Polskę" [Mad at Poland], *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 2006-07-28.
48. Mirosława Marody, Sławomir Mandes, "Polak katolik: O związkach religijności z tożsamością narodową" [Pole the Catholic: On relations between religious creed and national identity], *Europa* (supplement to *Dziennik* [Journal]) no. 24, 2006-06-14. See also reflections of Pole the Catholic in the study "Polska w Europie" [Poland in Europe] in Maria Janion, *Niesamowita słowiańszczyzna*.
49. "Ani hymn, ani Legia, ani Papież" [Neither the anthem, nor Legia, nor the Pope], Marta Dzido interviewed by Wojciech Staszewski, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 2005-08-10.

ion's book]. It included an inventory, called "Janion's tree" of the numerous academic works written under her supervision. Zbigniew Maichrowski, who initiated the book project, characterizes her with the following words: "Janion is a spirit who must always stand at the head of the line. She is curious about and ravenous for everything new, yet she always keeps up to date. On every occasion, she demonstrates her knowledge of the youngest authors. She is like a whale within the Polish humanities."

AS A PUBLIC INTELLECTUAL, Janion has always intervened in the political discourse. In recent years, she has put her authority to use to support the feminist movement and the reawakened new Left.

She spoke at the first Congress of Women (*Kongres Kobiet*) in 2009. What has always been ridiculed in the spirit of fraternity – women's solidarity – has now emerged in earnest and is now our collective responsibility, she exhorted. But a learning process is needed so that it does not remain merely wishful thinking. Janion postulates that the political transformation must be complemented by a reordering in the cultural-symbolic sphere.

Janion's tree has spread a myriad of seeds for such a cultural metamorphosis in Poland. ■

TERESA KULAWIK
RENATA INGBRANT

The essay "Farewell to Poland" was taken from *Niesamowita słowiańszczyzna* [Uncanny Slavdom], Wydawnictwo Literackie 2006, pp. 301–337.

Women's Solidarity.
The uprising of the Polish women's movement

Poland is usually associated with the Pope and Catholicism. The generation that grew up with the Iron Curtain no doubt also remembers the opposition movement Solidarity, which paved the way for the fall of the Wall. But the number who would see Poland as particularly receptive to feminism is certainly few – yet in fact, Poland is the only postsocialist country to have generated a women's movement worthy of the name.

The Third European Congress of Women was held in Warsaw on the 17th and 18th of September this year and drew almost 7,000 registered attendees. The main hall of Warsaw's enormous Palace of Culture was too small to fit everyone who showed up for the event. I got to sit in the area near the stage reserved for foreign guests. It was a relief to get a seat, but it felt a little odd too. I was born in the country, although I am now both a German and Swedish citizen.

Kongres Kobiet (The Congress of Women) has become the biggest social movement in today's Poland. The first Congress, in 2009, brought together 3,000 women and ignited a nationwide mobilization. Fifteen regional conferences followed and the formation of a national network is under way. By using the opportunity for direct democracy available in Poland's legislative process, the women's movement has successfully brought about electoral gender quotas. Kongres Kobiet activists collected 150,000 signatures and submitted a civic law proposal to Parliament demanding a 50 percent quota on the party lists. Although the law that ultimately passed was more modest, there is nothing like success to generate enthusiasm: banners at the congress proclaimed "Half the power, full wage" and "Vote for women!"

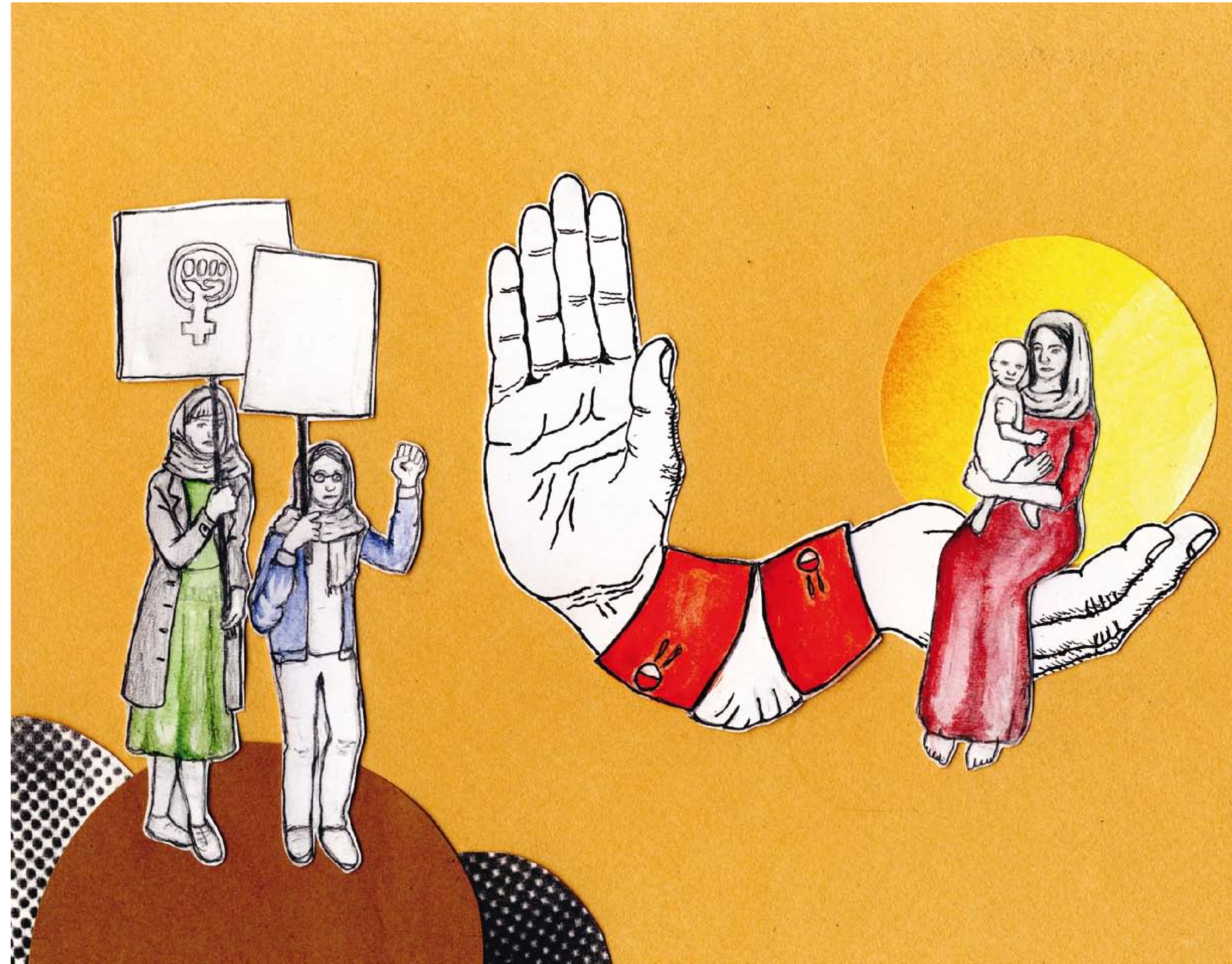
So, why is Poland the only post-socialist country where women have mobilized an active social movement? Research teaches us that social movements germinate in conditions of discontent, but seldom emerge when things are at their worst. Instead, mobilization occurs under conditions that provide opportunities for the exercise of agency. When hopes and expectations are raised, but dashed, the ground is prepared for mobilization. Resources are necessary for collective agency to be set in motion, of course, but so is hope that there will be some success.

There were a lot of reasons for women to be discontented with developments in the "free Poland" after 1989. Women in the new democracy lost self-determination over their own bodies: the right to abortion on demand that had existed since 1956 was abolished. Abortion became a divisive issue among those who struggled in the opposition movement in the 1980s – and one of the very first initiatives taken by Solidarity's men in Parliament was to amend the abortion law. When the women's section within Solidarity dissented, the chair was first threatened and then the entire section was shut down. The women did not simply give up. In the early 1990s, a million people signed a petition for a referendum on the abortion law. The vast majority of Poles were opposed to restrictive abortion law – but the new powers that be refused. There was a widespread sense of disappointment and powerlessness among women, and this time, the mass mobilization ceased. Focused on surviving "the transition", most women were preoccupied with things other than fighting for their rights: the "shock therapy" imposed on the country after 1989 – privatizations, large-scale closings of industrial plants, and the dismantling of the public sector – hit the women of Poland much harder than the men.

That the women's movement did not arise from the mobilization against the abortion law in the 1990s was also a result of the absence of an accepted language that could put words to the experienced injustices from a gender perspective. The communist dictatorship discredited gender as a political category. Gender equality was perceived as "forced emancipation" and "oppressive egalitarianism". Western feminism and its strategy of deconstructing femininity were far from appealing. "Feminists were burning their bras while we couldn't buy them", was an oft-heard statement that expressed the disparate positions of women in the East and women in the West. But a women's movement slowly emerged in the 1990s. Gender studies became established at the universities, preparing the ground for activism and feminist expertise. Legendary professor of literature Maria Janion was the nestor of the movement. The first gender studies center was established in 1995 at the University of Warsaw, with Małgorzata Fuszara among the founders. The quota law proposed by the Congress of Women originated from her pen. A rapidly growing network of NGOs was established with the support of foreign sponsors and the EU. Journals and information centers were founded. A new Polish feminism had seen the light of day.

The ten-year anniversary of the "free Poland" was a turning point for the women's movement. *Gazeta Wyborcza*, a newspaper with roots in the Solidarity movement, printed an article in June 1999 that became the Polish feminist manifesto. Agnieszka Graff put into words what until then could not have been expressed. She decoded the symbolic gender order that was the pillar of the new democracy. Graff argues that the common account of how real socialism was an "interruption" in the "normal" history of Poland is actually a gender-coded narrative. In this interpretation, the dictatorship is perceived as feminine rule, a humiliation and domestication of masculinity, a symbolic castration. In fact, the Solidarity movement constituted a masculine rite of passage that would restore the patriarchal order. Men would once again become what they had always been in Poland's past, according to the national narrative: brave heroes, chivalrous, patresfamilias. Real Men, in other words.

So, what about the women? In the history of Solidarity as it was lived, women played a crucial role that has been excised from the mythology of the movement. Graff refers to research by American scholar Shana Penn, who has shown that the actions of women were decisive for the emergence and success of the opposition movement. The strike at the Lenin Shipyard broke out because crane operator Anna Walentynowicz, a champion of workers since the 1960s, was fired. The agreement between the striking workers and the communist regime in September 1980 that legalized independent trade unions in Poland would not have happened without the women. The men at the Lenin Shipyard wanted to end the strike with a pay raise – but the women



Polish women are recovering from shock therapy. 35 percent of the candidates in the October elections to the Sejm were women.

Continued.
Women's Solidarity

blocked the exits. Along with Henryka Krzywonos, who led the public transportation strike in Gdansk, they exhorted the men to maintain solidarity with the workers in the rest of the country and continue the strike.

When Solidarity was made illegal again under martial law, women's underground activities kept the organization going while the men languished in prison. But the women were not allowed to share political power after the fall of communism nor included in the symbolic representation of the movement. Walentynowicz became an anecdote. But the photograph of Lech Wałęsa scaling the shipyard fence made him first an icon, then president of Poland and Nobel Prize winner.

With a sharp and satiric pen, Agnieszka Graff for the first time highlights the contribution of women in the fight for democracy out of the collective amnesia of the Polish public. Ingeniously, she points out the connection between the rendering invisible of real women and the symbolization of the feminine ideal in the picture of the Black Madonna on the jackets of the male heroes. The underlying image is that of *Matka Polka*, the Polish Mother, a figure I will be returning to.

Shana Penn's book *Solidarity's Secret* is fascinating reading and highly instructive on the subject of the male gaze and the performativity of collective memory. In the early 1990s, Penn began to interview women who were active within Solidarity and was surprised to learn that they played such an important part, yet remained so invisible. One explanation is found in Polish history. There is a long tradition among Polish women of joining underground resistance movements. After the January Uprising of 1863 in Poland was crushed, foreign observers reported that while the men seemed paralyzed, Polish women seemed to "never give up". But the woman warrior is not part of the national mythology, which is the preserve of Matka Polka, the mother, who is supposed to be both strong and self-sacrificing. She is supposed to be able to overcome every hardship, to "stand by her man", and admire him for his heroic struggle. She becomes an object of worship, elevated to the status of national symbol. She is given a kiss on the hand, a perfect rose, a bended knee. But what she cannot demand is recognition. She remains the anonymous heroine – *bezimienna bohaterka*, a fixed phrase in Polish.

Penn's research illustrates the crucial role of women in the Solidarity movement and how both the opposition and the glossing over of their work align with the national mythology. There is a sexist code, risen from the ashes of Romanticism and the aristocracy, which at once enables and denies the contributions of women.

Barbara Labuda, who was active in Solidarity and later became a government minister, states flatly that no one would have respected a movement led by women. She says, "Even if we had told the story, no one would have believed that women ran Solidarity's underground operations".

Agnieszka Graff's article and Shana Penn's research sparked strong reactions and widespread debate in the media. Several of the underground fighters objected to their interpretation, but one of the central figures sided with the feminists: Helena Łuczywo. She was head of the biggest underground newspaper and later co-founder and publisher of *Gazeta Wyborcza*. The debate became feminism's incursion into Polish mass media, where it is now an expected presence in the mainstream. Famous feminist personalities are interviewed or engaged as writers and debaters in many daily and weekly publications, not only *Gazeta Wyborcza*, although *Gazeta* was the pioneer. The newspaper supplement *Wysokie Obcasy* [High heels], conceived as a classic women's magazine, is now a key platform for gender and queer issues, with a wide readership.

What makes 1999 a turning point for the Polish women's movement is not only the entry into mass media, but also the advent of a language that links national Polish experience with a feminist perspective. The reinterpretation of the history of Solidarity is an ingenious approach, since it simultaneously addresses the discrimination and confirms the ability of women to act. For the younger generation of Polish women, this is an appealing mix.

Annual public demonstrations, called Manifa, have been held on International Women's Day, the 8th of March, every year since 2000. The demonstrations are produced in a spirit shaped by that sense of the grotesque acquired over the course of Polish history. Rather than express indignation, the strategy is to ridicule male-dominated society – as if patriarchy was a form of late communism, according to Graff, one of the founders of Manifa.

The 2000s became a decade of growing mobilization and smoldering discontent. Women's reproductive rights were undermined even beyond the restrictive abortion law. Political populism and unfulfilled expectations of EU support in the work for gender equality were two reasons for women to maintain their resistance. Mobilization became more widespread, extended to demands for social rights, and was spread to the public sector.

In 2007, women health care workers organized a protest action against low pay and miserable working conditions. They set up a tent city outside the presidential palace for four weeks. The action, called *Białe Miasteczko*, "Little White City," garnered widespread support among the public and the press. The trade unions received good press for the first time since 1989 – after which time they have been regarded as mainly trying to impede reforms. Issues of fairness and discrimination of women were linked. For the first time, the forces of the old and new Left joined forces.

This was the situation leading up to the first Congress of Women, arranged in conjunction with the 20th anniversary of democratic Poland. Once again, the trigger was the erasure of women. A commemorative exhibition about the Solidarity movement at the National Museum displayed the familiar picture: the women are not there. The driving forces behind the Congress were Magda Sroda, professor at the University of Warsaw, leading feminist figurehead and former governmental plenipotentiary for the Equal Status of Women and Men, and Henryka Bochniarz, former government minister and successful entrepreneur.

Today, the Congress of Women brings together women of different generations, of widely disparate social backgrounds, and relatively diverse political convictions. These differences are an asset – and a problem. Or as Agnieszka Graff puts it: "We do not talk about women's unity; we talk about women's solidarity."

Women deliberately chose this language and lined up with the tradition of Solidarity. It was a magical moment when Henryka Krzywonos was named the Polish Woman of the Twentieth Century – she, the tram driver in Gdansk, who looked at the shipyard in 1980 and persuaded the men to keep on striking. She not only stood for continuity with the past, but also for the belief that Polish women "never give up". She was a heroine with a name.

The arrangers are aware of the power of symbols. These days, the movement is more and more often called the "Second Solidarity". The women who gather for the Congress this year have big ambitions. Will they live up to the challenge? Will they, once the euphoria has subsided, cooperate across party lines in the daily grind of politics and make a difference in areas like childcare, health care, pensions, and low-income jobs that are important to the majority of Polish women? Actually, this is not up to the women alone.

What gives me confidence is that the women's movement in postsocialist Poland emerged from a profound learning process. The Congress movement brings together people who say they could never have imagined supporting quotas or cooperating with feminists – people who have been successful politicians or entrepreneurs. Many of them support the Congress. On the other side are the former activists in the grass roots movement who have realized that signatures on petitions do not get you very far. It is good news that these two groups are now cooperating. Studies show that the most effective coalitions for implementing women-friendly policies are those between women politicians inside the system and activists who can push and exert pressure from the outside.

I also think something more is needed so that the women's Solidarity does not become like the first Solidarity – a beautifully wrapped but half empty box. The point is that there has been a further betrayal that must be brought back from oblivion and worked through. The first Solidarity was based on a coalition of workers and intellectuals, a coalition that toppled the communist dictatorship. But while the workers went to the polls to vote for "their party" and "their government", the intellectuals had already left the coalition, unilaterally but not openly. For the intellectuals, the coalition ended in 1989, Adam Michnik conceded in Stockholm during the anniversary year of 2009. The intellectuals thus felt no responsibility to their voters. They wanted to keep being heroes instead. They were flattered when they were approached by international advisers and were invited to play with the Chicago Boys. Instead of taking Solidarity – justice – seriously, they chose to become the avant-garde of neoliberalism.

To prevent this from being repeated in this "Second Solidarity", the transformation process needs to be reevaluated and squared with the doctrine that the market solves everything. The criticism voiced against Kongres Kobiet has to do with this betrayal and differences among women based on class.

Elżbieta Korolczuk, scholar and Manifa activist, believes that many of the leaders of the Congress movement seem to take it for granted that the economic transformation was successful in the main. That everything will be fine if only more women are put into leading positions in politics, business, and academia. But that is not so, in her opinion. For many Poles, the transition was actually a setback. "We need to talk seriously about social justice again", Korolczuk adds.

Like the gender contract in Poland, the hubris of the intellectuals, that they "knew" and no longer needed to listen to "the people", is a relic of the aristocracy. Who better than the women's movement to come to terms with these relics and take demonstrations, the people, and democracy seriously? But comparative studies teach us that it takes two: the critical factor is cooperation between those who mobilize outside the institutions and responsiveness among those who are inside the system.

AFTER THE ELECTION

One hundred and ten women will be taking seats in the new Sejm, the lower house. The percentage of women MPs has increased from 20 to 24 percent, a historic record according to Małgorzata Furzara. There have never been more women in the Polish parliament. The second-best result was achieved in 1980, with 106 women MPs, although that was when the country was still the socialist People's Republic of Poland. In other words: women have finally overcome the fact that the way out of dictatorship was a male rite of passage. The era of the male hero has come to an end.

Certainly, one might be a tad disappointed that the result is not closer to the 30 percent line. According to feminist political scientist Drude Dahlerup, women's representation of 30 percent can constitute what she calls a critical mass and may be the percentage needed to really make a difference. But, says Fuszara, we should see this as the first step on a road in the right direction instead of grousing. The good news: the populist Law and Justice Party that embraced the masculine ideal fell far short of grasping the reins of governing power.

The quota law itself can partially explain the modest result. It provides that at least 35 percent of the candidates on ballots must be women. But the law says nothing about how the candidates must be ranked and several parties chose to put women at the bottom of the list. The governing party, the liberal conservative Civic Platform, is the only party to live up to the 35 percent standard among those elected. Civic Platform has voluntarily followed the rule that at least two of the first five candidates on the ballot must be women. It is the only party that attracted more votes from women than men in the election. This proves that gender matters to women voters! The party's victory was also historic for another reason: this is the first time a sitting government has been successfully reelected in Poland since the fall of communism.

The election results are also testimony to the continued flexibility of Polish citizens. The hallmark of political systems in many postsocialist countries is that voting behavior and the party system are more volatile than in the old democracies. One rather surprising outcome in this year's election was that the new Palikot's Movement Party won 10 percent of the votes and became the third strongest party in the country. This is a development for both good and ill. With five women out of a total of forty Sejm MPs, the party has a distinctly masculine character. The good news is that the forty include Anna Grodzka, the first transsexual in the Polish parliament, and gay activist Robert Biedron, the first openly homosexual Sejm MP. Wanda Nowicka is also among the newly elected. She is executive director of the Polish Federation for Women and Family Planning and one of the foremost advocates of women's reproductive rights in the country. Nowicka was also elected vice-president of the new Sejm.

Palikot's Movement may have a few surprises in the offing, but the party also contributes something none of the others has dared to: it is challenging the power of the Catholic Church in public life. Reluctance to clash with the Church was the historic compromise of the post-1989 order, a compromise that sacrificed women's rights. The election outcome instills confidence that women have male alliance partners and that together they should be able to influence policy. ■

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The women were those who got the Polish shipyard workers to hold out for more.

Masculinity questioned – perhaps. But what expedients are there for losers in our communities? Revanchism?

The modernization of Russia and the trans-Atlantic community.
On the need to overcome suspicions and prejudices

EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

On September 21—23, 2011, the second international conference dedicated to the memory of the Polish statesman Bronisław Geremek took place in Warsaw. The theme was *Russia and the European Union: What Unites Us, What Divides Us*. Bronisław Geremek was a well-known professor of history and a leading European intellectual. He was Poland's foreign minister from 1997 to 2000, and thereafter a prominent member of the European Parliament. Geremek died in a car accident in Poland in 2008, at the age of 76.

The conference attracted a large number of foreign policy experts from Europe, Russia, and the United States, among them former ministers, diplomats, and academics. The three Swedish participants were former foreign minister Hans Blix, Professor Daniel Tarschys, a former secretary general of the Council of Europe and a former liberal member of the Swedish parliament, and former ambassador Sven Hirdman.

Mr. Hirdman was Sweden's ambassador to Russia from 1994 to 2004. In the past he has been, among other things, undersecretary of state for defense, ambassador to Israel, and inspector general of military equipment. He is a noted Swedish expert on Russian affairs. Below is his contribution to the conference.

ILLUSTRATION: RAGNI SVENSSON

ON RUSSIA'S MODERNIZATION

1. The two economic crises, one in 1998 and one in 2008, have been very important to Russia, and significant lessons have been drawn from them:

a) From the 1998 crisis, Russia has learned that it must have a sound financial and macroeconomic policy with a balanced budget; Minister of Finance Kudrin deserves much credit for this change of policy.

b) From the second crisis in 2008, it has learned that it is very much dependent on the outer world and cannot achieve the necessary modernization of its economy without foreign investment and technology. This has far-reaching consequences for Russian policies, both domestic and international. The Russian government has realized that it must behave in a more friendly way to attract foreign cooperation.

2. Looking back over the last 20 years, one sees that significant – but by no means sufficient – modernization has been achieved in Russia, as I can attest from my own experience in Russia since 1994. Moscow has become a modern city with good public transportation. The same modernization process is happening in provincial capitals all over Russia. The railways are being upgraded, the retail sector is quite modern, the IT sector is booming in Russia, and so on.

3. A new force for modernization – one that also has effects in the sociopolitical realm – is the growing strength of the middle classes, which comprise about 30 percent of the Russian population. Previously apolitical and only interested in their own material needs, they are now taking a broader look at society and do not always like what they see: bureaucratic arrogance (*proizvol*), corruption, and limits to their freedom to make their own choices, being told what to do or think. They are forcing authoritarian politicians and officials to retreat on several issues – such as on the *migalki* (the flashing lights on official cars), and restrictions on the Internet. Thus, in the last few years Russia has become a more open society, which also is part of the modernization process. We see similar trends in China, India, and Brazil.

4. The main obstacle to the modernization of Russia is the infrastructure, which is still decrepit in many places. By 1973, the Soviet Union had, comparatively speaking, a fairly modern infrastructure. After 1973, the oil crisis and forced rearmament destroyed the Soviet economy. In the 1990s, the Russian government was broke and could not spend anything on infrastructure. After 2001, most of the new income from the higher energy prices went to improving the life of the poor and long-suffering population and to building up cash reserves for future crises. Only by the spring of 2007 did political awareness start to focus on the dilapidated infrastructure after a series of technogenic catastrophes. About $650 billion was set aside for a long-term upgrade of roads, bridges, railways, airports, public housing, and so on. The economic crisis of 2008–2009 destroyed the financial foundation of this program.

5. Today, when Russia is emerging from the present economic crisis, there is renewed focus on the modernization of infrastructure. Putin himself appears now as a champion of road-building and other similar projects. Hundreds of billions of dollars are set aside for this in new long-term budgets. I would submit that, for Russia and for the well-being of its population, a modern basic infrastructure with good roads, railways, airlines, housing, and public services is much more important than new high technology, be it nanotechnology, space research, the prestigious Skolkovo project, or whatever. Russia should not compete with the United States in high technology but with Switzerland in infrastructure.

ON RUSSIA'S RELATIONS WITH THE WEST

1. Turning to the problems of security and to Russia's relations with the West, I would say the following. Today, in comparison to the situation that existed during the 20th century, there are no longer any serious military-security threats in Europe. A new real war in Europe could not be conducted; it has become unthinkable, quite rightly. Yet tension and fears continue to exist. These are partly based on concrete historical experiences, as is the case with the Balts and the Russians, or on long-standing prejudices, which I would say is the case in Sweden and in the United States, and for that matter in Russia as well. So what can and should be done?

2. My view is that the best and I would say only way to reduce these security problems that are based on fear and prejudice is to attack them from the bottom, that is, with more people-to-people contacts. The most efficient way to do this would be to remove the visa restrictions between Russia and Western countries, in order to encourage much more travel and increase the possibility of becoming better acquainted. The visa restrictions are in almost all respects harmful and a waste of resources. Of course, if Russia were less nationalistic and less proud it would be able to blaze the path and unilaterally abolish visas for Western citizens. The best diplomatic policy is often unilateral, acting in one's own interest, not bilaterally making oneself hostage to what the other side wants or does not want to do.

3. The other way to increase understanding and reduce the feelings of insecurity is to establish a free trade agreement as soon as possible between Russia and the EU, first by immediately getting Russia into the WTO and then by establishing the free trade area with the EU. That would bind the nations, their economies, and their populations, closer together and be of general benefit. As President Johnson said, better to have the other inside the tent pissing out than outside pissing in. That was the WTO policy practiced towards China, and it should be the same towards Russia.

4. Now, in the field of traditional security policy, there are a few useful steps that could be taken to decrease tensions. One would have been for Western countries to ratify the adapted CFE treaty. If that is no longer possible due to changed circumstances, it is imperative to start negotiations on a replacement treaty to impose ceilings on conventional force levels and the stationing of domestic and foreign forces in all European countries. This would do much to remove old suspicions. In the wake of such a step one should take a new look at the Transdniestrian issue, which is ripe for a solution. Another promising confidence-building measure would be to start talks on reducing the number and the stationing of tactical nuclear weapons in Europe, both the US ones in NATO countries and the Russian ones in western Russia. A commitment to do that should lead to further détente.

5. In this context, let me say that I do not believe in the idea of building a European anti-missile system. I suspect it is not technologically viable, and it only risks creating more tension between Russia and the United States. If the concern is Iran's nuclear and missile programs, I believe that the only way to solve this is for the Americans to sit down with the Iranians and address their security concerns. The same goes for North Korea. The development and stationing of ABM systems seems to me to be a case of – in President Eisenhower's terms – the military-industrial complex seeking a mission. ■

sven hirdman

Russian middle classes are beginning to move. And building roads to move forward on.

Russian market reforms.
Lack of trust and institutions

"Market Reform and Socio-Economic Change in Russia" was the subject of an ambitious full-day seminar held October 6, focusing on the period since the fall of the Soviet Union. The Centre for Baltic and East European Studies at Södertörn University in Stockholm thus kicked off what will be an annual gathering of forces in the field: the Baltic Worlds Round Table. Seminar participants included several prominent Russian, British, and Swedish experts, who were firmly but cordially moderated by Elisabeth Hedborg, former Moscow correspondent for Swedish Television.

The period after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in December 1991 can be divided into two distinct phases. First, the years 1992–1999, when the domestic policy mess led most Russians to associate the word "democracy" with chaos and anarchy. The plundering of state-owned enterprises by the corrupt robber baron capitalists, the "oligarchs", sapped the government's financial resources, and the buffoonish President Boris Yeltsin lacked the capacity – or the will – to manage the centrifugal tendencies in the country's economy.

Thereafter came what was essentially a complete turnaround in 2000. The surprise appointment on New Year's Eve 1999 of Vladimir Putin as Yeltsin's successor has come to be understood by many Russians as "the right man ending up in the right place at the right time". Putin's first policy statement focused on the "dictatorship of the law" – instilling law and order and strengthening the powers of the state. Another of his favorite expressions is "to recreate the vertical", referring to the central government's taking back control over the regions and the oil companies. A third is "to fulfill the historical social contract", by which he means giving the citizens bread and security in exchange for not openly opposing the way the state is governed.

What then has been the outcome of all this for the Russian people? It was difficult to find a participant at the Baltic Worlds seminar who could bring up any actual bright spots. Philip Hanson of Chatham House in London, the dean of British Russian studies, pointed out that Yeltsin, Putin, and Dmitri Medvedev have all failed at – or not focused on – creating functioning institutions in society that could have guided and assisted private enterprise towards honorable and long-term productive initiatives. Hanson also noted that Russian society suffers from a permanent lack of trust between people, authorities, and companies, that corruption is rife at all levels, and that there are actually no reliable guarantees of private ownership.

Tina Jennings of Oxford University agreed completely. And she pointed out that the scandalous Yukos affair that occurred a few years into the 2000s, when principal owner Mikhail Khodorkovsky was arrested, indicted, and punished severely for having misappropriated state property in connection with the wave of privatizations after the fall of the Soviet Union, was more than anything an indication that there is no legal protection for private property in Putin's Russia. Nevertheless, nearly all of the other oligarchs have been allowed to continue operating as if nothing had happened. That is because most of these oligarchs are Putin and Medvedev's allies, many of them taken from the security service, Putin's actual political power base. The lack of legal security applies to the competition, new entrepreneurs who might pop up and challenge the established power and finance structure, and of course to the ordinary people. Under the control of Putin and his running mate Medvedev the state has, according to Jennings, taken total control of business and strategic decisions within the utterly dominant energy sector.

Ann-Mari Sätre of the Centre for Russian and Eurasian Studies in Uppsala provided striking evidence that legal insecurity is par for the course even at the local level. She has studied conditions for small business owners within the textile industry, tourism, and retail trade in parts of the country far removed from Moscow and other large cities, where local politicians and civil servants often demonstrate strong

Russia has been good at importing capital. More difficult is the importation of political cultures – and it may not even be salutary.

Continued.
Russian market reforms

willingness and ambition to develop private enterprise as a way to create jobs and improve service. But Sätre has found that such spirited private initiatives are often stymied by the vehement resistance of local big business to being subjected to new competitors: the companies simply buy up the new entrepreneurs or use legal and bureaucratic action to put obstacles in their path.

Nadezhda Azhgikhina, general secretary of the Russian Union of Journalists, had another, even more depressing, explanation, if this is even possible: "Quite simply, no business culture exists in our country, no entrepreneurial spirit. Instead, the prevailing culture is based on acquiring hidden income" – corruption, in other words, but also the remains of a Soviet system that choked and forbade capitalist and entrepreneurial drive. Azhgikhina claimed that Russians are infatuated consumers of mobile phones, computers, and fancy cars – but the goods have to be foreign imports, because Russian products are considered unreliable and are not status symbols.

It is certainly food for thought that the major industrial country of Russia – after seventy years of Soviet rule and twenty years of post-Soviet capitalism – still has not managed to produce a single make of car, or computer, or any other reasonably advanced consumer product of decent quality and suitable for export. Other middle-income countries have actually done it – including China, India, Iran, Brazil, and South Africa. The only Russian exception is the aircraft industry, which has been selling Antonov and Ilyushin planes to quite a lot of countries – but the driving force here is not a private business initiative of any kind, but rather the defense sector, which has been highly prioritized for many decades.

Russian business thus still does not work in a particularly market-oriented or capitalist fashion, even twenty years after the Soviet system went to its grave. Considering that, are the people at least doing better – physically and/or socially? To this question as well, the Baltic Worlds seminar provided less encouraging answers.

400 kilometers from the nearest town is the place in Russia where Annmari Sätre studied entrepreneurship. Here the groundwork is being laid for an expanded tourist industry. PHOTO: ANN-MARI SÄTRE

As an example, take the expected average lifespan in Russia. David Stockler of the London School of Tropical Medicine reported that it is barely 57 years for men and higher by only a few years for women – far below the Western average of about 75. And this is a trend that is once again on the downslide after a few years of improved average lifespan during the 1990s and the early years of this century. The question is, however, whether this is due to a poorly functioning social structure in Russia since the fall of communism. American scientists back in the 1970s found that average lifespan in the Soviet Union had stagnated and actually begun to decline – for the first time in history in a developed industrial nation.

There may be several causes, but one is obvious: Russians drink far too much. One striking statistic is that of all deaths among men age 25–54, fully half are due to a combination of liquor and violence. This means, Stockler related, that 170,000 men die every year in "overmortality", which is to say they would have lived longer if they had not put so much effort into drinking and fighting.

Suicide also claims many victims in today's Russia, Ilkka Henrik Mäkinen of SCOHOST at Södertörn University said. Every year, almost 30 out of 100,000 Russians commit suicide: twice as many as in France and almost three times as many as in Sweden. Here as well, the negative spiral seems to have begun before the demise of the Soviet Union: suicide figures increased by 3–4 percent every year from 1956 to 2004, except during the five years of tough alcohol restrictions of 1985–1990 imposed by the last Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. Paradoxically enough, according to Mäkinen, current research indicates that suicide frequency is rising in pace with the modernization of Russian society – suicide is now most common in the developed north Russia. In earlier phases, it was most common in the quiet south, to this day dominated by agriculture.

Has Russia then at least become a freer society since throwing off the yoke of Soviet communism? On this point, the Baltic Worlds experts were cautiously optimistic. In her field studies, Ann-Mari Sätre found that people feel they have greater scope for private initiative and found evidence of a budding civil society of voluntary clubs and associations and inspired local politics. Economist Rolf Eidem, with a long history in Swedish public administration, argued that the most important positive change of all was the reintroduction of the joint stock company in private business. And demographer Michael Gentile of Södertörn University recounted detailed statistics showing that housing segregation in large Russian cities has actually not become worse, despite sharp increases in income disparities over the last twenty years.

"It's always something", groused many members of the audience at the 2011 Baltic Worlds Round Table. Communism was against all types of freedom, but Putinism permits individual freedom. Such as the freedom to drink oneself to death, buy muscle cars (often stolen) from the West, watch increasingly lousy television shows, and shop at IKEA and other temples of consumption. ■

per jönsson

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Modernization and increased suicide rates tend to go hand in hand. In this respect Russia is unexceptional.

RUSSIA, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND THE BALTIC

BY **KATRI PYNNÖNIEMI** ILLUSTRATION **KARIN SUNVISSON**

INTRODUCTION

To borrow a familiar image from Pushkin, in building the city of St. Petersburg at the mouth of the Neva River, Peter the Great opened a window to Europe for Russia. In his epic poem "The Bronze Horseman", Pushkin in fact wrote of "cutting" or "hacking" (*prorubit'*) a window through to Europe, not simply "opening". Applied to the present day, the difference is significant. Russia's presence in the Baltic has demanded major investments in infrastructure, and will continue to do so in the future. Room has been made for new ports at the far end of the Gulf of Finland, the Baltic Sea floor is currently being excavated for new gas pipelines, and a new town of 35,000 people is under construction near the port of Ust-Luga.

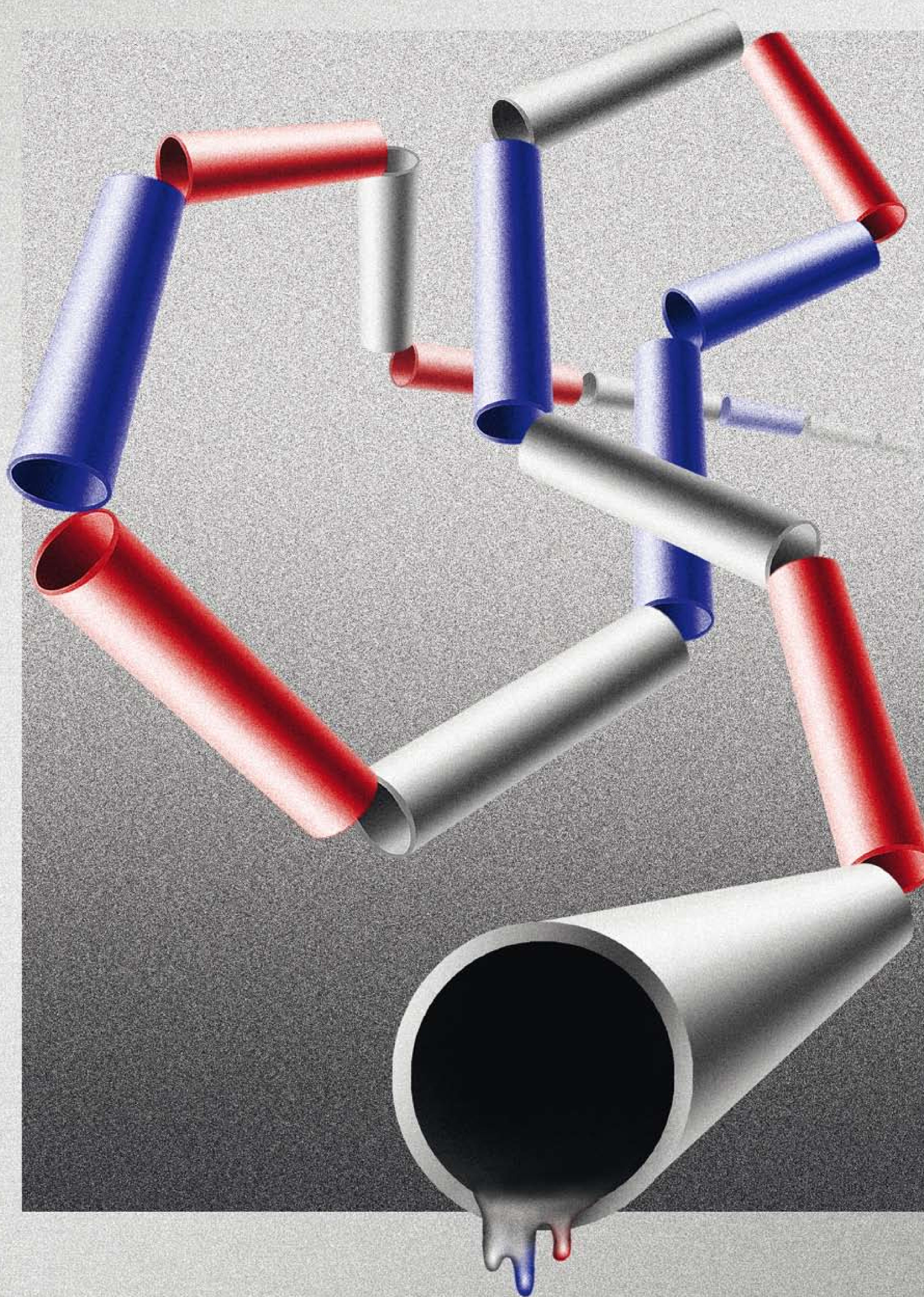
In Russia, debate on Baltic transport infrastructure is framed in terms of a temporary "interruption", as a result of which Russia lost direct control of income flows crucial to the national economy. The word "interruption" refers to the break-up of the Soviet Union and the subsequent state of affairs in which a significant part of Russia's exports reached the West via the ports of the now independent Baltic countries. In this respect, "hacking" a window through to Europe is an attempt to escape the geostrategic dead end into which Russia was driven following the collapse of the Soviet Union.

But has all this "hacking" brought Russia any closer to Europe? Has it not rather been the case that infrastructure has become a cause of disagreement between the EU and Russia? The problematic nature of infrastructure projects is particularly evident in discussions of the importance of the Nord Stream gas pipeline to the security of the Baltic area. The construction of the gas pipeline undeniably increases the mutual economic dependence of the EU and Russia, and, at least in theory, their willingness to seek compromises on other issues. At the same time, however, it is important to bear in mind that the decision to build the Baltic gas pipeline was a result of Russia's determination to reduce its dependence on the transit countries (the Baltic countries, Ukraine, and Belarus).[1] This also opens up an opportunity for a military build-up by Russia, justified by the need to safeguard critical infrastructure in the Baltic Sea area.

HOWEVER, IN THE past two decades, the prevailing issue in discussions about infrastructure in Russia has been its decay and the consequent gradual disintegration of Russia's various regions and industrial sectors. In the years of strong economic growth from the start of the 21st century up to 2008, infrastructure was seen mainly as a "bottleneck", the deficiencies of which would, before long, lead to a slow-down in the rate of economic growth. A few years later, amid the economic crisis, the debate continues largely along the same lines, albeit under the heading of modernizing the economy. The focus of transport infrastructure development strategies approved at the start of the last decade is on developing roads, building ports and connections to and from the ports, and developing transport logistics.[2] Alongside these goals, in line with the major thrust of Russian economic policy – which emphasizes modernization and innovative growth – the strategies for developing the transport system include a number of measures aimed at tackling the decline of the more remote areas of Russia. One particular problem is deficient or even non-existent transport links between villages and towns.

From these plans and objectives, we gain a picture of a country that is made of parallel, even contradictory spaces. On the one hand, Russia is part of the

Economic and political interests, however, need not go hand in hand. Natural gas has a thawing effect, but can also create suspicion.



global market with its associated flows of goods and other traffic. On the other hand, Russia partly exists on the outskirts of the global economy. Russia has not become an important transit country for transport between Asia and Europe, nor has the mobility of the population within the country increased significantly. Only very recently has more attention started to be paid to transport security and to those themes which, in Western discussions, are encompassed by the concept of critical infrastructure.

RUSSIA'S INTERESTS IN Baltic transport infrastructure will be examined as a fundamental part of Russia's resource economy.[3] The term "resource economy" refers primarily to the Russian economy's dependence on fluctuations in prices in the global energy market. However, it is also used to describe the mechanisms through which the Russian economy and politics are intertwined. According to American economists Clifford Gaddy and Barry Ickes, the operating mechanisms of a resource economy are the key to understanding changes in Russia's economic policy. The management of the income flows of the resource economy is centralized and takes place largely outside the public sphere through various unofficial networks.[4]

Richard Sakwa describes this world of official and unofficial political spaces as a "hybrid", in which public debate has in practice lost its function of supporting decision-making.[5] Russian researcher Simon Kordonskii has similarly put forward the idea of the Russian political sphere being divided into "estates" (*pomestj'e*). Estates are "owned" by oligarchs close to the current leadership and built on a regional or functional basis. What is important is that they are simultaneously connected to a "real" (*v realnosti*) official level of decision-making, and to an "actual" (*na samom dele*) political situation. The latter sphere is separate from the official one and operates through non-systematic personal networks.[6] References to Russian politics as a "hybrid" or as an imitation of democracy indicate that the terms currently in use are insufficient to explain the dynamics of change in the Russian political system.[7]

Addressing the concept of infrastructure does not in itself resolve this problem. Research into the importance of infrastructure networks within Russian politics enables us, however, to approach this broader problem in a new way. Infrastructure forms a link between the open global economic space and the non-public Russian political space. The question of how to manage the most important trade flows and understand their social importance is not, of course, solely seen as a matter of Russian politics. The research on Russia is also connected to the recent debate on the importance of increasing globalization and the mutual dependence of societies.[8]

THE CONCEPT OF INFRASTRUCTURE

In the past two decades, the word "infrastructure" has become a natural part of political and everyday language. The concept itself is a new one and has been used in English only since the late 1920s. Originally, the word was used in a military sense. Although its semantic field has widened and diversified, references to its original meaning remain, particularly when talking about logistics.[9] In everyday language, a distinction is often made between "hard" and "soft" infrastructure. The former is used to mean mainly physical networks such as the road network, the railway network, or the electricity network. "Soft" infrastructure, on the other hand, refers to non-physical institutions central to the functioning of society, from the financial system to the education system.

The development of container transport and the consequent reduction in transport costs is one of the factors influencing the global network economy. In the last couple of decades, the scale of infrastructure networks, along with the various data, goods, and passenger flows that use them, has gone from national to global. Another important factor has been the rapid development of information technology, as a result of which the relationship between technology and people's everyday lives has changed radically. The combined effect of these two different lines of development is that the societies are connected to one another in more complex ways than before, partly via parallel networks and partly via layered networks. Societies have also become more vulnerable than before to disruptions to infrastructure networks, whether as a result of accidents, natural disaster, or terrorism. In this respect, infrastructure has become "critical", and decision makers' concern is to maintain the security of the telecommunications, transport, and energy flows that are essential to society.[10]

THE DEBATE SURROUNDING critical infrastructures has evolved mainly within the framework of security studies, but increasingly also in the context of international political economy. Research in the latter framework is devoted to studying changing relationships between states and the global markets, and criticism of neoliberal economic policies in general. The notion of "supply chain security" refers to the increasing importance of transport logistics in the global economy. As noted by Deborah Cowen, "efforts to protect commodity flows have given rise to a whole new form and field of security". The potential disruption of the cargo flows is subject to "national and supranational programs that aim to govern events and forces that may disrupt trade flows – labor actions, volcanic eruptions, acts of 'piracy', and even the national border". In the logic of supply chain security, these events are, however, removed from the realm of political contestation and interpreted as problems of governance, a move that Cowen criticizes. [11]

The challenge presented by Cowen to the underlying assumptions steering the development of infrastructure networks and particularly of logistics should be taken seriously. An interesting viewpoint on this discussion is offered by the concepts "pan-European transport corridors" and "trans-European network" created within the framework of the European Union. These concepts do not fundamentally operate within a frame of reference of national security. Instead, their meaning is delimited and defined by relations between the EU and Russia, and by economic integration. However, differences of opinion precisely on the meaning of integration have contributed to a result opposite to what one might expect: over the past ten years infrastructure has increasingly become subsumed under "national security".

THE POLITICAL MEANING OF INFRASTRUCTURE LINKING EUROPE AND RUSSIA

Discussion of transport policy in the European Union emphasizes the frame of reference briefly described above; enhancing infrastructure is justified primarily by reference to the growth in trade between the EU and Russia.[12] At the same time, the development of infrastructure networks is seen as one form of constructing, or reconstructing, a "common economic and political space". This idea has been evident in the planning of EU-wide transport networks and in discussions of the eastward expansion of the Union. The Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the EU and Russia of 1997 and subsequent separate declarations of cooperation also contain references to infrastructure as one of the tools of economic and more general social rapprochement.[13]

The "pan-European transport corridors" created by the EU in the 1990s and the "transport axes" later formed on the basis of these were originally planned to stimulate and steer cross-border cooperation between the EU and Russia. However, they have remained mainly a symbolic gesture towards Russia.[14] Part of the reason is that the mechanisms and policies promoted by the EU on transport cooperation with Russia have undergone frequent, yet often merely semantic changes – for example, the replacement of the "pan-European transport corridors" with "trans-European transport axes". These policy changes are driven by the EU's internal developments, and Russia's role has been largely to react to these de facto transformations. Russia's official statements do not contain direct rejections of the EU's view of the transport corridors as expressions of a trans-European space, but in its own transport policy, Russia has interpreted the transport corridors from a very different perspective.

IN A RUSSIAN CONTEXT, the transport corridors are part of a debate about Russia's sovereignty and position in global politics.[15] This refers to both the strengthening of a common economic space within the country and the improvement of Russia's position in competition on the global transport markets and in the global economy in general. The statements of Russia's authorities and the official programs for developing the country's transport infrastructure also emphasize the idea of Russia's space as "a resource" in jockeying for power and position in the *international transport* market. This spatial resource is actualized in the form of a policy whose aim is to make Russia a "bridge" between Europe and Asia. The most commonly used argument is a reference to the fact that this will open up the "shortest route" for goods transport from the factories of Asia to the markets of Europe. At the moment, however, only a very small amount of transport between Asia and Europe uses Russia as a transit route. To change this situation, Russia has launched the concept of an international transport corridor, within the scope of which funding from the state budget and private investors is steered to the infrastructure projects most important to Russian foreign trade and transit transport.[16] Let us

"Infrastructure" is originally a military term. It remains inseparable from national security.

now turn to an examination of how these aims have been realized, as well as the associated interests connected with Russia's ports in the Gulf of Finland and Ust-Luga in particular.

TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE INTERFACE BETWEEN THE OFFICIAL AND THE UNOFFICIAL SPHERES

Russia views the mutual dependence that goes hand in hand with different infrastructure systems very selectively. Besides bringing income to the state treasury, directing international goods transport through Russian space is also expected to strengthen Russia's position in relation to its neighbors. Russia's interests in the Baltic area reflect this general duality: on the one hand the aim is to reduce dependence on the transport infrastructure of its neighbors, on the other hand the country's own infrastructure, particularly the ports, has been built primarily to serve these transport flows that are exposed to fluctuations in the global economy.

A statement by the President of Russian Railways Vladimir Yakunin in February 2010 describes the typical way the Russian elite analyzes this situation. Yakunin stated in an interview with the Estonian press that lack of trust between Estonia and Russia is forcing Russia to act to strengthen its own port capacity. The background to this statement appears to be a desire to emphasize Russia's ability to quickly switch oil exports from Estonian ports to the port of Ust-Luga currently under construction. To support this goal, the Russian government had already decided to increase rail transport via Russia's own ports.[17] Transneft, which manages Russia's pipeline network, has also taken part in these joint efforts. In 2002, the company cut off its oil exports using the pipeline via the Latvian port of Ventspils, after which transport switched to the railways.

It is true that northwest Russia's share of Russian foreign trade transport has grown throughout the 21st century. Currently three of Russia's five most important ports for foreign trade are located in northwest Russia: the seaport of St. Petersburg, the Primorsk oil terminal, and the port of Murmansk on the Arctic Ocean. The total transport capacity of the ports of northwest Russia has grown almost 350 percent since the start of the 21st century. According to the Russian Ministry of Transport, in 2001 the ports accounted for a total transport volume of 61.8 million tons. In 2008, a total of approximately 175 million tons of foreign trade transport passed through the ports.[18] The growth in foreign trade flowing through Russia's own ports is limited by poor connections between the ports and the main rail network.[19] Russian Railways is planning an investment worth 670 million dollars to repair the rail links leading to the port of Ust-Luga.[20]

IN AUTUMN 2009 at the meeting of the Maritime Collegium in Kaliningrad, Transport Minister Igor Levitin stated that the total capacity of the ports of northwest Russia would double by 2015 to up to 440 million tons a year. This would be an extremely significant increase. In 2010, the total transport volume of Russian ports rose above half a billion tons for the first time, reaching a total of 520 million tons. Plans presented in the transport strategy from now to 2020 are more moderate. The strategy states that the total transport capacity of the northwest Russian ports will increase to an estimated 266 million tons by 2015 at the earliest. Whatever the figures, the aim is for Russia's foreign trade goods to flow mainly through the country's own ports in the future[21].

The development of Russia's ports is steered mainly by the transport development programs and strategies described above. In the spring of 2010, FGUP Rosmorport, the federal agency that oversees Russia's ports, announced that it was starting to draw up a separate port development strategy. The preparation of the strategy is based on a need to re-examine the goals of the development of Russia's ports and the measures that support them. According to Rosmorport's General Director Igor Rusu, by the end of the year, the process of drawing up the strategy had reached the halfway mark. At the same time, preparations are underway for a change of status from an agency to a limited liability company. It will be interesting to see how this will affect the rules of play in the future concerning the involvement of private and possibly foreign investors in port development.[22]

In this context it is, however, worth remembering that in recent years the Transneft pipeline company has significantly increased its ownership of Russia's most important seaports. In 2009, Transneft acquired the oil terminal being built at Ust-Luga, and in early 2011, the company became a major shareholder in the ports of Primorsk and Novorossiisk.[23] Thus, via the company Transneft, the Russian state has in practice ensured total control of oil transport.

RUSSIA'S DECISION TO BUILD new ports at the far end of the Gulf of Finland is charged with many commercial expectations and much symbolic importance. Russia's re-emergence in the Baltic is expressed by the Orthodox church constructed in conjunction with the port of Ust-Luga. The church, which had been planned since 2003, has been completed with support organized by the Center of Russian National Glory (CRNG). The chairman of the board of directors of the Ust-Luga port, Valerii Izrailit, and the President of Russian Railways, Vladimir Yakunin, are both influential figures in the CRNG. The CRNG is an essential player in Russia's "unofficial" foreign policy in the border areas, although the activities of the CRNG appear to have waned since the second half of the past decade.

Discussions about building new port complexes in the Gulf of Finland started immediately after the Baltic countries gained independence. In 1993, the Russian government passed a decision to construct three new ports, where Ust-Luga was planned to specialize in timber goods and container transport, Primorsk in crude oil and oil products, and a port to be built in Batareinaja Bay was to concentrate on oil products. However, the construction projects progressed slowly. To speed up development work, President Yeltsin confirmed in an order issued in April 1997 that Moscow was still interested in the projects being completed. Yeltsin's order was part of the "St. Petersburg – Russia's European Gateway" project launched by the city of St. Petersburg, the stated aim of which was to develop existing infrastructure, as well as infrastructure primarily aimed at foreign trade. The importance of building the ports was justified by a need to "secure Russia's national and economic interests", especially in "strategically important" oil and oil products.[24]

OF THE PLANNED ports, the Primorsk port complex was completed first, in 2001, and is the terminal for the Baltic Pipeline System (in Russian: BTS) and the Sever oil pipeline. In 2010, transport through the Sever oil pipeline was estimated to have grown to 7.5 million tons (80 percent of capacity). Now great interest is being focused on the port complex being built at Ust-Luga. Port CEO Maxim Shirokov estimated in April 2010 that in the following two years the port's capacity would grow considerably. It is estimated that by 2015, Ust-Luga's total volume will have risen to as much as 170 million tons. The terminal of the second Baltic Pipeline System (BTS-2) is being built at the port. According to the CEO of the oil company Transneft, Nikolay Tokarev, BTS-2 will be in use by the end of 2011. As far as oil products are concerned, it is estimated that a fifth of Russia's exports will pass through Ust-Luga in the future.

An important role was also planned for the port in handling imported cars. In 2010, over 65,000 cars came through Ust-Luga, and the port is expected to have capacity for about 360,000 imported cars by 2013. Transport capacity for Russia's traditional export product, coal, will increase from the current 7 or so million tons to up to 12 million tons by 2012. Ust-Luga has a planned container transport capacity of 3 million TEU. A liquid gas terminal will also be built at the port, with a capacity of 1.5 million tons upon completion. The terminal will begin operations at the end of 2012.

Nathaniel Trumbull and Oleg Bodrov's 2009 article shows, among other things, how these Russian infrastructure projects, defined as strategic, were implemented without consulting local residents. A genuine public debate on the subject has proved to be virtually impossible. Public hearings have been organized almost without advance notice in small communities, and instead of public debate being carried out with independent environmental organizations, debate has taken place between the authorities and the organizations that support them[25].

ONE ESSENTIAL FACTOR in the lack of public debate is that 120 kilometers of the coastline of the Gulf of Finland, from Staryy Petergof south to the Estonian border, is a closed border area. The status of a closed border area provides the officials a means of restricting and regulating traffic in and out of the area. The status is also used in the legitimation of the state's primary role in the development of the areas adjacent to the port. Thanks to this status, the state and bodies close to it have what is in practice a monopoly over the development of the area, write Trumbull and Bodrov. In protecting this monopoly position, the state has concentrated mainly on implementing the major infrastructure projects outlined above. Small and medium enterprises important to local residents have not been able to develop in the face of this situation, due mainly to the fact that such operations are not officially permitted in a border area.[26] The current situation is very distant from the idea put forward in 1993 of the creation of a free trade area around the port of Ust-Luga. The lack of public debate about infrastructure and the underlying dominating position of unofficial networks epitomize the current situation of Russia's political system.

FINALLY: PARTNERSHIP FOR MODERNIZATION BETWEEN THE EU AND RUSSIA

At the Stockholm summit in 2009, the EU and Russia announced the "Partnership for Modernization" initiative. The aim of the partnership is to promote the modernization of the Russian economy and to advance transfer of Western technology to Russia.[27] Along with this broader framework of EU-Russia relations, many EU countries have concluded bilateral partnership agreements with Russia. Often these agreements are linked to specific investment projects and ongoing cooperation. In the transport sphere, for example, there is the agreement between the German company Siemens and the Russian Railways Company on cooperation to build new rolling stock. The EU-Russia partnership agenda provides a general umbrella for bilateral discussion, yet the general hope expressed by the EU is that the partnership would also serve as a means of hastening the slow change in the economy and the political system in the target country itself.

Recent initiatives articulated by the Russian leadership have fostered expectations in this direction. In a speech to the Duma in April 2011, Prime Minister Putin emphasized that Russia "should" and in the immediate future "must" genuinely change into a competitive country, one of the five leading economic giants in the world. Throughout his four years in office, President Medvedev has emphasized importance of the economic modernization of Russia through the transfer of modern technologies and standards already in use in the EU countries. The priorities in the transport infrastructure sphere show, however, that Russia emphasizes projects related to "resource economy" and also those that are considered to increase Russia's image as a major international power, such as the Sotchi Olympic Games in 2014 and the World Cup Finals in 2018.

AT THE SAME time, the Russian leadership has determinedly blocked any criticism of Russia's current political system. The liberal opposition and liberally minded economists in Russia argue that long-term development cannot be facilitated or maintained unless the political confines of the economic system are changed. The crux of the criticism is that bureaucratic inefficiency and social inertia call for more complex analyses and remedies than simply blaming the "bad habits" of the population. Thus there is a risk that the trust and transfer of know-how that could be facilitated through projects carried out within the framework of partnership programs between the EU and Russia will be encapsulated in a separate world of its own, and would have no effect on Russia's political reality. ■

Russia's "resource economy" can make itself independent of its surroundings.

But not of the global economy.

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Dizzying moment of freedom

In the last of his four travelogues, Magnus Ljunggren, professor of Russian at the University of Gothenburg, visits Russian intellectuals and a Soviet Union on the eve of a coup d'état and dissolution.

BY **MAGNUS LJUNGGREN**

SOVIET UNION, JUNE 1991

I went to Moscow in late June 1991, just a few weeks before the attempted coup whose outcome was the breakdown of the Soviet Union in order to attend . . . a neurosurgical conference. My visa had been restored the previous year after the entry ban of several years – ironically enough imposed on me just as Mikhail Gorbachev rose to power – had finally been lifted. My brother, a neurosurgeon, had invited me to come along as his interpreter.

The sense of something in the air was intense. Glasnost had put an end to the last ideological entrenchments. It was hard to find comestibles for the body in the stores, but nourishment for the soul was abundant here, there, everywhere. The newspapers were chock-full of striking revelations, the bookstalls overflowing with previously banned or inaccessible literature, now on sale for a few kopecks. I was forced to buy a sturdy suitcase to haul all the books home. The Soviet state seemed suspended on the brink, in a tense state of abeyance.

We started in Vladimir Bekhterev's Leningrad. We chose the city because we had published an article together about Bekhterev, the courageous neurologist who had consistently challenged the Imperial powers, but ultimately succumbed – or so it seemed – to Joseph Stalin. He had been summoned to the Kremlin in 1927 to examine Stalin, who had suddenly come down with numbness in his arm. The always fearless doctor is said to have declared the whole episode a case of hysterical paranoia. The very next night, he died under cloudy circumstances, possibly poisoned. Might he have been Stalin's first victim?

We had sent our article to Bekhterev's granddaughter Natalya, the Soviet Union's leading neurologist, and she had invited us to visit her. We were picked up at the hotel by her private chauffeur and ferried to the holiday home of the Russian Academy of Sciences on the Gulf of Finland. Once there, she treated us to a glass of wine and conversation about her family. Her father had been shot in 1937. She confirmed that her paternal grandfather actually had been ordered to the Kremlin, where he had indeed made some kind of provocative diagnosis. But she could say nothing with any certainty about the manner of his sudden death. On this point she was adamant: there must be proof and documentation. And we agreed. There were enough urban legends in the Soviet Union as it was.

Statue of Vladimir Bekhterev in the Psychoneurological Institute he founded in Leningrad, now St. Petersburg.
PHOTO: MAGNUS LJUNGGREN

What shocked us a bit was that Bekhtereva, paradoxically enough, was nevertheless receptive to the occult sentiments making themselves increasingly felt in these days of social disintegration. A charlatan by the name of Kashpirovsky was running riot on Russian television, claiming he could cure people right through the box. Bekhtereva claimed she was intrigued by his "supernatural" powers. She had, with Gorbachev's support, just opened a brain institute in Leningrad, where she had installed measuring instruments intended to pick up Kashpirovsky's "biofield". My brother was virtually speechless. Perhaps one should look at it this way: for seventy years, everything had been explainable, subordinate to a strictly materialistic worldview. Now that things were falling apart, even great neurologists were beginning to hesitate.

While in Leningrad, I took the opportunity to visit the city's most legendary dissident, Ernst Orlovsky, who lived, most symbolically, next to Revolution Square. For decades, he had unflaggingly behaved as if the Soviet Union were governed by reason, sending letters and objections that were based on vast legal knowledge, demanding consistency and logic. He had actually never been forced to spend a single night in a KGB detention facility. There he sat now, penning new and incisive inquiries to various public authorities. It felt almost like he was close to winning a war of attrition over an increasingly wounded Soviet power.

Our fellow travelers in the charter group suddenly seemed to be mainly Swedes from Ingria who had arrived to celebrate Midsummer – St. John the Baptist's Day – on a village hillside in their traditional areas outside Leningrad. We tagged along and were treated to something very special: thousands of "Ingrians" from all over the world who had come together to commemorate the resurrection of the nation after the long Soviet Ice Age with song, dance, and national costumes. This was also a picture of a moment in time: suffocated and oppressed national cultures on the way to deliverance.

And so we continued to Moscow – where the heat had settled heavily over the city. While my brother sat through the conference talks, I called on translator Yuliana Yakhnina. For years she had been the source of an extraordinary cultural service to Sweden's lasting benefit: she had, with an exquisite sense of the nuances of the language, interpreted August Strindberg, Hjalmar Söderberg, Eyvind Johnson, Vilhelm Moberg, and Per Olov Enquist.

Yakhnina was actually the niece of Menshevik leader Julius Martov, Lenin's one-time colleague who later became his opponent and was thrown out of the country after protesting against the October coup itself and the mass killings that followed. She had in fact been named after her uncle, a covert political statement by her parents in 1928, just as Stalin took power. Armed with a pocket dictionary, she had begun translating from Swedish in the 1950s. And so Swedish literature became her second home, her place of refuge under a brutal polity that nearly (in the wake of Martov's banishment) put an end to her family.

1 Yakov Rapoport at 93, with the author.
2 Nataliya Bekhtereva, Bekhterev's granddaughter and heir, at the Academy of Science's vacation house on the Gulf of Finland.
3 The translator and Swedophile Yuliana Yakhnina (left) in the writers' village of Peredelkino, with the gulag survivors Lev Razgon and Evgeniya Taratuta.

My brother had just read pathology professor Yakov Rapoport's account of how he had ended up in a cell for the condemned in Lefortovo Prison in early 1953, caught up in the notorious "Doctors' Plot" – until the whole affair came to nothing upon the death of the tyrant. This was the Bekhterev story in reverse: a number of prominent Jewish doctors, with Rapoport in the vanguard, had been accused of having tried to poison Stalin, whose dealings with doctors were always fraught with drama. Rapoport's book had been published during glasnost and quickly translated to English. It now emerged during my visit – so small is the circle of the Russian intelligentsia – that Rapoport was Yakhnina's second cousin. She had no problem arranging a meeting with the 93-year-old former death row prisoner.

Rapoport proved to be a white-haired moral giant whose lust for life was undimmed, his eyes still glinting with a kind of childlike inquisitiveness. He was a recent bridegroom, having married a woman in her early 70s. The couple lived on the eighth floor of a tall building with no elevator, where the old man easily nipped up the stairs. What he described for us was a Dostoevskian experience: like the great author (pardoned moments before his pending execution), a twist of fate had given him his life back. The nightly interrogations in Lefortovo – where he was called a terrorist – had been utterly horrific. He said he had actually felt a sense of safety each time he was returned to his cell. Despite everything, it was a place, a territory, of his own.

I then took the train out to the writers' village, Peredelkino, to visit yet another pair of formidable survivors. Lev Razgon was well past his 80th birthday then – and well-preserved, as old camp prisoners sometimes were. Once upon a time, he had been a member of the Communist aristocracy. His first wife had been the daughter of Gleb Bokii, a high-ranking official both in the Party and in the secret police. Bokii was arrested in 1937 and shot – and his daughter and son-in-law had disappeared along with him into the darkness of the Gulag. Razgon's wife succumbed, but he survived eighteen years in the camps. It was there, in the camps, that he met his future second wife, the daughter of one of the leaders of the Socialist Revolutionary Party obliterated by Lenin and Stalin. The two were often moved and were long kept at considerable physical distance from each another but managed somehow, by some miraculous means, to sustain the relationship across barbed wire. In the 1960s and '70s, he became a noted author of books about Russian science for the general public. But on the Gulag he remained silent – until his glasnost memoirs were published.

What struck me in particular was that Razgon, even at this stage of the game, spoke about communism in the past tense. Like Rapoport, there was about him an intractable belief in life that nothing had been able to break. The year before, he had been permitted to travel abroad for the first time in his life, when his book was published in French. It had been an overwhelming experience. He now declared that Russia must eventually put Communism on trial for her own sake, must make sure to at least symbolically bring to justice those responsible who were still alive.

> "Rapoport proved to be a white-haired moral giant whose lust for life was undimmed, his eyes still glinting with a kind of childlike inquisitiveness."

The story of the other victim of Stalin was even more harrowing. She was a seemingly meek and mild babushka by the name of Evgeniya Taratuta. What she revealed from her past stood out in violent contrast to the flower-strewn summer idyll around us. She had grown up in a Russian anarchist home in Paris. Her father was a disciple of Prince Kropotkin and Taratuta recalled Emma Goldman visiting the family. In May 1917, she was repatriated along with her parents. Her father never became a Bolshevik but accepted Leninism as a lesser evil than capitalism. As for herself, she eventually found a safe haven as a children's author.

Taratuta's father was executed by a firing squad in 1937. She was spared. The actual death blow came much later in 1950, when Stalin's persecution of Jewish "cosmopolitans" reached its zenith. She was arrested in her capacity as a Jew (and one with an anarchist past) and locked up, first in the Butyrka Prison, later in Lubyanka. Her interrogators wanted her to confess that she was an agent of three different Western intelligence services. Her particular tormentor struck her in the face, in the breasts, across the back. To keep herself from falling apart and losing her reason, she began, even as the beatings continued, to babble memorized poems to herself: poems by Pushkin and Mayakovsky. It helped.

In 1951, Taratuta ended up in a camp north of the Arctic Circle where 1,500 disabled women were held with numbers on their backs, all of them victims of torture. They were not forced into labor: with temperatures at minus fifty degrees or worse, every ounce of their strength was used to withstand the deadly cold. I noticed that her fingers looked like the thin branches of trees twisted by the wind. This was the result of having been forced to peel potatoes so cold that her hands stiffened. A few Ukrainian peasant women had finally liberated her from these tasks in exchange for her recounting the plots of famous short stories to them. For the second time, she had been saved by the Word.

The art of survival in various permutations. Elderly people with incredible testimony. Small remnants of social-democratic, socialist-revolutionary, and anarchist pockets of resistance. A year or so ago, literary critic Lyudmila Saraskina wrote that Russian television had made a terrible mistake in the 1990s, when it increasingly neglected to document the fates of this dying generation. This is probably true. My brother and I had been granted a few glimpses in just a few days. There were so many more stories left to be told.

Next to the Russian White House where the Duma was housed lies Rochdale Street, named after a 19th century English weavers' cooperative. I was sitting there in a private archive, browsing through old letters and manuscripts. It felt oppressively close. A persistent wasp buzzed. Just two months or so later, the entire picture would change: with Boris Yeltsin standing on the tank outside the Duma building and the masses pouring over the streets in protest against the putschists and the state of emergency.

Once the conference had ended, my brother and I took a walk to see the statue of Feliks Dzerzhinsky, father of the Cheka, on Lubyanka Square. I told him: "Take a good look at this memorial, because it's not going to be here much longer." As it happened, it took a few weeks. By August, "Iron Feliks" was gone.

For a brief, dizzying moment, it looked like Russia was going to move towards a new freedom – the first in history beyond the show of hands in Novgorod in the 1300s and the all-too-brief months of pluralism in 1917. We now know that it did not quite turn out that way. But 1991 was added to the revolutionary dates in Russian history.

BY **EKATERINA KALININA**

RUSSIAN GLAMOUR IN COMPETITION

Report from Aurora Fashion Week Russia

PHOTO: KIRILL LOGINOV

PHOTO: BY COURTESY OF ERARTA MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

PHOTO: BY COURTESY OF AFW

Left: AFW Russia, SS 2011/2012. Top photo: Exhibition of Alexandre Vassiliev's collection Fashion of the 1980s at Erarta Museum of Modern Art within the frames of AFW Russia. Small photos all from AFW Russia, SS 2011/2012. From left: KamenskayaKononova (first and second), Petar Petrov and Osome2some.

Here is a question that has yet to be addressed in the debate over the role of fashion in the cultural and socio-economic development of cities and regions: Would it be economically justified and conceptually attractive to run two biannual fashion events in the same city on the periphery of the international fashion scene?

Over the last two years, St. Petersburg has been hosting Defile na Neve and Aurora Fashion Week, two independent fashion events.[1] Whether it has raised the prospect of a "Darwinian showdown in fashion", to quote Eric Wilson, and forced fashion professionals interested in the Russian fashion scene to choose which events they will attend, is a question that doesn't even come up, given that the organizers have attempted to launch the shows so that they do not overlap with one another.

The fact that Moscow and St. Petersburg house in total five fashion events every season makes one think that the fashion business is considered attractive and economically sound in Russia. However, despite the growth of the Russian fashion market since the 1990s, the fashion industry is losing ground to other promising fashion hubs. The problem is that the textile industry slowly fell to pieces during the years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and even if some factories had managed to rise from the ashes and launch new competitive collections by 2008, they stopped production when the global economic crises hit.[2] The disadvantageous economic situation also resulted in a winding down of fashionable goods imports from European countries, although, according to experts, 2010 brought signs of recovery.[3]

Overcoming all odds, Russia is becoming recognized as a flourishing fashion market, but the key driver of growth – in contrast to the UAE, South Africa, and Singapore, whose fashion industries are characterized by the increasing private initiatives and government support directed towards promotion of tourism through expansion of the markets (by attracting international fashion houses and brands, for example), or in India and Brazil, with their booming domestic production of clothes – is likely the immense demand for luxury goods and the increasing number of fashion events supported by enterprises, private initiatives, and industry associations.

Meanwhile, experts caution that without government support and consistent investments in the fashion industry, Russia will soon trade nothing but gas and oil.[4] There is an evident need for a strategically elaborated program of investment and management in this branch of light industry, which should be one of the priorities of government. No one says that there is no talent in the country, for talent Russia indeed has, in spades – some brands displayed during the "Big 4" have been welcomed on international markets. The best examples may be the brands of Denis Simachev, Alena Akhmadulina, and Igor Chapurin, which made their way to the Paris and Milan fashion weeks. Unfortunately, Russian designers do not invest time and money in marketing and far-reaching business strategies.[5] Until this changes, Russia will consume international luxury brands, and sporadically produce some successful designers, but will not have a profit-generating and competitive industry.

While Moscow is recognized as a fashion capital of Central and Eastern Europe[6], St. Petersburg is not even listed. The question is whether St. Petersburg can become a scene of competing fashion events in the Baltic region and Russia. Could Aurora Fashion Week become an incentive for investment in the development of the cultural life of St. Petersburg? This is what I asked myself while participating in Aurora Fashion Week just over a month ago.

AFW sprang up from a fashion event called Modny Desant[7] under the formal patronage of the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation, with the support of the St. Petersburg government. It was initiated as an international fashion week in St. Petersburg, and positioned as "one of the key events in the fashion industry at both the regional and federal levels of Russia" and "a new forum for fashion business and fashion culture, aimed at Russia, Europe, and post-Soviet areas".[8] The first Aurora Fashion Week, occurring during the Year of France in Russia, had been kicked off in St. Petersburg in May 2010, and proved a successful undertaking, which in turn attracted more investment in its future activities. In comparison with Defile na Neve, which sprang up by chance thanks to the individual initiative of Irina Ashkinadze, AFW seems not only to have impressive ambitions, but to have elaborated from the very beginning a long-term conceptual strategy along with feasible growth objectives. Instead of inviting a large number of designers, as is done in Moscow, the emphasis is placed on a selection of 10 or 15 who might be commercially attractive or might possess a conceptual fit with the "European profile" of the week. This "Europeanness" of the designers, and of the event itself, is, as I see it, a counterweight to Moscow's fest of glamour, richness, and kitsch, and comes closer to Scandinavian design and the modesty of elegance and intellectuality.

Holding AFW at the very end of May 2010, when the sales season should already have ended and the collections been distributed to the stores[9], turned out to be advantageous: Artem Balaev, the general producer

After the Soviet collapse prioritization between heavy and light industry continues to be a point of dispute. Who prioritizes now?

The contrast between Moscow and St. Petersburg remains, the latter trying to create a name for itself. By refraining from kitsch?!

of the event, decided to play St. Petersburg's cultural card and accentuate the connection with the biggest festival in the city – the Day of St. Petersburg.[10] Thus feeding on the reputation of the aesthetic capital of Russia and establishing an association between its activities and public celebrations, AFW has a claim to recognition not only as a business, but also as a cultural event, playing on the intersection of fashion and literature, cinema, and museum activities. Among its venues were the State Russian Museum, the St. Petersburg Dom Knigi[11], the cinema circuit Karo Film, the Manezh Central Exhibition Hall, and the Erarta museum of contemporary art – primary cultural establishments in the center of St. Petersburg that make me think of the venues of Copenhagen and London fashion weeks[12], which symbolize the integration of fashion design and the urban environment.

The AFW promotional strategy is closely linked to the branding of St. Petersburg as a modern European hub sensitive to new cultural and social trends. The organizers of AFW employ both an established image of imperial St. Petersburg as a center of classical culture, and fresh aspects of contemporary fashion design, exhibition activities, and communication technologies. Thus, apart from the fashion shows, another main attraction for the visitors is St. Petersburg itself, a large city located on the waterfront with its interesting array of design venues, architecture, cultural events, cafés, bars, cinemas, and nightlife. I sense that the AFW organizers might have been inspired by the Copenhagen Fashion Festival, which is also open to the general public, and during which "large parts of Copenhagen are transformed into a fashion mecca of trend shows, exhibitions, miniconcerts, exclusive designer clearance sales, and parties".[13] For example, for two seasons in a row, as part of an open program, AFW has presented absolutely free of charge to the city public the Fashion Cinema Week, which displayed films about fashion for the first time in Russia.

A long-term cooperative effort between AFW and the Erarta museum of modern art was launched with an apparel show – a kind of "market of designers" arranged on an alternative platform during the fashion week. Besides some Russian designers and boutiques, which displayed their products for sale, there was a space for culture and art where, with the support of Erarta, young artists could share their ideas about a synthesis of art, fashion, and design. The exhibition 1960s Fashion: From Mini to Maxi; Haute couture models from Yves Saint Laurent, Balmain, Christian Dior, André Courrèges, Pierre Cardin, Chanel (2010) presented at the main venue clothes and accessories from the private collection of fashion historian Alexandre Vassiliev. Since then, a long-term collaboration between the crew of AFW, the Erarta museum, and Alexandre Vassiliev has taken off and continued in the form of a joint project called the "Museum of Fashion". It is thought to be a conceptual space organized within the walls of the Erarta museum, where a number of temporary exhibitions will run every 3 to 4 months. The plan is to move beyond national borders and to introduce European collectors and their treasures to the Russian public.

Experience gained from the second exhibition of Alexandre Vassiliev's treasures, started during the summer of 2011 and dedicated to 1980s fashion, revealed the importance of scrupulous curator work in captioning put on display, as well as the exposition as a whole. As the exhibition curators acknowledged in an interview I conducted with them, what Alexandre Vassiliev then introduced to the Russian public was in fact European fashion of the 1980s, with its numerous influences of American TV series, such as *Dynasty* and *Santa Barbara*, and the image of a strong and self-confident woman represented by dresses with padded shoulders, screaming accessories, and bright colors. Visitors to the event, who hoped to see garments similar to the ones they used to wear in the 1980s, were surprised by the discovery of an entirely different fashion style, and left contemplating the reasons why there was such a difference at all, and why the style came to Russia only in the 1990s.

As for the next year, sophisticated admirers of conspicuous consumption will get a chance to enjoy another pleasant project arranged by the cooperating partners: Alexander Vassiliev's collection of fashionable dresses of the first ladies and divas of the Soviet Union – another journey through time to an unknown life in the collapsed empire.

Apart from the Erarta, AFW also worked with other platforms, such as the conceptual design space Tayga, an experimental platform that unites young professionals in the creative industries for coordinated work and cooperation. AFW displayed the work of young designers who were not yet ready for the full catwalk show in the main venue. In my opinion, this is a much-needed initiative: it not only can provide an opportunity for young talents, but also can promote a new urban space and encourage its inhabitants to be more active in self-marketing and promoting further development. Tayga has a lot of economic and cultural potential due to its perfect location and liberal profile, but it is not yet recognized and taken advantage of by its tenants.

The producer of AFW says that among the event's fourteen different target groups, exhibitions and museum activities are mainly directed to the wider city public, those who do not usually visit scheduled shows. The initiative of broadcasting runways online, employed for years by respected players within the fashion industry, was also launched by AFW. Unfortunately, this year AFW did not become a highly mediated and mediatized phenomenon, which would have united the fabric of the city and the glamour of the festival, as happens, for instance, in Copenhagen. Participation in the fashion show was restricted to professionals, such as the press and buyers, industry businessmen, and privileged celebrities, who guarantee stellar publicity and promotion of brands. In that sense, Aurora Fashion Week is just like any other comparable event. However, the ratio of professionals to jet-setters is 3 to 7.[14] The organizers claim that having such a high percentage of the "beautiful people" of St. Petersburg and Moscow was a conscious choice. The timing of the event places the focus not on buyers, since the collections have been sold to the stores by then, but on the end customer, for whom the shows function as a teaser. The strategy of working with boutiques ensures high sales for them and high publicity for AFW. Such a pattern of cooperation might provide a substantial "crowd" for the occasion, but in order to ensure the long-term success of the project, more focus on professionals would be advantageous.

Cultural activities are not the only direction of strategic development. It is not a secret to anyone familiar with the Russian fashion industry that there is a certain lack of professionals who have a critical and analytical approach to fashion, are able to launch and manage successful marketing campaigns, and work with media specialists and buyers. For years, an absence of ethics and customs in the fashion market, poor dialog between the various players in the industry, a weak educational base, and limited sharing of experience with international colleagues did not improve the situation. Building upon the experience of Modny Desant, Artem Balaev initiated the educational project "Front Row", geared towards those interested in and willing to pay for courses about various aspects of the fashion industry, including PR, fashion journalism, and art journalism which review the contemporary market for art and fashion. There is also a series of conferences and roundtables running parallel to the fashion week, where invited specialists from around the globe share their experience.

The conference Fashionomica, which took place every day before the shows, assembled highly professional speakers who touched upon key issues of the Russian fashion industry, nuances of the market, the ins and outs of working with buyers and the press, business expansion, and strategies of marketing and selling online. Strangely, the audience shied away from engaging in dialog and questions during the time allotted for them. Whether this was a result of the lack of experience and expertise of the young audience, or of insufficient time, is difficult to say. But, without question, the entrance fee was too high for those who really needed to be a part of this event.

In conclusion, I would say that activities arranged by the crew of AFW, which pop up during the whole year in the fabric of urban environments, not only create a constant buzz around fashion week and the city, but also add something extra to the general trend that blurs the boundaries of art, fashion, consumption, and the educational process. It strengthens the idea that advertising and fashion are not only products of consumption, but also necessary elements of popular culture, which, if put in a museum context, acquire a new educational and conceptual meaning. In my opinion, seen in the right context, AFW might have all the hallmarks of the London and Copenhagen fashion weeks, with its focus on young designers and national apparel production, let alone the emphasis on urban space as a main center of inspiration and innovation.

Of course, without government support of the industry – which is a striking difference between St. Petersburg on the one hand, and Copenhagen and London, where fashion became a priority and a centrifugal force in urban development, on the other – long-term development is not possible. Even though AFW received nominal support, cooperation is still at a rudimentary level. It is probably more efficient and more economically justified to invest on a grander scale in just one well-organized, cohesive fashion season of international scope than to divide resources into two competing events on a smaller scale, which even double some projects, such as the display of vintage dresses from the same private collection or exhibitions of fashion magazines in collaboration with the Russian National Library. With this more efficient use of resources, we may one day be able to call St. Petersburg a fashion capital. ■

REFERENCES

1 Defile na Neve (titled "Neva Riverside Défilé de Mode" in English) is a fashion event launched more than 10 years ago by Irina Ashkinadze to support her boutique of Russian designers. Aurora Fashion week was launched in 2010.

2 By 2008, the three biggest – Pervomayskaya Zarya (with the brands Zarina and Befree), Factory of St. Petersburg (label: FOSP), and Moscow's Uzori (Gota) – which had been founded during the Soviet era and managed to adjust to the new market and create strong brands and far-reaching retailing systems around the country, had been forced to stop production or to move it to China. See Lilia Moskalenko, "Voluntarily" [Na Golom Entuziazme], *Expert*, 2008-05-19.

3 Tatyana Medovnikova, "Rusimport/Euroexport" [Russian Import/European Export], *PROfashion* 14, September 2008.

4 Tatyana Medovnikova, "Za Kruglym Stolom Sideli Direktor, Bajer, Portnoj ...– Ty Kto Budesh' Takoj?" [Round the table sat director, buyer, and tailor ... – and who are you going to be?], *PROfashion*, 20, November 2009.

5 Tatyana Medovnikova "Za Kruglym Stolom Sideli Direktor, Bajer, Portnoj. . . – Ty Kto Budesh' Takoj?" [Round the table sat director, buyer, and tailor. . . – and who are you going to be?], *PROfashion*, 20, November 2009.

6 For the full list of cities see: http://www.languagemonitor.com/category/fashion-capitals/.

7 *Modny Desant* ("fashion landing" or "fashion landing force") was a fashion show project for young and unknown designers started by Artem Balayev some years ago in St. Petersburg. Besides the shows, the program also included lectures by recognized scholars in the field of apparel production and design from Japan and the UK.

8 See the official website: http://www.afwrussia.com/en/index/mission.html/.

9 Major fashion weeks start in January or February to allow buyers and the press to preview collections.

10 The Festival Day of St. Petersburg is an annual celebration of the foundation of the city by Tsar Peter I in May 1703. It usually takes place May 26–29.

11 The St. Petersburg Dom Knigi is the largest bookstore in St. Petersburg.

12 For comparison, Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week Russia in Moscow takes place in the Congress Hall of the World Trade Center, and Volvo Fashion Week in Moscow in the Russia State Concert Hall (the only modern building in the Kremlin, completed in 1961), and Defile na Neve in St. Petersburg in the international exhibition complex Lenexpo, built in the 1960s. Copenhagen Fashion Week was inaugurated in the City Hall, an old and impressive architectural gem from 1905. Somerset House, whose history goes back to 1547, houses London Fashion Week.

13 For more information about Copenhagen Fashion Festivals see: http://www.copenhagenfashionfestival.com/28808/About.

14 For the full interview with Artem Balaev see: http://binoclespb.blogspot.com/.

PHOTO: BY COURTESY OF AFW

PHOTO: NIKOLAY NIKITIN

Producer AFW Russia, Artem Balaev (left).

Creative space Tayga (above).

Exhibits from the exhibition of the collection of Alexandre Vassiliev (below).

PHOTO: BY COURTESY OF ERARTA MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

(For more on fashion in Russia and the Soviet Union see BW III:2, "Soviet investment in flamboyance".)

ART AGAINST CRISIS

Survival Kit festival in Riga

The unprepossessing courtyard behind the multiple-family apartment block in Gertrudes Iela (Gertrudes Street) in the center of Riga does not immediately suggest that this was the site of the preparations for the third annual Survival Kit festival, which took place this September.

Originally established under the rubric "Do It Yourself" in the summer of 2009, this year's ambitious art festival has international participation. "Do It Yourself" was, however, not only the title of the first festival, but in this its third year it is also something that must be taken literally as soon as you enter the former school building in which the "surviving" will take place this time around. For most of the artists must set up the classrooms assigned to them with their own hands. And as you walk through the building, you have trouble believing that up until two years ago this was a school, given that the building fabric is in such a terrible state: wires hanging down, holes in the ceilings and walls – this school has certainly seen better days.

"WE HADN'T REALLY planned a festival at all. We were simply thinking about what we could do in view of the crisis, which hit Latvia hard. Then we invited artists to liven up the shops that stood empty everywhere, and sort of make them into exhibition rooms", says Solvita Krese, head of the LCCA and head curator of Survival Kit, talking about the festival's beginnings. This year everything is taking place under one roof for the first time. We chose a school as the festival's site to show that it is about learning and the future.

"It's difficult to get people interested in cultural projects, or even to find funding for them, in times when people fear for their livelihood", says Elina Cire, the press officer.

This is surely another reason why, in its first two years, Survival Kit concentrated first and foremost on the creative use of city space, and on establishing a very participatory character. The curators, who are almost all women, must first of all create a social foundation and an acceptance for contemporary art on which they can base their work. Elina Cire tells me that they had originally hoped that the shop owners would be happy about the short-term use of their shops. Yet they met with neither interest nor enthusiasm. "They held the key out to us and said, 'Give me 100 lats a month, or maybe 10, and you have the shop!'"

Given this situation, Latvian video-artist Katrina Neiburga, who is participating again this year, opened a soup kitchen, with poet Agnes Krivade the first year, with the slogan "Artists Cooking for You". "Of course, many people came from the culture scene, but people also came in from the street – taxi drivers, people out shopping, and so on", she tells me, adding: "That was not an artistic project in the true sense. It was super entertainment, as perfect as it could be. But no one seemed to have the energy to continue with this."

WHAT BEGAN TWO YEARS ago with a people's kitchen, hairdressing salon, plant exchange, and independent art book publishing house is today compelling enough that international artists, such as Munich native Hito Steyerl, and Melanie Gilligan (UK/CAN), accept the invitation to participate with their video work in the third iteration of the festival.

Steyerl is showing her film "After the Crash", in which she tracks the recycling path common to aircraft wreckage and DVDs, and in doing so also addresses globalization. And Melanie Gilligan is showing parts of her project "Crisis in the Credit System", which obviously calls to mind a highly topical subject. And so Survival Kit is already looking into the future.

THE SURVIVAL KIT, with its "headline", thus offers a glimpse of the future.

It is striking that outside the festival as well, many art projects without institutional support have arisen. One example is the VEF, which uses the site of the largest Latvian telecommunications manufacturer of the Soviet era, Valsts Elektrotehniska Fabrika (VEF) as a studio building and has filled it with an exhibition space, café, bar, and silkscreen workshop.

For the last several weeks there has also been, in the central Skola Iela (School Street), a new cultural center, with a stage and exhibition space, home to concerts and parties.

It would appear that the young art scene, independent of institutions, is already taking the future into its own hands. Surprisingly, Riga lacks a museum for contemporary art. And no one knows whether or when there will ever be one. For now, the women of LCCA will probably have to continue working in an office in Alberta Iela where both the library for contemporary art and an exhibition space are housed. And a Survival Kit therefore still seems necessary.

"I have noticed that most artists work with the past and do not look to the future very much. With Survival Kit we are trying to encourage them to do that", says Solvita Krese. This effort is only partially successful, however. Some artists, such as Krists Pudzens (Latvia), have interpreted the festival theme literally – he sends out mechanical monsters to climb to the top of the school's roof – which, however, they fail to do. The collage film of Dutch artist Marjolijn Dijkman also takes the title literally. Together with her personal view of the future, the most striking and at the same time trashy utopian film scenes of recent decades are served up to the spectator as science-fiction spectacles, and in the process they leave an extremely ironic aftertaste.

Artists such as the Berlin-based Eleonore de Montesquiou (Estonia, France, Germany) and Katrina Neiburga (Latvia) walk at the border of the documentary film genre through the old press building of Riga, which functioned as the Latvian center of censorship in Soviet times (Neiburga), or the Radiotehnica building, an old hi-fi factory also important in the USSR (Montesquoiu). Both choose an anthropological approach to history, which will certainly be relevant for future prospects, and ask what influences the communist society, as well as its breakdown, had on people's lives.

Alongside the festival there are lectures on, topics including gentrification, "art and science", and also hysteria (Hanne Loreck, HfBK Hamburg), which provide a theoretical perspective to help illuminate all of the festival's topics.

ON THE WHOLE it quickly becomes clear that what matters here is the struggle for survival rather than contemporary discourse. Therefore, what people are looking for is a proximity to the everyday life of Riga, and the festival itself poses sociopolitical questions rather than using art to tackle the intrinsic problems. There are many reasons for this, but it seems certain that contemporary art in Latvia does not have it easy, and not only for financial reasons. "Many artists are still afraid to express their true opinions, because they fear this will end their careers. The Soviet system is embedded deeply in all of us", Elina Cire explains.

And, about her work as curator and head of the Latvian contemporary art center, Solvita Krese says: "What we are doing here would be evaluated for instance in Germany as very critical, or as a total counter-position. Here we are among the principal figures on the stage of the fine arts, the ones who are already established." She goes on to complain that there is nothing available for contemporary art. The missing contemporary art museum is only one problem among many. As LCCA they would therefore be looking explicitly for practicable answers. "We are not interested so much in the object for itself, nor in a market orientation. We want to make people think, and to inspire them."

DESPITE ALL THE PROBLEMS, the organizers are looking cautiously toward the future, hoping to establish the festival as a biennial by 2014, when Riga will be the cultural capital of Europe. The organizers will always find it important to encourage international participation, but nevertheless will work on topics that are relevant to Latvia and the whole Baltic region. It will be fascinating to see whether political topics will gain relevance. After all, the twenty years since Latvia's independence should be enough for some artists to risk dealing with the Soviet past by means of an approach that is not necessarily judgmental but rather carefully descriptive in a storytelling style (as Katrina Neiburga and Eleonore de Montesquiou did). We will also have to wait and see how much interest the new government has in promoting culture, and what influence political developments will have on contemporary art. It is certain that this young scene has immense motivation and vibrant energy. So, looking back at the three years of Survival Kit and what has already been achieved, we now wait with anticipation, and even see the biennial festival sparkling in the future.

kathrin bernard

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Notes: LCCA = The Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art
http://www.lcca.lv/
http://www.survivalkit.lv/

When the shops in the center of Riga emptied out in the wake of the economic crisis, the artists were given free reign over the spaces – the result was an art festival.

BY **PETER HANDBERG**

The Pompeii of East Prussia

A landscape dominated by army graveyards

FROM RED BULLETINS IV

The Soviet military cemetery at the Poland-Kaliningrad border, the size of three soccer fields. Weeds pushing through the asphalt, the faces of fallen young soldiers carved in marble, row after row. The stone gazes are also sinking into the earth forever.

***Zinten*. On a swaying silo tower, a lone stork on one leg; it often stands so, exposed in its nest, even in the pouring rain as storms rage. One is bound to think of Saint Simeon Stylites, albeit with no hysterical claims of levitation. Something else has come. It is more as if the earth has been pushed in under her foot without her knowledge. One could also say the world, or life, or the meaning of it all. Simeon punished himself by standing on his high pillar for forty years, for long periods on only one leg. But actually, it only became clearer how far from heaven he was. The danger that he would be blown down and crushed against the ground of exhaustion was imminent. There is nothing of this with the stork. The world is nothing other than the place where she can catch frogs and meet some boy or other. The city of Zinten is only rocks on barren fields and overgrown cellars. But the stork still comes here, her nest now on a derelict sovkhoz tower. That epoch too has slipped by without a trace under the claws at the end of her long legs. All the world spins under her claws as if she were an equilibrist.**

The little twine-bound booklet "Off to Zinten We Go" is actually as dull and pointless as only vanity printing can be. Thick, brown cardboard covers, bound with heavy twine, 16 printed pages, 16 blurry black-and-white photographs with brief captions, which add nothing much to the pictures beyond platitudes and pointless jokes. Every family has similar scrapbooks and photo albums from trips and outings and parties – if not with better captions, at least with better pictures.

And still I was seduced into bidding far too much at the auction. Former residents of Zinten and their relatives search high and low for Zinten material and are ready to pay for it. An address tag from 1942 stamped "Zinten" – on two upside-down Hitler stamps: isn't that an act of dissent? – went for almost 30 euros. It is not only that Zinten was in the East Prussia that was partitioned after World War II between the Soviet Union and Poland and whose population either died in battle or under the privations of war, or was expelled to Germany. The old city had been utterly obliterated in the war. Ever after, the people would call it the Pompeii of East Prussia.

But when this trip to Zinten was taken, the city still stood in all its finery, with churches, ornamented stone buildings, a beautiful city hall complete with bell tower on the square, and winding cobblestone streets lined with gardens and arbors on the outskirts.

The trip took place on the 21st of July, a Sunday in 1935. *"Ausflug der Betriebsgemeinschaft der Königsberger Allgemeinen Zeitung"* is printed on the cover. *Königsberger AZ* was the biggest and most influential daily newspaper in East Prussia, with more than 500 employees. One of the last photographs in the booklet is a large group shot. About 400 employees seem to have gone along on the excursion. The bosses are there, front and center in the picture, all of them men with gray beards and balding pates. Reporters, younger and older, ladies in pale or floral-print summer dresses, gentlemen in lightweight suits. Employees from the accounting department, editors, sports reporters, typesetters, foremen, typists, secretaries, and, at the very front, a long row of young men and boys – probably errand boys, messengers, assistant porters, and helpers of various kinds.

> "Labor and management would work together for the fatherland."

It wasn't long after Hitler's rise to power in 1933 that the unions were abolished. The country was to stand united, not fragmented by internal conflicts. *Volksgemeinschaft*, the people's community, was trumpeted by the propaganda machine and became a central concept in the building of the nation.

Betriebsgemeinschaft, the "company community" that came to replace the union – although that was not its original purpose – worked the same way. Labor and management would work together for the fatherland. The bosses would look out for their employees and make them feel they were performing important work for the good of the country. They would provide a good atmosphere and create a bond among employees, which also worked as an instrument of control.

Betriebsgemeinschaft Königsberger Allgemeinen Zeitung's excursion to Zinten was part of one such general strategy. Early in the morning, everyone stepped aboard the chartered train at the central station in Königsberg and rode the 30 kilometers or so southwards. A few got off the train early in Kukehnen and walked the last five kilometers through the beautiful Stradick Valley. The weather was rainy and gray, but they were in no hurry. People stopped and rested along the way. In one photograph, four smiling women sit with a bottle of pilsner in front of them, on a "welcome break before the final stretch to Zinten", as the caption puts it. In the meantime, the others waited at Waldschloss, where they perhaps spent time doing other activities and later took a meal together, listened to lectures, and walked around the city. A few photographs show that some were involved in target shooting: "One shoots rain or shine", the caption says.

And so the day continues until finally everyone gathers for the big group photograph. Some look serious, but most are smiling. Then they board the train for the trip home to Königsberg. The next day is an ordinary working day. Zinten remains a happy memory.

Ten years later, the city of Zinten has been wiped off the face of the earth. Extensive research might make it possible to find out something of what happened to the people in the group photograph, but it would be hardly worth the trouble. The answers are already present.

Many of the men in the photographs fell in battle. Others were reported missing or their fates are unknown after the chaos that ensued in the wake of the advancing Red Army: women and girls were raped, old people were beaten to death, men were deported to camps in the Soviet Union.

But some of the people in the picture are probably alive as well, and have visited their former hometown on one of those bus excursions that take retirees to vanished corners of Germany that they are simply shocked to see.

One can say more with certainty about the city of Zinten than about the people in the picture. Sixty years after the newspaper's Sunday excursion – on a summer's day in 1995 – I came by car to the former sovkhoz of Kornevo, as Zinten is now called. Everything was still and deserted, the landscape dominated by army graveyards. There were only insignificant remnants of the old city found here and there: half a church tower obscured by shrubbery, an old water tower, a long cobblestone street running through the brush with no trace of the house gables that once lined the street.

ILLUSTRATION: RAGNI SVENSSON

> "The entire landscape was a still-ticking bomb. The war, all war, was still going on in the complex amalgamation of the present and past that no one had ever been able to tie up and clarify."

An old man came walking. He had worked on the sovkhoz. Now he did nothing. Waited for his pension. The war had ripped through this place and its ravages went on. A few children were still getting killed every year after playing with unexploded bombs and mortar rounds. The entire landscape was a still-ticking bomb. The war, all war, was still going on in the complex amalgamation of the present and past that no one had ever been able to tie up and clarify. They could only, like the stork, let it slide by under their claws and one day sense that something new had slipped in.

The trips to Zinten – mine and the one depicted in the little booklet – were a concrete reminder of how things can be here one day and gone the next. All culture is based on this relationship between being and nothingness. The illusion of capturing something – of being immortalized – seems to be the last transcendental seed that we, perhaps unconsciously, hold onto. That is true of poetry, especially, but also of the Olympic Games and the victories, and of having been a part of them and thus in the shadow of eternity. It is true of popular music, which without the seed of transcendence is reduced to mating rituals or lamentation.

But it is also true of simple photo albums and small booklets of photographs of private excursions. Seeing traces of worlds that no longer exist can be both painful and mysterious. It denies the physical perception that somewhere says that life is eternal, or that our artificially created products of this life are. Surely there are those who disagree, but I have a hard time imagining that we would, eyes averted, let history slide by under our claws, as if on a ghostly conveyor belt. And yet that is what is happening. We are just like the stork, only not as elevated and faithful. ■

Note: Peter Handberg is a Swedish writer who contributed to BW (vol. II:1) with an article on Richard Wagner and Riga. This text is from the collection of essays *Den nedkopplade himlen* [Heaven offline], Natur och Kultur 2011.

BY **PÄRTEL PIIRIMÄE**
ILLUSTRATION **MOA THELANDER**

The idea of "Yule Land"

Baltic provinces or a common Nordic space? On the formation of Estonian mental geographies

ON CHRISTMAS EVE 1998, Toomas Hendrik Ilves, who is now serving as the president of the Republic of Estonia, published an article in which he developed the idea of "Yule Land".[1] Ilsaves used this poetic name to signify the region where the name for Christmas is derived from a common root: in Britain "Yule", in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark "jul", in Finland "joulu". This region also includes Estonia, where Christmas is called "jõul", but excludes other countries in the region, such as Germany ("Weihnachten"), Latvia ("ziemasvetki"), Lithuania "kaledos", or Russia ("rozhdestvo").

Ilves's aim is not to make an interesting linguistic or historical observation but to point out that the countries that form "Yule Land" have a lot in common. Most importantly, these countries seem to share basic values that are reflected in various characteristics that can be objectively measured, such as a low level of corruption or enthusiasm for technological innovation. Ilves points out that in all these aspects, the Scandinavian countries and Finland are at the top worldwide, and Estonia is approaching their level very fast, having left other post-communist countries far behind.

The concept of "Yule Land" is an example of a conscious reconstruction of mental geographies. It is based on an entirely plausible assumption that "regions" do not exist in nature but are formed in people's heads. In order to make sense of the surrounding world, we have a natural tendency to group together phenomena that seem to have something in common. This is also the way we handle the overwhelming number of states and nations in the world.

Such groupings are not necessarily objective, for it is always open to debate which characteristics are essential and which are merely accidental. People might think that geography itself offers the most certain guidelines to mental mapping of regions, but this is usually an illusion. For example, the role of seas has varied greatly in history: they have divided countries into separate regions, but they have also bound countries together, as Fernand Braudel has famously shown with the example of the Mediterranean. Similarly, the Baltic Sea has, for most of last millennium, functioned as a connector rather than as a separator.

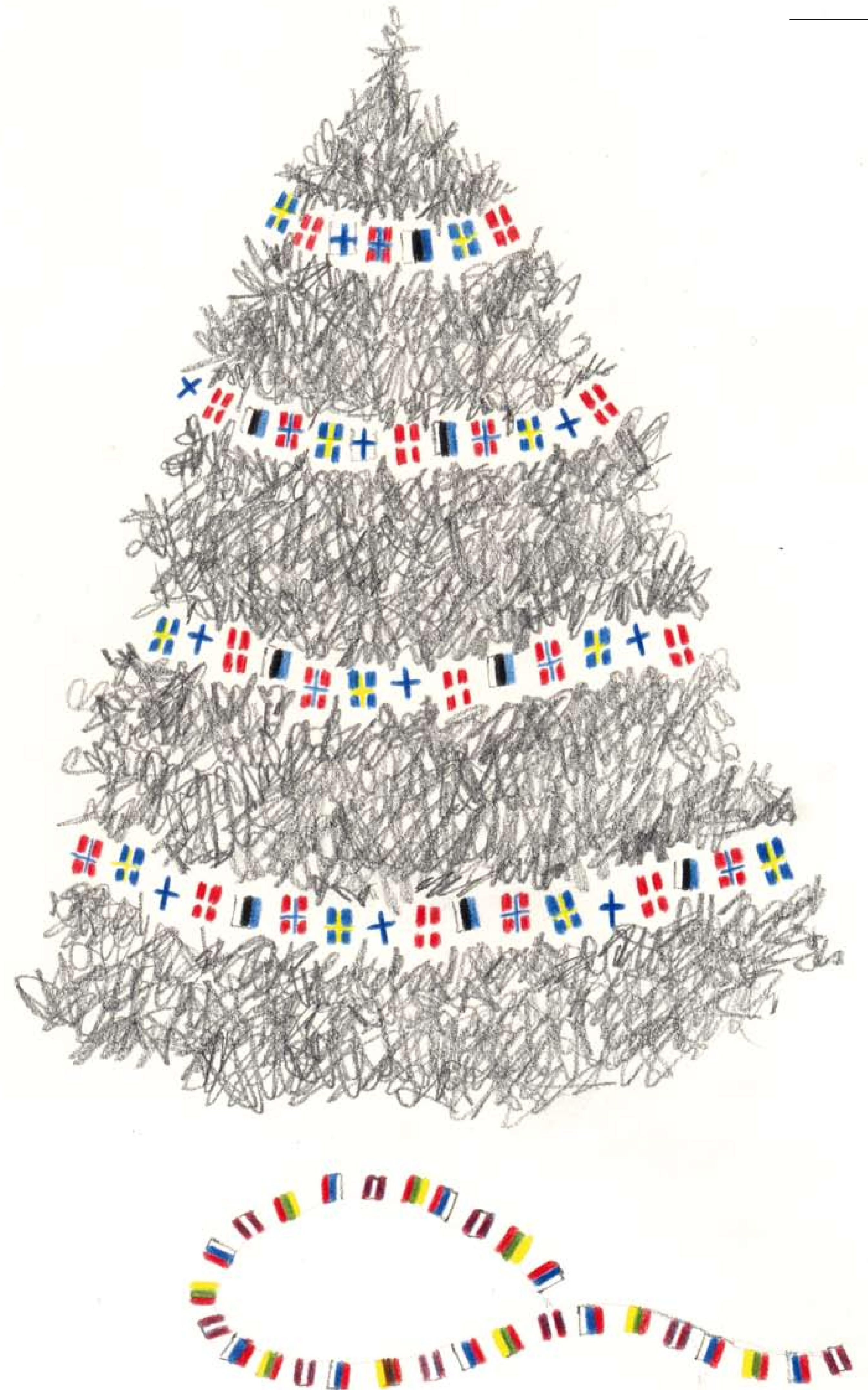
Therefore, geography alone is never a sufficient indicator. We need, instead, to look at how people interact and what binds them together. This leads us to the second most important component of region-making: politics, or, more precisely, state- and empire-building. Empires, indeed, influence region-building in the long run, because the policies of the central authorities result in similar effects in the various parts of the state. It has to be pointed out, however, that it is in the nature of empires that they contain a number of different nations and political communities, which preserve their own character, traditions, and often even distinct legal system and forms of administration – this is, in fact, why they are called "empires" and not "states". Thus, it can often happen that the political ties of authority and obedience – which are easy to observe – overshadow much more fundamental characteristics that distinguish the parts of an empire from one another or connect them with other regions across the boundaries of the political map.

A further problem bearing on objectivity is that once the regions are constructed, they stick in our heads and languages, and are hard to get rid of, even when the reality on the ground has changed. All these problems can be observed in the case of Estonia, and have, indeed, prompted Ilves and others to reconstruct the mental geography of this part of the world. The "regionalization" of the Baltic area in the past century has been determined by a political history that has cast a long shadow over all other characteristics even to the present day. After Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania broke away from the Soviet Union, it took ages for the world to stop calling them "post-Soviet republics", gradually realizing that there is not really too much in common between these countries and, for example, Belarus or Kyrgyzstan.

WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE "BALTIC REGION"?

The widely used label for the three countries is now "the Baltic States". So, why invent "Yule Land" if another, seemingly neutral concept has already been adopted? Why are the Estonians not so enthusiastic about viewing themselves as part of the "Baltic region", and why are they looking elsewhere for regional belonging?

One important reason seems to be that the term "Baltic" still carries a lot of its Soviet legacy and is therefore a constant reminder of the less fortunate period in the history of the region. It is worth remembering that before World War II Finland was also seen as a Baltic state. Finland as an independent state had – just like Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania – emerged from the ruins of Tsarist Russia, and it had similarly been the object of the Hitler-Stalin Pact that left all these countries to the Soviet "sphere of interest". However, Finland's resistance enabled it to avoid Soviet occupa-



tion and after the war it successfully managed to be included in the "Nordic space" – nobody would call Finland a "Baltic state" any more. Thus "the Baltics", as we know the region today, is first and foremost the creation of the Soviets, which is not a legacy that people are very keen to hang on to.

It is also important to remember what that legacy reminds us of: it is the sense of vulnerability and the need to look for wider spheres of belonging. This, of course, was the reason the Baltic states were so enthusiastic about joining NATO. And the security argument has been central even in the cases of joining the organizations that were designed for aims other than security, such as the EU or the monetary union. Every new layer of integration with wider European and trans-Atlantic structures has been seen, without much debate, by the Baltic nations as beneficial to their security and therefore desirable.

The word "Baltic" itself also lacks any meaningful connection to the Estonian national identity. It has always been a foreign word. Many European nations call the body of water "the Baltic Sea", but the Estonians have their own name for it: "the Western Sea" (Läänemeri). "Baltic" is also commonly used to signify a distinct family of languages within the Indo-European language group, but again, the Estonian language does not belong to this group. Linguistically, the Estonians are very close to the Finns, which is another factor prompting them to look toward the North in search of kin, rather than toward the South. And, finally, the term "Baltikum" is a creation neither of the Estonians nor of the other indigenous populations on the eastern side of the Baltic Sea, but was invented by the German elites who lived in these countries from the thirteenth until the early twentieth century.

THE ORIGINS OF THE CONCEPT "BALTIKUM"

Thus, when we look for the roots of the Baltic identity, we need to look at the formation of a national group that does not even live in this area any more. The older generation of the Baltic Germans – in German, "Deutschbalten" or sometimes just "Balten" – still has a distinct identity that is based on the common homeland of their ancestors. It has to be said, however, that these ancestors started to call themselves "Balten" as late as the middle of the nineteenth century. Before that, their provincial identity was much stronger than the national one. The Germans formed the governing and land-owning elites in three Russian provinces along the Baltic Sea (hence "the Baltic provinces") – Estland, Livland, and Kurland. These provinces, the territories of which correspond roughly to present-day Estonia and Latvia, had their own distinct political structures, administration, and legal traditions.

There was nothing unusual about this; in fact, it was typical of early modern conglomerate states that new territories that were acquired via a contract or a treaty maintained their distinct character under new overlords. The Baltic provinces of the Russian Empire had their origins in the sixteenth century when the Old-Livonian state system was dissolved in the turmoil of the Livonian War. The province of Estland emerged when the towns and nobilities in the northernmost possessions of the Teutonic Order surrendered to the king of Sweden. Livland formed from the parts that surrendered to the king of Poland. The last Master of the Order kept some territories to himself in the form of a duchy that owed allegiance to Poland – this was the origin of Kurland. Livland became Swedish during the seventeenth century; both Estland and Livland were acquired by Peter the Great in the early eighteenth century, and, finally, Kurland became a part of Russia with the partition of Poland in late eighteenth century.

Despite the administrative and political divisions, the idea that in a certain sense these provinces belong together was preserved throughout the Early Modern period. Seventeenth-century chroniclers often employed the word "Livland" as a common denominator for all these provinces, emphasizing that in this usage the term covered the provinces of Estland, Livland, Kurland, and Semgallen, and should not be confused with the distinct province of Livland. Such usage, however, appears to belong to the vocabulary of bourgeois and clerical writers only. The nobility, on the contrary, opposed the habit of treating the provinces as a single unit, and attempted to reinforce the provincial identities at the cost of the regional one.

One of the methods of doing this was to extend the history of the province far beyond the time of present rulers, sometimes by very inventive means. For example, a chronicle written at the end of the 17th century by high-ranking noblemen in Estland argues that the distinct identity of the province goes back to pre-Christian era, when pagan rulers governed the powerful kingdom of "Eastland" (*Östland*). That state was conquered and Christianized by Danish kings who in 1080 founded the Duchy of Estland. This duchy then figures as an autonomous historical actor that throughout history has changed protectors voluntarily in exchange for a confirmation of its historical privileges.[2]

Similarly, the nobility opposed the occasional attempts by central authorities to impose the common identity of the empire as a whole on the Baltic provinces. Such a conflict of identities can be observed in the course of the controversy over "reduction" (the resumption to the crown of the estates of the nobility) in late seventeenth-century Livland. The most vehement opponent of the reduction, Johann Reinhold von Patkul, was sentenced to death by the Swedish High Court in Stockholm. Patkul managed to flee the Swedish realm and later justified his actions in published writings. One of the accusations of the Swedish prosecutors had been that Patkul had betrayed his fatherland ("patria"), by which they, of course, meant Sweden. Patkul responded that he had acted as a true patriot, because his "patria" was not Sweden, but Livland, and he had risked his life for the sake of Livland, as an honorable patriot was obliged to do.[3]

THE BALTIC PROVINCES AND THE NORTH

In the course of the Great Northern War, Sweden's Baltic provinces were conquered by Russia. Provincial nobles and city magistrates swore allegiance to the Tsar who confirmed their privileges and restored possessions lost with the reduction. It is only natural that the nobility had no fond memories of the Swedish period. Accordingly, they did not emphasize the Swedish legacy as a part of the identity of the Baltic provinces in the Russian Empire, despite the fact that in the actual life of the area that legacy was rather strong, considering that a large number of Swedish laws were valid until the nineteenth century. The self-image of Baltic nobles was very strongly based on their rights and privileges, which, in their view, pre-dated Swedish rule, were illegally threatened by the Swedish kings, and then rightfully restored by Russian tsars in the capitulation agreements of 1710. The generosity of the tsars towards their new subjects was reciprocated with the loyal service of Baltic Germans in the Russian military and administration. They managed to accommodate the dual identities – provincial and imperial – without too much difficulty.

This "happy marriage" ended abruptly in the middle of the nineteenth century when the "Slavophile" Russian politicians started working towards greater unification of the Empire. This entailed the abolition of the special status of the Baltic provinces. Under this serious threat, the German elites in three distinct provinces realized their common interest and the need to act together. The word "Baltic" started appearing in journal titles, polemical writings, historical works, and elsewhere. The sense of common identity was strengthened by the national movement in Germany, which prompted many Baltic Germans to view themselves as people with a special mission to spread "Deutschtum" in the less civilized part of the world.

The Baltic Germans never identified themselves with anything "Nordic". In fact, in the Middle Ages and Early Modern period, "the North" was an entirely undesirable label, since the northern nations were generally considered savage and uncivilized. "Nordic" meant the same as "barbaric". During the Thirty Years' War, an anti-Swedish broadsheet was printed in Germany that scared the readers with the Northern barbarians that fought in the Swedish army. It depicted three figures – a Lapp, a Livonian, and a Scot, all in their national garments and traditional weapons, but all looking equally fearsome.[4] In the same vein, Russia, which was also widely viewed as a barbaric country, was located towards the North rather than the East – it demonstrates how mental geographies affect where people think countries are actually situated.

Only during the eighteenth century did "the North" start to acquire a more positive meaning. One of the earliest and most important positive connotations was the concept of "Northern liberty". The idea that the North had been the bulwark of liberty against the spread of southern tyrannies was developed and promoted by Enlightenment thinkers, such as Montesquieu and Diderot.[5] In particular, the personal liberty and political participation of the peasant class was a remarkable testimony to the eminent position of the value of freedom in Northern societies. The peasant curia of the Swedish Riksdag was quite unusual, even in a European context. Elsewhere in Europe, where any representative assemblies existed at all, the peasants were "represented" by their noble landowners.

This Nordic tradition of peasant liberty was totally foreign to the Baltic Germans, who viewed themselves as paternalistic caretakers of their childlike subjects. For Swedish rulers, on the other hand, the "un-Christian" and "inhuman" treatment of the peasants in their Baltic provinces was a constant source of consternation in the seventeenth century. They did not manage to abolish serfdom in noble manors, but the projects drafted in Stockholm to ease the lot of the peasants was one of the primary reasons why the period of Swedish rule was viewed as "the Good Old Swedish Age" by emerging Estonian historiography in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. In the search for alternatives to Russian and German nationalist imperialism, the Scandinavian societies seemed the most attractive regionalist alternative.

Thus, the Estonian nationalist movement was complemented by a very strong Nordic dimension. In addition to emphasizing the positive role that Sweden had played in Estonian history, the nationalist historians developed an account of earlier history that demonstrated the close connections and similarities between the eastern and western coasts of the Baltic Sea. The period before German conquest became known as the Estonian Viking Age, which also captured the popular imagination and prompted a number of literary works that depicted the valiant deeds of the Estonian vikings. According to popular myth, one of these deeds was the destruction of the old Swedish capital of Sigtuna in 1187 by the vikings from Ösel (see text box on Sigtuna). Thus, the Estonians sought to be similar to the Northerners not only with regard to the achievements of their modern society but also with regard to the more dubious "pan-European" achievements in their past.

INTER-WAR ESTONIA AND NORDISM

When we look back at the formative period at the end of World War I, the emergence of the independent Baltic states often seems like a predetermined outcome. In fact, it was not the only alternative discussed by the local political elites in this period. The options included the establishment of a Baltic duchy with a German prince as a monarch (advocated by conservative Baltic Germans), having Estonia join Soviet Russia (advocated by some Estonian Bolsheviks), and the creation of a union state with Finland, Latvia, and Lithuania, or one with Finland alone. Also, a union state with Sweden was a matter of serious discussion by Estonian politicians.

All these discussions reflect a certain distrust in the viability of a small state in the then competitive, and often aggressive international world. This is why even after the sovereign Estonian state was established, the search for wider regional attachment – specifically in the form of a military alliance – continued as intensely as before. The most desirable option in the eyes of many politicians was a broader Baltic union that would include Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and perhaps even Poland. However, Finland did not commit to such an alliance, since it was more interested in closer cooperation with Sweden and other Scandinavian countries; and the Swedes discouraged the Finns from linking their fate with that of their southern neighbors. The Poles were left out of the negotiations due to their conflict with Lithuania over the possession of Vilnius. Hence, what was left of this broader regional alliance was a political union between the three Baltic states that was concluded in 1934.

This Baltic cooperation was, however, not universally approved. One of the most vehement opponents to this alliance was Ilmar Tõnisson who argued that there is no such thing as "the Baltic states" (see the text box). He wrote in 1937 that the Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians have nothing substantial in common and the attempts to put them together had been not merely artificial but indeed harmful to Estonian interests. According to Tõnisson, the "Baltic region" was invented by Baltic Germans with the aim of preserving their political superiority. Later on, this regional concept was advocated by the Latvians, because Baltic cooperation was in their geopolitical interest. The Estonians, however, should detach themselves from their southern neighbors and become a Nordic country. Although Tõnisson did not hide the Estonian interests that would be served by this agenda, he emphasized that idea was viable because it would be based on an actual affinity of culture, language, and national character. Moreover, the Nordic countries would not object to such an extension of the concept of "Norden" (literally "the North" in most Nordic languages) because the addition of Estonia would only strengthen their military cooperation, whereas the addition of Latvia and Lithuania would draw them into the possible future clash between Nazi Germany and Soviet Union.[6]

GOOD NEW NORDIC AGE

The vision of a "Good Old Swedish Age" has never disappeared from the Estonian imagination. In the 1990s, it took some bizarre forms. For example, the success of the Royalist Party at the parliamentary elections in 1992 can only be explained by the universal admiration of the Swedish royalty and its legacy in Estonian history. The seriousness of the party can be judged by the fact that their election program included the idea of inviting the "disinherited" Prince Carl Philip to serve as the King of Estonia.

Nowadays this vision has transformed into a desire to establish a modern and wealthy Nordic society with its democratic and humane values. When Estonian political commentators occasionally ask whether we really want to become a "boring Nordic state", most people emphatically say, "Yes!". In this part of the world, to have a bit of a boring period in history would be quite nice for a change.

The reconstruction of mental geographies by extending the concept "Norden" is a part of these efforts. It is, however, quite clear that the Baltic states will never become Nordic just by talking about it – nor, for example, through the replacement of the horizontal color stripes on their national flags with crosses, as has been suggested by an Estonian journalist. The way towards a Nordic society can only be through internal change and development. ×

SIGTUNA:

The Uppsala annals say that Sigtuna, one of the most important political and commercial centers in early medieval Sweden, was burned down in 1187 by "the pagans". It is clear that these pagans came across the sea from the East, but who were they? Karelians, Russians, Curonians, and Estonians have been suggested by earlier chroniclers and modern historians as suitable candidates. The Estonians have never denied their possible "involvement" – on the contrary, the late 19th and early 20th century nationalist politicians, writers, and scholars were rather enthusiastic about the Estonian hypothesis, which they viewed as proof of the nation's glorious and valiant past. The concept of the "Estonian Viking Age" became particularly popular in the interwar period when a number of novels were published that portrayed the destruction of Sigtuna by the Vikings from Ösel. An opera was even produced in 1928 that depicted the raid – in quite a romantic manner – as the mission of an Estonian nobleman to liberate his captured fiancée.

ILMAR TÕNISSON:

Ilmar Tõnisson (1911–1939) was the son of Jaan Tõnisson (1868–1941), the leader of the Estonian national movement in the early 20th century and one of the most influential statesmen of the interwar period. Ilmar was an extraordinarily talented young man who studied at the London School of Economics and, despite his young age, managed to publish widely on issues related to politics and society. His fate was, however, tragic: he was shot dead by his jealous wife. This coincided with another national tragedy – only a few weeks earlier the Estonian government had concluded a treaty with Soviet Russia that allowed Soviet military bases to be established in Estonia. The occupation of Estonia was complete in 1940. Jaan Tõnisson, who stayed in the country despite the urgings of friends and family to go abroad, was arrested by the Russians and probably executed in 1941.

(See BW Vol IV:2 2011 article on Jaan Tõnisson by Finnish foreign minister Erkki Tuomioja.)

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SPOMENIKS SYMBOLISM GONE FOR GOOD?

PHOTO: JAN KEMPENAERS

This Spomenik is found in Tjentište in Sutjeska Valley in eastern Bosnia.

"What I felt when I saw one of the monuments for the very first time – that's the feeling I have tried to capture in my photographs. It's quite something", says Belgian photographer Jan Kempenaers. He traveled extensively through the Balkans in 2006 and 2007 to photograph a great number of striking monuments, called *Spomeniks*, using a 1975 map of memorials as a guide. The result is a series of captivating photos collected in the book Spomenik.

There used to be hundreds of them, scattered all over Yugoslavia. The Spomeniks were monuments commissioned by former Yugoslavian president Josip Broz Tito during the 1960s and '70s to commemorate the Second World War. The striking sculptures, most of them built in reinforced concrete, were designed in a futuristic, brutalist style by different sculptors and architects. The monuments were erected on sites where battles had taken place, where concentration camps had stood, or adjacent to war cemeteries. Their impressive grandeur also symbolized the new unity of all the southern Slavs. (The name *Yugoslavia* in fact comes from the word for south, *jug*, and the word for Slav, *slaveni*.)
Unlike the average war memorials of Eastern Europe, the Spomeniks are non-figurative, abstract sculptures, not busts of heroic leaders or patriotic workers.

After Yugoslavia dissolved in the early 1990s, the monuments were abandoned. Many of them were destroyed on purpose during the war; the rest were left to crumble, their symbolism lost and unwanted.

These often-breathtaking monuments are, to a surprising degree, unknown to people outside the region. Jan Kempenaers first came across the Spomeniks by pure chance while he was taking photos in Sarajevo just after the war.

"On rainy days, I would spend time in the library. One day, I was looking through an encyclopedia and

One measure of the speed of modernization might be how fast monuments turn into ruins.

PHOTO: JAN KEMPENAERS

These Spomeniks are found in (from top left): Petrova Gora, Podgarić, Jasenovac, all in Croatia; Kruševo in Macedonia; Niš in Serbia and Makljen in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

… SYMBOLISM GONE FOR GOOD?

came across photos of some of the monuments. I made some photocopies, filed them away, and then forgot about them. Years later I found the photocopies and decided to go see the monuments."

THE SPOMENIKS ATTRACTED MILLIONS of visitors through the 1980s, many of them school children who visited the monuments as a part of their patriotic education, others war veterans and grieving relatives who had lost loved ones during the war. Today, they are rarely visited at all.

"The locals are not interested in them. To the older people I guess they symbolize the previous regime. They just want to forget them. They don't see the quality of them", says Jan Kempenaers.

He photographed a great number of Spomeniks during his journeys, and then picked the ones he liked the most to appear in the book. His favorite is the massive monument on the cover of the book, situated in Tjentište in Sutjeska Valley in eastern Bosnia. It commemorates the Battle of the Sutjeska, which took place between May 15 and June 16, 1943. The goal of the attack by the Axis forces was to eliminate the central Yugoslav Partisan formations and capture their commander, Josip Broz Tito. The failure of the offensive marked a turning point for Yugoslavia during the Second World War. Over 6,000 partisans and 2,000 civilians were killed in the battle.

"Awful things happened there. The Axis troops killed all partisans who could not escape, including a complete hospital", says Jan Kempenaers.

The monuments are often situated in pristine countryside locations, and Jan Kempenaers has chosen to capture them in misty weather, sky always overcast, or at sundown.

"A nice blue sky makes it an image that refers to exotic places, like in a travel magazine. I don't like that. If the weather was too good I wouldn't stay, or I would take photos at night to get the right atmosphere. I want the photo to show the whole thing, with no shadows", he explains.

His mission was not that of a documentary photographer, but of an artist. He did extensive research and learned a lot about the history behind the monuments, but his aim was not merely to document them.

"My main concern is making interesting images. I only photographed the ones that I liked, the ones with an interesting shape."

PRIOR TO THE SPOMENIK PROJECT, Antwerp-based photographer Jan Kempenaers mainly focused on portraying urban landscapes, in large-scale detailed photos. The Spomeniks got him interested in abstract art, and recently he has been experimenting in abstract photography. The project also raised questions about how we see monumental sculptures.

"I asked myself, 'Can these monuments be seen as pure sculptures now, without the symbolism they represented when they were built?'"

Jan Kempenaers' photos of the Spomeniks have gone viral on the Internet, attracting lots of attention from people all over the world. He has exhibited the photos in Belgium, New York, France, and Amsterdam – but so far not in any of the countries of former Yugoslavia.

"Maybe some people would be interested, but I don't know … It is still complicated. The monuments refer to bringing together the different ethnic groups of the region, and obviously that is a very difficult question now after the war. Older people see these monuments as a symbol of something they would rather forget. Young people are just not interested."

The reactions after a Croatian architecture magazine and a local newspaper wrote about his photos are telling:

"People who commented on the articles said, 'That must be a very weird guy, to come all the way here to photograph these old monuments'", he says with a laugh. ■

sara bergfors

Jan Kempenaers has been affiliated with the Royal Academy of Fine Arts, University College, Ghent, since 2006, and is doing a PhD in the visual arts about picturesque landscapes. His books *Picturesque* (2012, Roma Publications) and *Spomenik* (2010, Roma Publications) present the results of his ongoing artistic research. His books can be ordered from www.orderromapublications.org.

Not to make use of history can be a way of abusing it. So small is the difference between worship and demonization!

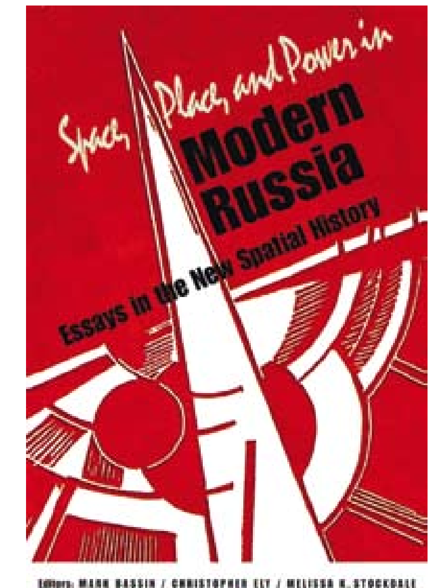
New spatial history.
Putting place in its proper place in Russia

Mark Bassin, Christopher Ely & Melissa K. Stockdale (eds.)
Space, Place, and Power in Modern Russia
Essays in the New Spatial History

DeKalb, Northern Illinois University Press
2010
268 pages

IT IS astonishing, if not paradoxical, that historians writing about Russia have attached so little significance to space. There is hardly any other place where everyday experience and academic perception are separated by such a wide chasm as in Russia. There is not a single report from people traveling through Russia that does not speak of the breadth and size of the country, the natural features and their cultural implications – sometimes with accurate observations, sometimes leading the reader astray into all manner of speculation. However, we know dozens of histories that discuss all sorts of social and cultural processes and sometimes deal with the most exotic topics, yet do not discuss the most obvious thing: the sheer expanse of the territory, or the zones of extreme cold. But is it even possible to write a history of Russia without starting from these basic experiences, and is it possible to get an idea of life and death in Soviet work camps without speaking of the cold? Speaking about space is considered to be naturalism, and understanding history as defined not only by time but also by space is all too quickly misunderstood as determinism.

THEREFORE, MARK BASSIN, Christopher Ely, and Melissa K. Stockdale did us a great service when they organized a conference devoted to the topic "Space, Place, and Power in Modern Russia", the proceedings of which have now been published in one volume. Instead of delivering an ordinary commemorative publication for Abbot Gleason, in whose honor the conference was held, the authors have presented a collection of multifaceted and stimulating essays that exemplify what a history book can achieve when it always keeps the spatial dimension in mind. What Nick Baron a few years ago called "a new spatial history of Russia" is, according to the editors in their foreword, not quite so new: after all, prominent Russian historians, particularly Vasily O. Klyuchevsky, have considered space, especially physical geographic space, to be of central importance, and have interpreted the genesis of the Russian Empire as the history of progressive colonization, as a product of imperial space. The editors rightly point out that when this is considered, this "new spatial history" is indeed not so new; however, they do not explain how it came about that the spatial dimension has disappeared in the most important narratives of Russian history – in Russia as well as in the West. In Soviet history books space was categorically reduced in the main to "political system" or "economic geography"; in Western history books it was dealt with under the rubric "environment" – usually in the introductory chapters dealing with geography and climate.



SPACE IS, HOWEVER, in the newer reading of Edward Soja, Derek Gregory, Henri Lefebvre, and others, not only geographic space but also historic-social-cultural space; not only a passive stage or a closed container, but lived, produced, "created" space, which knows genesis as well as decline. The editors refer to the boom in mostly ideological conceptions of space in post-Soviet Russia, and point out the vacuum that the one-sided Soviet-Marxist fixation on production and political control had left behind. How extraordinarily innovative and productive a sociologically informed local history could be had been demonstrated by the post-revolutionary revival of *kraevedenie* (local studies) – for example the work of Ivan Grevs and Nikolai Antsiferov, who in many respects were the contemporaries of Fernand Braudel, but in Russia itself were quickly forgotten and repressed (Antsiferov spent many years in the Gulag), and in the West were never recognized. Only the Eurasian school with its innovative and also idiosyncratic theoretical approach is acknowledged (without reference to any others) in the essay by Mark Bassin.

The principal advantage of the present volume does not, however, lie in a critical review of Russian historiography from the point of view of an analysis of its "spatial atrophy" (Carl Schmitt), but in the exemplary demonstration of concrete, sometimes brilliant, field studies. Each of these studies provides proof of the explanatory power of history written with a consciousness of space and place. John Randolph's study of the main route from St. Petersburg to Moscow shows how a specific spatial corridor was able to come to represent the whole country – that is, Russia – in the eyes of other countries. At the same time, it is a marvelous contribution to the history of Russian mobility. Richard Stites has established, with his very clear and extremely complex study, that the ballroom is the place of society in both the capital and the provinces. Patricia Herlihy shows how the effects of the reports of the American Eugene Schuyler molded the Western understanding of Russian Turkestan. Robert Argenbright's contribution about the agit-trains and agit-ships that brought Soviet power to the provinces – at least in terms of propaganda – during the civil war is a fascinating study of the production of Soviet territoriality in a space that was not yet fully under control.

IN THE THIRD section of the volume, too, we can see the possibilities of history written with a consciousness of space. Christopher Ely reads urban space as a "document" of the era of Alexander I, and Sergei I. Zhuk interprets the transformation of the spiritual, even "holy landscape" of Ukraine during the last part of the Tsarist Empire. Cathy A. Frierson analyzes the radical change of the cityscape dominated by churches and monasteries in post-Soviet Vologda. Isa A. Kirchenbaum reads the changes in street names and public spaces as an indicator of social transformation.

Above all, it is the case studies that show what a "new spatial history" could achieve. There, too, it becomes clear that from this perspective the supply of sources available for writing history increases enormously – street names, architectural styles of buildings, public spaces, interiors, and so on – and that the repertoire of types of research and presentation is changing in the direction of observation and exploration of spaces – which after all cannot be understood solely by reading texts and archive documents.

This reviewer finds it somewhat regrettable that the literature available for space history outside Anglo-Saxon and American literature was not taken into account, and also that there is no mention of pioneer works of "a new spatial history avant la lettre" – such as Roger Pethybridge's study on the importance of the railway network for the spread of the Russian Revolution. ■

karl schlögel

On the desirability of industrial capitalism and autocracy.
A Russian road to modernization

Francis W. Wcislo
Tales of Imperial Russia
The Life and Times of Sergei Witte 1849–1915

Oxford: Oxford University Press
2011
314 pages

Ilya Repin's large oil painting, *Ceremonial Session of the State Council*, hangs at the Russian Museum in St. Petersburg in a spacious, sunken gallery (above: 400 x 877 cm). Bigger than most battle paintings, the oil covers an entire long wall. The State Council, a sort of combined senate and supreme court in autocratically governed Russia, is receiving a speech by Minister of the Interior von Plehve, who was later murdered. The time is a year or two into the 1900s, and the State Council is celebrating its tenth year of existence. Grand dukes and high-ranking dignitaries listen apathetically to the speaker standing in front of them. The people in the picture corresponded to actual living people; the artist made detailed studies of the individuals, some of which cover the other walls of the gallery. Of the men in these drawings, all but one are in uniform. The exception is Sergei Witte, the Tsar's minister of finance. He is portrayed in a white, three-piece suit, his gaze moving beyond the room, a man of the new era, being regarded by his master with a hint of displeasure.

A SIMILAR REPIN portrait of Witte, painted a few years later, hangs in the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow. It adorns the cover of the biography by Francis W. Wcislo, *Tales of Imperial Russia*. If Dominic Lieven allowed a detail from the monumental painting in St. Petersburg to be the cover illustration for his major study of the ruling classes in late Imperial Russia[1], Wcislo has, with his choice of both cover art and artist, emphasized that this person, who was generally regarded under Nicholas and his predecessor as the greatest Russian statesman of his time, must receive a worthy and fitting representation. He, this Witte, was later known as "Russia's Bismarck" and the German "Iron Chancellor" was doubtlessly someone Witte considered a role model. But just like Bismarck, whose leadership of the country was strongly tied to and dependent on his king and kaiser, and who fell hard when a new ruler took the throne, Witte's status as the first among the Tsar's liege men became untenable about ten years after the death of Alexander III, when Witte, then the prime minister, had no choice but to shoulder responsibility for the Russian defeat at the hands of the Japanese, the peace negotiations after the war, and the civil unrest among the Russian working class. He was first given the title of count and then his walking papers, relegated to an obscure role as an adviser in the Imperial treasury administration.

During the last ten relatively uneventful years of his life, he dictated lengthy memoirs aimed at vindicating himself in the eyes of posterity and defending his intimate collaboration with Alexander. He no doubt fantasized about a comeback. Such a notion never would have crossed the bristly and indecisive Nicholas's mind. His father and predecessor had been a relatively crude, uneducated fellow who liked Witte's objective and candid ways; in his memoirs, the slanderous and heavy-handed minister would deal harshly with his contemporary colleagues and competitors for Imperial grace and favor. It is precisely these published memoirs that Wcislo has used as the primary source for his depiction of the ultimate careerist in a multinational, caesaro-bureaucratic mega-empire, which throughout Witte's active years was in a state of constant expansion and seemingly entrenched backwardness. His task became to employ the oppressive tactics of the despot to keep all the disparate parts in some kind of balance and to use the state baton to direct the flows of capital, especially foreign capital, towards their right utilization. He became the conductor of organized state capitalism, a social engineer of extraordinary skill under extremely authoritarian conditions. It is the dreams and fantasies of such a person, his ambitions and self-image, that Wcislo is trying to capture. It is Sergei Witte's own story, or stories, that he is seeking to construct and interpret.

Under autocracy, political leadership necessarily took on a bureaucratic form, and Witte seems to come relatively close to the archetype of a rationally acting Weberian civil servant. His background and education were ideally suited to the purpose. His forebears on both the maternal and paternal sides had been Imperial officials in the provinces, just a touch below the highest level. His father was of the lesser nobility, with roots in the Baltic-German lands and, further back, in the Netherlands, while his mother was descended from a Russian princely family in decline (the Dolgorukis). As aristocrats, they were enlightened, internationally minded, and had a clear understanding of their role as Europeans – Russians, that is – in their dealings with conquered peoples in the Caucasus and Central Asia: one must certainly tame and civilize, but the goal was not to create equitable relations, but rather to regulate into existence hierarchies that would endure and ensure the function of traditional rule. A kind of frontier atmosphere prevailed. This was essentially the same view embraced by the governments of other European colonial powers; the difference, of course, being that the empire of the Russian realm was contained within its own borders and not across the seas. Accordingly, the disruptive elements on the periphery had more serious repercussions for the exercise of central power than they did in Western imperialist nations. This, in turn, demanded a completely different overview, control, and subtle sensitivity. The slightest error could be devastating and end up devouring resources sorely needed elsewhere for investments in things like industry and functioning markets. As Geoffrey Hosking has pointed out[2], the suppressed regions could be given far too much attention at the expense of the titular nation. This view was actually shared by conservative officials (in Russia and elsewhere), while the more liberally minded stood out as the most dedicated expansionists.

AFTER MISSPENT SECONDARY school years in Tbilisi, Witte was enrolled at the university in Odessa in 1866. Rather than study law, he chose science and mathematics, concentrating on the latter subject. Witte made rapid progress and seriously considered becoming a scientist, a choice of occupation his aristocratic kin considered unthinkable for a person of his social standing. Instead, he turned to business and what was then, around 1870, perhaps the most dynamic industry in Russia, the railroad. The building and operation of rail transport was critical in a gigantic territorial state – to ensure the smooth functioning of markets for surplus goods, to connect the various parts of the realm, and to ensure that its problem children could be kept in check by military means. Witte's theoretical knowledge was precisely what was needed here. Mathematics was necessary to calculate things like the strength of the rails, transport speeds, suitable traffic frequency, energy use, and optimum passenger numbers. And this well-educated scion of the nobility soon advanced to the position of chief executive for a railway corporation headquartered in Kiev that was intended to connect the European parts of the realm with Asia. In an even more central position, it was he who put his signature on the mighty Trans-Siberian Railway. He was, in a nutshell, a technical success, but also a commercial one. In addition, he had obvious intellectual inclinations – an aunt of his had written noted novels in the first half of the 19th century and Elena Blavatskaia, later active abroad as the famous theosophical guru ("Madame Blavatsky") who could make the spirits talk and tables dance, was his cousin. In other words: he knew how to behave in the drawing room.

WHEN ALEXANDER III called him to serve in the government offices in St. Petersburg in 1889, Witte was a lion of society, but he was also drawing an incredibly high salary. As he moved up with blinding speed to one of the highest ranking classes (genuine cabinet minister), those at the highest levels made sure to compensate him financially for the losses he made when he left his executive position – a flagrant case of favoritism, it would appear. But Alexander needed Witte. And Witte believed that massively strong imperial power of the kind Alexander wielded was necessary if industrial capitalism was to have a chance in Russia. In the 1880s he had published a couple of economic/political tracts, in the fiscal tradition of Friedrich List, in which he argued vehemently in favor of state interventionism and trade protectionism as unconditional prerequisites for a country with a large and pitiable population to rise out of underdevelopment and lethargy. A little state-provided flogging was what was needed. And yet repression could not be the primary means to the end. Investments in public infrastructure released positive energies that could attract enterprising men. This revolution from above à la Bismarck founded a tradition in Russia that was to endure and be further developed under new political conditions once the story of tsardom had come to an end. With Witte, one might say, science came to power – that is, to the court – in Russia. The communist rulers and courtiers would also lay claim to a scientific approach in their behemoth social experiment ("scientific socialism" and "the technical-scientific revolution") and in this respect (and others) one can clearly see a continuity from one epoch to another. Unlike so many American presidents, educated in the law, the Soviet leaders Brezhnev and Kosygin were both engineers.[3] In their own way, they were technocrats, like Witte, and members of a "new class", a socialist, ruling bureaucracy that had only rudimentary similarities to the governing leaders of an imagined workers' state.[4] And Russia is still having difficulty shedding this political autocratic heritage.

NOW, OUR COUNT Witte was by no means a liberal or a democrat. Francis Wcislo makes it clear that Witte did not believe in any sort of division of power and was convinced that autocracy and industrial capitalism were not only compatible, but equally desirable. By rewarding technical expertise and bureaucratic skill instead of connections, in the modernist manner, he may have contributed to alienating the old aristocracy, which had long held an unquestioned monopoly on top posts in the army and public administration, and resented working alongside the new, middle-class elites, from Imperial rule and undermined faith in it – an argument put forth by P. A. Zaionchkovsky and Roberta Thompson Manning. He seems, however, not to have been a sworn enemy of corruption, at times seeing out-and-out bribery as the lubricant needed to keep the machinery running and get people moving. The author argues that Witte also resembled his idol Prince Bismarck "in his continuing obsession with the press and his manipulation of its opinion through cash subsidies to journalists out of ministerial funds". This statesman was a hard worker, an assiduous writer and convener of meetings, and in that respect he may have differed from the old East Elbe Junker who was wont to take leave of his governmental duties for months at a time to rest on his estate. Nor was Witte quite the lover of food and drink that Bismarck was.[5] He was the inspiration for and initiator of the major pan-Russian world expo in Nizhni Novgorod in 1896, intended to put Russia on display as a competitive industrial and imperial nation, a model to learn from, and this undeniably says something about the breadth of his contribution.[6]

This book about Sergei Witte – about his life and times and work, his thoughts and reflections – is written in an exquisite, perhaps occasionally studied, literary language. It is probably also a sign of the times in historiography that the author has taken the trouble to highlight the many linguistically gifted and scientifically prominent women – researchers, like his grandmother, in one or two cases – who were in Witte's intimate sphere during his formative years. ■

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REFERENCES

1 *Russia's Rulers under the Old Regime*, New Haven & London 1989.

2 *Russia: People and Empire 1552–1917*, London 1997.

3 I am grateful to Professor Gunnar Åselius, Stockholm, for this observation. As Åselius recounts in his dissertation, *The "Russian Menace" to Sweden: The Belief System of a Small Power Security Èlite in the Age of Imperialism* (Stockholm 1994), Witte traveled in 1894 to the Arctic coast to open a Russian Atlantic port (which was extremely interesting to the government in Stockholm). The Swedish-Norwegian consul, Conrad Falsen, reported that Witte, at the banquet in Archangel in July 1894, aware that the Swedish-Norwegian consul was there, had proposed a toast to the monarch of the United Kingdoms of Sweden and Norway, Oscar II, for being such a good neighbor. Eleven years later, the union between Norway and Sweden was dissolved.

4 See here the discussion in Robert V. Daniels, *The Rise and Fall of Communism in Russia*, New Haven & London 2007, pp. 76–82; see also Moshe Lewin, *The Soviet Century* (Gregory Elliott, ed.), London & New York 2005, particularly chapter 17, "The 'Administrators': Bruised but Thriving".

5 Otto von Bismarck's tendency towards laziness has most recently been underscored by Jonathan Steinberg in *Bismarck: A Life*, Oxford 2011.

6 Karl Schlögel, "Weltmarkt an der Wolga. Nischni Nowgorod 1896 oder Russlands Aufbruch ins 20. Jahrhundert", in *Lettre International*, Vol. 94 (fall 2011).

Love, money, and murder.
A remarkable family history

Mary-Kay Wilmers
The Eitingons
A Twentieth-Century Story

London: Faber & Faber
2009
XI + 476 pages

[B]ut when I reach for universal terms and try to say something about the history of the twentieth century I find that instead I've gone back to my childhood and to the fact – once so important – that my brother and Hitler were both born on 20 April.

MOST PEOPLE in the today's world were born and raised before the new millennium and can bear witness to their biographies. However, with the passage of time, the drama of the horrifying 20th century becomes more distant and professional historians claim a greater stake, so individual lives tend to merge into larger patterns. Still, in their self-presentations, most people have distinct, though distorted and doctored, private memories of this short period in the history of mankind. At the same time, a person lives not only his own life as an individual but also, consciously and subconsciously, the lives of his contemporaries and their epoch.

At the heart of the common history depicted in *The Eitingons* lies the October or Russian Revolution, an event of the utmost significance that perturbed friend, foe, and non-aligned (neutral, third position, or whatever the case might have been) – and in its unfolding molded the peoples, nations, and battlegrounds of a world these creatures inhabited for almost 75 years. The murder of Leo Trotsky was in many respects the 20th century's most fateful assassination; without question far more important than the murder of Kirov, and fully comparable to the 1914 killing in Sarajevo of Grand Duke Franz Ferdinand, not to mention the killings of the Kennedys, Martin Luther King, or Che Guevara in the New World, despite the global tourist industry's having made the most of the latter.

THE END OF THE Soviet Empire and the disappearance of a (potential) world elicited a wave of histories, both individual and collective, cultural or economic, political and social. Berlin and Moscow in particular became popular destinations for researchers, journalists, pundits, travelers, and other semi-professionals searching for their pasts, and for ours. Archives and peoples contributed to the scrutiny of historical incidents as well as of "longues durées", individual characters, human institutions, and other artifacts. For a short while, almost everything was open to inquiry, at least in the former center of the Second World. This was long before "Wikileaks" and the triumph of virtual media messages. Hence, the post-Soviet period has been very different from the 1980s and previous decades, when either détente or cold war was on the agenda. During a sojourn in Washington D.C. in the late 1980s, I happened to follow a polemic in the *New York Times Book Review* and the *New York Review of Books* between two American ex-communists, along with several letters to these magazines, on the links among Stalin's designated Leo Trotsky stalker in Turkey and Mexico; the cosmopolitan Jew Leonid Eitingon, of humble Belarusian origins; the Freudian psychoanalyst Max Eitingon, a member of a wealthy Russian émigré family who lived in Germany, Palestine, and the US; and the financing of Trotsky's annihilation. "Intellectuals and Assassins: Annals of Stalin's Killerati" was the chilling title of the literary analytical turncoat Stephen Schwartz's opening article. Another ex-commie and eminent historian, Theodore Draper, objected that the most likely non-Soviet financier, the American multimillionaire Motty Eitingon, was a mere fellow traveler. Draper was not able to provide convincing evidence because relevant documents were still inaccessible.

WHEN, AT THE AGE of 71, Mary-Kay Wilmers, editor of the *London Review of Books*, made her controversial debut as an author after twenty years of research with *The Eitingons: A Twentieth Century Story* (a paperback edition appeared in late 2010), I was reminded of this exchange as she took the polemic as her starting point: "If you set aside Schwartz's more lurid suggestions", she writes, "the notion isn't entirely far-fetched even now, and it certainly wouldn't have seemed so if you'd been a Russian émigré living in Paris in the 1930s." However, Draper is one of the first to be mentioned in the book's acknowledgements "for his generosity". The mystery is there from the beginning, as is "generosity", and Wilmers tries to get at both in her collective maternal family biography. This is a very personal yet in certain ways disturbingly impersonal analysis of some "known unknowns", which ends up by revealing some family secrets and giving some global events and epics a new twist.

The Eitingons opens with family gossip and letters before moving on to the Soviet archives of the 1990s, first focusing on Moscow, where the descendants of the infamous killerati still live, then moving on to Minsk. In between, we are told a fascinating story that begins in the historical shtetls close to Lukashenko's Mogilev on the border between contemporary Belarus, Ukraine, and Russia, continues in Austria-Hungary and Russia, extends simultaneously eastward and westward in Mexico as well as in Harbin ("the Chicago of the East") and Constantinople, and also in Leipzig and Łódź (where the author's mother was born), Madrid and Paris of the 1920s and '30s. It is the ups and downs of revolution, popular fronts and world communism, the Chinese and Spanish civil wars, Stalin and the Communist International, the capitalist fur trade from Siberia to New York and its glamorous family life, spiced with European psychoanalysis in Berlin and Vienna. The story ends in the 1990s and the new millennium's first decade among family members in Moscow and to some extent Geneva and London. That the Moscow Eitingons are her family is still an open question for Wilmers herself, as well as for her new acquaintances, which adds to the entertainment and uncertainty throughout the book. Its structure supports her enterprise: theoretically well aware of space, time, languages, and the factuality of objective reality, it disdains straightforward account-giving in favor of at least three parallel chronologies, framed by the author's relationship with her mother, beginning with adolescence and ending "At the Undertaker's" long after the main characters have passed on. It is also rhythmical: its five sections, covering more than 440 pages, run smoothly on the whole, like essays by the most frequent contributors to her London paper, interrupted at times by chapters that are closer to that paper's forthright book reviews or regular diary. *The Eitingons* is the work of an editor-cum-researcher, though there are a few places where Wilmers would have benefitted from a second opinion (for instance, the sentence "My family did some ugly things but I understand why they did them", however crucial it may be, occurs twice, on page 421 and again on page 441).

IN THE EARLY 20th century, as European markets declined in importance, the first-class furs that Siberian hunters had been supplying for hundreds of years were mostly shipped across the Atlantic. Trade was free apart from a brief US embargo after 1948. Although no family or company archives seem to exist, the available historical records make it possible to outline the history of Russian-Soviet fur trade and the role of Jewish people within this business. The research literature is comprehensive; sources were available before 1989 and many of them have been re-examined firsthand. Wilmers has done her homework; the bibliography runs to nine pages. Moreover, she does not hesitate to include family anecdotes from late 19th century Eastern Europe – her ancestors were the "Rothschilds of Leipzig". It is this mix of high and low that makes the book such a vivid encounter with the living past. The pre-revolutionary origins of the family relationships are set out quite clearly, at least on the future Western male side, while the Eitingons of the future East are more elusive, though pictures of Leonid with siblings, father, and grandfather are reproduced. Having made the best of the archives, Wilmers has recourse to Leonid's descendants' memories from the early 1920s, the published autobiography of a Soviet KGB general who was Leonid's long-standing superior and protector, and a Brazilian aunt who recalled a story about a poor, young orphan, cousin or second cousin ("brother" in Russian), who once lived in the house of the rich aunt and on leaving forgot to take the revolutionary pamphlets which he had hidden under his bed. But Wilmers does not rest content with the fact that Leonid and Max came from roughly the same village in old Pale, and may have shared an apartment in Moscow for a short while some years after the revolution. The records clearly show that two male members of the wealthy Eitingon family were arrested in 1918 in Moscow but were soon released after having raised a substantial sum of money. Meanwhile, the female Eitingons who lived in Moscow during the upheavals were "playing cards". The men tried to carry on their business and hold on to what they treasured most: personal contacts. One of the two, on learning of an impending second arrest that would call for an even larger sum, left for Stockholm and crossed Sweden to sail on the SS Stockholm from Göteborg to New York. However, no anecdotes or rumors from Sweden have survived, and, presumably, we will never know whether the fugitive met the "Rothschilds of Gothenburg". Otherwise, documents and tales go hand in hand in Wilmers's narrative, which mentions Raoul Wallenberg once, and notes that Sweden was the origin of one of Leonid's many forged passports.

ILLUSTRATION: KARIN SUNVISSON

The family's fur traders and their complicated relationship with both American and Soviet authorities before the Second World War are colorfully depicted. They are Mary-Kay Wilmers's intimate kin, in particular her great-uncle, the charming moneymaker Motty Eitingon (1885–1956) and his global entourage. She has her own childhood memories of this giant, and is not impressed. For three decades, Motty was the world's leading fur trader, living on a grand scale with a correspondingly outgoing social life. Wilmers is circumspect about his dealings with the Bolsheviks and the FBI; her account is mainly based on the latter's files. It seems that he may have financed the early Communist Party of the Soviet Union – and thereby also the instigator of world revolution, the Comintern – particularly in 1926 when the young Soviet regime awarded him, now an American citizen, a contract that for a decade or two gave him a monopoly in the fur trade. He had a considerable number of companies – mostly run by relatives – at critical locations around the world, above all in the Northern hemisphere, not unlike the Rothschilds or the Sassoons. Well-oiled top-level contacts characterized this early global oligarch, and he needed them to cope with market forces, in particular during the Great Depression. The FBI, which this book implies was rather amateurish compared to its principal rival, continued to haunt him but finally concluded that he "is not pro-Soviet but is a shrewd businessman who posed a pro-Soviet front to gain a choice position with the Russians in order to acquire Russian furs and make a fortune". At the same time, he was an extraordinarily generous family patriarch, and was also able to buy off striking American trade unions led by another Russian émigré, the red Ben Gold from Bessarabia. On one occasion, however, it was the other branch of American unionism, the ferociously anti-communist AFL, that took Motty Eitingon to the FBI, but Eitingon had cleared the deal with Herbert Hoover. He was a constant gambler and continued in the same vein until his various enterprises lost contact with prospective consumers. That brings us to the McCarthy hysteria of the late 1940s and early 1950s.

WHILE MOTTY EITINGON may or may not have provided funds for V. I. Lenin, another family member certainly did so for Sigmund Freud. This is the even more extravagant but much more secretive Max Eitingon (1881–1943), son of the first fur tycoon Chaim ("the Rothschild of Leipzig" who financed the construction of the city's first orthodox synagogue), whose daughter married her and Max's second cousin Motty (he later divorced her). All Max had to do "was to shake the money tree and watch the moidores come down", Wilmer writes boldly. To her, he is a more distant

Continued.
Love, money, and murder

relative, one of an older generation of the author's intimates and well remembered for his charming manners. He had a taste for secular Yiddish culture, from the classics to modern music. He had a bad stammer, and his interests differed from those of the rest of the male tribe. He spent the first decade of the new century in Zürich as a medical student devoted to psychiatry, first with Jung, then as a confidant of Freud, which made Jung jealous. Max Eitingon underwent the first ever training analysis (by Freud) and later organized free analytical sessions in Berlin until the Nazis closed his practice. He was remembered by those of his clients who survived *Kristallnacht* and the subsequent hell. After a meeting with Max's father, Freud wrote to Max that Chaim looked "very healthy and rejuvenated, and monosyllabic and impatient as, I assume, is in his nature". In 1926, Max became president of the International Psychoanalytic Association; he was also a respected administrator, financier, and member of the Freudian clan. In the interwar period, he traveled extensively, for example to Moscow and Paris, where he became involved in a court hearing about the murder of a Russian émigré general. This was in 1937, and another Eitingon was now in charge of numerous special operations in nearby Spain. It is no coincidence that Max was of special interest to Schwartz, who, like so many others, came to despise the divan and its practitioners and associate it with darkness at noon. Moreover, Max had been impoverished by the Depression and he and his wife settled for Palestine. Much more than Motty, whom the FBI cleared, Max is still seen as a culprit by others besides the deceased Schwartz. Did Max, when his family fortune failed, support the Freudians from clandestine resources funneled from Red headquarters? Were they basically useful idiots? Wilmers, with her background in modernist high culture, has a weakness for the (psycho-)analytic, which quick-wittedly leads her to refute such accusations and defend Max, "wielding her pen like an ice pick", as one critic put it. Max is her newfound intimate kin. While Motty was a fabulous, though rather simple, capitalist, Max was the ultimate man of world. The Freudian slip belongs to the 20th century's historical drama, and to this very day, guilt by association is in the interests of many involved here. To her credit, this avenue is not chosen by Wilmers.

INSTEAD, MARY-KAY WILMERS'S sensitivity is put to the test when it comes to Leonid Eitingon (1899–1981) and his family, related to her either rather distantly or not at all (most likely the former). For Leonid, who was without question Jewish, and came from poor circumstances, the October revolution and its aftermath proved to be the chance of a lifetime, or the beginning and end of a career. He joined the Checka as a trainee in Minsk, partly changed his name to Naum Aleksandrovich, and after a few years settled in Moscow for future global adventures with the GPU/NKVD/OGPU/NKGB/MGB. After a brief start with Anna Shulman in Minsk, he established the rest of his family in Moscow, with two, three, or perhaps four "wives" (he had children with Anna and two others). Towards the end of the book one gets the impression of a rather close-knit union of four children and one stepdaughter from Harbin living in his flat in Moscow, altogether three women and two men. Things had been written about this dangerously bad guy of the old days before Wilmers uncovered new material from archives and confronted his descendants with it. Through Leonid, the drama of the "short twentieth century" is re-enacted, from Lenin's funeral to Leonid's rehabilitation in the aftermath of Gorbachev's dissolution of the empire. Leonid is also given a key role in the memoirs of his KGB superior, General Sudoplatov, published after the end of the Soviet Union (in English by 1994). Moreover, Leonid Eitingon got his own Russian biographer in 2003, a decade after his posthumous rehabilitation. Leonid was awarded the Order of Lenin in 1941 and Stalin publicly declared that "as long as I live not a hair of his head shall be touched". Nevertheless, at the end of the tyrant's life Leonid was first a victim of the Doctors' Plot and then, after a brief interlude in freedom in 1953, spent another twelve years in prison in Vladimir as a "Beria man". Back in Moscow, he spent the rest of his life fighting for his rehabilitation – in vain. The new material about Leonid adds a lot to the overall story, but less to the family connections, which remain dubious, though not impossible. These three Eitingon life stories are intertwined to such a degree that Schwartz's suspicions might have been confirmed in the early 1990s once the archives had been opened. Wilmers does her best to establish the remarkable connections but most of the links still seem uncertain. Maybe another trawl in the KGB archives will provide the necessary evidence. Were Max and/or Motty more or less directly involved in, or at least aware of, Leonid's secret operations, or are the bonds that tie much more layered? At least until the archives tell us more, the second option seems the most plausible.

Be that as it may, the book contains another story that is of special importance for the overall account: the female members of the family who throughout the book provide the oral information and thereby add several mini-biographies-cum-chronologies to the plot. Those who are still with us are introduced as part of the present yet with a past in a different era. The central figure is of course the author herself, whose presence in the book has amused journalistic reviewers and annoyed more traditional narrators. On her mother's side, Mary-Kay is the granddaughter of the wealthy Eitingons of the 1920s and 30s, while her father's side represents impeccable Anglo-German-Jewish wealth (solid, prosperous business, no gamblers, fluent in French). Until he passed away in 1980, she declares that she adored her rational father and his orderly family while the Eitingons with their heavy accent could be rather embarrassing for a young American girl growing up in Manhattan's Upper East Side. Thus, most of her childhood was spent with her mother's family in New York, where Motty and his second wife babysat for her younger brother. Fortunately, she escaped to Europe as her father advanced in his multinational firm. At 18, she went to Oxford to learn Russian and in the late 1950s from there to Moscow with a university group under a college don. The story could have remained untold as the future author went into publishing in London – Faber, *the Times Literary Supplement* and *The Listener* – and did not use her Russian until the early 1990s, when she started to meet a recently settled Belorussian woman in order to recapture the second or third family language by exchanging (female) life-histories with an unrelated migrant from the diseased Second World.

AT THAT TIME, Leonid, Max, and Motty were all long gone. So were most of the elders apart from a few women with rather faded memories from Leipzig, Łódź, or Moscow. It is her cousins and second cousins who are acknowledged as informants, four out of six named Eitingon (three Russians), those married into, or out of, the family to distinguish them from other interviewees. It is the two Moscow Eitingons, who together with the rest of the family in the capital took on the burden of rehabilitating Leonid when he had passed away, who stand out and remind us of the complicated nature of the present past to which most persons now living belong. A special place in the book is accorded Zoya Zarubina, Leonid's stepdaughter whom he brought back from Harbin to Moscow together with his second wife Olga (Naumova, Zoya's mother from her first marriage to Vasily Zarubin, a Chekist like his wife and her second husband). Zoya is portrayed as the author's "Eastern" equivalent, who lived through the Sputnik/Gagarin years, the best decade for children of the elite (though for them the 1990s probably meant other and in many cases even better opportunities) as well as for ordinary Soviets. Zoya and the author met in the early 1990s and continued to talk over the years, though Zoya's tale first appeared in 1999 in an interview book with an American journalist. Once a low-ranking member of the Special Forces, she had to leave when her stepfather was imprisoned. She survived in relative freedom, trained academically in foreign languages and maintained her network. She was a schoolmate of Alexander Shelepin, head of the KGB during the late Khrushchev and early Brezhnev era, and remained in close touch with the party hierarchy during and after her stepfather's incarceration. In Soviet parlance, she is a woman of steel, the real survivor of a cruel system, also after its collapse, no bitterbitch.

In Wilmers's narrative, she is the fourth main character of this collective plot, the author herself being number five or six. Other characters include her mother as well as the two Galia Eitingons in Moscow, to say nothing of the author's Western aunts and cousins, who appear frequently as soon as Max or Motty is in the limelight. Missing (apart from the younger Galia) are those who grew up in the 1970s, with their own memories of the Cold War and the late Soviet era. There is an invisible divide here. Nevertheless, women occupy a special position in this collective family biography: the second sex and the longest of all revolutions are essential parts of this microscopic yet grand narrative of the previous century. Their presence also makes possible an East-West comparison of female emancipation and gender equality; the class societies themselves as well as male domination and sexual emancipation/liberation come into view – the broader spectrum of human existence during this period. Moreover, life in the upper echelons of New York, female life in particular, was very different from what emerged during the last decades of the Soviet Union. While female Eitingons in the West went from an untroubled homebound existence to a rather comfortable outward living (for instance they never spoke of money because it was always there), their Moscow relatives experienced fundamental anxiety and, in First or Second World terms, relative impoverishment, despite belonging to the nomenklatura. Still, it is striking that Leonid's relatives held on to a four-room apartment in central Moscow throughout his prison years. Not that the enlightened rules were fully implemented during the short Soviet siècle – not at all. Nevertheless, the everyday life of women improved in some ways in the latter part of the Soviet era, reflecting the formal goals of the early revolutionary period. Domestic violence, for instance, was kept at bay, as were alcoholism, hooliganism, and unemployment. Prostitution was restricted though buying sex was never banned. Human gains were achieved during the Soviet epoch and Putin, Medvedev and their successors will have a long way to go before the civilizing process is back on track. Wilmers harbors no illusions about Soviet life, but has the capacity to be measured and is not overwhelmed by loyalty to her Western environment.

FURTHERMORE, THE BOOK has a lot to say about Jewish life – orthodox and secular, liberal and socialist – before, during, and after the mass extermination in Central and Eastern European. This was the Jewish century, when the sons and daughters of this tribe ended up either in the camps, the kibbutz, or the US as the three male characters of this story neatly demonstrate. In the book, there are also oceans of love and affection – brotherly, childish, familial, fatherly, parental, and sisterly – that would make any sociologist of emotions green with envy. Loyalty is close by. Whatever there is of Freud, hatred is suppressed to the last drop. Then there is, of course, a lot of calculation and cold-bloodedness. Composure. Deceit. Desire. The libido in all its guises is in no sense confined to the sons and daughters of Sarah and Abraham, but it is they who occupy the stage from the first page to the last (though the book is not explicit about the Jewishness of Zoya). The 20th century fate of the Jewish people pervades the book, the many who left few signs after their extermination, and the few – by no means all of them wealthy – who managed to escape. Leonid's centrality entails frequent mention of Jewish communists: most of those who ultimately fled were caught by either side, most often their own, with known ends. The everyday practices and rituals of Jewish life are also a recurrent theme. For instance, the secular Freud remarked that there was something truly Jewish about present-giving when Max Eitingon did him a favor or sent another package of Dostoyevsky. The gifts and reciprocities are part of a larger picture of suffering, affection, and ambitions. In particular, Wilmers touches on the affluent Jewish afterlife in America and Israel-Palestine in ways that do not always conform to what is currently deemed cultivated. She is never mealy-mouthed.

FOR THE ACADEMIC SPECIALIST, whether historian or social scientist, *The Eitingons* is a troubling book. The puzzle is there, but its pieces do not always fit together. It is unquestionably analytical; full of pertinent questions but few definite answers; well-read in contemporary business, intellectual and military-political history. Nevertheless, any synthesis is so far fictitious. A close (or syntopical, in Mortimer Adler's terminology) reading reveals an understanding of the past as well as the present world as uncultivated, yet nevertheless entailing a differentiated though sequential, never linear, civilizing process full of action and human experience, aspirations, emotions and expectations. The author can be seen as a female John Scotson (in *Outsiders*) taking part in an investigation of human relationships under the direction of Norbert Elias. Or, she is both Scotson and Elias, writing side by side, the participating observer and the distant analyst. *The Eitingons* is definitely written for a readership wider than the traditional academy, for an educated lay public as well as a young generation with little or no personal experience and knowledge of the world before and behind the Berlin Wall. It takes nothing for granted and makes few concessions to the lazy bookworm. It is uncompromising in its search for the ways of the real world, the truth (if that word still is acceptable), where deception, inhibition and suspicion belong to the rules of the game. Her fascinating account puts some male members of the clan at center-stage but in the end, the women also stand out, though more could have been said about them. *The Eitingons* is non-fiction turned into fiction and back again, postmodern oral history at its best. And much more than that: it is love, money and, most frequently, murder during the cardinal dramas of the 20th century. ■

sven hort

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War, masculinity, and memory.
Recruited into a foreign army

Ene Kõresaar (ed.)
Soldiers of Memory
World War II and its Aftermath in Estonian Post-Soviet Life Stories

Amsterdam & New York
Rodopi 2011
441 pages

THE BOOK *Soldiers of Memory*, edited by Ene Kõresaar (University of Tartu), follows the research approach developed by an interdisciplinary group of scholars (including Kõresaar) in the book *She Who Remembers Survives* (2004)[1]. The previous publication was based on nine female life stories and included an analysis by seven researchers, five of whom are also among the authors of *Soldiers of Memory*. In spite of the similarities in the composition of the books, the more recent publication contains two important differences: it is based on male memories, and it is focused not on the whole Soviet period, but on Estonian participation in World War II. The book comprises two parts. The first part consists of the stories of eight men who were recruited or volunteered for the war or were involved in military or paramilitary activity in other ways. In the second part, eight researchers analyze the stories presented. The book thus offers the reader many opportunities to evaluate the content of the stories and to form his or her own opinion about the presentation of the war experience. The published biographical stories were written in Estonian as a response to four appeals made by the Estonian Life Stories Association and the Estonian History Archives between 1989 and 2005. In order to understand the importance of this publication, it is helpful to take into account the significance of the Estonian tradition of preserving individual memories of historical events, which the editor acknowledges in the introduction. In addition, it is worth bearing in mind that the stories discussed in the book represent the war experiences of a large group of people: about 100,000 Estonian men served in the Red Army or the German Army, or were part of other military units (for instance in the Finnish Army). The work on the reconstruction and analysis of "soldiers' memories" is a pioneering effort that became possible only after Estonian independence: memories of the Second World War as well as memories of other periods of the recent past had been heavily censored in the Soviet Union.[2] Indeed, memories were not only influenced by discourses of how to remember, but direct disciplining of the bodies (in the form of repression, rationing, or deportations) was frequently meted out to those who did not want to present the "correct" view of recent history.

The complexity of the past that is presented in this book is announced on the book cover itself: the picture placed there shows two Estonian soldiers in two different military uniforms (German and Soviet). The soldiers are portrayed close to each other, as if they are friends, not enemies. The title of the book also introduces the reader to the problems of the conflicts of remembering. The narratives of eight Estonian men presented in the book differ in style and focus, and correspond to several different contexts of remembering (this last aspect is skillfully discussed in the analytical chapters). The narratives also illustrate differences in self-positioning with respect to war experiences, as well as the complexity of choices all the narrators faced during the war. The book brings together memories of those who were recruited by the Nazi-German and Soviet military administrations (some of the narrators were recruited by both of these administrations one after the other), as well as of those who served as volunteers in the Finnish Army or spent a large part of the war as "mobilized workers" in the Soviet rear. Many of those whose memories are published in the book (or their close relatives) suffered from Soviet repression and deportation, and the deportation is frequently remembered as part of the experience of the war. The reconstruction of this complex picture of the war experience is seen by the editor of the book as very important: one of the aims of the book is to subvert the "ethnicization" of the presentation of the war produced by Estonian media (according to that simplified picture, the ethnic Russians had to represent the Soviet military experience, while ethnic Estonians were deemed to represent the German one).

THE ANALYTICAL PART IS well-grounded in source materials – most of those performing the analysis of the narratives expand the scope of their sources by bringing follow-up interviews with the narrators and their relatives into the analysis, as well as archive materials and other people's memories. Due to discrepancies in the interpretation of some historical events by the narrators and the researchers, the names of the narrators were changed for publication. The analytical chapters, however, differ significantly with respect to their use of theory: while some chapters clearly present a particular theoretical approach, others are more descriptive. From the theoretical viewpoint, chapters by Ene Kõresaar, Rutt Hinrikus, and Olaf Mertelsmann are particularly interesting. Ene Kõresaar sees the aim of her chapter as understanding "the personal significance of war for the narrator" in the cultural context of the 1990s, when Estonian veterans took part in public discussion about the past. Kõresaar uses Debbora Battaglia's term "representational economy" in order to describe the complicated process of the presentation of the "self" as a "reification" that is continually defeated in communication and competition with other voices and stories. Indeed, central to her interests are relationships between the narrator and his audience. Kõresaar also looks at problems of remembering the Soviet period through the frame of "memory of rupture" developed in her earlier works. Thus, she pays attention to the time of remembering (Boris Takk's memories were written in 1993, the period of the public discussion about the Soviet past as a time of "rupture", the period when any normal life was impossible) as well as to different "communities of memory" (like family, veterans' groups, the local community) where war memories could be presented. According to Kõresaar, Takk successfully deals with the problem of guilt (he volunteered for the German Army that occupied Estonia and served in the Waffen-SS) by using the concept of the "third way". He wrote that he joined the German Army in order to save Estonia by fighting against the Red Army. Kõresaar explains Takk's choices through his idea that "the choice made by Estonians [...] was to survive in the name of Estonian independence". Later she finds a similar strategy when Takk explains why he joined the Communist Party in the 1970s: according to the narrator, he wanted to fight the enemy from within. It is important to note here that even if the political context of remembering (in 1990s) is supposed to be radically different from the context of the event, memories about serving in the Nazi army still seem to be a stigmatizing experience. For example, another narrator, Loog, whose memories are found in the book, did not mention it at all; the information about his short military service in the German police was discovered later.

RUTT HINRIKUS, who analyzes the story of Reinhold Mirk, a Red Army officer during the Second World War, who continued to serve as an officer of the Special Estonian Military Unit until 1956, uses Aleida Assmann's concept of winners and losers. Hinrikus notes, however, that in the Estonian context the use of these concepts is more complicated and, most probably, Mirk was thinking in practical terms in both situations. At the same time, Hinrikus notes that about one half of the space of Mirk's narrative is dedicated to his experience working in the labor battalions during the first half of the war; this could be seen as a sign that that period was particularly difficult, and was filled with suffering. The scholar identifies three different scenarios according to which Mirk's narrative is composed: "victim of forced conscription into the labor battalion, soldier of the victorious army and Estonian nationalist". Hinrikus comes to the conclusion that his memories "reflect changes in the strategies of remembering the war" in Estonia.

Olaf Mertelsmann, in analyzing the memories of Boris Raag, has chosen to follow Sheila Fitzpatrick's ideas on Homo Sovieticus as a survivor. Raag gives an account of his life in the Soviet rear as a soldier who was mobilized, and presents his experience of long travel through Central Asia (like many other Estonians, he was mobilized, but was not sent to the front out of suspicions held by Soviet military leadership toward ethnic Estonian soldiers). He also describes relationships with other Estonian men in similar situations, the struggle for food, and his desertion from the army. According to Mertelsmann, Raag is "neither a victim nor a hero, but a survivor using his agency"[3].

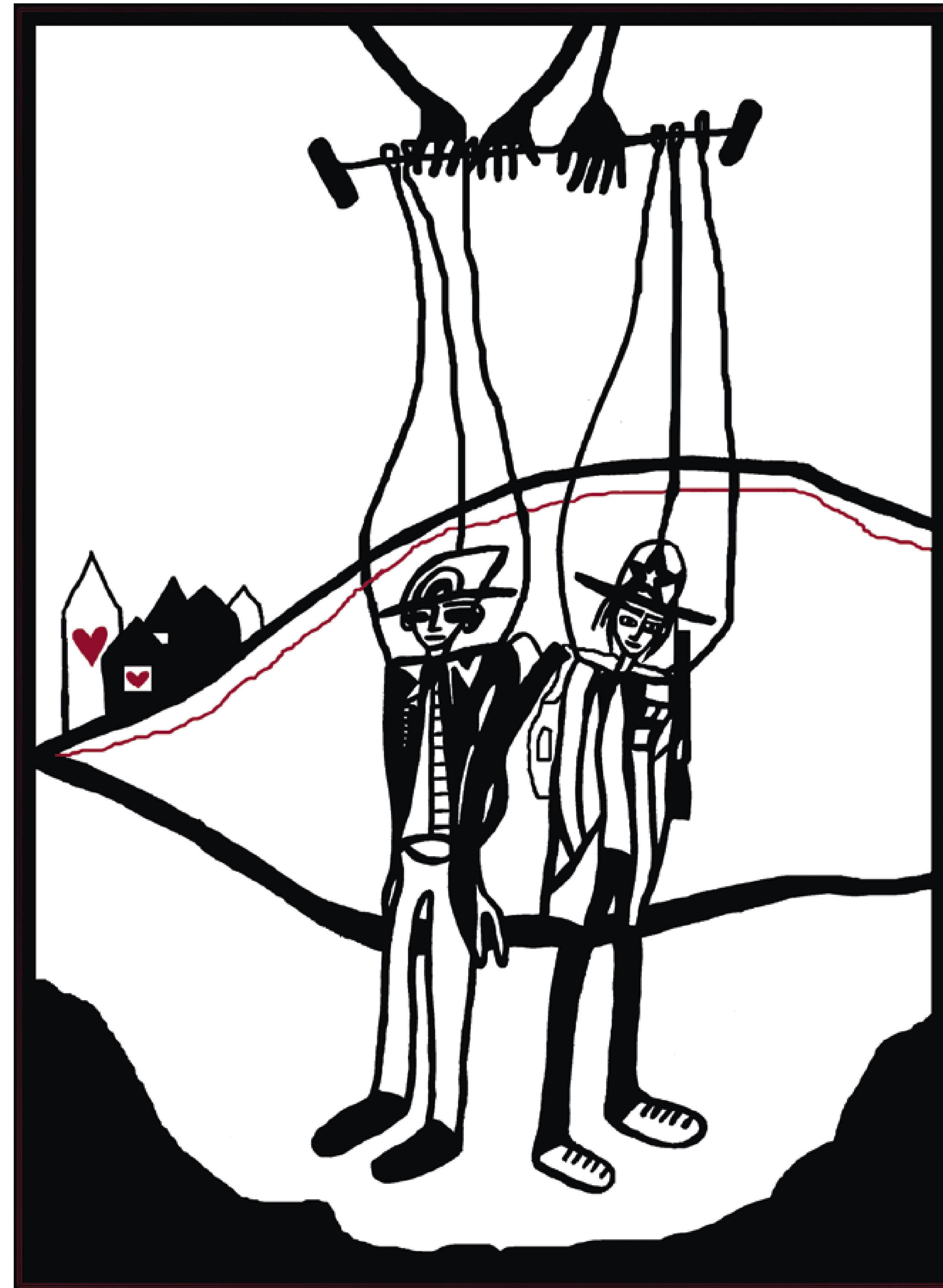

ILLUSTRATION: KATRIN STENMARK

The author pays special attention to the use of humor in the narration and indicates the possible influence of fiction on Raag's writing style.

WHAT CAN ANALYZED memories tell us about war and about men in war? Although the authors of the book do not refer explicitly to theories of gender, the construction of masculinity through self-narrations about the war experiences could be well analyzed on the basis of this material. Some of the authors of the narratives describe themselves as a rather "natural" object for conscription by different military authorities. For example, Ailo Ehamaa writes that those men born before the end of 1922 got to participate in the war on one side or another. ("Had I been born a month later or in January of the following year, my fate might have been different.") Similarly to Raag, he presents himself as a rather involuntary participant in one of the most dramatic events of the 20th century – the World War. Aili Aarelaid-Tart, who analyzes Ehamaa's story, takes up the idea of the "alien war" that made Ehamaa into a rather neutral observer: "The war journey is presented rather as a sequence of fortunate and unfortunate happenings, of itineraries and locations, than as an emotional description of the horrors of battle, friends who were killed before his eyes, soldier's jokes, etc." Another important topic for male biographies in general and for military biographies in particular is the topic of male bonding. The particular importance of male friendship for survival is acknowledged by Tiina Kirss in her reading of Ylo-Vesse Velvelt's memory of the last period of the war. Velvelt was mobilized into the German Army only in 1944 and is a survivor of the "Czech Hell" (the partisan war in Czechoslovakia during the last phase of the war). Like Ehamaa, Velvelt finds himself in a situation of "choiceless choice", where he has to choose between "worse and bad".[4]

HOWEVER, AS WE saw in the example of the story analyzed by Kõresaar, several narratives offer the possibility of looking at the war period as a time when choice based on moral values is given special significance by the narrator (this is usually seen as a typical characteristic of male narratives). These narratives are constructed around agency and rational decisions. An example of this is Tiiu Jaago's presentation of the story of Lembitu Varblane, the so-called Finnish boy (the name for those who took part in the war on the Finnish side in hopes of fighting against both Rus-

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sians and Germans). In order to focus on the decision-making process, Jaago puts Varblane's story into the context of other published memories, and also pays attention to changes in the character of the story that indicated different stages of personal development of the narrator. After analyzing Varblane's experience of fleeing to Finland and serving in the Finnish navy, she goes on to analyze his strategies under the Soviet regime (Varblane's relatives were arrested – his mother and brother were deported to Siberia – and, understanding that "the Soviet system was destroying country life", he decides to work as a teacher in the village school). The presentation of the life story of Heinrich Uustalu (analyzed by Terje Anepaio) differs from other stories through a certain "distortion" in the presentation of the "male story". Anepaio draws the attention of the reader to the emotional parts of Uustalu's story, dedicated to his life before the war (which presents a picture of development and progress) and to the story of his family. The latter is a source of special suffering for the narrator: he and his wife (they married in September 1941) suffered deportation to Siberia and eleven years of separation from each other. Uustalu presents himself in his story as a man for whom the family has a primary value and provides an emotional picture of his feelings towards his wife and child, and of the reunion with his family in Siberia in 1955. That makes Uustalu's story different from the other stories represented in the book, where family life is simply mentioned, rather than described in any detail.

THUS, THE BOOK under review could be seen as expanding our knowledge of several important issues. First, it complicates the established picture of the "two sides" in the war and contributes to the post-Cold War discussions about the Second World War and ways of presenting and commemorating it.[5] Second, it provides a new, more nuanced picture of what the Second World War was and meant for Estonia. Finally, even if the book does not focus enough on the gender dimensions of the stories presented, in my opinion it would be very useful for anyone interested in male story-writing and constructions of masculinity. ■

yulia gradskova

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3. This presentation is reminiscent of another study of Soviet Russian memories conducted by Natalia Kozlova on the basis of the documents of the Popular Archive in Moscow. Kozlova looks at the narrators as players of a game on the field of history. These players do not act according to a clear plan; the rules of the game are invented during its realization.
4. As noted previously, male friendship is an important topic in Raag's memories as well.
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The Baltic States – how many?

A story of a historical coincidence

Andres Kasekamp
A History of the Baltic States

London
Palgrave Macmillan 2010
xi + 251 pages

Andrejs Plakans
A Concise History of the Baltic States

Cambridge
Cambridge University Press 2011
xvi + 474 pages

THE TERMS "the Baltic States" and "the Baltic states", as they traditionally have been used, represent two different concepts, in terms of historical, empirical semantics, rather than lexicographic definition.[1] The first term denotes Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. The second could theoretically denote the states that border on the Baltic Sea, but the idiomatic expression in English for this grouping is "the Baltic Sea region". It refers to all modern states bordering on the Baltic Sea, including, in addition to the three mentioned, Finland, Russia, Poland, Germany, Denmark, and Sweden. There is another term as well, "the Baltic Nations", which denotes Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Finland, and Poland. The allusion is to the five new states formed in the Baltic Sea region after World War I. The first three had been parts of various governorates in Russia; Finland had been a Grand Duchy in the Russian Empire; sections of Poland had been parts of various Russian governorates; and the other two sections of Poland were part of the Austrian province of Galicia and part of Prussia in the German Empire. Before World War I, only four states bordered on the Baltic Sea: Sweden, Russia, Germany, and Denmark – four states that are not "Baltic" in the least. The adjective has been reserved for new states, meaning, in the modern era, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

HISTORICAL REGIONS are customarily defined in terms of shared culture and language, political history, and economic development. The Nordic region is one example, East Central Europe is another. The Baltic States (with a capital "S") are not. In terms of regional history, Estonia can be defined as a Nordic state and Lithuania as an East Central European state. Latvia becomes a borderland: the state has no historical identity under this name and is a construction with the Latvian language as the common denominator. It is for the Latvians that the term "Baltic" is meaningful. Being labeled "Baltic" indicates that the country has been placed by definition into a greater regional community, and does not stand apart as an isolated minor state in the shadow of Russia.

The Soviet Russian equivalent to the English expression "the Baltic States" is *Pribaltika*. It is part of the concept of Russia. In the Russian language, and thus in the Russian conceptual world, there are on the one hand the concepts of "Russia" and "Eurasia", in which the concepts of *Pribaltika*, *Zakavkaz* (Trans-Caucasus), and *Dalny Vostok* (the Far East) are included, and on the other hand "not Russia", the rest of the world. Finland and Poland are not included in the concept of Russia. Since Estonia endeavors to appear as a Nordic state, cultivating relationships with Sweden and Finland, and since Lithuania gravitates towards Poland and Belarus (East Central Europe), Latvia remains, with its capital city Riga, the still vital nucleus of the concept of *Pribaltika*.

AMERICAN HISTORIAN ANDREJS Plakans and Estonian historian Andres Kasekamp have chosen to give their new books about Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania the titles *A Concise History of the Baltic States* and *A History of the Baltic States* respectively. The subject of the books is that indicated by the English term, that is, the history of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. But what does that mean? Three parallel histories about three states? A single, coherent historical narrative about a geographical designation? A comparative historical narrative about three states whose commonality is that they border each other in pairs from north to south, and that they all border the same fourth state? A history of all the state formations that the three modern "Baltic" states have been part of over the course of history? A history of a macro-region, the Baltic Sea region, to which the three states belong?

For both Plakans and Kasekamp, the concept of "the Baltic States" is a construction. It denotes the geographical area that severed the bonds with Russia after World War II and had not until then been defined in terms of nation-states. The "Balts" were the German landowners and burghers whose forefathers had settled in Estonia and Livonia in the Middle Ages. Estonia was a name for part of the historical German province of Livonia – which was, by the way, named after the Livonian people and language – and Latvia was a new creation named after the Latvian people and language. The new states were defined territorially essentially along the linguistic dividing lines between them. While Lithuania certainly existed as a state in the Middle Ages, it was not especially "Lithuanian". The inhabitants of the historical Grand Duchy were largely speakers of Slavic languages and the state was united with Poland from the late 14th century to the end of the 18th century. The new state of Lithuania was defined, like the two others, essentially according to linguistic criteria. Andrejs Plakans and Andres Kasekamp explain how all of this proceeded and how a historical narrative about the Baltic States can be constructed on this basis. The concept seems to be a historical Procrustean bed.

At the beginning of his book, Kasekamp refers to the deeply problematical matter of making "the Baltic States" the subject of a historical narrative. In his foreword, he maintains:

> **[I]t was not preordained that these three countries together would today be commonly known as the Baltic states. They are not the Baltic States with a capital "S", as in the United States, not the lazy shorthand "Baltics", patterned after the "Balkans".**

Historically speaking, what has created the term "the Baltic States" is the formation of new states in Europe after World War I and after the Soviet occupation and incorporation of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania of 1940–1991 (in turn interrupted by the German occupation of 1941–1944/45).

The last chapter of Kasekamp's book is called "Return to the West (1991–2009)". The title indicates that the three contemporary states are part of the concept of "the West". The last section in the chapter is entitled "Relations with Russia". The title indicates that the three states are not included in the concept of "Russia". The last chapter of Plakans's book is called "Reentering Europe, 1991 –". The conceptual formation is identical to Kasekamp's but the "reentering" is here presented as a process that is still going on. The last section is called "The Travails of Normality", a title which suggests that the period before 1991 was abnormal and that the years since have been a time of arduous alignment with "Europe".

The operational definition of the term "The Baltic States" thus becomes such that it comprises the three modern states that cover most of the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea and Europe's border zone against the non-West, that is to say, Russia. Plakans leads us to understand that this is a temporary definition in a determined phase of European political history. He suggests that there's something paradoxical in the fact that while Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania are internationally recognized states, it seems increasingly less relevant to write the separate history of any single state among them. He describes the task of "Baltic" historians in 1991:

ILLUSTRATION: KATRIN STENMARK

> **Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian historians had to devise ways of doing their work with at least two audiences in mind: readers in their home countries who, after a half-century of browsing through heavily ideological historical accounts, were truly interested in what really happened in the past; and the larger international historical profession in which national histories, though continuing to be written usually as textbooks, were not generally regarded as contributing much to human knowledge.**

Notably, the nationally defined historians are not expected to write histories whose subject is the Baltic States! Both Plakans and Kasekamp have chosen to write the history of the three countries

Continued.
The Baltic States – how many?

founded on the generally accepted 19th century construction of peoples within the confines of the Germanic cultural area (Herder's conceptualization of *Volk*). On this basis, they both write a comparative history. The backdrop is the general history of the Baltic Sea region from prehistory onward, with special focus on the geographical area where hunters, farmers, and fishermen spoke the two Baltic-Finnic languages, Estonian and Livonian, and the two Baltic languages, Latvian and Lithuanian ("Baltic" here thus denotes a language group in accordance with 19th century German linguistics). The result is that the peoples who have had Estonian, Livonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian as their native languages emerge as subjects and direct producers, while those with other native languages, especially German and Russian, emerge as the masters and shapers of political structures. In the case of Lithuania, we also have the speakers of Russian as the subjects (in contemporary usage, "White Russians" or "Belarusians" and "Ukrainians") and the speakers of Polish as the masters.

HISTORIOGRAPHY IN THE contemporary states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania is characterized, as Plakans mentions, by the classic nation-state paradigm. This is not true of individual historians' rigorous scholarly examinations of various historical problems, but it is true of the role of history in society in the form of textbooks and historical memory culture. It is not only true of those who identify themselves as Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians (there are no Livonians any more), but also of those who identify themselves as Russians. With respect to the latter, it is also true of citizens and political leaders in Russia. They are very active participants in the work of defining the "true" history of the three Baltic states. From that perspective, the history of the Baltic peoples is also part of Russian history.

Kasekamp and Plakans recount how historical commissions with international membership were established in each of the three Baltic states after 1991, which were tasked with documenting and analyzing human rights violations during the Soviet and Nazi occupations. These involved outrages committed by people of varying ethnic origins but in the name of the German or the Soviet state. The Russian government perceived this as an attempt to challenge the official Russian thesis that the Baltic states were liberated (and not occupied for the third time in four years) by the Red Army in 1944–1945. Russian President Dmitri Medvedev appointed a historical commission in May 2009, as Kasekamp pointed out, to refute the "falsification of history" (by the Balts).

THE EXAMPLE OF the historical commissions is evidence of a fundamental difference between the spiritual climate in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania on the one hand and Russia on the other. While state-funded historical research in the three Baltic states is theoretically aimed at trying to clarify historical fact, the commission in Russia is oriented towards establishing the true history in accordance with a predefined conclusion.

Both authors provide good explanations of the conceptual complications, as well as the somewhat arbitrary nature of combining the history of the three states in a single narrative. One might say that the authors allow their narratives to meet an important pragmatic criterion. There is a need in the English-speaking world for syntheses that look upon history from the perspectives that have shaped the people who today make up the majority populations in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania and whose native languages are Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian. Consequently, this involves parallel national histories from a dual comparative perspective: first, a comparison of the history that has played out in the geographical territory of the three modern states among themselves, and second, a depiction of the history in the context of general political, economic, social, and cultural conditions in the Baltic Sea region. As a result, Estonia's history and part of Latvia's history are written into German history especially and Swedish history to some extent; another part of Latvia's history and all of Lithuania's history are written into Polish history; and what is more, Lithuania's history is also written into Russian history.

Plakans and Kasekamp show that history in which the subject is "the Baltic states" has been constructed on the basis of current political perspectives. For this reason, the history is an open question and both books easily could have ended with a "to be continued" cliffhanger. History may take yet another turn. Both books intimate that Jews played a key economic, political, and cultural role in the Lithuanian area both when Lithuania was part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and when it comprised a few governorates in Russia. Consequently, "Baltic" history is, in addition to the history of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, not only also Swedish, German, Russian, and Polish, but Jewish as well. In one part of Lithuania (and Belarus) with Vilnius as the capital, a Jewish national homeland could have been created – a Jewish state with Yiddish as the national language – if 20th century history had taken another turn and if the Jewish national state project had not been projected onto Palestine, instead of what was actually the biggest Jewish settlement area in Europe. This settlement area could then have become a fourth "Baltic state" after the First World War, a Jewish nation-state according to the same ethnic criteria otherwise applied when the new states in Europe were created.

The Baltic states could thus have become four in 1920. Surprisingly enough, the Jewish project has once again become topical, as evidenced in this report by *The Economist* (June 11th) from the 2011 Venice Biennale:

> **[T]he Polish [...] pavilion has been given over to Yael Bartana, an Israeli video artist. The pavilion presents a trilogy of films about the Jewish Renaissance Movement, a political group founded by the artist that calls for the return of Jews to eastern Europe.**

If one permits oneself to think along constructivist lines, yet another possibility arises, alongside a Jewish project: a presumptive fifth Baltic state, in what is now known as the Kaliningrad area and is part of the Russian state. ■

kristian gerner

REFERENCE

1 Because norms for the use of uppercase and lowercase have been shifting in most dialects of English – especially UK English – so that many terms traditionally capitalized are now lowercase, that which in this article is referred to as "the Baltic States" is actually more and more often denoted by "the Baltic states" (indeed, this is the practice that Baltic Worlds follows – though an exception obviously needs to be made in this article).

Northern Dimension

At a meeting on the topic of the Northern Dimension partnerships on October 17 at the Finnish embassy in Stockholm, the audience present seemed to agree that that a wider northern cooperation in areas of societal importance, including Russia, is possible.

Throughout its lifespan, the Northern Dimension has had a practical focus, subsidizing projects leading to tangible results, mainly in the area of environmental protection.

Read the report by *Jonas Harvard*. ■

Full text at www.balticworlds.com.

BALTIC WORLDS

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Professor at the European Viadrina University, Frankfurt/O. Contributed an essay on Russia abroad and the Russian Berlin to BW IV:3. One of his seminal books is *Im Raume lesen wir die Zeit* (2003).

NEW TENSIONS IN UNTROUBLED WATERS

ONE CANNOT TALK about "liberal democracy" in the singular – it must be in the plural, says the Finnish security policy expert Pertti Joenniemi in a new study of the once again strained relations between the historical arch-enemies Denmark and Sweden (*Liberal or Illiberal? Discord within the Danish-Swedish Pacific Community*, DIIS Working Paper 2011:23).

The tension has risen to the surface in specific situations, as when Denmark tightened controls along the Danish-Swedish border (and the Danish-German border) almost a year ago. The public reactions to the "Mohammed cartoons" published in the Danish press, and to a Swedish artist who deliberately profaned Islamic cultural phenomena, also diverged on opposite sides of the Sound.

JOENNIEMI TRACES THIS to historically buoyant political and cultural differences. It was important to the originally binational Danish kingdom to differentiate between state and nation, in order to secure some sort of Danishness in the encounter with a superior potential enemy (Germany). The Swedish national understanding has been less ethnically oriented: the interests of individual citizens have coincided more naturally with those of the state. Swedish "state-individualism" has thus stood in contrast to Danish "state-skepticism".

This has been reflected in dissimilar immigration policies – the very restrictive Danish policy and the more permissive, albeit far from generous, Swedish policy. As a Swedish newspaper was able to show in a review of expulsions of refugees by EU countries, Sweden accepted almost 32,000 refugees in 2010 of whom 20 percent were Serbs, while Denmark accepted 5,000 of whom almost one third were from Afghanistan. Sweden granted asylum to 28 percent, Denmark to 41 percent, which does not correspond to the differences in population size between the countries.

Among the new EU member states in Eastern and Central Europe, the relative reluctance to grant asylum seems to be strongest in Lithuania, Poland, and Romania (8, 12, and 16 percent, respectively), while Ireland and Greece stand out among the "old" EU countries (1 and 3 percent, respectively). (*Dagens Nyheter* 2011-11-21) ■

PHOTO: PETER NIJENHUIS/FLICKR

The bridge over the water was supposed to connect neighbors. Immediately they began distrusting each other – again.

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

Anti-Stalinism not suppressed under Putin

"Most Western observers attributed favorable post-Soviet attitudes toward Stalin to the increasingly authoritarian rule of Vladimir Putin, the former KGB officer who became the president of Russia in 2000. In reality, though the phenomenon grew under Putin, most of its elements began in the 1990s, under Yeltsin. Foremost among them was the economic and social pain inflicted by 'shock therapy', which was the primary source of pro-Stalin revival, and the decline of democratic practices after Yeltsin destroyed a popularly elected parliament with tanks and mortgaged the country's future to a new oligarchical elite based on pillaged state property.

"Nor was anti-Stalinism suppressed under Putin. Access to relevant archives, though somewhat more limited, continued, at least in those where I worked; thick volumes of previously unknown terror-era documents were published; the number of local Gulag monuments and exhibits grew; the renamed KGB (FSB), carrying on a practice started under Gorbachev, met with and even honored its former victims; films based on popular anti-Stalinist novels, including Solzhenitsyn's *The First Circle* and Anatoly Rybakov's *Children of the Arbat*, were made for and shown on state-controlled television; and an international conference on the Stalinist terror was held in Moscow in December 2008."

From Stephen F. Cohen, *Soviet Fates and Lost Alternatives: From Stalinism to the New Cold War*. New York: Columbia University Press 2009 (in paperback, with a new epilogue 2011).

The White House, the Russian parliament building, about three days after Yeltsin pounded it with tanks in 1993.

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