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From the Centre for Baltic and East European Studies (CBEES)
Södertörn University, Stockholm

conference report
on cosmopolitanism

BALTIC WORLDS

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Modern Russian
religious icons

Minority problems
in Serbia & Croatia

A conversation
with Sheila Fitzpatrick

Wine and walnuts

also in this issue

ILLUSTRATION: KARIN SUNVISSON

ENTREPRENEURS IN THE RUSSIAN PROVINCES / ROSENHOLZ / TELEPHONES UNDER STALIN / NATION-BUILDING AMONG MOLDAVIANS

Memories of solidarity and of mistrust

ON THE INITIATIVE of the Czech and Slovak ambassadors in Stockholm, the book *Minnen – Memories – Vzpomínky – Spomienky: Swedish-Czechoslovak Solidarity 1968–1989* was designed and printed in record time by Urban Westling in connection with a conference and an exhibition held on September 27, 2011. The book is a collection of essays written in Swedish, English, Czech, and Slovak by a number of politicians, activists, journalists, translators, and academics, all of whom opposed the repressive Communist regime after the Prague Spring and supported the political opposition, mainly within the framework of the Charta 77 movement.

The book opens with a speech by Minister of Education Olof Palme on August 21, 1968, the day of the Warsaw Pact invasion, as well as with a greeting from Václav Havel, the dissident leader, who became president in 1989. Havel claimed that no country showed more solidarity with Czechoslovakia at the time than Sweden, and many Czechs fled to that country.

The contributions do indeed show that Swedish solidarity stretched across the entire political spectrum, including communist groups. Peter Larsson for example discusses the left-wing *Folket i bild (FIB)/Kulturfront* [The people in pictures/Culture front], which engaged in demonstrations, fund-raising, and published books and pamphlets.

Not surprisingly, the Social Democrats Gunnar Lassinantti and Olof Palme's advisor Anders Ferm emphasize the support rendered by their party and their own contacts with Zdenek Hejzlar, the former head of Czechoslovak Radio, who became a leading spokesman for Charta 77 in Sweden. Hejzlar's daughter Jana expresses much gratitude for the efforts of Olof Palme, who allegedly always raised the matter of Czechoslovakia on the world scene, and in 1984 lambasted the Husak regime as the creatures of dictatorship.

HOWEVER, PROFESSOR of history Kristian Gerner points out in his essay that throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Swedish intellectuals started to turn their attention to the Vietnam War, the Cultural Revolution in China, and the fall of dictatorships in Portugal, Greece and Spain, while the political establishment concentrated on giving support to not-so-democratic regimes beyond Europe. The Czech Jaroslav Suk, who belonged to the Swedish extreme left, claims that leftist parties were the most willing to take material to Czechoslovakia and contact the opposition, and criticizes the Swedish authorities for accepting the



status quo in Czechoslovakia and having no contact with those who were exiled.

Several contributions show that a leading role in the Swedish solidarity work was played by the East European Solidarity Committee (ÖESK, as it is known by its initials in Swedish), which cooperated with FIB/Kulturfront. Led by Ulo Ignats, a man with Estonian roots, who belonged to the liberal youth organization, the ÖESK published a journal, *Östeuropa*, later *Östeuropa-solidaritet*, which for a long time focused on Czechoslovakia. Several members tell quite amusing stories (as they now seem) about secret meetings in Prague, the smuggling of subversive material and equipment, and demonstrations in Stockholm and several provincial Swedish towns.

A NUMBER OF ESSAYS and an annex are further devoted to the activities of the Charta 77 Foundation, created in 1978 by the exiled nuclear physicist Professor Frantisek Janouch in collaboration with the ÖESK and other Swedish groups. One part of its work was to give financial and technical aid to the Charta signatories and their families in Czechoslovakia; another was the translation and publication of a great number of texts by prominent dissidents and authors in Sweden. In this connection Professor Lubomir Ďurovič and Dr. Miloslava Slavickova at the Slavic department at Lund University have an interesting story to tell. As head of the departments, Ďurovič was allowed to propose the Czech poet Jaroslav Seifert as a candidate for the Nobel Prize in literature, and in 1984 Seifert indeed received the prize. This great achievement made the poet world famous and brought increased attention to other prominent Czech authors, who were translated into Swedish in the year that followed, some of them by Slavickova and their students. After Seifert's death in 1986, a literary prize was also instituted in his name and was backed by famous authors such as Josef Skvorecký and Milan Kundera.

A final point made in some essays is that all this activity was closely monitored by the Communist officials at home and by agents in Sweden. When Janouch danced with Seifert's wife after the Nobel Prize dinner and the news was published, the Czechoslovak ambassador, in a secret report, called this a programmed provocation.

In conclusion: Even though this book came out in great

haste, with the texts simply arranged in alphabetical order and no common themes or styles having been recommended to the authors, it gives a broad and vivid survey of political and cultural solidarity between Swedes, Czechs, and Slovaks in support of democracy, human rights, and free speech in Czechoslovakia in the dark years of "normalization". The book is a collective effort. The texts are well illustrated by many fine posters, book covers, photos, and press clippings. ✕

INGMAR OLDBERG

Fellow of the Swedish
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Minnen – Memories – Vzpomínky – Spomienky: Swedish-Czechoslovak Solidarity 1968–1989. Embassy of the Czech Republic in Sweden, 2011, 116 pages. Available at www.mzv.cz/stockholm.

Editorial remarks

Starting with this issue of *Baltic Worlds*, the scholarly material will be emphasized and demarcated more than previously. As before, the research articles will be peer-reviewed by two external referees.

The magazine's fifth year also begins with a strengthening of the editorial advisory board. Li Bennich-Björkman, Johan Skytte Professor in Political Science and Eloquence, and one of the heads of research at the Centre for Russian and Eurasian Studies (UCRS), Uppsala University, is joining the editorial advisory board of *Baltic Worlds*. She is a member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, and has previously been involved in the journal as a writer (vol. II:3-4).

Former director of CBEES, Anu Mai Köll, has left the editorial advisory board, and has been succeeded by Professor Helene Carlbäck, current acting director of CBEES. The editors would like to thank Professor Köll for the extraordinary work she has done for the journal.

In the future, material from academic congresses will be primarily published at balticworlds.com. There, for the last year and a half, there has also been regular commentary on general elections to parliament and public offices in the countries included in BW's area of focus. On the back cover of this issue we are publishing a résumé of Irina Sandomirskaja's analysis of the Russian election campaign, published in full at the Election Coverage section of our website.

The next issue of BW will have a special section on fiction. ✕

Success?

"In 2008 and 2009, as many countries fell into recession due to the global financial crisis and world recession, Latvia experienced the worst loss of output in the world. From late 2007 to late 2009, the country lost about 24 percent of its GDP. Official unemployment rose from 5.3 percent in late 2007 to 20.5 percent in early 2010. Employment dropped about 20.3 percent from its peak in the fourth quarter of 2007 to the bottom in the first quarter of 2010. Since the economy began recovering, it has recovered just 6.0 percentage points of this loss, leaving Latvia with 14.3 percent fewer working-age people employed as compared to pre-crisis employment."

From Mark Weisbrot and Rebecca Ray, *Latvia's Internal Devaluation: A Success Story?* December 2011, Center for Economic and Policy Research, Washington, D.C.

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Communism?

A question of more than terminological significance is whether the crumbled Soviet societies in Russia and Eastern Europe were ever communist societies – if by communism one means some form of collective ownership of property and distribution of the fruits of production according to need rather than on the basis of positions of political and institutional power. These societies, at least, did not designate themselves as such.

Certainly, they were ruled by parties that often labeled themselves communist, and the classless society used to be the stated goal of their platforms. But most people inside and outside the system understood that this was a fiction, fraud pure and simple. The party caste appropriated increasing privileges for themselves, and of course could not simultaneously claim with the slightest shred of credibility that the communist “final goal” had been achieved or was even within reach. When Nikita Khrushchev said it was, people laughed in his face.

It makes no sense to call a country like today's China communist when the social and economic reality indicates that a new kind of capitalism – state-controlled private ownership of the means of production – is spreading to more and more industries and sectors of Chinese society. Party platforms are often fig leaves: they may be retained for purely nostalgic reasons and can, like laws, become obsolete. The Scandinavian kingdoms have long been well-functioning republics, albeit with royals – deprived of all governing power – as heads of state.

In vulgar propaganda, communism has been made to stand for a prison camp state with a significant slave population, and for terrorist dictatorship, exercised not by the party or the government, but by a clique of officials able to command the appropriate “organs”. A social order of this kind needs a more analytically resilient designation than communism. We also need something other than a scornful epithet that doesn't say one iota about how these societies actually worked and were governed.

The highly distinctive model of governance characterized by Mary Fulbrook as “participatory dictatorship” in a book on the GDR (*The People's State: East German Society from Hitler to Honecker*, 2005) needs to be studied in its empirical details. These societies were subjugated not only through physical and spiritual repression, but to a great extent by the participation of the subjects themselves. It is hard to imagine that it would have been possible to form the Stasi's vast corps of informants solely by threat and manipulations by cadres with power and authority. Voluntary, even enthusiastic, submission must have occurred. The payoff may have been the feeling that one was an important person, a contributor to the survival of the prevailing order, although there were certainly political believers, missionaries.

Nor can it be claimed that these societies were gov-



ILLUSTRATION: MOA THELANDER

erned monolithically, that the regime had a single intention and the outcome was set once and for all. As Stephen F. Cohen was able to show in his book *Soviet Fates and Lost Alternatives: From Stalinism to the New Cold War* (2009; new expanded paperback edition 2011), power struggles and new choices of direction were constant. “Communism”, that flummery, was never a uniform thing; as a political movement and power factor, it encompassed many mutually conflicting tendencies. If the party and state machine had given shelter only to yes-men, Stalin would not have needed to resort to such draconian methods in his showdown with the opposition. And is it really that hard to imagine, for example, that there was a significant faction within the government and party that truly wanted to get rid of the despot, when it came to pass?

No, “communism” is probably not particularly helpful as an explanatory category. It was simply window-dressing, however dreary. As Cohen points out, the formal regulations were articulated surprisingly often along the lines of democratic templates, even if the templates were almost always relegated to the desk drawer. But when people came into the leadership who wanted to fill the regulations with new content, much had already been done for them.

Formalities should not be ignored, but ideological anti-communism tends to do just that. It bundles actual and potential mechanisms of change and closes its eyes to all of it. It is ahistorical. ✕

by Johan Öberg

SHEILA FITZPATRICK

A LEADING LADY IN SOVIET STUDIES

Since the very beginning, Sheila Fitzpatrick's main focus has been social history based on archival sources, which made her a pioneer in the renewal of Soviet studies in the 1970s and '80s. Though once very controversial in the context of the Cold War, Fitzpatrick's view of totalitarianism in the Soviet Union as something complex, full of contradictions and of different kinds of agency, has now become a commonplace in Russian studies.

Sheila Fitzpatrick is a member of the American Academy of Sciences and of the Australian Academy of the Humanities. She is also a violinist and plays with several orchestras and chamber groups.

This interview was conducted in Fitzpatrick's office at the University of Chicago on January 5, 2012.

**What did Australia represent, politically and ideologically, around 1960?
What did the Cold War and the Soviet Union look like from there?**

FP: I was born in 1941 and I grew up in Melbourne in the '40s and '50s. It was a very provincial, relatively small town with an even smaller group of intellectuals who were self-conscious about that status. My parents belonged to that group and they were on the left. My father was an activist and a sort of self-taught lawyer. He headed a civil liberties organization, and what he mainly did was challenge the government on civil liberties cases. And since it was the Cold War, they were often cases involving left-wing people.

It was the Cold War, and the Soviet Union was a source of spies. We didn't quite have McCarthyism, but we had the *Petrov affair*¹ – with accusations about Soviet

contact with all sorts of leftists, including the leader of the Labor Party, Dr. Evatt.

So the Soviet Union was mainly a bogeyman. My father was a skeptical man; he would certainly not take it on trust that it was a bad place. He didn't know much about it. He used to get those free propaganda materials from the Eastern Bloc countries. Yes, I grew up in a vaguely pro-Soviet atmosphere. As a teenager, I started to quarrel with my father about all sorts of things. Because he didn't have any job, he didn't make any money and he drank too much. He was a problem father. He had staked out a sort of dissident position in a society where dissidents were not a recognized form of being. Some people on the left looked at him in a somewhat heroic light, whereas others, not on the left, had a less charitable explanation.

And I started to criticize him for that, and I also started to needle him on the question of the Soviet Union. Not that I was against the Soviet Union, but rather because I thought that he was hopeful rather than informed.

I did Russian at the University of Melbourne. I did it partly because of the Cold War: The Russian department had come under criticism in the Parliament for alleged sympathies for communism, so the left-wing intelligentsia put their children there. But the teachers were not pro-Soviet, they were émigrés, many with nostalgia for old Russia. . . .

At the fourth year of history we had to write an essay based on primary sources and I did that on Russian material. I found it absolutely fascinating, and that put me on the path. And then I got a scholarship to Oxford and there I said that I wanted to do modern Russian history.

In Oxford I found that this was not a place to do Soviet history. Nobody knew



The young doctoral student Sheila Fitzpatrick in Moscow, 1969.

anything about it there. What I should have done was probably to go to the United States, perhaps to Columbia.

Oxford represents something to an Australian.

Yes, tremendously. And it also meant something to my socialist father. He was snobbish also. In Melbourne, he sent me to a private school, to my fury.

But in Oxford there was an environment, with E. H. Carr....

Carr was in Cambridge. I hated Oxford!

And Isaiah Berlin....

I met Berlin. . . . Berlin at one point seemed to be interested in being my adviser, but Berlin's notion of advising would be that he just talked. . . . A stream of consciousness about people he knew, and in my case it seemed Prokofiev was big on the list. I found it very interesting but I didn't find it to be very much to the point as far as my work was concerned.

Anyway, I got Max Hayward, the great translator, which was miserable for Max, and for me. . . . Because he had no idea about history . . . and he didn't really want to be landed with a new student. He was a literary scholar and he didn't know what I was interested in. I went on talking to him about access to primary sources, and he really didn't know what I meant. He too would tell me stories. He too – like Berlin – had been in the Moscow embassy after the War. And he had a wonderful Russian by the way, and lots of lovely stories. And he didn't completely understand

that I didn't want to write history based on anecdotes. It was miserable for him, and when I met him later in America he said how much he hated those meetings.

The two people who knew something about what I wanted to do were E. H. Carr in Cambridge and Leonard Schapiro at the London School of Economics. I spoke to those two people and both of them were very encouraging to me. But they didn't like each other and they didn't like me seeing the other, and would frequently point this out to me. I admired Carr. I found him to be a fascinating figure. Everybody at Oxford warned me against him. They told me that he was unreliable and . . .

But wasn't he? So many turns in life, so many careers....

Well, perhaps. But it was the wives they kept harping on, but I wasn't planning to marry him. I thought of him as a person of great stature. I was quite fascinated by his way of working which was completely different from mine. He had a wonderful collection of sources at the library in Cambridge. So there he went to work on a section of them during the day and then in the evening he would go home and write it up. Another page. I do not work like that. I thought that was quite odd, but we got quite friendly, I think.

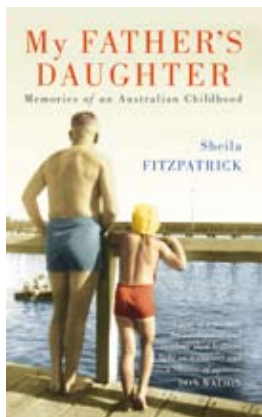
Carr was remote. He didn't know many young people. He just knew me and John Barber. And he tried to find out about the younger generation, on the basis of these two examples. And he would talk about Isaac Deutscher and Tamara. Isaac was dead then, but Tamara was a close friend of his. He would often talk about her.

Which primary sources were accessible in Britain at that time?

For the '20s: lots of periodicals, a lot of stenographic reports from party meetings and government bodies. Statistics. So Carr, writing on politics and economics in the '20s, he had the sources. But me . . . I had to get to the Soviet Union! But that was hard, because Australia didn't have an exchange. The British had one, and I applied for it. The first year I didn't get it because of my nationality, but the next year I married an Australian boyfriend of mine who happened to be British also, and then I had a British passport. So I went to Moscow two years after I had arrived in Oxford, the fall of 1966.

The time in Oxford hadn't been totally wasted. I tried to learn some contemporary Russian, but that was impossible. They only taught Church Slavonic. So what I decided was that since nobody seems to know any Soviet history – it was a non-subject, a non-field – what I would do was to simply read journals and newspapers. Just day after day, week after week! I started with *Pechat i revoliutsiia* [The press and the revolution]. It was a broad journal of and for the intelligentsia, of the communists, but not by the communists. It was the journal of that environment that interested me. And then *Krasnaia Nov'* [Red virgin soil], and *International Literature*. That was a multilanguage publication, originally called *Literature and Revolution* and put out by the revolutionary people in RAPP – the proletarian writers' union – and then it continued during the '30s. The Russian-language edition was important in the '40s, but then the editor was held to be too pro-British and got fired and arrested. An interesting journal! It kept me going. And one of the things I found in Oxford that were truly useful for a person like me was J. P. Simmons, a language person and a specialist in early Russian 20th century reference works. He gave a course where he would examine changes in editorial policies in the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, the *Literary Encyclopedia* and the *Encyclopedia of the Revolutionary Movement*. And he knew exactly which letter they got up to, and when they changed editors so that they stopped including a certain kind of material. So that gave me a really good course in understanding the problems of Soviet reference works.

All this affected my formation as a historian: I became addicted to the thrill of the chase, the excitement of the game of matching your wits and will against that of Soviet officialdom. [...] I thought of myself as different from the general run of British and American scholars, with their Cold War agenda (as I saw it) of discrediting the Soviet Union rather than understanding it. But that didn't stop me getting my own kicks as a scholar from finding out what the Soviets didn't want me to know. Best of all was to find out something the Soviets didn't want me to know and Western Cold Warriors didn't want to hear because it complicated the simple anti-Soviet story.²



Brian Fitzpatrick

Brian Fitzpatrick, Sheila Fitzpatrick's father (1905–1965), was an author, historian, journalist and one of the founders of the Australian Council for Civil Liberties. In 1937, he won the University of Melbourne's Harbison–Higinbotham Scholarship with his manuscript *British Imperialism and Australia*

1783–1833. His book *The British Empire in Australia: An Economic History, 1834–1939*, was published in 1941. Fitzpatrick returned to journalism in the 1940s. From 1958 until his death in 1965, he published *Brian Fitzpatrick's Labor Newsletter: What is Going On in Australian Politics*. Sheila Fitzpatrick made a colorful and ambivalent portrait of him as a father, journalist, politician and historian in *My Father's Daughter: Memories of an Australian Childhood* (Melbourne 2010): "I didn't want to think about Brian and his world in my first years away from home. And perhaps in a sense he didn't want me to think about it either. Almost the only advice he gave me on going to university was to stay out of politics, so as not to get black marks against my name that would injure my future career" (p. 141).

In Moscow it was practically impossible to get into the archives. But I got more materials than expected, more or less by chance. I was also looking for the Lunacharsky family, as Lunacharsky was a part of my research. My Soviet adviser was very eager to get hold of Lunacharsky's diaries, which were owned by his daughter Irina, and he thought I could help him with that, so he put me in contact with Irina. And Irina sent me off to Igor Sats, her uncle, in order to make him check whether, basically, I was a spy. So Igor looked me over. He was a very kind man and he also liked young women. He thought I was just fine and invited me practically every day. He would talk about Lunacharsky and other aspects of the past that were of interest to him.

Igor Sats was on the editorial board of the most important literary journal of that time, the *Novy Mir*, and I got to know Vladimir Lakshin. He was the head of the literary criticism department of *Novy Mir*. And I met Tvardovsky, but he was wary of me: there was, in the editorial board, a certain unease about Igor having become so friendly with a foreign woman.

And times were hard for *Novy Mir* in 1966/67.

Yes, and later on they were forced out. There was a lot of applause for them in the West, and they felt this as daggers. . . . They hated it. . . . That's why Tvardovsky was not so keen on my being around.

But as you wrote in your article in the *London Review of Books*, Igor Sats was more of a risk taker.

Within reason. I think actually he did look me over and decide that I was not working for intelligence. At the same time, he could dig his heels in when people were trying to tell him what to do. When they called him in, the "Central Committee", but actually the KGB, asked him if this British *stazherka*³ who comes around is really reliable, he said, "Yes, she's fine." So he was in that sense stubborn. But he was not a total risk taker. He would not, for example, have put the Solzhenitsyn manuscripts into my hands. That could have been a risk to me. He wouldn't have used me for smuggling. He also tried to make sure that I didn't move with undesirable types. Around Victor Louis for example, there were all sorts of *somnitelnye*⁴ people – Soviet people and people from the West. I was invited to meet him, but I very consciously didn't pursue that acquaintance. I have forgotten whether or not I asked Igor about this but I was very clear about what he would have said, which was: "Stay out of it!" On the other hand he preferred me to stay out of most milieus that were not his own. And that's a very Soviet thing to do. Not Russian: They do not see it as promiscuity any more if you make friends with people that they do not know.

It is curious actually . . . because they would take you to their heart so much, so firmly, with really so little to go on, except their own intuition, but then they would be so jumpy about the possibility that you had some other friends. . . .



E.H. Carr

E. H. Carr (1892–1982) was one of Sheila Fitzpatrick's mentors during her stay in England. A former British diplomat, Carr left the service in the late 1930s to write and do research applying a perspective close to Marxism. Carr, who worked in Cambridge, is best known for his 14-volume history of the Soviet Union from 1917 to 1929 and for his book *What is History?*



Isaiah Berlin

Isaiah Berlin (1909–1997) was one of the most influential antitotalitarian thinkers of the 20th century. He was also a diplomat, historian of ideas, philosopher, political thinker and a fine connoisseur of Russian literature. He translated Turgenev into English.

What kind of resistance did the archival material exercise on your attention and intention? You dug up a mass of material. What was the difficulty of the material for you? What was the scientific problem?

First, all of us had the big problem that they wouldn't let us see the *opisi*, the inventories. So we didn't know what they had. So you had to ask, or guess, or take what they had. The first problem I realized was that in order to work in archives you need to really know bureaucratic structure. I didn't know bureaucratic structure at all. I didn't understand bureaucracy in any context, let alone Soviet. I had had no contacts with any bureaucracy in my life. The first time was when I had to deal with the British about going on the Soviet exchange.

So that my first reaction was: I must find out how bureaucracies are structured and what they do. What are the departments, what are the forms of reporting, what kind of materials get kept under what headings? And here I really was fantastically lucky in a way. Because I got into the Narkompros⁵ archives very much at the same time as I got to know Igor Sats. Igor had not worked in Narkompros, but he had worked with Lunacharsky at that time, so he remembered some of the issues. But also there were some old secretaries of Lunacharsky who had worked in Narkompros. A couple of women. He introduced me to them and thus I got clues about who was really fighting whom. And from Irina Lunacharskaya, Lunacharsky's daughter, but she was much more cautious. She worked for *Novosti*⁶ as a science journalist, and was a different kind of person from Igor. But she was very interested. She was passionately attached to her father, and she knew quite a lot about him. Not so much from memory, but from research. She was the *priemnaia doch'*⁷, as people who didn't like her were constantly telling me, because her real father had died during the civil war and had no meaning for her, and she had been young when her mother married Lunacharsky. Irina's main activity was sponsoring publications of Lunacharsky's works, editing his work and controlling Lunacharsky scholars to see that what they published was according to the right Lunacharsky line.

You defended your PhD thesis in 1969 and it became a book — *The Commissariat of the Enlightenment* (1970). Both publications included a fresh flow of new sources.

Yes, it is a very dissertation-like book. But also, in my defense I must say that there was no framework for writing on this subject. One had to create one.

That is why I asked you about the resistance of the material itself. And not so much about how you were digging it out.

I was very close to the texts. The book was structured around direct quotations that I typed out as a kind of pre-draft. Luckily (since nobody had taught me anything about using archives), I had not translated or transliterated, but wrote, by hand,



in Russian all the quotations with quotation marks. In that first book, that was my technique of writing.

This book was groundbreaking for its time.

Yes, I think so. It opened up a whole field that people didn't know about before. The cultural policy field.

So you came back to Britain with your book, and what were the reactions in Oxford?

Oh yes, very good! The *Times Literary Supplement* ran a positive review by Michael Glenny on the *Commissariat of the Enlightenment* as the lead review, the whole of the first two pages. People liked the book. Everyone in Oxford was very interested, because it contained new stuff. In England, it wasn't read as having any political implications, but simply as bringing new insight and data on cultural politics.



Max Hayward

Max Hayward (1924–1979) graduated in Russian from Oxford in 1945. In 1946–1947 he studied at Charles University in Prague and was then appointed to the British Embassy in Moscow, where he stayed for two years and met Pasternak, Akhmatova and others. When forced to interpret for the ambassador on a visit to Stalin, Hayward was too dumb-struck to speak. Back at Oxford, he supervised a number of students who went on to prominent careers. He is famous for his translations of Mayakovsky,

Mandelstam, Solzhenitsyn, Pasternak, and Akhmatova.

Anatoly Lunacharsky

Anatoly Lunacharsky (1875–1933) was a prolific literary critic and Russian intellectual, a Marxist revolutionary who became the first Commissar of the Enlightenment (1917–1929). Lunacharsky studied in Russia and in Switzerland, where he made friends with Russian exiled social democrats and became a party member, and with European socialists like Rosa Luxemburg and Leo Jogiches.

During the party split in 1903, Lunacharsky sided with Lenin and the Bolsheviks. Lunacharsky's intellectual and cultural curiosity resulted in a wide range of artistic and intellectual acquaintances (Mach, Avenarius, Proust, Bernard Shaw, later Bakhtin) and to the creation of the Circle of Proletarian Culture, later the "Proletkult". Lunacharsky was also the head of Soviet

censorship. As described by Fitzpatrick, he tried to adopt a middle way and be a mediator in the political fights of the late 1920s, which cost him his power and finally his position in 1930. In 1933 he was appointed ambassador to Spain. He died in Menton in France on his way to the new post. During the terror Lunacharsky's name was erased from the Communist Party history. A revival came with the thaw of the 1950s and '60s. During that era, Lunacharsky was considered by Soviet intellectuals as an educated, refined, and tolerant Soviet politician, which probably helped Sheila Fitzpatrick get access to the archives.



Igor Sats

Igor Sats (1903–1980), legendary literary critic, literary historian, and literary secretary of Anatoly Lunacharsky, who was also his brother-in-law. One of the rare, consistent supporters of Andrey Platonov's work in the 1930s, when Sats worked as one of the publishers of the controversial *Literaturnyi Kritik* (closed in 1940). Vladimir Lakhsin reveals in his memoirs *Golosa i litsa* what conclusions Sats drew from the history of his life: it had consisted in partitions, like the history of Poland, or "dissolutions" –

In that book there is almost no criticism of other scholars. You do not try to argue with other interpretations. You just explore a new field.

Most of the time, once I got in contact with primary materials, I didn't read other people's work very much at that point. Then I came to America. And the first article I wrote I sent off to *Slavic Review*. And they said, "Very fine, but you must locate yourself in the literature." You have got to engage other scholarly works. I don't remember how I replied, but what I thought was that there was really nothing to engage. I really had the feeling of a new field. There were few people writing Soviet history then – E.H. Carr, Bill Daniels, Leonard Schapiro.

You moved to the US in 1972. How did the Soviet studies field in the US look at that time?

At that time I thought that it was more polarized than it perhaps was. I saw it as dominated by Cold War prejudices, which were almost as bad as the Soviet ones, and the totalitarian model, which I saw as having an in-built political bias. This was probably exaggerated: after all, there were people who were interested in modernization; there was the Harvard project⁸. The movement that later came to be known as revisionism was just beginning; I came across that through Stephen Cohen. Cohen knew about me because he had read the *Commissariat of the Enlightenment*, and he and other people like Loren Graham too, they read the book, and it sounded somewhat different because "she is not saying in this book that everything is run through the Central Committee, and she is giving a picture of quite a lot of agency elsewhere, and perhaps she is doing this intentionally or perhaps not, but in any case, it is worth talking to her." So they made contact with me. That was interesting and encouraging for me, although as far as Cohen was concerned we pretty soon had problems: I thought he had a political axe to grind, and he thought I had one. Since I was very strongly in favor of objectivity and interpretations driven by data, I deeply resented the suggestion that, for whatever reason, family background or whatever, I was pushing a pro-Soviet line. I really hated that. I was actually fairly apolitical, despite the family background, and I didn't see why people kept ascribing political positions to me. Now, I can see more clearly why they misunderstood me: in a way, we were talking a different language. Also, many people in the 1970s *did* have political positions or wanted to make political points: Cohen, for example, wanted to show that not everything about the revolution was bad. That it had a democratic potential. The USSR could have gone the Bukharin way, the NEP way, but it went the Stalin way. He organized a panel on the viability of NEP for the AAASS⁹ and he invited me to take part. I was new to conference life then; I thought that if they invite you to write a paper on something, you need to go off and do new research. So off I went. . . . I worked on the Smolensk Archives and I decided that the evidence pointed all the other way – against the viability of NEP. Lunacharsky

was pushing a "soft" line in culture, Lenin also had a soft line, but it was very hard for these to prevail. In the party, the instinctive choice was always the hard (radical, intolerant, non-pluralistic) line. Therefore I decided that NEP in culture was pretty non-viable, which was the opposite of what Stephen wanted me to conclude. He was quite annoyed about that at the time, but now we are on good terms. He says he wants to reopen the debate about the viability of NEP, but I'm not sure that it's really an interesting issue anymore.

For people like me who come from the literary field more than from the historical field, the '20s are so immensely rich. So much of what became important in the 20th century in literature, theater, cinema, comparative literature . . . was created there and then. Why couldn't this immense richness have won?

Well, you are right. But your approach is focused on the intelligentsia, the avant-garde. In the broader society, if you like, things often look different. You know, there is this wonderful stuff, in literature and in the arts. But *people really disliked it*. Not only in the Communist Party, but quite broadly. The same sort of problem exists with issues about family and women: there were wonderful progressive policies, but people didn't like them. For ordinary people, there was a feeling that "liberation" just meant there was too much license about, women were being exploited in a new way via postcard divorces and so on. It's the same kind of thing that happened with the arts.

Did Lunacharsky himself reflect upon this tragic situation in the Soviet culture of the 1920s? I don't remember that from your book. But of course he must have seen the problem you are pointing to.

Yes, right. But he was a very optimistic man. I don't think he saw the situation in this tragic light. I think he felt it was his mission to mediate between the two worlds: the Bolshevik Party and the intelligentsia. He was one of the few who could understand both the communists and Left art. So he would try to explain them to each other. But he was of course often discouraged. He was marginalized by the late '20s, though perhaps not as discouraged as it might look from the outside, because – according to his daughter Irina, who had his diaries, though she didn't let me read them – he thought Stalin was probably better than the alternatives. He thought that things might get better as the country got rid of the period of factional fighting which caused nothing but harm. Evidently he thought that once Stalin settled down, things might be not so bad, which is a big surprise. But I only know this from Irina, not from my own research.

The '70s, in the US, were marked by a new tendency in Soviet studies: revisionism. You became a part of that field with your book *Education and*

of his "anarchistic" regiment during the civil war, of the Commissariat of the Enlightenment in 1929, of the Communist Academy in the '30s, of the journal *The Literary Critic* in 1940, and twice of the journal *Novy Mir*, in 1954 and in 1970.

Stephen Cohen and American Revisionism

Stephen Cohen (born 1938) became an important intellectual reference point and a partial ally for Fitzpatrick when she arrived in the US, though they initially disagreed on central issues of the politics of the 1920s (see the interview). Cohen is one of the fathers of American revisionism (arguing against "traditionalism" – a form of research they criticize for deducing history and social life from the very totalitarian nature of the Soviet State) and the study of everyday culture in the Soviet Union, where he began archival research, after Fitzpatrick, in the 1970s. In *Rethinking the Soviet*

Experience: Politics and History Since 1917 (1985) Cohen outlines the dramatic history of Soviet studies in the US, its oscillations between an ideological commitment to "Western values" and pro-socialist or pro-Soviet values, its dependency on US government funding and pre-established, non-empirically grounded constructions of the totalitarian state, as well as its efforts to ground itself in theoretical reflection on empirical material, to connect to history, to political science, cultural history, etc. Cohen concludes that "[r]evisionism [...] put an end to orthodoxy in Soviet studies".

Tear Off the Masks!

Sheila Fitzpatrick *Tear Off the Masks!: Identity and Imposture in Twentieth-Century Russia*

Tear Off the Masks! deals with masking and unmasking, with the reinvention and reconfiguration of social, political and ethnic identities after the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917. It brings an important comparative perspective to bear on identity changes and identity play in the post-Soviet 1990s. The book starts by defining how the young Soviet state shaped the new system of identities, privileges and exclusion mechanisms that was to become dominant during the 1920s and '30s, i.e. its ways of defining class and social heritage, professional identities and the old *soslovie* (estate) identities. As the working class constituted a minority of the population, and was the main beneficiary of social policy, the new situation initiated a complicated process

of adaptation for the majority of the people to the new identities, which implied various forms of silencing one's past and rewriting one's personal narrative in order to fit into the new forms of social and professional life. This process of invention and recreation of identities and identifications in turn generated opposing forms of action: revealing and disclosing the "true" identities of the "impostors" – peasants as "kulaks", Bolshevik party members as Trotskyites, engineers as saboteurs, high level managers as parasites, etc.

The book is based on archival research conducted in the '80s and '90s, and on more recent studies, many of which are made by Fitzpatrick's former students, especially life stories of the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s. This book also has broad literary and cultural aspects. It traces the processes of masking and unmasking in Russian history and connects them to Bakhtin's theory of the carnival. The 5th

Social Mobility in the Soviet Union. And with the conference, which became a book: *Cultural Revolution in Russia*....

Well, I think I was actually pursuing my own research rather than trying to launch a new tendency. One thing my research turned up was that in the late 1920s there was a “cultural revolution” in the USSR in which all sorts of stuff seemed to be bubbling up from below. There were “signals” coming from above too (that was already known in the scholarship), but what struck me particularly was what was coming from below – not just radical, militant initiatives from the young, but also all kinds of crazy people, with their panaceas, who suddenly got a hearing at that time. That’s what I call “bubbling up”. This was the theme I was pursuing at the time I arrived in America, but much of the archival work had been done during my two research years in Moscow. I had originally intended my dissertation to go up to 1929, but I had so much material that I stopped at 1921. *Education and Social Mobility in the Soviet Union 1921–34* was originally going to be *The Commissariat of the Enlightenment* Part II, so I already knew the later part of the ’20s. Anyhow, my ideas about cultural revolution “from below” (as well as from above) really fitted in with a nascent revisionist agenda, which was basically challenging the notion of *total control*.

There was something about Narkompros at the end of the 1920s that for years I couldn’t understand. It was what was meant by proletarian preference, *vydvizhenie*,¹⁰ in higher education, and who those “proletarians” were. It really puzzled me. I didn’t know what they were talking about. And then came the revelation that this was a kind of affirmative action program on behalf of workers and working-class communists that came in in a big way with “cultural revolution”. Lunacharsky tried to moderate it, and this was one of the things that brought him down. He wanted affirmative action for workers, but not too much. I mean, he wanted to promote workers in the higher education system, but not to discriminate against others, which is a difficult position logically. So, that upward social mobility which the educational system was supposed to promote became my central theme for the new book. In the *Commissariat of the Enlightenment*, I was mostly interested in the administration of culture, even though the Commissariat had charge of education as well. But then, out of the education aspect came a really important social theme. So it was tremendously rich. *Education and Social Mobility* focuses on a new theme that emerged from my empirical research but made me come closer to the social sciences.

So, this is your ’70s. Plus the conference. And the preparations of the important work for the book *The Russian Revolution*.

The Russian Revolution, yes, but that was never a major project. I wrote it quickly. Actually it was my first visit back to Australia and I had no materials. In order to make a good story, in order to make it read well, it was good to do it without materi-

als. So I did that, and checked the facts and added the footnotes after I got home. I think it worked quite well as a story. And I suppose that it also helped crystallize my own interpretations of what the revolution was about.

One of the main themes in *The Russian Revolution* is that the revolution might have been an extended process, starting in a sort of political radicalism and populism supported by the peasant class and the working class, transforming into the civil war, the NEP, the Cultural Revolution, the collectivization and then dissolving in a sort of Soviet high culture, in a stabilization process from the mid-1930s where the Purges were to be the last phase of Soviet revolutionism. Stalin kills the revolution, and his killing of the revolution will by itself appear a revolutionary action.

Yes, On the one hand you have Stalin sponsoring stabilization (the “Great Retreat”), which would mean the end of the revolution. And on the other hand you have destabilization – in the shape of the Great Purges – also initiated by Stalin. I think you have to think of the Purges as a last act of revolution. If there were no revolutionary impulse left, the idea that you can purify the society by killing off a whole lot of people just wouldn’t arise.

Stalin’s idea from 1933 of an aggravation of class struggle under socialism when you approach communism — isn’t that what this is about?

You can’t explain the Purges in Marxist terms, it doesn’t make any sense, but you can partially understand them in terms of how revolutions work. Think of the Terror in the French Revolution: revolutionaries feel that they have to purify their ranks, that they are in danger of sinking into a swamp.

In *Everyday Stalinism* you write of the Soviet Union after 1935, approaching World War II, as a prison, or a conscript army, or a boarding school – authoritarian, but allowing education and mobility – and a soup kitchen or a relief agency. Isn’t that also a rather good description of what modernity might have been? Or the modern state? And maybe this sort of cleansing, following a thinker like Zygmunt Bauman in *Modernity and the Holocaust*, is not the exclusive property of the Stalinist state? You create a modern state, and you exclude the undesirable.

In *Everyday Stalinism*, I wasn’t so interested in the modernity approach, though this is a theme that other people have taken up very enthusiastically recently. . . . In *Everyday Stalinism* I was really on another track; it wasn’t the “modernity” of the Soviet Union that interested me. Of those three metaphors – the prison, the soup kitchen, and the school – the one that really appealed to me was the school. It brings out that whole didactic element of Stalinism. Perhaps other people have different experience of schools, but they definitely have their Orwellian aspects.

chapter, “Impostures”, deals with the con men of the ’20s and ’30s, comparing them with literary and journalistic models (Ostap Bender and his colleagues) as well as with positions taken in early Soviet investigative journalism. In *Tear Off the Masks!* Fitzpatrick also, for the first time, takes an overtly theoretical standpoint in today’s historiographical discussion. Fitzpatrick argues that “this is neither an attack on the Foucauldian ‘Soviet subjectivity’ school [in the current of Oleg Kharkhordin, Jochen Hellbeck and others] nor a contribution to it, but something different [...]. Their focus is in the self and subjecthood; mine on identity and identification. For me, however, differences in historical approach are what makes scholarship interesting. The new cohort’s arrival on the scene was a major part of the revitalization of Soviet history in the 1990s. If I were to isolate two aspects of this revitalization that I particularly appreciate, one would be the shift of attention

toward experience, and the other the definitive end of the Cold War in Soviet history [...]. It is a great step forward to have the Stalinist subject emerge as ‘an ideological agent in its own right’” (pp. 8–11). ✕

Stalin’s Peasants

Sheila Fitzpatrick: *Stalin’s Peasants: Resistance and Survival in the Russian Village After Collectivization*

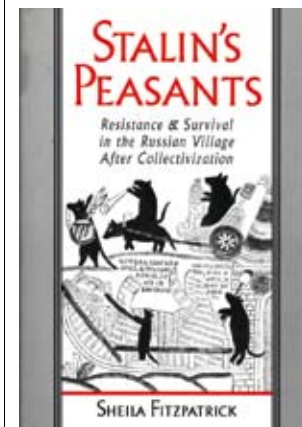
As Fitzpatrick mentions in the interview, the archival material underpinning *Stalin’s Peasants* gave some answers to the questions raised by the scrutiny of the official Soviet press – especially the *Krestianskaia Gazeta* [Peasants’ journal] – already undertaken by researchers like Fitzpatrick in the 1980s about the different forms of agency shaping the specific forms taken by collectivization. In *Stalin’s Peasants* it is the whole social world of religion, struggle, forms of resistance, and careerism that is

presented to the reader, a world so absurd and horrifying that it could never have been deduced from the media. Here the opening of the archives has been crucial, even to an experienced archive hunter like Fitzpatrick.

As with several other of Fitzpatrick’s works, the perspective of this book could also be traced back to her conversations in the 1960s with Igor Sats. And, paradoxically, the material in all its horrible absurdity coincides with Andrey Platonov’s prose on collectivization, and especially *The Foundation Pit* (written around 1930 and then reworked several times). Platonov had himself taken part in the collectivization as an engineer and a land reclamation expert. Igor Sats published stories by Platonov in the 1930s and seems to have shared Platonov’s views.

With the opening of the archives in early 1990s, the same kind of polyphony of ghostly voices flew into Fitzpatrick’s historical writing that had once populated

Platonov’s prose, the same macabre ambivalence of horror, abasement, resistance, and mortification; rationality, humor, and bizarre optimism against all events. *Stalin’s Peasants* could – and should – also be read as a social history companion and a gloss on Platonov’s complete works. ✕



(In fact, some people think Orwell based *1984* as much on his experience at public school as on the Soviet Union, where he had never been.) In my own school I was very struck by the hypocrisy of the teachers when I was a child. You know, they tell you (the pupils) all these rules and you pretend to agree with them and accept their norms, but really you don't; the pupils – the subaltern population – has its own norms and values. You have a private (subaltern) persona and a public one that is different. You say one thing when you have to stand up in class and you say another thing to your friends. I really liked that analogy of Stalinism and school, but I never fully developed it.

The totalitarian model scholarship that the revisionists were challenging assumed that all agency came from the top. Then the revisionists came along, and they were interested in showing that people within the society had agency of various kinds. In *Everyday Stalinism*, I assume that: if you start writing a book on the everyday you take that for granted, and you are looking at the kinds of agency that people have in their everyday life. I think the reason I wanted to do work on the everyday goes back to my first experiences in the years of the late '60s as a student in the Soviet Union, when this kind of "ordinary life", *byt*, just struck me as absolutely bizarre. I mean, how could it be that life is arranged in a way that is maximally uncomfortable? Inconvenient, and just so terribly annoying. Those are the things you notice when you go as a stranger to a place. And *Everyday Stalinism* is an investigation into how it came to be that way. Of course, terror is important in *Everyday Stalinism*. But it is not the only important thing. Equally important is the fact that it was so hard to get things. Get goods, to get by. . . . To survive in the sense of coping with everyday life was so difficult. I tried to interweave those themes.

It is a special kind of book. Really filled with all those different kinds of agency. It says something about what a society is in a more general sense.

But it is also a very atheoretical book. There is all this theory on the everyday, and I pay little attention to it. Some people think I should have written a different book. I was very surprised once by a Russian, an acquaintance of mine, who himself is quite a theoretical scholar. He told me he liked this book, and I said that I was surprised by that, because in general he was very theoretically oriented. "Yes of course," he said, "one could talk about it in theoretical terms, but you are just telling it like it was."

It is a funny thing to think that this "atheoretical" work is not in any way making Russia exotic. It is everyday life.

I think that to a large extent it is because of Igor Sats. I sat at his feet for so many hours. And he talked about everything that came into his head. I think that may be why the book has this funny not-quite-outsider, and not-quite-insider perspective. It didn't seem exotic to me, because it was his life. And I felt him as a relative. As family. Therefore, even though I didn't live that life, it didn't feel strange to me. But in *Tear off the Masks* – there theory is a bit more important. I find theory a funny concept, because it's based on a canon that seems almost randomly chosen. Theory with a capital T. Of the works regarded as Theory that have actually interested me, Bourdieu is one, but I read him too late to have him as an inspiration. Erving Goffman, whom I encountered early, by chance, back in the early '70s, perhaps was a real influence. When I read *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, I didn't think about it as theory; I was almost surprised that he would bother to write about something so obvious that everyone must know. But it lodged in my mind as a sort of external confirmation of the way I had of looking at the world.

So it all started with the style of work in the Commissariat of the Enlightenment, between the Cold Warriors and the Soviets, and your whole work has been growing out of that, and out of that dialogue with Igor Sats. But when 1991 came, the sources, the archives were opened, that had previously been closed, and where you had been digging successfully in your way before that, and then they started to close again in the second half of the 1990s.

Yes, a lot, but never everything, because one never had free access to KGB materials. But that was wonderful. It was astonishing. That the Soviet Union should collapse. And it was interesting to be around when something so astonishing happened. It made me realize that, even though I knew that there are ruptures in history, I knew this only theoretically, and my practical experience of life was that things always happen incrementally – and that, suddenly, they don't. That was really fascinating, and on top of it came the opening of the archives, which was basically a *prazdnik*, a feast, for ten years. Perhaps if I were a political historian I would

have reacted differently. But for social historians, there wasn't the same worry about having your interpretations disproved – in fact, on questions that I'd written on like social mobility, there was just an additional mass of data from the party side supporting what I had found out back in the '70s and '80s from state archives. So it didn't have a downside for me, it was just an extraordinary once-in-a-lifetime gift.

Could you have written *Everyday Stalinism* without the opening of the archives?

Yes, I think so. It is an archival book, but it doesn't have the same kind of archival backbone as most of my other books. It has got a whole lifetime of sources in it. Yes, I think that I could have written it. But *Stalin's Peasants*, which actually comes before *Everyday Stalinism*, I couldn't have written without the peasants' letters that were in the archives. When I was working just with published material, I was absolutely baffled about what happened to peasants after collectivization. It was absolutely gibberish to me. . . . I couldn't make any sense of it. The only thing that allowed me to make sense of it was the peasants' letters to *Krestianskaia gazeta* [Peasants' journal], so that's a kind of backbone source for that book. ❌

references

- 1 The Petrov affair was one of many dramatic espionage affairs during the Cold War. Petrov, who was a colonel in the Soviet secret police, and had important networks in Australian society, and his wife, who was also an agent, were attached to the Soviet embassy in Canberra. Fearing that he would be sent back and punished after Beria's death in 1953, Petrov, and later his wife, defected in a spectacular way with the help of the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO), which was, in exchange, able to get hold of an important amount of sensitive Soviet diplomatic documents. The story was reported around the world.
- 2 Sheila Fitzpatrick, "A Spy in the Archives", in *London Review of Books*, Vol. 32 No. 23 (December 2, 2010).
- 3 Foreign student with a scholarship.
- 4 Dubious.
- 5 "The Peoples Commissariat for the Enlightenment" (Culture and education).
- 6 One of the official Soviet news agencies.
- 7 Adopted daughter.
- 8 <http://hcl.harvard.edu/collections/hpss/>
- 9 American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies; today: Association for Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies, ASEES.
- 10 *Vydvizhenie*, an important political concept and a controversial political issue in the 1920s and '30s for the party and Stalin personally, for the educational system and the Soviet industry, refers to the promotion or advancement of working class people.



ICON WRITING. A JOURNEY THROUGH TIME

by **Nancy Westman**

Top: St. Anna, by George Panaiotov.

Right: The Three-Handed Mother of God, by George Panaiotov. The third hand is said to represent a divine intervention, a miracle. The motif dates back to the 8th century.



The man bent over a lectern has a very long beard. Thin and gray, illuminated from below, it becomes a halo that has slipped out of place, hanging down so low it nearly brushes the computer screen. We are in a room in the Engineers' Castle, part of the Russian Museum in St. Petersburg. The "Holy Russia" exhibition is showing a rich collection of religious art, icons, exquisite textiles, and gleaming silver chalices. The exhibition, previously shown in Moscow, is said to have been the idea of President Dmitri Medvedev.

And here stands a man, born in a time when no one dreamed it would one day be possible to use modern technology to peruse a book nearly a thousand years old. When the pages of the Ostromir Gospel turn by themselves under the glass, it is pure magic: in this, the second-oldest preserved manuscript of the Russian world, the uncial manuscript is itself a work of art. It is dated 1056 or 1057. The time perspective is slightly dizzying.

The schoolchildren being ushered around the stands filled with sacred contents are rowdy, like kids all over the world. The boys are goofing off; their gray blazers seem too uncomfortable. The girls' pleated skirts are as prim and proper as their freshly pressed hair ribbons. A few listen intently as the guide drones on about the objects in the exhibition. Perhaps one of the girls will join the host of silent, fine-limbed figures in long dark dresses and headscarves in one of the major cathedrals of the city? One of their duties is to take care of all the icon candles. In the second-largest city in Russia, they live in a world where people encounter religious art as a matter of course. Handwritten icons, many of them new creations, are in demand for church walls, monasteries, and private homes. Icons are seen here, there, and everywhere – cheap copies are bought and sold wholesale and retail. The wide range of icon bracelets sold in the gift shop of the Russian Museum are a trendy favorite among young women – all over the world.

But is there something that can be termed *modern* icon writing? The icons being created now are almost exclusively based on originals that have been around for 400 to 800 years. Or even more than 2000 years: after all, the tradition holds that the first icon is the one called the "divinely wrought" image of Christ, the image "not made by human hands". As the legend goes, King Abgar, a contemporary of Jesus, was afflicted with leprosy and asked for help. Jesus wet his face and dried it on a towel, which he had delivered to the king. Abgar is said to have been partly cured by this very first "portrait" of the face of Christ. (The Veil – or Sudarium, meaning "sweat-cloth" – of Veronica is a variation on the theme.) Saint Luke is said to have made the first icon written by human hands.

The icon writing of our time is generating keen interest in many areas and St. Petersburg is no exception. A publishing house was established here in 2007 that is exclusively devoted to works about icons and other sacred art. The publisher, Kolomenskaya Versta, arranged an international conference in November 2011 under the heading "Modern Sacred Icons in the World", which drew 120 attendees. Most of the partici-

Philip Davydov shares the Sacred Murals studio with his wife Olga Shalamova. Together they travel around the world, teaching their skills in popular workshops. Photo by Nancy Westman.

Right: Mandylion – Image of Christ “not made by human hands”, by Philip Davydov.



pants were from Russia, but many traveled from the US, Canada, Finland, Japan, Greece, Italy, England, Serbia, and Uruguay to devote three days to modern iconography.

Kolomenskaya Versta was founded by Elena Petelina. At first, it was part of another publishing house that had long been publishing books specifically about icons aimed at Russian audiences. Elena Petelina wanted to internationalize the publications and arrange conferences, exhibitions, and pilgrimages focused on the icon, and the contemporary icon in particular.

At a meeting at the publishing house, which boasts a prestigious address on the famous Nevsky Prospect, I am shown a few of the twenty or so titles published in the last five years. The books they show me seem very lavish. The publisher's English-speaking spokesperson and vice president, Natalya Loseva, tells me that the company has an expansive network in Russia, Europe, and the US, and that the conference held in November clearly showed that the icon writers of the world had both a need for and an interest in getting together to discuss their work. The next icon conference will be held in St. Petersburg in September of this year.

A trilingual publication was issued in connection with the conference. The participants and their varying opinions about what iconography is and should be in the 21st century were presented in Russian, English, and Italian. Conference speakers included authorities like Paul Busalaeve, who began writing icons in 1982. Educated at the Graphic Art Faculty of Moscow Pedagogical Institute, Busalaeve has worked in the United Kingdom and Norway and has co-written a book with the even more renowned Michel Quenot.¹

Busalaeve argues that icon writing is an integrated part of the liturgical life of the church, but must still develop its imagery, for two reasons:

The first and most important reason is reconsideration of the events of modern history of both the church and the state, such as the persecution of the church in the Soviet era and the Second World War, especially in association with the worship and glorification of the new martyrs. The second reason is a new interpretation and imagery in icon painting of personalities and events already manifested in church art.

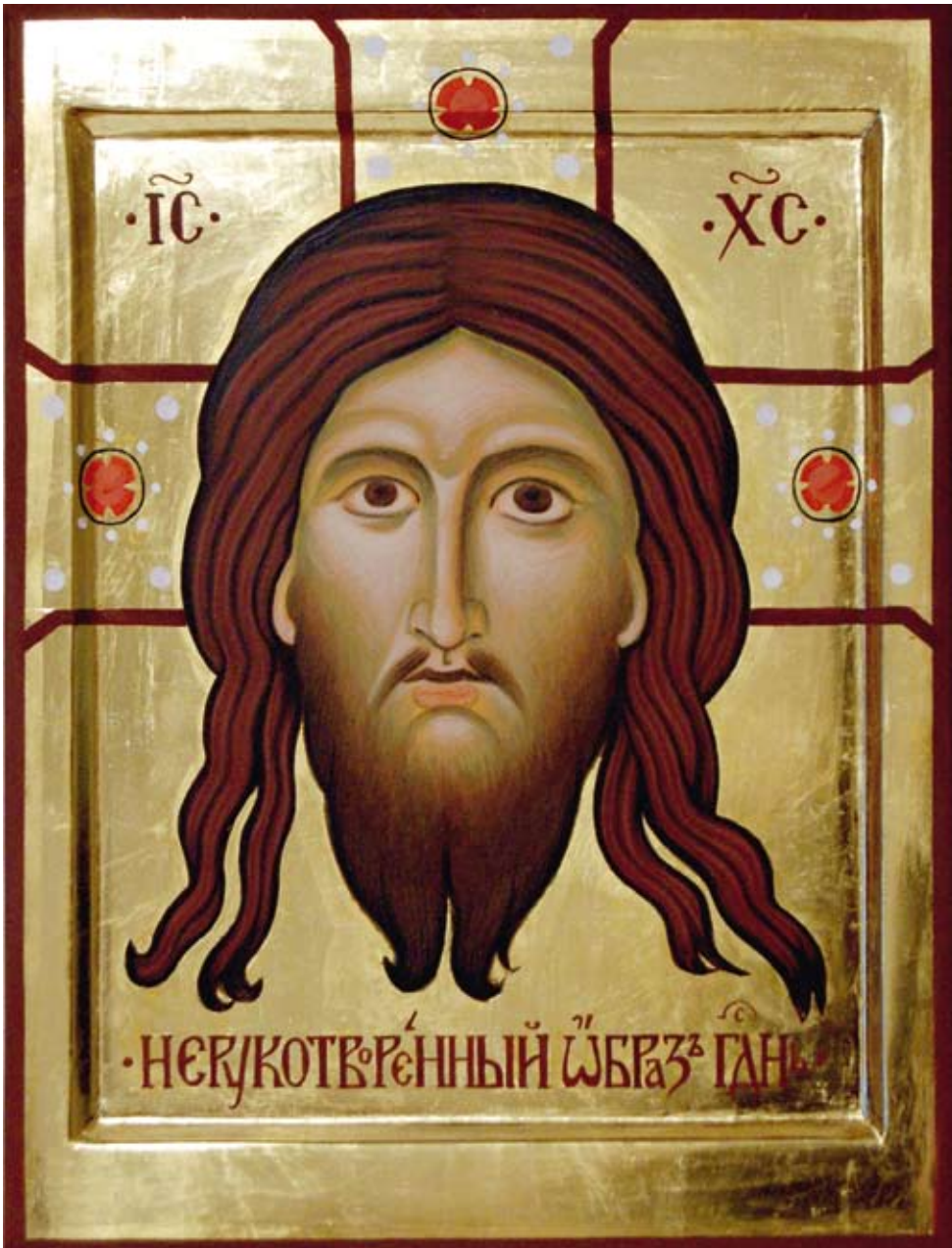
Busalaeve's opinions have garnered support from quite a few others, including 22-year-old George Panaiotov, who emphasizes that the Assembly of Hierarchs held in August 2000 canonized an amazing 1,200 new saints – and so there are masses of new subjects for icon writers! Panaiotov has been writing icons since the age of six; one of his older colleagues calls him the “Mozart of icon writing”. George's mother realized how gifted her little boy was from a very early age and his icons are now found in churches and the finest collections in the country. He seems to have any number of commissions to handle, both in Russia and abroad. He tells me this with pride while he serves olives and wine at his kitchen table. He lives quite simply by Western standards, in a one-room apartment with a kitchen and a little studio filled with some of the icons he is working on or has just finished. But in a city where collective housing is still a reality – where several families are crowded into an apartment with a shared toilet, bathroom, and kitchen – his home is comparatively luxurious. He earns enough from the icons to afford

both the apartment and his studies in art history at the Ilya Repin State Academic Institute of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture. He paints in his spare time. He can usually write two icons a month and tells me that one of them is now going to be copied using digital photo technology. Forty copies are going to be sold by a hard-working entrepreneur in the icon business. George seems quite pleased with the arrangement, but I am appalled: what will happen to the divinity of the icons, I wonder? With some effort, I have managed to learn that icon writers certainly do not copy old icons when they write yet another image of Jesus, the Virgin Mary, or a saint who is very meaningful to the icon writer in question. Saint George and the Mother of God are two of George's favored motifs. They may seem like portraits, but some call them religious meditation and others liken iconography to theological research. Everyone I talk to asserts that every element of writing an icon is a form of prayer, praise of the eternal and the divine. But how can a copy machine create true sacred art? Or for that matter, how much of a divine presence can a six-year-old child communicate in a conscious manner?

Putting good manners aside, I pose these questions, but they don't bother George Panaiotov. He believes he has been given a gift from God and that his icons thus meet the right criteria. He shows me an icon he wrote many years ago, of Saint Anastasia surrounded by a Russian patriarch, a Catholic Pope, and two cosmonauts. The icon was written in honor of a peace project carried out jointly by the Orthodox and Catholic churches some years ago.

The day after my visit to young Panaiotov, I go to the Church of St. Pantaleimon, which blends in easily

New saints are good for modern icon writing. There would appear to be no risk of inflation.



with the surrounding homes and stores. A couple of George Panaiotov's recently written icons hang in the church. You almost have to know they are contemporary, unlike most of the sacred images here, to tell that they are so new the paint has hardly dried.

People prefer not to talk about money in connection with icons, and some seem not to need anything so worldly. Archimandrite Zinon, who works at the Pskov-Pechory Dormition Monastery, is a legend among modern icon writers. In an online interview, he says the only payment he wants is to be included in people's prayers and the joy his icons give to those who pray before the sacred images.²

Today's Russia lives in a strange mix of tradition and hyper-modernity. After the Soviet parenthesis of seventy years or so, it might sometimes seem as if nothing happened, as if people here still lived in a Byzantine era, even though Western capitalism is everywhere apparent. Could it be that people feel a deep need for comfort? Icons are still used in everyday life, as protection against evil, to call forth miracles, to help someone find housing or a job, or to cure someone from a serious disease. One Tuesday morning like any other, I go into the Kazan Cathedral on Nevsky

Prospect, where I find lively activity with Mass in progress, people lining up in front of the icon of Kazan himself, people lighting candles before an icon or standing in the gift shop thinking about buying some kind of sacred art, or perhaps just a postcard.

Among those who have made icons the subject of their academic research, there are a few who are horrified by what they see occurring in modern society. Anastasia Trapeznikova is currently completing her doctoral studies, which are devoted to contemporary iconography. At the international icon conference in St. Petersburg in 2011, she did not mince her words: the paper in which she attacks the pop culture and superficiality that devalue icons was titled "Kitsch and Modern Iconoclasm". She wrote:

When we talk about kitsch, we mean that the icon image is used by non-Orthodox people who deliberately devalue it. It is reflected in the creation of objects of pop art, which employ the idea of the image in comic interpretations or render stylizations of the contemporary art of postmodernism.

Trapeznikova also accuses parts of the Orthodox Church of being the iconoclasts of our time, because its priests do not resist newfangled ideas. She criticizes not only the way modern icons are far too often written, but also the fact that they are copied en masse and disseminated to the four winds. What should be done? One way to save the situation, she believes, would be if all icon writing henceforth and forever were permitted only under the aegis of the church. The church should take over all training and approve the new icons, according to Trapeznikova. Old-fashioned ideas? Maybe, but this particular scholar was born in 1987.

Icon writing is taught at universities and colleges, painting schools, workshops, and night classes at the hobby level in St. Petersburg. Philip Davydov is one of the most sought-after teachers. He and his wife Olga Shalamova run a respected icon studio in St. Petersburg, to which we drive in his ramshackle car. We enter through the back courtyard and it becomes obvious that the spruced-up facades along the larger streets of the city may be hiding even worse dilapidation. But once inside the studio, the place is warm and bright. The couple rent the city-owned space at a subsidized rate through the Union of Artists of Russia, to which they both belong. When we come in, Olga Shalamova waves happily at us, her hands white with the paint she is using to prime a large number of wood panels. Six or seven coats of priming paint have to be put on before the panels are sent out to a workshop in Australia.

The walls of the studio are covered with finished icons and shelves bowing under the weight of books about icons and art history. Philip Davydov's doctoral dissertation, presented at the St. Petersburg State Fine Art Academy, was entitled *Genesis and Evolution of Medieval Altarpieces in Italy*. He learned to write icons from his father, a priest who was one of the first to catch on that icons were once again becoming popular in Russia. As Philip expands upon his thoughts about modern iconography, he emphasizes the importance of tradition, but also that medieval icons should not be cloned. And to clarify the difference between visual art and icon writing, beyond the sacred purpose, he says that the icon is poetry, while other visual art is prose.

History, theology, and practice are all important elements of writing an authentic icon – but there must be room for development. When I push him to explain what good, innovative icons might look like, he has one recommendation: the works written by Todor Mitrovic, from the Serbian capital Belgrade. Mitrovic has found a form of his own that Philip likes very much.

Much of Philip's and Olga's work is done on commission, but quite a bit springs from their own yearning to devote themselves to a particular motif. There are now about 150 icons, frescoes, and works in metal by Philip Davydov spread all over the world.

No shortcuts are taken in this studio. Everything is done meticulously, from the design of the panel and the size mixed of chalk and glue to the image painted in egg tempera, which yields the most gorgeous, bright, and permanent colors. The tiny pots of natural pigment in every color of the rainbow offer their own experience of beauty. The gold is of the highest purity

Icon bracelets have become a global hit with young women. Is this a threat to the religious value of icons? Photo by Bror Jansson.



Right: The Annunciation, icon by Jelena Kuzmina.



and most heavenly glimmer. The icons written here have been praised to the skies by critics, students, and those who buy the works. Philip Davydov has been a professor at the Orthodox Institute of Theology and Sacred Arts in St. Petersburg since 2006. How he finds time for it all is something of a mystery.

Sweden has proud traditions in iconography, if not out in the churches, at least at the National Museum in Stockholm. Its icon collection is considered one of the finest in the world outside Russia. It is small in terms of the number of exhibited works, but the icons crowded into the small space are of the highest quality, of tremendous breadth and depth, and are only a tiny fraction of the total collection of 320 icons, of which 250 were donated by the “Red Banker”, Olof Aschberg.

Reading the learned discourses of Per-Arne Bodin on an obscure saint like the Blessed Xenia of St. Petersburg is stimulating. Bodin is a professor of Slavic languages, and his book of essays *Skruden och nakenheten* [The robes and the nakedness] includes the tale of the remarkable Xenia, a fool-for-Christ who lived in the 1700s.³ Since she was not canonized until 1988, there are no ancient icons to fall back on: the icon writers are free to create to their own inclinations, which they do. You can see examples on the net from many places around the world.

There are a great many people in Sweden who can style themselves icon writers, and even more are taking classes to learn how to write icons. One of those who have been involved in iconography for a long time is Yelena Kimsdotter Kuzmina. She was born in Latvia, has a solid arts education from Russia – but learned to write icons in the Swedish provincial city of Sundsvall. She was taught by Father Olof Åsblom of the Catholic parish in Luleå. The education included masses, meditation, learning about old originals, and training in the painterly craft. She eventually took a master’s class at Valamo Abbey in Finland.

She now writes her icons in Visby and teaches courses in icon writing in various places in Sweden. Yelena Kuzmina also emphasizes that icon writing is not about copying, that for her it is a way of praying to God, of expressing her yearning to be with God and to become a better person. “Icon writing is a long, slow process, it’s impossible to stress out about it. On

the contrary, as the work proceeds, you often find stillness, inner peace, and the answers to many questions”, Yelena Kuzmina explains.

Her thoughts are very much in agreement with what Dr. Margareta Attius Sohlman writes in a book about the icons of centuries past: “The icon is an image of the divine. The icon never depicts the exterior reality, but only the inner, the extracorporeal.”⁴ Attius Sohlman stresses that icons should not be regarded as art, but as part of the liturgy. It is the spirituality that gives the icon its quality, that conveys a message. For her part, she is drawn to older icons, which is chiefly where she finds what resonates with her.

They say you can call yourself an icon writer when you have devoted yourself to the process for seven years – and Jesper Neve has been writing icons since 1987. He started because he wanted an icon of his own. He had seen an exhibition of icons whose genuineness was guaranteed by a Soviet certificate of cultural historical authenticity. Instead of buying one, he decided to learn to write icons himself. As he has a doctorate in physics and a day job in IT, it was a struggle to find the time to learn and develop his iconography. He first approached the Right Reverend Bishop Johannes of the Orthodox Church of St. Constantine and St. Helen in Vårberg, south of Stockholm, and bought two icons there. He then signed up for an icon course in Kista, the “Silicon Valley” of Sweden, which gave him an un-

derstanding of the painting technique, but not the fundamental religious aspects. He went back to Bishop Johannes and began a course of training with the bishop and Theodora that lasted 17 years. For his part, Jesper Neve has chosen a classic, Russian/Greek style. Even within rigid confines, there is clearly room for personal choice – but always with one singular purpose: the prayer to God. This is one of the things Neve teaches at the icon writing courses he now holds. ✕

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WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN RUSSIA

SMALL BUSINESS IN A BIG COUNTRY¹

by **Ann-Mari Sätre**

As a result of the priority structure in place at the time, mass privatization in Russia in the early 1990s was in many respects far from equitable, resulting in both winners and losers. Among the clear winners were the directors of high-priority oil and gas industries, most of them men.² Those in former high-priority sectors, for example heavy industry, were on average less fortunate, since the performance of these sectors generally deteriorated and led to closings or bankruptcy, which meant that the owners lost their wealth. Both women and men involved in heavy industry lost their fortunes. At the same time, many women benefitted from the privatization of the low-priority consumer goods industry. In the course of mass privatization in 1994–1995, some of these women were able to transform their enterprises into private firms. Despite an obsolete industrial structure and a need for investment, it was also possible to build up small-scale production with limited resources in this sector. Some women who were bosses in other low-priority sectors, such as trade, culture, health, and education, also benefitted from the privatization process.

Setting up a private business is something new; it was not possible during the Soviet period. Women have taken advantage of this new opportunity and set up businesses in traditionally female sectors that had low-priority status and underdeveloped economic activity during the Soviet era. In the early 1990s, female entrepreneurship was primarily oriented towards science, consulting, retail trade, and services. Women also started small-scale businesses in the fields of childcare, healthcare, education, dressmaking, knitting, handicrafts, and fruit and vegetable production. According to official statistics, 90 percent of production in the female-dominated consumer goods sector takes place in small firms. This sector is growing and is fairly competitive. It may also be that women have benefitted from a positive attitude towards female entrepreneurship. Women are believed to be responsible and to be trustworthy in their business relations, since

they are assumed to be driven by the need to support their families. They are also expected to run businesses with social aims.

Meanwhile, women had few resources to build up sustainable entrepreneurship, with the possibility of expansion beyond the level of merely treading water. According to the national labor force survey in Russia, the share of women among individual entrepreneurs in 2007 was 41 percent. The sharpest increase in the number of self-employed women occurred between 1996 and 1998; it actually doubled during this time, when unemployment reached its peak level. There also seems to be a positive correlation between female entrepreneurship and male unemployment.

INTERVIEWS FROM THREE communities in a Russian region illustrate that there are many new opportunities for potential entrepreneurs, while there are also many at times unpredictable obstacles to overcome.³ Women have set up trade firms, but firms have also been set up for processing timber, berries and mushrooms, and agricultural products, as well as in the textile and tourism sectors. All the interviews paint the same picture. The arbitrary enforcement of rules and treatment by authorities forces the female entrepreneurs to rely on several sources of income. Politicians and municipal officials are “in the hands of the oligarchs”; consequently, the large male-managed firms do not have to worry about rules that apply to smaller ones. But there are also examples of how mayors have helped small female entrepreneurs with various facilities, renting them commercial property, or even lending them money.

The interviews support the impression that it has been more difficult to start small businesses in recent times than it was just after the privatization reforms in the 1990s. One reason could be that it was easier to get hold of equipment needed to get started, since one could take over existing equipment, or buy it cheaply, from old state firms. Another reason could be stricter rules for obtaining licenses. Despite many problems,

individuals still try to start their own businesses. Possible explanations could be high general levels of tolerance towards risk-taking, too little knowledge of difficulties that may be faced, personal networks, the fact that having one's own business is the only way to support oneself, or simply that this is something the individuals really want to do. The insufficiencies of the legal system are not of major importance; people still try, even if they have difficulties with the registration and licensing of their activities. Several said explicitly they did not want business partners or collaborators from outside the family. The perceived instability of the situation has meant that people are hired on an informal basis, especially at unlicensed businesses.

THE STORIES OF LUDMILA, DARIA AND ANASTASIA

The stories of the business development processes of three female entrepreneurs will illustrate what the situation might be like.⁴

LUDMILA LIVES with her husband and two children in a town of some 10,000 inhabitants, situated 600 kilometers from the regional capital. As a teenager, Ludmila had dreamed of starting her own business. Anxious to realize her ideas as soon as she had the possibility, in 1992, at the age of 19, Ludmila took over a sewing machine from the textile firm where she was working. She took a loan to buy all the equipment she wanted from the state-owned firm at a very low price, since it was about to close down, and she also took over the ten employees. She was thus one of those who benefitted from privatization reforms in the early 1990s. She registered her firm in 1993, producing traditional costumes and work clothes.

Ludmila developed her textile enterprise slowly, and did not invest in new technically advanced machines until there was enough capital within her own business. She collaborates with her husband: she told about how he invested money that he earned from

timber cutting in her textile firm, while she helped him with bookkeeping. Only after twelve years did she start to make some money. Both explicitly said they did not want partners from outside the family. She also told about how her husband stayed at home with their newborn baby when she returned to run her enterprise a couple of days after giving birth.

Ludmila runs the sewing activities connected with her shop in the village. She had employed some young women with small children; they were able to work at home, although this meant they could not utilize the modern equipment. She was sewing to order only, due to the limited buying capacity in the area. These orders included ladies clothes, costumes and work clothes for firms and linens for restaurants. She said her expansion was limited by a lack of skilled staff in the local community. Her solution was to train her staff herself. In 2008, she had opened a new shop in a town 400 kilometers away. The number of employees had increased to 18. She had been considering moving to the town as she felt it was not possible to expand in the local community where most people are poor apart from those who were already her customers. But she had decided to stay in the village and to keep on with the sewing there, where the rents are low, while also sewing on orders to the town. Ludmila had also expanded her activity to include sewing curtains and interior decorating, which she had learned by attending special courses in the town.

DARIA LIVES WITH her husband and three children across the river from a village of 5,000 inhabitants, 10 kilometers from the municipal center and 600 kilometers from the regional capital. For five years she tried to get a license for her tourism business without success; she was one of those who ran her business without being registered, and the community knew it. In her case, this was due to land registry problems. Daria felt unsafe, since her family had built houses without being registered as legal owners. Finally, at the end of 2006, her "rental cottages" business was registered. Her financial capital came from retail trade and timber cutting. Together with her husband, she started a sports school that was free for children. Their salaries for this activity were paid by the state. The couple had also run a shop in the village together with some relatives. Although they earned very little from this shop after paying salaries and taxes and repaying loans that they had taken out in order to start it, some money was left to put into the development of a tourist business. By renting out the shop, they got money to build a house of their own to live in as well as other houses. (Timber for building your own home is free).

The tourism business has been built up gradually, step by step. In 2008, five houses were made available for rent to tourists, the first of which had been built in 2003. From the money earned over the years, they have also been able to build a sauna, a café and a building for administration. Gradually the ski and tourism center is being developed, partly by state money and increasingly with money from the private sector. Daria expresses a fear of being absorbed by one of the larger local entrepreneurs: "As long as the firm is small it is your own, but if you start to grow somebody will buy you up." Nevertheless, she is proud to be an example of how to "start with two empty hands" and develop your business little by little, using income



Breakfast at the tourism firm.

from timber and trade to finance the development of tourism activities. Daria tells about how she handles all the "begging" she is exposed to, being perceived of as a successful local entrepreneur. She has to choose what she wants to support, as she can't contribute in all areas. She has chosen ski-related activities for children, which dovetail with her public employment as a ski instructor.

Food shops in the municipal center continue to be important sources of money for the development of the tourism business. But Daria believes that new rules concerning the sale of alcohol will cause problems for smaller food shops, and hence lower financial capital from trade that can be used to develop their business. Daria expresses the opinion that, while it has been possible to earn a lot of money in the grocery business, it has gradually become harder, due to new tax rules and various restrictions. Nevertheless, it has been quite easy to get permits for shops, cafés, restaurants, recreation and sports facilities, while it has not yet been possible to get a license for a hotel. The development of the tourism business with the gradual expansion in the number of employees has facilitated life for the private household, which benefits from cooking, cleaning, building repairs, maintenance of vehicles, and even on some occasions childcare.

ANASTASIA LIVES WITH her husband in a beautiful village of 1,000 inhabitants some 100 kilometers away from the municipal center and almost 700 kilometers from the regional capital. She has three adult children. One daughter, one son and three grandchildren live in the same village. She was the director of a local child care unit for 25 years who in the early years of perestroika, in the early 1990s, became a local politician for a couple of years. After not being re-elected, she decided she wanted to realize her ideas about developing her own business. Consequently, she was eager to apply to take part in the SIDA-financed project (see

note 3), an opportunity she became aware of through her engagement in the development of the community. Anastasia tried to get started by means of borrowed money; she ran a business processing berries and mushrooms for almost five years without a license.

Anastasia describes how her proposal was accepted by five municipal officials, while a sixth person said no. She hired an electrician who made the electric installations that she required to get started, but when the inspector found out that the electrician did not have the required permit, she was fined. According to her, this happened because the inspector had learned about safer installations in Sweden. Then she had to get hold of the only licensed electrician in the region, borrow more money from her son-in-law to pay him, and make the electrician come to her village and redo the necessary installation.

According to Anastasia, municipal officials have the same mentality as they did under the Soviet regime, restraining people who have ideas of their own. She had bribed three persons, but said she would have to bribe another one to get her license. She felt that the possibility of setting up a business depended very much on how administrators deal with the various permits that are needed, and she said she sensed right away whether it was worthwhile to talk to a particular bureaucrat or not. She felt that administrators and officials behave differently, and as there are many hierarchies to go through, it seems likely that obstacles will appear on at least one of the levels. Anastasia's own experience provides an illustration. She was anxious as setting up her business and getting started had become much more costly than she had expected. She had borrowed money from relatives, the municipal administration, and three entrepreneurs. She had already invested in modern equipment, but needed to borrow more in order to get the necessary documents to get started.

For the pioneers in a given field, there appear to be



Kitchen staff outside the café.



Here you can find some nice hand-made clothes.

obstacles of which the person who is in the process of starting a business is simply unaware. Anastasia described how she was simply unaware of all the permits she needed to get started. For instance, she needed permission from the health authorities, the fire authorities, and the energy authorities, and she did not know in advance how much she had to pay for each permit. Neither was she aware of quality control procedures, how much she had to pay for each product or how often, the need to give monitoring authorities three kilos of dried mushrooms each time, and present each product to the center for standardization and certification three hundred kilometers away.

Anastasia described how she and her husband survived thanks to their small pensions, the sale of meat from their own cattle, her little shop, and the sale of products from her non-registered business. Her firm was finally registered in mid-2007, but in her daughter's name, in the framework of a family business in the same village.

CONCLUDING REMARKS AT THE END OF MAY 2011

What has happened in the municipality since the last time I was there? Starting with the municipal administration, I learn that they now have a young male *glava* (municipal commissioner), and a new deputy commissioner, Olga, one of participants in the SIDA project, and former director of the cultural center in Ivaksha. The previous deputy commissioner has become minister of culture at the regional level. This new *glava* defeated his predecessor, Andreev. It was interesting to hear the various views about this, some positive, some not – some people believing that the new *glava* doesn't know anything, isn't spearheading any projects, and that he was elected simply because people do not want Andreev back. Andreev had been *glava* at the time of my first visit to the municipality eight years

earlier, in 2003. I remember that Andreev had had the old *politruks* (political commissars), who worked for United Russia, against him. Then when we met him in 2008 he said he finally joined the party because it made it easier for him as an entrepreneur. I learn that the new *glava* is not a party member – interesting that this did not prevent him from being elected. And it was he who convinced Olga to accept the job as deputy commissioner; like her predecessor, she comes from the cultural sector. As Olga put it at the time, her predecessor, whom I have met several times, most recently in 2008, thus managed to get the job that she was hoping to get, once she realized that people were not ready for a woman *glava* in the municipality.

We have called Sergei and asked him to meet us, but Olga also comes to the train, with her chauffeur, to greet us. She is very well dressed, with high heels there in the grassy slope, and she is eager to set up a rewarding agenda for us. This time I am traveling with Irina.

Lunch is waiting for us at the café. It's just the two of us – it's pretty late in the afternoon. This time we get the nearest house, with two bedrooms, living room, kitchen unit, toilet, and a shower with sauna. For the first time we have a sauna in our own house. I see that there are now a few more houses, and that there is a fine red fence that separates the cottage area from the next lot. Daria has given birth to her fourth child. Maxim is a strong little chap at eleven months. They seem to have quite a few employees, just like the old days. Daria solves her own family's needs for meal preparation, laundry, carpentry, babysitting, and car repairs as part of her business. One of the employees is also an "extra mother" to the youngest son – she is available around the clock.

Now Daria is finally registered as the owner of the land, and thus of all eight houses. This is important to her, some of the uncertainty is gone, and now she has the possibility of selling a house if she ever wants to. They have a buffer now. Each house is registered separately. Daria thinks that things are right now, she feels satisfied with having positioned herself in the middle ground – the concept is that it should be simple but comfortable. "This doesn't make sense for people who want to strike it rich", she says. But getting there through the forest is still difficult; the municipality does not want to pay for road improvements. Nor is anyone registered as a private owner of the road, so nothing happens.

I often encounter the view that "there is no need to save money today in Russia". "We live for the day", they say. Sergei thinks that the state should support agriculture; the land previously used for farming has been transformed into open ground. "It's easier to fell the forest, then there's money right away, you cut and sell. But agriculture requires a little work first, and then you might get something, but now nobody wants to wait." There is still no dairy in the municipality. Tania, a politician at the lowest local level, believes this is because the men who planned it did not have enough patience. "If it had been women, it would have gotten done", she says.

I want to try to convey my view of today's Russia, that special blend of Soviet mentality woven together with unrestrained entrepreneurship, "business po russkii" and "russkaia demokratia". The impression I carry with me is very much one of misery, hopeless-

ness, and recklessness. But there are also many bright spots, those people who find ways to weave past the various obstacles, even in the middle of it all – all these amazing people who make the impossible possible! ❌

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- 2 Putin, however, managed to collect a considerable portion of the income flows that had previously gone directly into the private pockets of "oligarchs", so that some of the profits are diverted to the state budget.
- 3 In 2003, 2005, 2006, and 2008, I conducted 50 interviews in connection with the follow-up of a project financed by the Swedish International Development agency (SIDA), which began in 1999. Fifteen people took part in this project aimed at helping individual entrepreneurs to start their own businesses. I interviewed 11 women and three men (basic information about the situation of a woman who was not interviewed was collected through interviews with others). The project involved education in business development and law, assistance in developing business plans, law, and a study visit to Sweden, where the participants visited individual entrepreneurs in the same business sector. In 2008, one of the three who was running a business, a woman, had run her textile firm since 1993. Another woman had finally been able to have her firm for "individual living" registered in 2006. A third woman had, after a long struggle, succeeded in having her processing firm for berries and mushrooms registered in 2007, although in her daughter's name. One of the men had been able to set up a Swedish-Russian timber-cutting firm in 2003, with a Swedish companion, but was out of business in 2008. Some of the others who had tried were running their businesses without being registered. One of the men had died and one of the women had moved to St. Petersburg. Apart from the participants in the project, interviews in three communities were carried out with other individuals who have succeeded or failed to start their own firms, as well as with politicians and municipal officials. At the regional level I talked to a vice-governor, a vice-chairman, and a member of the regional duma.
- 4 I interviewed these three women (we can call them Ludmila, Daria, and Anastasia) several times in each of the years 2003, 2005, 2006 and 2008, and I have also on a few occasions interviewed some of their family members.



SILENCE AND SURVEILLANCE

A HISTORY OF CULTURE AND COMMUNICATION

by **Lars Kleberg** illustration **Ragni Svensson**

In one of the final scenes of Andrei Tarkovsky's film *Stalker*, the three men exploring the forbidden Zone – Writer, Professor, and Stalker – are close to entering the room where, allegedly, people's wishes come true. After having passed through a landscape of ruins and elements of a destroyed civilization, they pause in a small room on the side of a water-filled pool, full of lost cultural artifacts. In the middle of all the junk, an old-fashioned telephone on the floor mystically gives a ring. The Writer answers the call, but quickly replies, "No, this is not the clinic!" and slams the receiver down. It is a misdialed call from the other world, with which the Zone seems to have no contact.¹

The scene in *Stalker* is a random example of how the telephone in the Russian and Soviet context can have completely different connotations from those found in an American or Western European film, where the phone call is a common device for speeding up the action and focusing the spectator's attention on the solution of the plot. The differences have a historical explanation.

THE TELEPHONE IN RUSSIA AND THE SOVIET UNION

The history and sociology of the telephone in Russian society have only slowly become the object of serious study.² The scope of this essay is limited to the following two topics: first, the forms of use, in pre-revolutionary Russia and the Soviet Union, of the telephone as a means of communication, potentially universally available and "horizontal" but actually restricted by "vertical" forces; and second, the symbolism that accumulated around this means of communication in Russian and Soviet culture.

The telephone, during its almost 150-year history, has created new spatial-temporal conditions for communication. Before Bell's invention, communication entailed either the simultaneous presence of the participants in one and the same place (conversation, discussion), or the overcoming of geographical distance between the sender and addressee at the cost of lost time and the exclusion of any signals not recorded

in the text (written correspondence or telegram). The appearance of the telephone created a new situation involving simultaneous contact over great distance, as a result of which the significance of the human voice increased dramatically. At the same time, the loss of paralinguistic signals that accompany ordinary speech required active compensation on the part of the participants in a telephone conversation.

Sociologists seem to agree on the availability of telephone communications and telephones as one of the indicators of a society's degree of modernization.³ In Russia, the telephone, like many other technical novelties, appeared early but had a very limited geographical and social distribution. In 1896, the Bell Telephone Company published what was in all likelihood the first telephone directory for Moscow, containing approximately 2,200 telephone numbers for private individuals and organizations; most of all it resembled the membership list of a motorist club.⁴ According to international statistics, Russia was far behind the US and leading European nations around 1900 in the number of inhabitants (of all ages) per telephone:



USA – 60, Sweden – 115, Switzerland – 129, Germany – 397, France – 1,216, Italy – 2,629, Russia – 6,988.⁵

The *Brockhaus and Efron Encyclopedic Dictionary* (1901) described the successful expansion of the telephone in the West, compared to Russia, in almost lyrical tones:

With the development of urban life, the telephone acquires ever-greater significance; with the intensification of industrial development, it acquires great importance in the countryside as well, particularly in the United States, a country of heightened industrial pace. In order to save expenses on the installation of telephone lines, American farmers use fences surrounding fields; wires strung on these fences serve as telephone lines and special telephone poles are erected only when it is necessary to extend the telephone network across a road. Such telephones cost very little and function very well, even when the fence is covered with dew.⁶

In spite of the low ranking of Russia in comparative statistics, in the upper echelons of society in the two capitals the telephone was as much a part of daily life as in any other large European city. Like other similar novelties (trains, airplanes, or computers), it was initially met with curiosity on the part of some and suspicion on the part of others, but it was generally received as semiotically “charged” and not merely as a practical object of utility. The particular tension between simultaneity and distance, characteristic of all forms of telephone communications, gave rise to various complexes of associations. The communicative situation between two speakers not seeing one another could generate misunderstandings and fantasies, reflected in anecdotes about telephone conversations and telephone operators, and subsequently regulated by books on telephone etiquette. Due to the possibility of direct contact in time without physical presence in space, the telephone eliminated or crossed the boundary between private and public spheres of life; it became what Marshall McLuhan has called “the irresistible

intruder”.⁷ In Russia before World War I and especially after the October Revolution, the possession of an office telephone became a symbol of status and power: the more telephones or different telephone lines an official had at his disposal, the higher his status.⁸

In Western sociology, telephone communications are usually described as a direct, horizontal, centripetal, or even decentralizing means of communication, for which the current metaphor is *the network*.⁹ Such potentialities of the telephone were realized only partially in the Soviet Union, where concepts such as horizontality, centripetal movement, etc., were rather at variance with the fundamental norms of the system.¹⁰ To put it simply, various forces, intended to restrict or counteract the inherent tendencies of the telephone system, were mobilized, namely:

- permanent technical shortcomings: shortage of lines and telephones, low quality of switchboards, absence of automated long-distance (and especially international) lines;
- the creation of separate and secret telephone networks for the state apparatus, which in terms of speed and audibility maintained an entirely different standard than that of the public network;
- wiretapping of telephone lines by state security organs, which deprived the telephone of its function as a “direct” means of communication, regardless of whether surveillance was actually conducted;
- limited circulation of telephone directories, which are a basic and indispensable factor for ensuring the reciprocity and accessibility of telephone communications.

THE LACK OF TELEPHONE DIRECTORIES AS A FEATURE OF SOVIET CULTURE

In the West, the telephone directory or telephone book has always (at least until the computer revolution) been one of the most widely distributed, universally available and content-rich sources of information. However, what we in Sweden, Germany, Poland, or the United States associate with the telephone book – a universally available, open, comprehensive, and regularly published list of telephone subscribers – was scarce in the USSR before the war and almost nonexistent after the war. Granted, there was one well-known type of telephone directory, which was often referred to as *telefon-naia kniga*. The differences between this publication and that which we in the West call a telephone book are quite apparent.

Let us take a look at the directory entitled Moscow: *Telephone Numbers and Addresses of Organizations, Institutions, and Business Enterprises*, 1989, published by the Ministry of Communications in 1989 (the last Soviet edition). The first thing that strikes one is the composition of the directory. All entities listed as having telephone numbers, i.e. the universe of the telephone book, are divided into fourteen concentric sections, or categories with subsections – from governmental institutions of the USSR and the RSFSR and Communist Party organizations down to “emergency services, bathhouses, domestic services, garage construction cooperatives, housing construction cooperatives, hotels, cemeteries, crematoriums, pawnshops, hair salons, sew-

ing, repairs, manufacture, laundries, rental agencies, repair services, photography, darkrooms, photography studios, dry cleaning, and dyeing”.¹¹

The universe formed here – Moscow, capital of the USSR – by its structure is actually reminiscent of the Tree of Knowledge (originating from Francis Bacon and the *Encyclopédie* of d’Alembert and Diderot). In the *Moscow–1989* telephone directory, each concept – be it an organization, institution, or business – has its own predetermined place on the branches of the Tree. Who is the implied reader of such a telephone directory, if we consider what is said and left unsaid in the text? It is apparent that s/he is an enlightened reader who does not require an introduction to the norms of the Tree of Knowledge, which is in fact the Tree of Power. It is expected of her/him that s/he will know (or will not question) why the world is divided into fourteen categories, and which subsections are to be found under which category. This reader’s point of view coincides with the point of view of the Center, the center of bureaucratic and administrative power, for which the principles of order and subordination are obvious and indisputable. One could hardly expect anything different from a directory with a print run of 250,000 for a population of nearly 10 million.

Thus, a kind of telephone directory did exist, primarily as an administrative instrument available to a minority. It resembled the “Yellow Pages” long known in Western countries and widely published in Russia today. However, the telephone directory as understood in the West, i.e. a universally available list of private subscribers, published with the aim of facilitating communication among citizens, appeared only as an exception in the USSR. Prior to the Second World War, this kind of directory was published only rarely. The last edition of *Vsya Moskva* [All Moscow], a mixture of a Moscow “Yellow Pages” and a telephone directory, appeared in 1936.¹² In 1937 and 1939, telephone directories for Moscow were actually published. They have, however, been extremely hard for foreign scholars to gain access to, and the number of copies printed has not been established.¹³ In connection with the evacuation during World War II, existing telephone books were systematically destroyed and very few new editions appeared during the Stalin era.¹⁴

An interesting event was the publication of the four-volume directory of Moscow telephone subscribers in 1971–1972.¹⁵ From the very outset, this telephone book was a collector’s item: the official edition was 50,000 copies for approximately 600,000 telephone subscribers (of whom 67,000 were collective subscribers, i.e., belonging to communal apartments) among 8 million inhabitants.¹⁶ If the above-mentioned *Moscow–1989* directory with its hierarchical structure was compiled for communication along a line leading from the Center to the periphery, then the Moscow directory might appear to have been constructed for horizontal communication between subscribers, like any other such list in the world. Judging from the severely limited size of the edition, however, this was not likely the case. The directory seems in fact to have been calculated to simplify communication within the Center, over the heads of the subscribers themselves.

The potential and dynamics of the telephone communications system in the Soviet Union were thus restricted by powerful means. The telephone was “domesticated” and turned into an instrument of control for those who held power, while for the broad masses it remained an instrument of contact within the private sphere. For ordinary citizens, the telephone became an object associated with two rather independent worlds. On the one hand, there was the world of the power structures, where the telephone mainly com-



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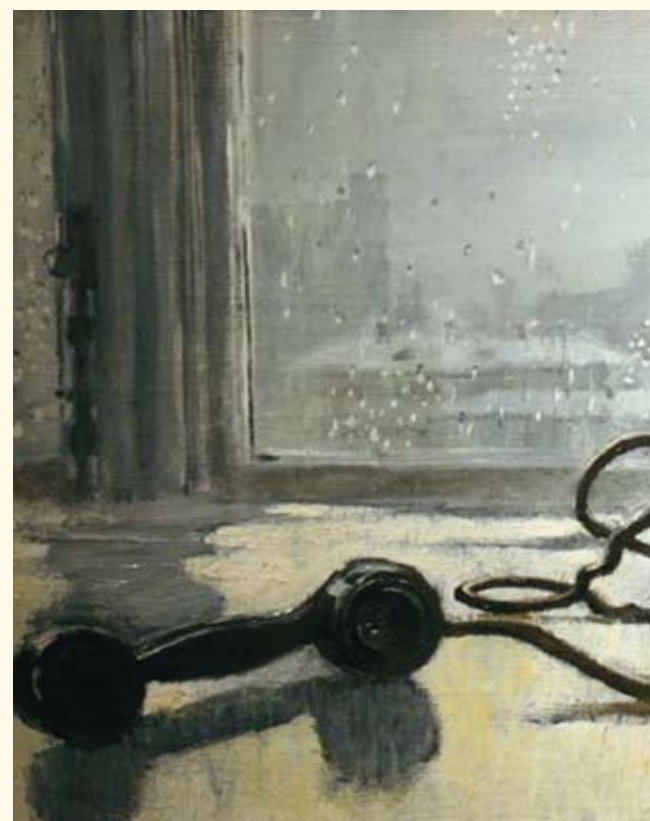
municated internally (or sometimes made ominous calls to the individual citizen), and on the other hand, the “little world” of private life and the part of the public sphere closely connected with it (school, stores, health care). Telephoning within the boundaries of this sphere – excluding intercity (and, where possible, international) calls – was virtually free of cost; until 1992 there were no time restrictions on local calls in Russia. For the “little world”, telephone directories were not a necessity.

In Tarkovsky’s *Stalker*, the mysterious telephone call answered by the Writer leaves the three men bewildered. But after a short pause, the Professor – the rationalist and technocrat – suddenly picks up the receiver of the old-fashioned telephone and calls a number. The connection works immediately, and he asks for “Laboratory No. 9”. As a person used to being in control, the Professor tells the person answering where he is and says that he will not use the bomb he has brought into the Zone. Threatened that he will be reported to the Security organs, he unperturbedly tells the person on the other end of the line (whose voice is also heard) to mind his own business.

“VERTUSHKA”

If telephone communications could play an important role in the process of erasing the boundaries between private and public life in Western Europe and the United States, things were very different in Soviet society.¹⁷ As early as 1922, on Lenin’s initiative, a special automated network was installed for the Kremlin bureaucracy, parallel to the public telephone lines. This government telephone was called *vertushka* [“pinwheel”, or “whirligig”], because, while the ordinary telephone system was run with manual exchanges – i.e. one had to ask the operator to connect to a certain number – the Kremlin automatic exchange functioned like all telephones today; that is, the subscriber himself dialed the desired number on the rotary dial, hence the name *vertushka*. Later, this telephone was also called *kremlyovka*.

From the beginning, this *vertushka* network, officially called ATS VTsIK [Automatic Telephone Exchange of the Central Executive Committee], had only 100 subscribers. It guaranteed its subscribers high technical quality, swiftness, and



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secrecy of communication.¹⁸ The directory of this exclusive service from 1922 has recently been found and published on the Internet, showing the numbers of all the Party leaders.¹⁹ Gradually, *vertushkas* were installed in the private flats and even dachas of party leaders, ministers, and other members of the highest Soviet elite, both in Moscow and in the capitals of the Soviet republics. In the 1970s, the government ATS was finally divided into two systems, ATS-1 with a maximum of 1000 subscribers, and ATS-2, for the second-highest elite, with a maximum of 5000 subscribers. A leading expert on post-World War II Soviet history, Rudolf Pikhoya, notes that “[p]robably the most exact indication of the size of the highest layer of power in the country is found in the directory of the subscribers of the government telephone net”. According to Pikhoya’s source – the internal directory of the ATS-1 from 1991 – this system, at the end of the Soviet era, did not have much more than 600 subscribers.²⁰

The *vertushka* was a system for communication and control inside the Soviet elite. Using the ordinary telephone communications system, those in power could call whomever, whenever they pleased, but the reverse was not true. The well-known idiosyncratic telephone habits of Stalin are an extreme example of this. No one ever called Stalin unless he was expecting the call.²¹

An interesting description of Stalin’s telephone calls and their immediate effects is found in the memoirs of the famous airplane designer, once vice-minister for aviation, Aleksandr Yakovlev. In the 1930s he was a relative newcomer in the highest Soviet elite:

In 1939, I received a new flat in the house of the ministry at the Patriarch Ponds. The engineers Ilyushin and Polikarpov also took up residence there.

The house was new; a telephone was installed only for Polikarpov. Several times, I was asked to answer a call from Stalin in Polikarpov’s flat, which was a floor below. I felt extremely embarrassed. Therefore, when Polikarpov’s maid once came running and said that I was asked to call immediately to Poskryobyshev, that is, to Stalin, I went to the next



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shop and rang up from a pay phone in order not to disturb Polikarpov. During the conversation, Stalin asked why I was so late calling back. I explained that I was calling from a pay phone.

He was surprised:

– What, don't you have a telephone?!

The next day, when I came home late from work, I found a municipal telephone in the apartment.

But this was not the whole story. During one of our next conversations, Stalin asked about certain details concerning the armament of a new airplane and put a question that I refused to answer:

– Comrade Stalin, I cannot speak with you about that.

– Why?

– It is prohibited to discuss such matters on a city telephone.

– Yes, of course, I forgot that! But what's that, don't you have a direct telephone at home?

– Of course not.

– Is that not regulated in your job description? answered Stalin laughing.

– Well, good night.

And again, just as in the earlier case, the next day I found on my desk at home beside the city telephone a second one. This was a government telephone, a *vertushka*.²²

IN WESTERNEYES

The peculiarities of the Soviet telephone – situated in the contradiction between the open communication of a new era and the abyss of secrecy – have often been recognized and thematized in Western mass culture. The telephone, traditionally used as a means of heightening suspense in the thriller genre, acquired special connotations in plots set in or connected with Soviet society. Thus, in Walter Wager's novel *Telefon*,²³ a disillusioned KGB officer and participant in a Stalinist conspiracy turns up in the United States, where he intends – for the purpose of sabotaging the policy of détente – to activate a number of “sleeper” Soviet saboteurs who have been planted

in the United States during the Cold War as part of an operation called “Telefon”. However, the KGB, more peaceably inclined during the period of détente, sends another agent to the US to prevent the plan from being implemented.

Frederick Forsyth's *Icon* is a well-known thriller about how an American-British joint force manages to prevent a fascist coup in Moscow in 1999. Eventually the Russian fascist dictator *in spe* Igor Komarov realizes that his plans have failed, and in a rage he attacks a symbol of modernization – the telephone standing on his desk:

Without warning, he began to shriek his rage at his persecutors, using the ruler to hit his own telephone until the plastic cracked and shattered. Grishin stood rigid; down the corridor there was utter silence as the office staff froze where they were.

“... There will be no czar in this land other than me, and when I rule they will learn the meaning of discipline such that Ivan the Terrible will seem like a choirboy.”

As he shouted, he brought the ebony ruler down again and again on the wreckage of the telephone, staring at the fragments as if the once-useful tool was itself the disobedient Russian people, learning the meaning of discipline under the knout.²⁴

THE TELEPHONE IN RUSSIAN LITERATURE

The conscious “domestication” of telephone communications in Soviet society was never carried through to completion and always remained inconsistent. As even the most preliminary analysis of telephone symbolism in literature, cinematography, and visual art reveals, the telephone was an exceptionally “charged” object in the Soviet era, with strong connotations, if not a mythical aura.

The telephone first appears in Russian literature in Anton Chekhov's works. His little story “On the Telephone” (1886) makes fun of the difficulties of getting a normal call through, due to the unreliability of the operators.²⁵ The seventeen-volume Soviet Academy *Dictionary* cites the following quota-

tion from Chekhov's “In the Ravine” (1900): “A telephone was installed at the *volost* government office, but it soon ceased to work.” The *Dictionary*, however, leaves out Chekhov's colorful continuation: “as bedbugs and cockroaches had taken up residence there. The head of the *volost* was semiliterate and capitalized every word in documents, but when the telephone was out of order, he said, ‘Well, now it will be difficult without a telephone’.”²⁶

During the first decade of the twentieth century, the telephone had already become a natural component of life in the big cities of Russia. However, the duality of the telephone – lightning speed on the one hand and the one-channeled character of the communication on the other – created great possibilities for mythologization. Telephone operators, who – in the capacity of a potential third, silent participant – attended communication, served as a topic of both anecdotes and serious texts.²⁷ The strictly non-material, yet intimate nature of telephone conversation was frequently associated with supernatural forces:

Unexpected and bold

A woman's voice on the phone, –

Such delightful harmony

In this bodiless voice!

Joy, your gracious step

Doesn't always pass by:

Clearer than a seraphim's lute

You are even in the phone receiver!²⁸

No less often, the telephone was linked to infernal subterranean forces, to death and suicide: “In this savage, frightening world / You, friend of midnight burials, / In the high, austere office / Of the suicide victim – telephone!”²⁹ However, in literature the telephone became above all a symbol of love, especially unrequited love or separation. As Vadim Rudnev points out in his *Dictionary of Twentieth Century Culture*, “throughout the first half of the twentieth century, the telephone was one of the most stable symbols of love, specifically of love in the twentieth century, a symbol of texts and discourses on love”.³⁰ Examples of this can be found in plays, but first and foremost in poetry and all its subgenres, from high poetry to the lyrics of popular songs. Widely known variations on the theme of the telephone appear in Mayakovsky's works, in Kornei Chukovsky's children's verses (“Telefon”, 1929), in the poetry of Nikolai Zabolotsky (“The Voice in the Telephone”, 1957) and Vladimir Vysotsky (“07”, 1969).

Of particular interest is Mayakovsky's poem “About This”, from 1923. Here, a telephone not only figures as a channel for a (broken-off) liaison; a telephone call and the technology involved are also anthropomorphized and become characters in the poem. In essence, the poem constitutes a chain reaction of associations in the poet's mind during a moment of stopped time in front of an Ericsson telephone while he waits to be connected to his beloved through the telephone lines running below the streets of Moscow. In Mayakovsky's hyperbolized language, this situation of being one-on-one with the telephone develops into “two series of expanded metaphors connected with the telephone: that of the ‘telephone storm’ and that of the ‘telephone duel’”:³¹

Suddenly

the lamps went berserk,

and then –

the whole telephone network is torn to shreds, see!



Illustrations to Vladimir Mayakovsky's poem "It" by Alexander Rodchenko.

"67-10
Connect me!"
In the Little Alley!
Hurry!
Into Vodopiany's quiet!
Look out!
or else electrically that call –
on Xmas Eve –
will blow you sky-high –
yes,
with your telephone exchanges and all.³²

The transgression of the boundaries between private and public is striking. In the poem "About This", the telephone is no longer a means of concealing something; on the contrary, all elements of this lovers' drama, including the telephone number of the beloved, are open and transparent.³³

The initial connection among the telephone, love, and distance was subsequently banalized and became a theme of mass culture. Other associations began to develop in the 1920s. After Soviet authorities had confiscated or "communalized" private telephones, the image of the telephone as a symbol of power began to dominate in Russian literature.³⁴ In Boris Pilnyak's "Tale of the Unextinguished Moon" (1926), the telephone as an instrument of power is a constantly pres-



Joseph Stalin in his office in 1949.

ent element of the sinister "machine of the city" which forms the universe of the narrative. The enigmatic leader in "House No. 1" has "three telephones which emphasized the tranquility of the logs crackling on the hearth. The three telephones brought into the room three main arteries of the city, so that, out of that tranquility, the city could be commanded – commanded, that is to say, as regards the city itself and its arteries". It is precisely through this thrice-mentioned system of special telephone communications, "the inside telephone that connected with thirty or forty others" (the *vertushka*), that oral commands for the liquidation of the commander-in-chief of the army on the operating table are transmitted and their execution confirmed.³⁵

In Mikhail Bulgakov's novel *The Master and Margarita* (1929–1940), earlier telephone associations – with notions of infernal forces – are combined with the connection between the telephone and power typical of Soviet literature. From apartment number 50, Woland's retinue unabashedly makes calls to any authority, always with fatal consequences for the telephone subscriber. Calls made to apartment number 50 are not answered by Woland, but, it would seem, by the telephone itself: "They are busy, answered the receiver in a jingling voice. Who's calling?"³⁶ In the Variety Theater, where Woland gives his black magic séance, all the phones are switched off, yet suddenly the telephone rings in the office of the financial director Rimsky, who is seized by panic:

And suddenly the deadly silence of the office was shattered by the sound of the telephone itself, blasting in the financial director's face. He shuddered and grew cold. "Boy, my nerves are really shot", he thought and picked up the receiver, whereupon he recoiled and turned white as a sheet. A soft but at the same time insinuating and depraved female voice whispered into the phone, "Don't make any calls, Rimsky, or you'll be sorry. . . ."³⁷

Through the window Rimsky sees the moon – the same moon that looks over the "machine of the city" in Pilnyak – "and the more he [looked], the more strongly he felt the grip of fear". Naturally, Margarita also receives the invitation to Bald Mountain through a

telephone call from Azazello.³⁸ Only the security services are able to use the telephone so effectively: a single word over the phone from "one of the Moscow institutions" is enough to make the chairman of the Acoustics Commission, Arkady Sempleyarov, stop resisting and realize that he must appear immediately for interrogation.³⁹

In Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's novel *The First*

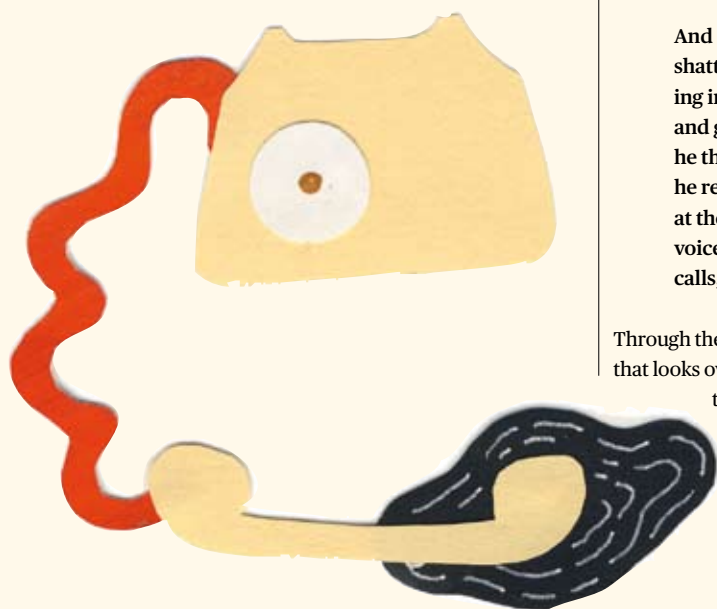
Circle (1968), the telephone connects two parallel worlds in a fatal way. The plot takes place in the year 1949, in the Moscow of the Soviet elite, and a prison with a particular purpose – a *sharashka*. Events begin with an anonymous telephone conversation: an official from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs warns a friend, in a call from a pay phone, of a dangerous foreign contact, and the conversation is intercepted by the security services. A group of imprisoned scientists is given the task of identifying the voice on the magnetic tape with the help of modern technology. One floor up in the same prison building, another group is working on the opposite task, namely to construct a telephone for Stalin's office in the Kremlin that is incapable of being tapped. Technology is completely subordinated to totalitarian power, and whoever designs it inevitably becomes the servant of those in power. The cruel irony of the situation consists in the fact that if the researchers from the Acoustic Laboratory succeed in determining which of the five suspects from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs placed the anonymous call, they will essentially be sentencing him to death. The prisoner Rubin attempts in vain, in a conversation with an NKVD officer, to preserve at least an ounce of freedom for himself in this technical-political system:

"Wait. Wait twenty-four hours", protested Rubin. "Give us a chance to produce the complete evidence."

"You'll have your chance when the investigation begins. We'll put a microphone on the interrogator's table and you can listen for three hours on end if you like."

"But one of them is innocent!" cried Rubin.

"Innocent? What d'you mean?" Oskolupov's green eyes opened wide in astonishment.





Telephone operators work at the manual switchboard of the Leningrad City Telephone Exchange in 1922.



Old Russian telephone.

“Not guilty of anything at all? The security service will sort that one out.”

Having said this, he left without a word of praise for the two exponents of the new science. [...]

They sat down on the same chairs on which they had sat such a short while ago, dreaming of the great future of their newborn science. They said nothing.

It was as if their whole beautiful fragile structure had been stamped on.

Since two could be arrested to make sure of one, why not arrest all five to make it easier still?⁴⁰

In the works of Solzhenitsyn, all constructed meta-languages and all technological means are thematized as fundamentally falsified and alienating.⁴¹ This includes the use of numbers in place of human names in the system of prison camp records, as well as the use of X-ray therapy in the novel *Cancer Ward*. In Solzhenitsyn's texts, the telephone is both an object and a means of observation; it comprises an element of the modern political-technological system, in counterbalance to which Solzhenitsyn proposes a utopian program, turning his back on modernity in any form.

With the end of World War II in Vasily Grossman's magnificent epic *Life and Fate* (1959, published 1980), the nightmares of the terror, the front and the camps both in Germany and in the Soviet Union seem to be fading away in an atmosphere of relief. But suddenly the central character, the nuclear physicist and Academician Viktor Shtrum, feels that his situation is threatened, possibly a sign of a new wave of anti-Semitism and purges. People stop greeting him, friends stop calling, Shtrum stays home waiting for his arrest. Suddenly, one afternoon the telephone rings. It is Stalin:

“Good day, comrade Shtrum.”

At that moment everything came together in a jumble of half-formed thoughts and feelings – triumph, a sense of weakness, fear that all this might just be a some maniac playing a trick on him, pages of closely written manuscripts, that endless questionnaire, the Lyubyanka. . . .

Viktor knew that his fate was now being settled. He also had a vague sense of loss, as though he had

lost something peculiarly dear to him, something good and touching.

“Good day, Iosif Vissarionovich”, he said, astonished to hear himself pronouncing such unimaginable words on the telephone.⁴²

The conversation lasts just a few minutes. Stalin says that he considers Shtrum's work interesting and useful and asks if he has everything he needs.

With a sincerity that he himself found astonishing, Viktor said: “Thank you very much, Iosif Vissarionovich. My working conditions are perfectly satisfactory.”

Lyudmila [Shtrum's wife] was still standing up, as though Stalin could see her. Viktor motioned to her to sit down. Stalin was silent again, thinking over what Viktor had said.

“Goodbye, comrade Shtrum. I wish you success in your work.”

“Goodbye, comrade Stalin.”⁴³

When Shtrum comes to his institute after several weeks' absence, everything seems to have changed.

Viktor had imagined that the people who had tried to destroy him would now be too ashamed even to look at him. Instead, they greeted him joyfully on his return to the Institute, looking him straight in the eye as they expressed their heartfelt goodwill. The most extraordinary thing of all was that these people were quite sincere; now, they really did wish Viktor well.⁴⁴

A victim of complete resignation and vulnerable nakedness in front of total power, Shtrum receives Stalin's telephone call as a gift. In the grim irony of Grossman's novel, the gesture of total control and total arbitrariness of power is seen by those afflicted as a ray of light and a gesture of grace from above. Here, McLuhan's “irresistible intruder” has acquired a completely different meaning. ✕

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- 3 Sidney Aronson, “The Sociology of the Telephone”, in *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, vol. XII:3 (1971) pp. 153–167.
- 4 *Mezhdunarodnaia kompaniia telefonov Bellia: spisok abonentam na telefonnoe soobshchenie v Moskve* [Bell International Telephone Company: Directory of subscribers in Moscow], Moscow 1896.
- 5 John Brooks, *Telephone: The First Hundred Years*, New York 1976, p. 94. Data for 1982 show, after the enormous development of communications technology in the world, virtually the same proportion of inhabitants per telephone: USA – 1.3; Sweden – 1.2; Switzerland – 1.3; FRG – 2.0 (GDR – 5.1); France – 1.8; Italy – 2.7; USSR – 11.3; *Britannica Book of the Year 1985*, pp. 898–902.
- 6 “Telefon (ekon.)” [Telephone (econ.)], in *Entsiklopedicheskii slovar' Brokgauza-Efrona* [Brockhaus-Efron encyclopedic dictionary], v. 64, Moscow 1901, p. 814.
- 7 Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, New York 1964, p. 271.
- 8 Stalin allegedly opposed Trotsky's plans to expand the telephone net for the people saying, “It will unmake our work. No greater instrument for counterrevolution and conspiracy can be imagined”. See Henry M. Boettiger, “Our Sixth-and-a-Half Sense”, in Ithiel de Sola Pool (ed.), *The Social Impact of the Telephone*, Cambridge, Mass. 1977, p. 203. – Stalin himself always had a number of different telephone lines at his disposal. Nikolai Bukharin is said to have called Stalin “Genghis Khan with a telephone”.
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- 11 Moskva: *Telefony i adresa organizatsii, uchrezhdenii i predpriiati*. 1989 [Moscow: Telephones and addresses of organizations, institutions and enterprises. 1989], Moscow 1989, pp. 4–5.
 - 12 Karl Schlögel, *Terror und Traum: Moskau 1937*, ch. “Topographie des Verschwindens: das Moskauer Adressbuch von 1936”, pp. 101–113; also Karl Schlögel, *Moscow*, transl. by Helen Atkins, London 2005, pp. 161–177.
 - 13 On the scarcity of telephone directories, see Vyacheslav Kuritsyns interesting article “Stolbtsy: Chitaem telefonnuu knigu” [Columns: Reading the telephone directory], in *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 1992-03-18. In her essay, “A Spy in the Archives”, Sheila Fitzpatrick recalls the difficulties a young foreign scholar in the 1960s encountered when she wanted to study prewar Soviet telephone directories in the Lenin Library: *London Review of Books*, 2010-12-23 (vol. 32:23), pp. 3–8. The results of Fitzpatrick’s analysis were finally published as “The Impact of the Great Purges on Soviet Elites: A Case Study from Moscow and Leningrad Telephone Directories of the 1930s”, in J. Arch Getty & Roberta T. Manning (eds.), *Stalinist Terror: New Perspectives*, Cambridge 1993, pp. 225–246. – A unique collection of Soviet telephone directories – internal as well as more generally available ones – from the 1930 editions on, is held at the Library of Congress in Washington, DC. See “Address/Telephone Directories from Russia at the Library of Congress”, <http://www.loc.gov/rr/european/phone/rpintro.html> (accessed January 2012).
 - 14 In Konstantin Simonov’s novel *The Living and the Dead* (1962), the hero returns in autumn 1941 from the front and finds Moscow in chaos, expecting the imminent German attack: “How should I know where everybody’s gone!” said the house supervisor, and he climbed into the lorry. “They’ve burned the registers, they’ve burned everything today, they’ve even burned the telephone books! Everything!”
 - 15 *Spisok abonentov Moskovskoi gorodskoi telefonnoi seti* [Directory of Moscow Telephone Subscribers], 1–4, Moscow 1971–1972. – Cf. Hedrick Smith, *The Russians*, New York 1976, pp. 353–354.
 - 16 In Stockholm, at the same time, 1,140,000 copies, or approximately one copy per subscriber, were distributed (1972).
 - 17 The unqualified application of the private–public dichotomy to Soviet society, especially during the Stalin era, can be questioned, as has been done by Jochen Hellbeck in his study of diaries from the 1930s: “The problem of applying a public–private binary to Stalin era diaries and subjectivities is that it projects a liberal understanding of selfhood into the Soviet context”, *Revolution on My Mind: Writing a Diary under Stalin*, Cambridge, Mass. 2006, p. 86. – A special case, unknown in Western Europe or the US, were the collective telephones of the communal flats (about ten percent of all apartment telephones in Moscow in 1972), which in practice made any private telephone conversation impossible. Cf. Ilya Utekhin, *Ocherki kommunal’nogo byta* [Sketches of communal living], Moscow 2001.
 - 18 According to legend, Stalin managed to manipulate himself into total power over the other Party leaders thanks to the wiretapping of even this secret system in the 1920s. The legend probably emanates from Stalin’s former secretary Boris Bazhanov, who escaped to the West in 1928 and in 1930 published his memoirs in France. Cf. Boris Bazhanov, *Bazhanov and the Damnation of Stalin*, transl. and comm. by David W. Doyle, Athens 1990 [1930], pp. 39–41.
 - 19 Curiously enough, one learns from the reproduced pages of the directory that the number to the office of the head of the Cheka, Feliks Dzerzhinskii, was “007”. http://www.liveinternet.ru/users/boss_shadow/post107912912/ (accessed January 2012).
 - 20 R. G. Pikhov, *Sovetskii soiuz: istoriia vlasti 1945–1991* [Soviet Union: the history of power 1945–1991], Novosibirsk 2000, pp. 6–7. See also Michael Voslensky, *Nomenklatura: Anatomy of the Soviet Ruling Class*, transl. by Eric Mosbacher, London 1984, pp. 207–213; Lazarova, op.cit., pp. 64–68; for technical aspects of the vertushka system, see also V. V. Pavlov (ed.), *Pravitel’stvennaia elektrosviaz’ v istorii Rossii* [Government electrical communication in Russian history], pt. 1: 1917–1945, Moscow 2001 and Mikhail Il’inskii, *Tainny spetssvi-*

- azi Stalina 1917–1945 gg.* [The Secrets of Stalin’s special communications systems 1917–1945], Moscow: Veche 2004. – A recent collection of illustrated Soviet nostalgia confuses the vertushka with a military telephone without any rotary dial at all: “Vertushka – Dialless Diplomatic Telephone”, in Michael Idov (ed.), *Made in Russia: Unsung Icons of Soviet Design*, New York 2011, pp. 206–208. – Concerning the continuation of the vertushka in post-Soviet Russia, cf. Viktoriia Arutiunova, “Spetssviaz’ vremen” [Special communications of the times], in *Kommersant–Vlast’: Ezhenedel’nyi analiticheskii zhurnal*, 11 June, 2000, No. 27 (378), p. 20; Ol’ga Tatarchenko, “S vami budet govorit’ president” [The president will speak with you], *ibid.*, p. 21–22.
- 21 Stalin’s calls to the writers Michail Bulgakov and Boris Pasternak are particularly legendary. See Marietta Chudakova, *Zhizneopisanie Mikhaila Bulgakova* [A biography of Mikhail Bulgakov], Moscow 1988, pp. 437–440; Vitaly Shentalinsky, *The KGB’s Literary Archive*, transl., abridged, and annotated by John Crowfoot, London 1995, pp. 90–93; Lazar Fleishman, *Boris Pasternak v tridesiatye gody* [Boris Pasternak in the 1930s], Jerusalem 1984, pp. 175–187; Nadezhda Mandelshtam, *Hope Abandoned: A Memoir*, transl. by Max Hayward, London 1974, p. 146. Fleishman examines all the circumstances of Pasternak’s conversation with Stalin about Mandelshtam in 1934, including the poet’s unsuccessful attempts, after Stalin had hung up, to redial the number through which he had been ordered to contact the leader.
 - 22 Aleksandr Yakovlev, *Tsel’ zhizni: zapiski aviakonstruktora* [The aim of a lifetime: Notes of an aircraft designer], Moscow 2000, p. 157. – This passage is not included in the English translation by Vladimir Vezey, *The Aim of a Lifetime: The Story of Alexander Yakovlev, Designer of the YAK Fighter Plane*, Moscow 1972.
 - 23 Walter Wager, *Telefon*, London. The title of the novel, as well as that of Don Siegel’s film starring Charles Bronson (1977), is written in “Russian”, *Telefon*, and with the correct English spelling.
 - 24 Frederick Forsyth, *Icon*, London 1996, pp. 401–402.
 - 25 A. P. Chekhov, “U telefona” [On the telephone], *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem* [Complete works and letters], v. 4, Moscow, pp. 312–314.
 - 26 *Slovar’ sovremennogo russkogo literaturnogo iazyka* [Dictionary of the contemporary standard Russian language], v. 15, Moscow 1963, p. 222.
 - 27 Roman Timenchik, “K simvolike telefona v russkoi poezii” [On the symbolics of the telephone in Russian poetry], in *Trudy po znakovym sistemam* [Studies in sign systems], XXII, Tartu 1988, pp.155–163.
 - 28 Nikolai Gumilev, “Telefon” (1918), in *Sobranie sochinenii v chetyrekh tomakh* [Collected works], v. 2, Moscow 1991, p. 26.
 - 29 Osip Mandelshtam, “Telefon” (1918), *Sobranie sochinenii v trekh tomakh* [Collected Works], v.1, Washington 1967, p. 143. – For a discussion of the telephone in Mandelshtam’s poetry, see L. L. Gorelik, “Tainstvennoe stikhotvorenii ‘Telefon’ O. Mandel’shtama” [O. Mandelshtam’s enigmatic poem “The telephone”], *Izvestiia RAN:z Seriia literatury i iazyka*, 2006:2 (vol. 65), pp. 49–54.
 - 30 Vadim Rudnev, *Entsiiklopedicheskii slovar’ kul’tury XX veka* [Encyclopedic dictionary of twentieth century culture], Moscow 2001, p. 466.
 - 31 Anna Han, “‘Telefon brosaetsia na vsekh’: metamorfozy telefonnogo apparata v poeme Maiakovskogo ‘Pro eto’” [The telephone hurls itself on everyone: Metamorphoses of the telephone in Mayakovsky’s poem “About This”], in *Acta Universitatis Szegediensis: Dissertationes Slavicae; Sectio Historiae Litterarum* XXIV, Szeged 2006, pp. 177–197, quotation on p. 185.
 - 32 Vladimir Mayakovsky, *Mayakovsky*, transl. by Herbert Marshall, London 1965, p. 166.
 - 33 Mayakovsky included a telephone conversation early on in the poem *A Cloud in Trousers* (1915): “Hello! / Who is speaking? / Mama? / Mama! / Your son is gloriously ill! / Mama!” – There are plenty of examples of Maiakovsky’s and the



- Soviet Russian avantgarde’s interest in the telephone, e.g. El Lissitzky’s dummy for Maiakovsky’s book *Dlia golosa* [For the voice] (1923), designed in the form of a telephone book, and Aleksandr Rodchenko’s collage illustrations to the poem “About This”. The information in Ericsson’s centenary publication that Rodchenko proposed a design for a telephone booth in the shape of a gigantic telephone seems less convincing. See *Eriksson v Rossii: pervyye 100 let – Ericsson in Russia: First 100 Years*, Moscow 1997, pp. 109–115.
- 34 On the de-privatization of the telephone system in Russia after 1918, see Steven L. Solnick, “Revolution, Reform and the Soviet Telephone System, 1917–1927”, in *Soviet Studies*, vol. 43:1 (1991), pp. 162–163 and Iu. V. Krasik, *Telefon* [The Telephone], Moscow 2000, p. 314.
 - 35 Boris Pilnyak, “The Death of the Army Commander: A Tale of the Unextinguished Moon”, in *Fifty Years fo Russian Prose: From Pasternak to Solzhenitsyn*, Krystyna Pomorska (ed.), Cambridge, Mass., vol. 1, pp. 65–66. – On the symbolism of numbers in Pilnyak’s story, see Elena Semeka, “A Structural Analysis of Boris Pil’njak’s ‘Povest’ nepogašennoy luny” in: Andrej Kodjak et al. (eds.), *The Structural Analysis of Narrative Texts*, Columbus, Ohio 1980, pp. 145–169.
 - 36 Mikhail Bulgakov, *Sobranie sochinenii v piati tomakh* [Collected works in five volumes], Moscow 1990, v. 5, p. 108; italics mine. – The effect of the receiver speaking as if by itself is lost in the English translation: “‘They’re busy’, a crackling voice replied, ‘Who may I say is calling?’”, in *The Master and Margarita*, transl. by Diana Burgin & Katherine Tiernan O’Connor, London 1995, p. 91.
 - 37 *The Master and Margarita*, p. 127.
 - 38 *Ibid.*, p. 199.
 - 39 *Ibid.*, p. 282.
 - 40 Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *The First Circle*, transl. by Max Hayward, Many Harari & Michael Glenney, London, pp. 511–512.
 - 41 Krystyna Pomorska, “The Overcoded World of Solzhenitsyn”, *Poetics Today*, vol. 1:3 (1980), pp. 163–170; reprint: “Alexander Solzhenitsyn: The Overcoded World”, Krystyna Pomorska, *Jakobsonian Poetics and Slavic Narrative*, Durham, N. C. 1992, pp. 47–56.
 - 42 Vasily Grossman, *Life and Fate*, transl. by Robert Chandler, New York 1985, p. 762.
 - 43 *Ibid.*, p. 763.
 - 44 *Ibid.*, p. 818.

THE ROSENHOLZ FILES: MYTH AND REALITY

by **Helmut Müller-Enbergs** and **Thomas Wegener Friis** illustration **Karin Sunvisson**

Who were the East German spies in West Germany and the rest of the Western world? This is the question that has puzzled scholars for several decades now – particularly after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the dissolution of the East German (GDR) security apparatus, Stasi, during the winter of the peaceful revolution of 1989/1990. Only shortly after angry citizens had stormed Stasi central headquarters in Berlin in January 1990 did the first reports of East German spies appear. However, at this early stage the question only interested a few experts. Not even the local media paid much attention to it. The number of competing historic events was simply overwhelming. Nonetheless, an important agent, Alfred Spuhler, alias “Peter”, was arrested in November 1989, and the agent of the century, Gabriele Gast, alias “Gisela”, in October 1990. Both had been employed by the West German foreign intelligence agency, Bundesnachrichtendienst (BND).

The interest of the wider public increased in 1992 because of two events in particular. First, the Stasi files were opened. And second, NATO was desperately seeking the mole known by the mystic cover name “Topas”. His value to the Eastern Bloc was even greater than that of “Peter” and “Gisela”. “Topas” had been placed at the heart of NATO’s planning for several years and had smuggled at least 1,047 secret documents to East Berlin, of which 282 were deemed “very valuable” – the highest ranking of raw intelligence – and immediately shared with the KGB.¹

With the opening of the files, it became generally known that East Germany’s primary intelligence service, the Hauptverwaltung A (HVA, often written as “HV A” in German) of the Stasi, equivalent to the First Directorate of the KGB,

had succeeded in destroying almost all its files, computers, and even filing card system. Or at least so the final report of the HVA from June 1990 promised its political supervisors, when Germany was on the brink of reunification.² The lack of material nourished the legend of East German intelligence, which had already been built by memoirs, pieces of evidence, and even fiction. However, an important route to more secure knowledge and deconstruction of the legends was opened when, in April 1998, the German news magazine *Focus* was able to publish an article with a new source of information named “Rosenholz”. The journalist reported that a microfilm copy of the central filing card system of the HVA had not been destroyed, but had miraculously survived in Langley, West Virginia, the headquarters of the CIA. In April 1993, the German counterintelligence agency, Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz (BfV), had been allowed to take notes from this unique resource.³ This archive operated under the name “Rosenholz”, which today is widely accepted as synonymous with the information of the filing card system. Rosenholz sheds new information on the HVA networks and working methods.

The HVA started the destruction of its files in November 1989. Altogether a hundred truckloads of shredded paper were taken from the intelligence central headquarters on Normannenstrasse in East Berlin to destruction facilities. The work was made substantially more difficult on the 15th of January when representatives of the civil rights movement took control of the Stasi headquarters. However, a small group of HVA officers was allowed to continue their work feeding the shredders day and night. Their main priority was documents concerning the agent

networks and general directives that would yield knowledge of HVA methods and target institutions in the West. Only very few of these documents are therefore available in the Stasi files today. However, it was not possible to destroy everything. Important search aids like the Rosenholz files were spared, as well as electronic databases, a large number of final intelligence reports for the party leadership, and even some 13,000 of the service’s 63,000 operations. However, they were generally the operations of least importance.⁴

WHAT IS “ROSENHOLZ”?

In the past it was normal to keep track of books or files using filing cards. The filing cards were a search aid containing a name or a signature. They were small promises of what the file contained. And they were indispensable to the work of intelligence services, giving an overview and perhaps a summary of their work.

The Rosenholz files consist of three different kinds of records, originally created by the HVA. The major part of the files is 293,000 filing cards of the person index of the HVA. The part of Rosenholz which today is kept in the Stasi files lists 133,000 West Germans, 24,000 West Berliners, 112,000 East Germans, and 121 citizens of other states. Within the organization, it was called “Formblatt 16” (standard card 16) or just “F 16”. It contained the names and personal data of people whom the HVA for various reasons found interesting. Often the HVA filed several persons under one registration number. Therefore it is not possible to use the F 16 card to identify individual agents. However, popular belief is still that such identification is possible, and in Germany, in the summer of

2011, it led to a misguided debate on whether the former lawyer of the terrorist group RAF, Horst Mahler, had also been a Stasi spy. The general expression “agent cards” as a synonym for “Rosenholz” is still common. Terms like this nurture the Rosenholz legend.⁵

The second part of Rosenholz is the operation cards, called “Formblatt 22” or “F 22” by the HVA. Rosenholz documents 57,000 of the original 63,000 operations. The operation cards do not reveal any names or personal data, but give information on the type of operation and its registration number. Using the unique registration numbers, it is possible to correlate the F 16 and the F 22 cards. The operation cards, F 22, give a clear idea whether the person with a given registration number could be an agent or whether he or she was a part of an “Objektvorgang” (enemy object file).⁶

The third part of the Rosenholz files is the 2,000 *Statistikbögen* (basic agent statistics). The agent statistics contain a number of different items of information about an agent or a contact person (Kontaktperson, KP). They do not reveal the name, but rather the cover name and personal data, and they give information such as the motives for the recruitment and the recruitment year.⁷ Like the F 16 and F 22 cards, the agent statistics also use the registration number, which permits the correlation of information from the cards. They are a valuable aid in the identification of possible agents. Nonetheless, they offer no final proof for scholars, journalists, or lawyers.⁸ Furthermore, the basic statistics are primarily on West German citizens; only a few hundred cards refer to citizens of other Western states.⁹

The Rosenholz files are, in other words, an archival search aid, they are not documents or operation files, as widely believed. After the CIA decided to give Germany a copy of the files on all German citizens in Rosenholz, this part of the file collection in the Stasi archive in Berlin has been made available to both scholars and journalists.

HOW DID THE CIA ACQUIRE THE ROSENHOLZ FILES?

The exact journey of the microfilms across the Atlantic is still unknown. However, there is speculation, and a few facts.

The fate of the original filing cards is well established. The last East German communist government under Hans Modrow decided on the 14th of December, 1989, to dissolve the Ministry of State Security (MfS) and establish an independent foreign intelligence service and a domestic counterintelligence agency. The filing card system, which until then had been unified, had to be physically separated. Removing HVA's F 16 and F 22 cards from the Ministry's archive (Department XII of the MfS) was a demanding task and took several weeks. All filing cards needed to be checked for references to the HVA. Throughout the history of MfS there had been minor initiatives in which old cards were removed from the system, but nothing of this magnitude.¹⁰

An HVA task force led by the head of Sub-Department 7 of the HVA brought the filing cards, sorted alphabetically, to the central archives to manually remove all the cards from the ministry's system. F 16 cards which had relevance only to the HVA were removed. Cards which also had relevance to other main departments of the MfS were replaced by new handwritten ones which only bore the information of the counterintelligence department, thus erasing any trace of the HVA from the central archive. Later, these hand-written cards provided

the Stasi archives with the only extant link between certain persons and the HVA.¹¹

In some cases the HVA cards were not removed. Such exceptions were made when, for instance, a case had already previously been transferred to the central archive in the “open materials”. These cases had usually been subject to changes, new registration, and substitutions of personal data to such an extent that it was no longer possible to establish an overview. Another reason not to remove the cards was human error. Names were often written phonetically, and in some cases the officers were unable to find and remove the right persons.

The procedures for the removal of the F 22 cards were the same as for the F 16 cards, with the exception that the officers were able to use computerized lists. The removed card was taken to a neighboring room and fed into a shredder, but the reference aids that the HVA officers used were taken back to the service with them. This removal process was briefly brought to a stop on the 15th of January, the day the central headquarters was stormed. Shortly afterwards, the process began again, authorized by and under the auspices of the semi-democratic transition institution the Round Table, which had a subcommittee on security issues. The removal and rewriting of cards continued until the 9th of April. On this day, the minutes of the civil rights movement note the sorting of the “remaining cards”.¹²

In the period from December 1989 to spring 1990 the perspective of the former officers of the MfS changed. By the time of the free elections in March, no one was talking about a reorganized foreign intelligence service. Only the dissolution of the HVA was on the agenda. At this point, someone remembered that the F 16 and the F 22 cards had been put on microfilm. If they survived, the entire work of the winter would have been utterly meaningless. Therefore, on the 28th of March, the East German government's special commissioner Werner Fischer, in agreement with the civil rights movement, ordered an immediate destruction of the films.¹³

The first microfilming of the F 16 cards was performed in 1973. On the microfilms, each card was reduced to four millimeters and put on jackets, and the microfilm contained all cards within the MfS. A second filming of the total filing card system was done in 1974, and a third in the early 1980s.¹⁴ For financial reasons, Department XII of the MfS changed its procedure in the 1980s: instead of a total filming of the filing cards, they performed only a daily or weekly microfilming of new cards. Even though the microfilms were strictly regulated, all four microfilms were used in daily business until the dissolution of the MfS.¹⁵

Safety, or backup microfilms were also made. In a report of the HVA from December 5, 1988, a safety film of F 16 and F 22 was explicitly mentioned.¹⁶ These microfilms were made on 16 mm rolls. The production of these films

was an ongoing process. For protection, they were placed in containers which could easily be transported in case of a threat of war. For this purpose, the HVA had 160 steel containers ready, and 30 new ones had been planned for 1989.¹⁷ According to current calculations, all 350,000 cards – including those on all non-German citizens

– on F 16 could be contained on 63 microfilm rolls. This was a very handy size.

All of the above can be reconstructed based on the documents at the Stasi archives. What follows comes from the news magazine *Der Spiegel*. The journalists were able to find out that the steel containers were still kept in the cellar under the HVA headquarters in East Berlin in November 1989.¹⁸ This seems plausible, but only one of two safety microfilms of the HVA cards were available. Also, Department XII (the central archive) of the Ministry kept a backup microfilm. A protocol of the central archive of December 28, 1989, states that Department XII handed a film over to the head of an HVA department. In this protocol, the content of every film is listed in detail. This is the latest archive trace and hard evidence about the microfilm that we today know as Rosenholz.

But what happened to the films? One would think that they were destroyed. For from the 6th to the 8th of April, 1990, all microfilms of the filing cards of the MfS were indeed destroyed. This is documented in detail by the destruction protocol.¹⁹ All of the microfilms of the F 16 from 1986, and the running microfilms from the 22nd of January to the 6th of December, 1989, were destroyed. The F 22 microfilms from 1960 to 1985 and supplementary microfilm until 1988 had the same fate. The microfilms were cut to pieces and transported to the MfS buildings in Biesenthal, just a short drive from Berlin, where the pieces were burned on the 11th of April, 1990.²⁰ The protocol tells nothing about earlier version of the safety films, so it is unknown what happened to the MfS microfilm of the F 16 cards from the 1970s. About Rosenholz, the protocol contained an intriguing but somewhat vague detail: “At the same time, all materials bound for liquidation were destroyed as ordered by the government commissioner on 1990-03-28 (concerns: previously destroyed film materials of the HVA and other film duplicates) about materials”.²¹

Which HVA films were actually destroyed remains unclear. One thing, however, is certain: the protocol contained details on only MfS safety films, not on the HVA Rosenholz cards. The last detailed description of these is in the document from December 28, 1989, and states that Department XII handed a film over to the head of an HVA department. These documents are not specifically mentioned in the destruction protocol. This means that the safety microfilms which are in Langley today – Rosenholz – were not destroyed in April 1990. The destruction protocol might suggest that they were, but it does not rule out alternative explanations. The phrase “previously destroyed film materials” could mean that it was not necessary to cut it to pieces and burn it. These phrases bear the scent of a covert action. The unanswered question is thus: Was it the intention to create the impression among the public that the Rosenholz files had already been destroyed?

Two stories exist about how the CIA got hold of the microfilmed F 16 and F 22 cards. One explanation claims the CIA bought them from a KGB officer. The other version states that high-ranking officers or an employee of the HVA secretly sold services to the Americans. Neither version is fully convincing.

In the KGB version, Lieutenant Colonel Rainer Hemman of the HVA plays an important role. In December 1989, he was ordered to bring metal boxes to the KGB headquarters in the Karlshorst district of Berlin and give them to Sascha Prinzipalov. “In December 1989, my superior officer ordered me to store the materials of Sub-Department 7 in Karlshorst”, Hemman explained.²² It seems very plausible that Hemman received such an order. The staff of Sub-Department 7 of the



HVA had a registration unit which handled the microfilms. The metal boxes were placed in a black briefcase which was handed over to the KGB in a villa near Karlshorst: "I handed Sascha the briefcase, which looked like a pilot's flight case."²³ Whatever this briefcase held, it could not have been the Rosenholz files – because the HVA did not receive the safety film until the 28th of December.

The KGB explanation usually connects Prinzpalov and Colonel Alexander Siubenko to the CIA. Siubenko allegedly made contact with CIA Lieutenant Colonel James Atwood, in Berlin, who was operating undercover as a military historian. Atwood supposedly received the materials from the two KGB officers in Moscow in 1992. However, the KGB story presents the serious difficulty that it cannot be verified, because the only hard fact linking the three persons mentioned is that they are all dead.²⁴ In 2003, people connected to the CIA spread the story that the Rosenholz files had been purchased in Warsaw for the price of \$65,000.²⁵ Earlier, the price had been estimated at around one million dollars. In German counterintelligence circles, the KGB version is regarded as disinformation being spread to cover the real history of the purchase.²⁶

A version encountered

less often is that the microfilms were sold by either high-ranking officers or an employee of the HVA. High-ranking officer Klaus Eichner of HVA Department IX/c suggests this: "Apparently our bureaucracy, the staff scribblers, ignored the basic rules of secrecy. Such a serious compilation of information was a huge breach of the special protection of sources."²⁷ Furthermore, the security during the dissolution process was inadequate, so it was possible to acquire the sensitive materials and earn a few "pieces of silver".²⁸ Or maybe the Judas is to be found within the ranks of those who were supposed to guard the materials? Markus Wolf leans towards the belief that people from "his service" went to the CIA.²⁹ In July 2011, Peter-Ferdinand Koch, who had personal experience dealing with the HVA, supported this version of the events. He drew an image of the threatening situation during the dissolution for the leading troika – General Werner Grossmann, Colonel Bernd Fischer and Ralf-Peter Devaux – each of whom should have possessed a copy of the Rosenholz files. Is this yet another cover story or a relevant lead? Koch almost suggests a deal: the crown jewel Rosenholz, traded for immunity for officers and agents of the HVA.³⁰

Whether any of these explanations is true is still unknown. No matter what the truth is, the whole operation has a certain reputation with the CIA. The *Washington Post* cited an officer who took part in the operation: "When the complete history of the closing days of the Cold War is written, this will be one of the CIA's greatest triumphs".³¹ This is also the evaluation in the memoirs of former GDR intelligence officers: "The acquisition by the CIA [...] of HVA documents from which our networks could be reconstructed, is one of our largest defeats."³² President George Bush was also immediately informed of the purchase.³³ He was president until January 20, 1993.

This raises the question of when the CIA got hold of the files. The window of opportunity can be narrowed down to sometime between the December 28, 1989, and the January 20, 1993. The time frame of 1989 to 1990 is often mentioned, sometimes also 1992. There is no official statement from the CIA on this matter. However, the end of 1992 or early 1993 is more likely. The case of "Topas" (NATO agent Rainer Rupp) demonstrates this. Even though the police knew the name "Topas" quite early, the NATO mole was only found with the

help of Rosenholz, despite a large prior investigation.³⁴ But on the 31st of July 1993, he was arrested, thanks primarily to the microfilmed version of the F 16 cards.

LOST OPPORTUNITIES

The first German federal commissioner for the Stasi documents, Joachim Gauck, demanded as early as August 1993 that the Rosenholz files be handed over to his archives. This was refused repeatedly with the argument that it would be a threat to Germany's security.³⁵ Another argument was that the files allegedly were not Stasi documents.³⁶ At the same time, from 1993 onwards, the German counterintelligence agency BfV was able to travel to the US and make handwritten copies of the files. In this way, the BfV produced 1,929 copies of filing cards.³⁷ The analysis of these copies came to an end in January 1995.³⁸ The copies were then sent to the federal commissioner and were classified in the archives.

This situation did not change until the coalition government of Social Democrats and Greens under Gerhard Schröder came to power in Germany in 1998. The remains of the civil rights movement, which was close to the Green Party, collected signatures to petition the government on the Rosenholz issue.³⁹ Then, in October 1999, the big breakthrough took place, and from 2000 to 2003 Germany received 381 CD-ROMs with Rosenholz information. However, it was still classified as "secret". And the CD-ROMs only contained information on German citizens. Starting in 2004, the documents were declassified and opened for research. This much is generally known. What is less known is that the chancellor's office also took other initiatives to obtain further Rosenholz information.

A central person in the negotiations to get back the Rosenholz files was Ernst Uhrlau. He had been head of Department IV in chancellor's office since 1998. This department is responsible for the coordination of Germany's intelligence services and for handling information between the German government and BND (foreign intelligence), BfV (counterintelligence) and Militärischer Abschirmdienst (military counter intelligence). On the 14th of February, 2000, Ernst Uhrlau contacted the ambassadors of Germany's Nordic partners. This is documented by a protocol from the Finnish embassy dated February 16.⁴⁰

At a meeting in

Berlin with the ambassadors from Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden, Uhrlau asked about the Nordic governments' position on the Rosenholz question. He informed the countries about the agreement with the US, which paved the way for the transfer of Rosenholz material to Germany and to the office of the federal commissioner for Stasi records. He informed the Nordic representatives that this material went up to 1988 and that it contained "the names of foreign agents". The transfer was to be finished by the end of the year.⁴¹ However, the condition of the US government was that the documents be handled according to US laws. Ernst Uhrlau wanted to know from the Nordic governments whether they would oppose a transfer of information to the federal commissioner's office as well.⁴² A similar request was made to the governments of Switzerland, Great Britain, and France. Belgium was also under consideration.⁴³ If the Rosenholz material was transferred, the federal commissioner for the Stasi records would answer future questions from the countries through the Ministry of the Interior (which was synonymous with the BfV).⁴⁴

The following day, the ambassadors of the Nordic coun-

tries discussed the matter together. However, it bothered the Swedish ambassador that the question was unofficial. He would have expected an official verbal request. The Norwegian and Danish ambassadors had thought that this sort of information was already in German possession, since it was a German matter.⁴⁵

It took several months to get a final answer from all the Nordic countries. In Finland, Hannu Moilanen and Seppo Nevala, senior officer and director, respectively, of the counterintelligence agency Supo, gave the Foreign Ministry their opinion. They concluded: "In the eyes of the Security Police, there are no fundamental obstacles that hinder Finland from transferring the Rosenholz information".⁴⁶ However, this would be on the condition that Finland would have full and unlimited access to the information concerning Finland. The transfer to Germany would also be on the condition that it could only be used "for serious research purposes".⁴⁷ Given these conditions, Finland had actually given its consent to the transfer of Rosenholz information.

The Finnish foreign ministry then informed the government of their analysis of the question. Vice-secretary Jukka Valtasaari wrote on the 4th of April, 2000: "Sweden, Norway, and Denmark are ready to transfer the materials to Germany. Norway and Sweden have already given their consent." Finland also agreed in principle, given that Germany would grant future access and would limit access to "serious research". Furthermore, he also raised the question how Finnish citizens could control their own personal information.⁴⁹

The Nordic initiative ended up going nowhere. Nonetheless, it seems reasonable to hold the Nordic governments to their word, and appeal to the governments to transfer Nordic Rosenholz files to the archives of the federal commissioner's office in Berlin for future research purposes.

ON THE NORDIC STAGE

In all Nordic countries, East German espionage during the Cold War has been a part of the public agenda and general Cold War agenda. Information from the Rosenholz files surfaced in Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden around the turn of the century. The political and media context was different in each of the countries. However, all four countries had one thing in common: the authorities choose to make one prominent case public. In Denmark, it was the agent "Lenz" (1999/2000), in Sweden, "Koenig" (2000), in Norway, "Lanze" (2001), and in Finland, the difficult case of "Pekka" (2002).

Only two of the countries have made information from the Rosenholz files available to research. Denmark was pioneering in this respect, with Rosenholz documents declassified for the use of the government White Book and later for independent research.⁵⁰ Not until 2007 was it made public that the Swedish service had received at least 500 names from the CIA.⁵¹ In 2010, Birgitta Almgren, a researcher from Södertörn University, was able to get access to the Swedish Rosenholz material with the help of Sweden's high court.⁵²

The Danish "Lenz" case became breaking news during the Christmas holiday of 1999. Shortly before the holidays, a Danish civil servant working for the European Commission was arrested in his mother's apartment in Copenhagen. He was suspected of being identical with the agent "Lenz" (XV 6991/75), and his mother of being agent "Nelly" (XV 2738/79). Unconvincingly, he denied everything through the approximately one hundred days he spent in prison while the state authorities considered whether he should be put on trial. In the end, he was released and went back to the Commission where he became the EU representative in Bulgaria during the admission talks.⁵³ Both the Rosenholz material and German memoirs confirmed the suspicions.⁵⁴

The “Lenz” case was finally taken up after years of debate in the leading Danish tabloid newspaper, *Ekstra Bladet*. This debate questioned the will of the governing coalition of Social Democrats and Liberals to investigate political crimes from the Cold War⁵⁵, and suggested that the government parties themselves had a political motivation to avoid this.⁵⁶ This put the government under Prime Minister Poul Nyrop Rasmussen under considerable pressure.⁵⁷

The “Lenz” case did not end the discussion, especially since journalists from *Ekstra Bladet* were able to cite confidential papers linking the foreign policy spokesman of the Social-Democratic Party, Erik Boel, to agent “Lenz”.⁵⁸ The discussion did not ease off until the government buried the Stasi discussion in two state commissions.⁵⁹

After the opening of the Rosenholz documents in 2005, it became possible to establish the thesis that the background of the Stasi campaign of *Ekstra Bladet* might have been a covert action either by the CIA or more likely by the Danish counterintelligence service, PET. The files showed that the journalist had been able to publish information from the Rosenholz files about a year after the information had become known to the Danish counterintelligence.⁶⁰ The Danish Rosenholz document identified only about twenty agents from various parts of society, but with a cluster within universities and among leftist groups.⁶¹ The government commission on the activities of the PET during the Cold War also mentioned the Danish Rosenholz document. Regrettably, the report disregarded the international research on the area.⁶² Nevertheless, the commission’s analysis of HVA and KGB activities delivered useful arguments for people who wanted to question the existence of a Soviet Bloc agent network.⁶³

In Finland, the debate about Rosenholz soon became highly political, as the suspicions of the Security Police (SUPO) against Ambassador Alpo Rusi, former adviser to Martti Ahtisaari, were made public. Rusi defended himself effectively both in public and in court against the unjust accusations.⁶⁴ Finnish authorities had misread the Rosenholz information on the agent “Pekka” (XV 11/69), which was probably Alpo’s older brother Jussi Rusi. Instead of using expert assistance to access the Rosenholz sources, SUPO choose to accuse Ambassador Rusi publicly. The result was a long public struggle, ending with the acquittal of Rusi, who won a slander case against the Finnish state and €20,000 in compensation. To a large extent, the political struggle around Rusi and the potential moral judgment of the “Finlandization policy” took the focus away from the overall question of East German espionage in Finland.⁶⁵ Any ideas about openness among the Finns were dispelled by the Rusi case⁶⁶, and in 2009 the Finnish high court decided to keep their Rosenholz files classified.⁶⁷

In Norway, the Rosenholz information created a debate that was largely focused on the *Stavanger Aftenblad* journalist Stein Viksveen, who was suspected of being the agent “Lanze”, probably the most successful agent in the Nordic countries, at least according to Stasi data. “Lanze” delivered at least 513 pieces of information to the HVA, two in the categories of science and technology, two about counterintelligence, and the rest about politics and security. Viksveen issued the obligatory denial, and even wrote a book about why he was innocent.⁶⁸ However, in this case the Rosenholz connection was also backed by memoirs.⁶⁹ The Norwegian discussion about East German activities never reached the public in the form of a general debate on the files, nor did it inspire Norwegian scholars. One reason for this could be that Norway already

had had a long public debate on different aspects of intelligence and counterintelligence at the beginning of the 1990s.

This debate had resulted in a government report on the records of the security service, POT,⁷⁰ as well as a large work by the historians Trond Bergh and Knut Einar Eriksen.⁷¹ These works also dealt with East German intelligence, but only – at most – as a secondary matter. In this early Norwegian research, Bergh and Eriksen had access to information about what were most likely Norwegian Rosenholz materials. They were able to quote a report from the head of Norwegian counterintelligence from 1997 in which it was concluded that POT had received

information from “partner services” about seven Norwegian citizens who were registered Stasi agents by the time of the fall of the Wall.⁷² In December 1996, it became known that POT had been collecting information on East German cases in the “early 1990s”, most notably on the member of parliament for the socialist left party Berge Furre, who in the 1990s was a member of the Lund Commission which was investigating the POT’s registration of Norwegian citizens during the Cold War. The attorney general accessed the information relating to Furre, and concluded that there was no “reasonable cause” to conduct a formal investigation.⁷³ Whereas some of the conclusions and reactions to the material from the “partner service” have been accessible, the actual documents were still classified and not available to Norwegian historians.⁷⁴ However, there did not seem to be a great interest in the Rosenholz material among Norwegian scholars, since the main scoop was Norwegian intelligence.

The Swedish debate had, like the Norwegian, been dominated by the issue of surveillance of the country’s own citizens during the Cold War. The Swedish authorities produced, just like their Norwegian counterparts, a large report on different aspects of surveillance, counterextremism and counterintelligence. This report about the Swedish Security Service (SÄPO) inevitably touched upon questions relating to East Germany.⁷⁵ Nonetheless, this dimension remained marginal to the Commission, and the report contained only one reference to information that might have derived from the Rosenholz files. In the volume about the peace movement, there is reference to the discussion in the Swedish press in 2000 about GDR agents, and without any mention of its source, the report denounces the media information on “Kiesling” (a code name).⁷⁶ Even though there is no reference for the claims, the information must derive from the Swedish counterintelligence sources and therefore probably from Rosenholz files, since the report’s overall conclusion explicitly mentions that the archive of the German Federal Commissioner Preserving the Records of the State Security Service of the former German Democratic Republic brought out no “new, noteworthy insights”.⁷⁷ Both Swedish and German scholars have since analyzed different aspects of GDR foreign policy towards Sweden, but the HVA has only played a very small part in these academic works.⁷⁸

The first work that explicitly mentioned Swedish Rosenholz material was the book by the investigative journalist Björn Cederberg. Though without any supporting references, he wrote that 900 Swedes were registered by the HVA, and that perhaps some 50 worked as agents.⁷⁹ However, Cederberg’s book did not ignite a large public debate, in contrast to the work of the linguistics professor Birgitta Almgren, who in 2009 pub-

lished a book on Sweden’s relations with the GDR in general.⁸⁰ Even though the title of her book was *Inte bara Stasi* . . . [Not just Stasi . . .], a large part of the reaction to her book centered on the chapters concerning the East German intelligence efforts aimed at Sweden. The discussion and very positive reviews of Almgren’s research paved the way for the opening of the Swedish counterintelligence service SÄPO’s GDR investigations. These became the topic of Almgren’s next book, *Inte bara spioner* . . . [Not just spies . . .], about 53 selected GDR cases in Sweden. The book is to a large extent based on a combination of SÄPO and German Stasi records, including the Swedish Rosenholz material. Almgren’s work shows that Sweden apparently got only the F 16 cards from the CIA, with material on only about ten presumed agents.⁸¹ In other words, Sweden apparently got a very meager piece of the CIA pie.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The Rosenholz files reveal merely whom the HVA found interesting – and even within limits, because the names from “La” to “Li” are not included in the microfilms. Persons registered after January 1989 are home free, since the microfilm ends in December 1988. It is generally possible to establish who was an agent using the three different parts of the Rosenholz material as well as other databases of the HVA. In West Germany the total number of agents in the history of the HVA is 6,000, of whom 1,500 were active at the end of the 1980s. Those are all known to the federal commissioner’s office; the remaining 4,000 West German agents are hidden in the ocean of the 293,000 filing cards. Using the Rosenholz material of other countries, it will be possible to give an almost complete picture of the HVA networks throughout the Western World.

The total picture of what the Scandinavian countries really received and what it meant can only be established when the Rosenholz files are generally available. Fundamental questions however still remain, such as: Who did the HVA register and on what grounds? How were the HVA networks constituted over time? And how did they develop? How did they communicate? And how did the secret logistics function? The answers to these questions would certainly reveal new insights into the operations of foreign intelligence in a not-so-distant past. Furthermore, it must be of interest to the Nordic states to see how well their own counterintelligence understood their opponent. Did the Nordic services have a clue what went on, or did the Eastern German activities develop unnoticed? Evaluating this should be imperative to intelligence services and governments in Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden. ✕

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MINORITY LEGISLATION IN TWO SUCCESSOR STATES

A COMPARISON THROUGH THE LENS OF EU ENLARGEMENT

by **Vassilis Petsinis** illustration **Ragni Svensson**

Last summer, Croatia successfully concluded its accession negotiations with the European Commission. Serbia submitted its official application to the EU in December 2009 but has not yet been granted the status of an accession country. Apart from their “European aspirations”, Serbia and Croatia share the political heritage of the old Yugoslav federation and were both embroiled in the latest conflict. Therefore, clarifying how minority legislation in Serbia and in Croatia compares, and how legislation in the two countries measures up to European standards, is of great significance. Attention should also be paid to regional mechanisms for the management of ethnic relations. This touches on institutional provisions under the umbrella of provincial autonomy for Vojvodina in Serbia (Map 1 and Table 1) and certain bodies operating in ethnically mixed Croatian regions such as Istria (Map 2 and Table 2).¹ The main questions here are: What has been the actual impact of the EU accession process upon legislation on minority rights in Serbia and Croatia? Which country has gone furthest in establishing an efficient framework for the protection of minority rights? What I demonstrate here is that both states have made significant progress in harmonizing their legislation with the *acquis communautaire*. In addition, this paper illustrates how a more sustainable framework, as well as regional mechanisms, have been articulated to a greater extent in Serbia.

CROATIA

Croatia submitted its application to the EU in 2003. The European Commission granted Croatia the status of a candidate country in mid-2004 and the accession negotiations commenced in October 2005. The first decade since the year 2000 saw remarkable progress in the field of minority legislation. However, in order to comprehend and assess the significance of this progress, a short overview of minority policies during the 1990s is needed. Article 15 of the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia (1990) formally endorsed the equality of



Map 1.

members of all national minorities before the law. Nevertheless, the realities “on the ground” were different. Since the declaration of Croatian independence, Franjo Tuđman initiated a nationalization process. His government proceeded to purge employees, mostly those with an ethnic Serb background. This affected the administrative bureaucracy, the police, the judiciary, the media, and education. Even as late as July 2000, government statistics demonstrated that only 2.8 percent of state administration employees belonged to the Serbian minority.² Furthermore, in 1995, the UN expressed concern about the state authorities’ failure to take action over the propagation of ethnic hatred against Serbs by the media and the press. The landscape became fuzzier because of indications that Croatian society had been hugely scarred by the war and that ethnic cleavages were indeed pronounced. Consequently, the situation with regard to minority rights remained static until the end of the 1990s.

The year 2000 saw radical changes in Croatian politics. The voters’ change of mood resulted in Stipe Mesić’s victory in

the presidential elections (January 24 and February 7, 2000), and the Social Democrats’ (SDP) victory in the parliamentary elections (January 3, 2000). The new government promoted an agenda of alleviation of ethnic cleavages within Croatia and the establishment of better relations with the leadership of neighboring states. Most important, the new leadership demonstrated great interest in Croatia’s accession to the EU, as well as eagerness to comply with the recommendations of EU advisers. A series of bilateral talks were held between EU advisers and representatives of the Croatian government. In the course of these negotiations, the former outlined to the latter a number of reforms that had to be undertaken in order for Croatia to tread the path of democratization more effectively. As part of the constitutional revision (2000–2001), Article 15 was amended to add a clause saying that the special right of the members of national minorities to elect their representatives to the Sabor (parliament) may be provided by law (this is in addition to the general electoral right).³ This was an explicit stipulation of positive discrimination in favor of national minorities.

The culmination of the entire process came about with the inauguration of the new Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities, CLNRM (December 19, 2002). A key aspect of the new law was the national minorities’ authorization to elect advisory councils in local administrations and their proportional representation in the Sabor (Article 7, Articles 19–20, 24, 25–31, and 32–33). This new law is of particular significance for the more ethnically mixed *općine* (municipalities) in that it has encouraged the application of regional mechanisms for the accommodation of the minority communities’ demands. An appropriate example is the coordination among the national minorities’ councils in the municipality of Rijeka in the multiethnic region of Istria.⁴ In Istria, the proper operation of such institutions and mechanisms has also relied upon the longstanding tradition of harmonious multiethnic cohabitation. Last but not least, the laws on education and



the use of the national minorities’ languages (2001) additionally safeguard the status of minority languages in public information and the education system.

These developments at the legislative level did not fully correspond to the realities of implementation, for certain deficiencies persisted. First, a lack of competence or eagerness has been observed on the part of certain bodies in the state administration in the implementation of the CLRNM. Similar symptoms have also been detected at the local government level. Another obstacle has been the varying degrees of apathy or insufficient motivation among the national minorities’ elites to take full advantage of the new legal framework. To these one might add that the Council for National Minorities functions as an advisory body and not as a full-fledged legal entity, empowered to represent national minorities before the Croatian government. Lastly, the persistence of ethnic intolerance in the society has often emerged as a factor that obstructs the timely implementation of the novel provisions. In particular, the picture remains rather blurred with regard to the collective status of the Serbian minority. Two urgent tasks for the Croatian government, as prescribed by the European Commission, have been the facilitation of the Serbian refugees’ return to their homes and the resolution of their civic status and property restitution.

The legal aspects of the Serbian refugee question in Croatia bear the scars of the recent conflict. Unlike Bosnia-Herzegovina, where Section VII of the Dayton Agreement enabled Serbian refugees to obtain citizenship and regain their abandoned property, the international element in Croatia was not very active during the 1990s. It was not until to the “changing of the guard” in Croatian politics that the Croatian authorities, in coordination with EU advisers, demonstrated a greater decisiveness towards resolving the Serbian refugee question. Since 2000, a greater number of Serbian refugees have been enabled to obtain Croatian citizenship and regain their property.⁵ A series of amendments to the Law on Areas of Special State Concern (2002) recognized the former owners’ right to bring a case for restitution of their property and provided for compensation. In spite of the frequent lack of willingness on the part of the local authorities to cooperate in the implementation of these provisions, the new framework has enabled a considerable number of Serbian refugees to reclaim their property or be granted alternative housing options. Moreover, no serious instances of discrimination against the Serbian Orthodox Church have been witnessed lately. In an overall assessment, the more effective coordination between Zagreb and the EU sub-bodies has, since 2000, resulted in the formulation of a more adequate framework for the management of ethnic relations. The CLRNM and the other legal documents have provided a good basis for the harmonization of the Croatian legislation with the *acquis communautaire* and the improvement of the position of national minorities in Croatia. It is therefore up to the Croatian authorities to adhere to the proper implementation of the new legal framework.

SERBIA

As in Croatia, the period since the year 2000 saw considerable progress in Serbia’s minority legislation. Once again, in order to comprehend the extent of this progress, a brief overview of Serbian minority policies during the 1990s is required. The rights of the national minorities in Serbia and FR Yugoslavia were to be regulated by a variety of documents. Certain provisions were included in the Yugoslav Constitution (1992) and the Serbian Constitution (1990). Nevertheless, as long as neither FR Yugoslavia nor Serbia had a separate law on national

minorities, the constitutional rights of national minorities were also codified in Serbian statutes. Still, the realities in the implementation were different. In Vojvodina, the new Serbian elites promoted a series of subtle policies with the objective of renationalizing the province. Since the termination of Vojvodina’s autonomy (1989), the nationalizing dimension became manifest in irregularities in the implementation of the provisions on education and the public use of minority languages, as well as in alleged cases of discrimination against minorities in employment.

The end of Slobodan Milošević’s rule was accompanied by rapid developments in the field of minority legislation. The post-Milošević elites manifested great interest in recovering the lost ground in Serbia’s path towards the EU. A number of documents came into force under the umbrella of the Serbian-Montenegrin Constitutional Charter (March 2003), including the *Federal Law for the Protection of the Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities* (LRFNM, February 27, 2002). This law guarantees the public use of minority languages in those municipalities where a minority forms at least 15 percent of the population (Article 11). It also provides for education in minority languages, at all levels, in the same municipalities (Article 13). The most notable innovation of this law was the establishment of the “National Minorities’ Council” at the former Federal Assembly (Articles 18–20). As in Croatia, this is a body tasked with supervising the implementation of the minority legislation⁶. However, on this occasion, Article 19 clearly designates this body as a “pravno lice” (i.e. “legal entity”). After the dissolution of the Serbian-Montenegrin state union (June 2006), the “National Minorities’ Council” and the LRFNM were incorporated into the legal system of the Serbian republic.

In July 2008, a new institution was assigned the aforementioned tasks and a fully-fledged legal entity came into existence: The Ministry of Human and Minority Rights. Most importantly, the new Serbian Constitution (2006) summarized a number of fundamental provisions for national minorities (e.g. the public use of minority languages, prohibition of discrimination and relations with kin states – Articles 75–80). Last but not least, the laws on local self-government (2002), the official use of minority languages (amended in 2005) and prohibition of discrimination (2009) also contributed to the arrangement of an articulate infrastructure for the protection of minority rights. One more factor that facilitated the arrangement of the new legal framework is the state of fragmentation in Serbian elite politics and the formation of government coalitions in which minority parties have participated (e.g. Vojvodina’s ethnic Hungarian parties). This granted minority elites the opportunity to promote their demands from within the power structures. Minority entrepreneurs have seen Serbia’s “European aspirations” as an “ethnically neutral” terrain on which they can voice their demands and serve their interests more effectively.

In Vojvodina, the protection of minority rights became entangled with the concession of administrative competence to the province. Vojvodina returned to the fore with its new statute (December 14, 2009). A major “external factor” behind the approval of this document was Belgrade bureaucrats’ desire to demonstrate that Serbia conformed to the European standards for regionalization. The preamble upgrades the status of national minorities to that of national communities (*nacionalne zajednice*). Articles 6 and 7 reaffirm Vojvodina’s multiethnic physiognomy and the equality of ethnic groups. They also provide for the implementation of positive discrimination with the aim of safeguarding minority identities. Article 23 reaffirms the dual dimension of minority rights, while Article 26 safeguards the use of minority languages in education

Table 1. The ethnic structure of the autonomous province of Vojvodina, according to the 2002 national census

Ethnicity	No.	%
Serbs	1,321,807	65.05
Hungarians	290,207	14.28
Slovaks	56,637	2.79
Croats	56,546	2.78
Yugoslavs	49,881	2.45
Montenegrins	35,513	1.75
Romanians	30,419	1.50
Roma	29,057	1.43
Bunjevaks	19,766	0.97
Ruthenes	15,626	0.77
Macedonians	11,785	0.58
Ukrainians	4,635	0.23
Muslims	3,634	0.18
Germans	3,154	0.16
Slovenes	2,005	0.10
Albanians	1,69	0.08
Bulgarians	1,658	0.08
Czechs	1,648	0.08
Russians	940	0.05
Goranci	606	0.03
Bosniaks	417	0.02
Vlachs	101	0.00
Others	5,311	0.26
Non-declared	55,016	2.71
Regional affiliation	10,154	0.50
Unknown	23,774	1.17
Total	2,031,992	100.00

SOURCE: Konačni rezultati popisa 2002 [Final results of the 2002 census], *Saopštenje* [Information], 52, number 295, Republika Srbija, Republički Zavod za Statistiku [Republic of Serbia, State Agency for Statistics], Belgrade 2002-12-24.

and public information. An institutional provision of major importance is the establishment of a Council for National Communities at the provincial assembly (Article 40). These clauses supplement the relevant provisions in the LRFNM with a more regionalized focus towards the regulation of ethnic issues locally.

Overall, the endeavor by Serbian policy makers to comply with European standards has resulted in the arrangement of an efficient framework for the protection of minority rights, both at the state level and at Vojvodina’s provincial level. As in Croatia, a problem that has to be dealt with is the frequent lack of coordination among state, provincial, and local authorities towards the implementation of these provisions, as well as their weak motivation to do so. To these might be added the conscious assimilation process among certain minorities (e.g. Vojvodina’s Ruthenes and Romanians).

Table 2. Istria's ethnic structure by first language, 2001

First language	Persons	%
Croatian	179,945	87.21
Italian	15,867	7.69
Slovenian	1,894	0.92
Albanian	1,877	0.91
Serbian	1,808	0.88
Bosniak	1,244	0.60
Romany	575	0.28
Serbo-Croat	506	0.25
Hungarian	430	0.21
Macedonian	387	0.19
German	249	0.12
Slovak	155	0.08
Czech	102	0.05
Romanian	94	0.05
Croato-Serbian	86	0.04
Turkish	64	0.03
Russian	56	0.03
Montenegrin	47	0.02
Polish	40	0.02
Ukrainian	29	0.01
Bulgarian	25	0.01
Ruthenian	17	0.01
Istro-Romanian (Vlach)*	1	0.00
Unknown	655	0.32
Other	191	0.09
Total	206,344	100

SERBIA, CROATIA, AND EUROPEAN STANDARDS

The Copenhagen criteria (1993) have set as one of the conditions for the acceptance of post-communist states into the EU the adequate protection of the rights and freedoms of national minorities, in accordance with the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM). In principle, both the Croatian CLRNM and the Serbian LRFNM are consistent with the FCNM. For a start, both affirm the individual and collective dimensions of minority rights. The prohibition of acts of discrimination, forcible assimilation, or alteration of the ethnic structure in ethnically mixed localities is consistent with FCNM Articles 4.1, 5.2, and 6.2. Both countries allow media and press institutions in minority languages (Article 9.3). The provisions for the public use of minority languages (e.g. in signposting) in the areas where minorities form dense concentrations comply with Article 11.1-2. Other conforming clauses concern the provision of education in minority languages at all levels; the teaching of subjects relevant to the minorities' culture, language, history, and religion; and the establishment of private educational institutions by minority entrepreneurs (Articles 12.1-2, 13.1, 14.2). The authorization of minorities to maintain relations with legal subjects based in their *external homelands* is consistent with Article 17.1. Some clauses, such as the Serbian LRFNM's provision on offering financial breaks for the establishment of private educational institutions, even go a step beyond the FCNM. In addition



Map 2.

* It is very likely that speakers of Istro-Romanian have been grouped under "Romanian".
Source: Croatian Governmental Bureau for Statistics, Census 2001 (<http://www.dzr.org>).

to these specific laws, the relevant provisions in the Serbian and Croatian constitutions, as well as the other Serbian and Croatian laws, are all consistent with the FCNM. The Serbian and Croatian laws on the official use of languages and their alphabets, in particular, are also consistent with Articles 8.1 (on education), 9.1 (on judicial authorities), 10.1 and 10.2 (on public services and administration), 11.1 (on media) and 14 (on cross-border cooperation) of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (COE, 1992).
At this moment, it seems that Serbia's legal framework for minority rights is somewhat better articulated than Croatia's, particularly with regard to its enforcing mechanisms and institutional provisions – most notably the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights. Moreover, the LRFNM explicitly designates the National Minorities' Council as a legal subject before the Serbian government. In Croatia the Council for National Minorities remains an advisory body with no legal status before the Sabor. In addition the Croatian CLRNM contains some ambiguities and minor deficiencies with regard to the system of election of minority representatives to the Sabor. First of all, Article 19 does not make it entirely clear whether the number of seats to which minorities are entitled may be determined by the outcome of the election by universal and equal suffrage. What causes the confusion is wording such as "at least five representatives and at most eight" (19.1), "at least one representative and at most three" (19.2) and "at least four representatives" (19.3), with reference to the size of each minority group. This wording creates the impression that the

number of seats to be reserved for minority representatives cannot be fixed in advance. In this case, Article 19 could potentially come into conflict with the constitutional provision that fixes the total number of the Sabor's seats beforehand (Croatian Constitution, Article 71). This potential discrepancy must therefore be clarified. Moreover, the special voting system for members of minority groups requires that both voters and candidates reveal that they belong to a national minority in the election of the national minority councils. However, persons belonging to certain minorities may feel reluctant to do so out of fear of discrimination. Therefore, it is essential that the Croatian authorities create mechanisms for the more effective safeguarding of confidentiality. Equal respect for the principle of confidentiality must be shown in the special elections for minorities that are held in Serbia, too. These include the elections of the national minority councils at both the Serbian parliament and Vojvodina's assembly.

Both Serbian and Croatian state authorities must combat symptoms of weak coordination, incompetence, or unwillingness to implement the new legal frameworks on the part of regional and/or local authorities. In particular, allegations of ethnic discrimination in employment must be investigated and combated. This can be facilitated through the accumulation of reliable data on the employment of persons belonging to national minorities in the public sector. Moreover, the Serbian and Croatian organs responsible must make sure that the use of minority languages in education and public information is provided as dictated by the relevant legislation. This also entails the satisfactory arrangement of programs in the minority languages on the state radio and television. Lastly, authorities in both countries must ensure that persons belonging to national minorities are granted the right to full participation in Serbian and/or Croatian political life.

At this point, it should be noted that a number of resolutions and measures have been taken recently towards the correct implementation of the new legal norms. In Croatia, the "Action Plan for the Implementation of the CLRNM" (June 2008) aims at ensuring the quick and efficient application of the law. A series of periodic reports, focusing on the adequate implementation of the minority legislation in Vojvodina and other ethnically diverse areas, is also being prepared in Serbia under the aegis of the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights. Apart from governmental policies, the minority groups themselves are expected to demonstrate a greater interest in taking full advantage of the new provisions. In particular, it is up to political and intellectual entrepreneurs among minorities to reverse instances of conscious assimilation within certain groups. Despite possible shortcomings, Serbia and Croatia are currently endowed with sustainable and efficient frameworks for the protection of minority rights. This is also evident in the positive remarks in the latest EU and COE reports over the progress made by the two countries in the course of their accession to the EU.⁷

What needs to be pointed out, among other things, is that both Serbian and Croatian legal experts and policy-makers have made proper use of certain mechanisms for the management of inter-group relations during the communist era. As components of the multifaceted and hazy constitutional and legal framework of SFR Yugoslavia, these provisions turned out to be disastrous in the long run. Nevertheless, within the process of European integration, legal experts and policy-makers from both states modified certain mechanisms employed in SFR Yugoslavia and adapted them to the European standards for the protection of minority

rights. For instance, the Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Croatia (Articles 219 and 380) granted minorities the right to participate in representative bodies at all levels of state administration. SR Croatia's 26 multiethnic municipalities were granted extensive autonomy in managing intergroup relations with regard to a variety of areas (i.e. education, the public use of minority languages, and public information). In the context of independent Croatia's legal infrastructure for the management of ethnic relations, these provisions "correspond" to the national minorities' advisory councils at the local self-government level; although their powers more restricted than that of the multiethnic općine during the communist era.

Nevertheless, a specific feature distinguishes the Serbian from the Croatian legal framework – namely, the application of more regionalized mechanisms for the management of ethnic relations in Serbia's most multiethnic region, Vojvodina. The main driving force behind the formulation of these mechanisms has been the popular demand for the restitution of certain powers (i.e. administrative and fiscal) to Vojvodina's assembly. Provisions such as the new statute for Vojvodina endow Vojvodina's assembly with an array of mechanisms for the more efficient accommodation of minority demands locally. Closer communication between the provincial organs and minority representatives can ensure that the former respond more quickly to the demands of the latter. Article 40 of the new statute and its authorization for the formation of the minority council at Vojvodina's assembly can bring about fruitful results if this body coordinates its activities properly with larger institutions at the national level (i.e. the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, or the National Minorities' Council at the Serbian parliament).

In all of this, it seems that Serbian policymakers and legal experts also paid close attention to regionalized mechanisms for the management of ethnic relations which operated under the umbrella of Vojvodinian autonomy during the communist era. They selected certain of their elements, reformulated them and adapted them to the latest European trends in the areas of regionalization and minority legislation. A suitable example is the new statute's authorization for the election of the national minorities' councils at the provincial assembly. Others include the national minorities' authorization, by the same document, to cooperate with legal subjects based in their kin states, and the ban on ethnic discrimination and the propagation of ethnic hatred. Similar provisions were in force as part of the Vojvodinian Constitution (1974) (Articles 4 and 194) and its supplementary legislation. In addition to these, the abolition of Vojvodina's legislative and judicial powers in the 1990s did not amount to the dissolution of the formal structures of its autonomy (i.e. the provincial assembly and its executive council). This provided the soil where new and up-to-date proposals for the devolution of authority, including the authority to manage ethnic relations, to the provincial organs could take root.

In Croatia, the new legal framework has opened up new prospects for coordination among minority councils in ethnically mixed regions such as Istria. Institutional provisions such as the national minorities' councils can promote the more adequate representation of minority communities in Istria's local administration. The positive state of multiethnic cohabitation provides an additional incentive towards coordination among the various minority councils in the region. This, in turn, can facilitate a consensus regarding the joint communication of the minorities' demands and issues of major concern to the local, regional, and state organs. At a first glance, Istria's case is quite comparable to Vojvodina.

Istria is another ex-Yugoslav region characterized by a high degree of ethnic plurality. As in Vojvodina, the persistence of the trans-ethnic cultural substratum of "Istrianity", at the grass-roots level, functioned as a catalyst for the alleviation of intense ethnic cleavages and friction during the 1990s. Furthermore, Istria is home to a popular regionalist party, the Istrian Democratic Assembly (IDS). As result of coordination between the IDS and Istria's Italian Union, the statute of the Istrian *županija* ("county") stipulates that a number of posts in local administration must be reserved for members of the Italian minority.⁸ Moreover, a well-established supervisory infrastructure guarantees the satisfactory use of the Italian language in local administration, public information, education, and signposting throughout the region's urban centers (e.g. Rijeka and Pula).

However, unlike Vojvodina, Istria lacks the political heritage, from the not-so-distant past, of powerful governing institutions at the regional level. In fact, no forms of regional autonomy were established in Croatia during the communist era. Furthermore, Croatia's regional restructuring in the first half of the 1990s was rather shortsighted and interest-driven. The main impetus behind this project was Croatian Democratic Community's (HDZ) intention to capitalize on its high popularity back then. Therefore the 11 "associations of municipalities" were dissolved and their powers transferred to the 21 new *županije*. Nevertheless, this did not amount to an extension of the constituent units' powers, and Croatian policymakers have to this day remained keen on centralization. The IDS and other regionalists must lobby for more drastic steps along the path towards Croatia's regionalization and the management of ethnic relations at the regional level. At this moment, though, it is hard to predict the effectiveness of such an endeavor in the immediate future. To date, Serbia has been more successful than Croatia in drafting and implementing more regionalized mechanisms for the management of inter-group relations.

Finally, the status of ethnic Croats in Serbia and of ethnic Serbs in Croatia has also been upgraded. Croatian has regained its status as one of Vojvodina's official languages and the Democratic Alliance of Vojvodina's Croats (DSHV) participates in the current governing coalition. In Croatia, the Serbian Independent Democratic Party (SDSS) also participates with three seats in the Sabor. Meanwhile, no serious instances of harassment against the Serbian Orthodox clergy in Croatia or the Croatian Roman Catholic clergy in Serbia have been recorded lately. Nevertheless, an urgent task for the Croatian government remains the rapid and effective facilitation of the return of Croatian Serb refugees to their homes and the restitution of their property. Although a number of Croatian Serb refugees are currently dwelling in Serbia (mainly Vojvodina and Belgrade) and demonstrate no interest in returning to Croatia⁹, this objective could become more attainable through joint efforts between Zagreb and Belgrade. Serbian and Croatian authorities should cooperate towards estimating the exact percentage of Serbian refugees who are keen on returning to Croatia. The necessity for cooperation between Serbian and Croatian authorities, towards the facilitation of the Serbian refugees' return to their hearths, can also form part of an agreement or memorandum of good relations between the two states.

IN LIEU OF A CONCLUSION

Overall, the management of ethnic relations in Central and Eastern Europe has been a particularly complicated and hard task. Conflicting national narratives and the long-term

democracy deficit have often resulted in non-viable combinations. In the specific case of Serbia and Croatia, the whole picture is even more battered by the legacy of the recent warfare. Even today, certain segments within the two countries' political scenes continue to view the respective Serbian and Croatian minorities as "unreliable elements". Nevertheless, the two countries' "European aspirations" have alleviated the traumas of the recent past and encouraged the formulation of sustainable and effective legal frameworks that are highly compatible with European standards in the field of minority rights. One could argue that the recent developments in the Serbian and Croatian legislations on minority rights represent one occasion on which the EU's *informal* engagement has exerted a beneficial influence. One should also note that, throughout the last decade, the roles of Serbia and Croatia as kin states to ethnic Serbs in Croatia and ethnic Croats in Serbia has been constructive. The leadership of both groups have watered down their rhetoric and have opted for cooperation instead of confrontation over the accommodation of their co-ethnics' interests in each state. Therefore, it is up to the Serbian and Croatian authorities to enforce the proper implementation of the new legal provisions. ✖

references

- 1 After Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence (2008) and recognition by a number of powerful states, my focus is primarily on Serbia's other multiethnic region, Vojvodina. The emphasis on this region also better serves the purpose of a Serbian-Croatian comparison, since most of Serbia's Croatian community resides in Vojvodina.
- 2 See *The Croatian Government Report on the Implementation of the FCNM to the COE*, 1998 (<http://www.coe.int> – accessed 2010-06-04).
- 3 The Preamble of the Croatian Constitution grants "autochthonous status" to the following minority groups: Serbs, Czechs, Italians, Hungarians, Jews, Germans, Austrians, Ukrainians, and Ruthenes. For the full text, see "Ustav Republike Hrvatske", in *Narodne Novine*, 28:2001.
- 4 These councils are the Albanian, the Bosniak, the Montenegrin, the Hungarian, the Macedonian, the Roma, the Serbian, and the Italian.
- 5 It is estimated that, by 2008–09, a total of 108,466 Serbian refugees had returned to Croatia while an additional 80,000 remained in Serbia. On this issue, see Commission of the European Communities, *Croatia 2009 Progress Report*, SEC (2009) 1333, pp. 14–16.
- 6 This body is the aggregate of smaller councils that represent each minority separately. These councils are elected directly by members of national minorities in special elections.
- 7 On Serbia, see Commission of the European Communities, *Serbia 2009 Progress Report*, SEC (2009) 1339, pp. 17–19; Venice Commission, *Opinion on the Constitution of Serbia*, Opinion No. 405/2006, 10. On Croatia, see *Croatia 2009 Progress Report*, pp. 14–16; *Croatia 2008 Progress Report*, pp. 12–14.
- 8 On this issue, see Centar za Ljudska Prava/Human Rights Center, *Položaj Nacionalnih Manjina u Republici Hrvatskoj-Zakonodavstvo i Praksa* [The position of national minorities in the Republic of Croatia – law and practice] (prepared by Tena Erceg), Zagreb, April 2005, p. 11.
- 9 On this issue, see Vassilis Petsinis, "The Refugees in Vojvodina: Prospects for Social Integration and Other Alternatives", in Istvan Tarrosy and Susanne Milford (eds.), *European Higher Education in a Changing World: A View from the Danube Region*, Budapest 2007, pp. 171–174.

AMONG WINE AND WALNUT GROWERS IN THE POOREST COUNTRY IN EUROPE

text and photos **Torgny Hinnemo**

The walnuts are part of the Soviet legacy. Walnuts have grown in the Carpathians since ancient times, of course, and have been grown in Moldova for centuries. The first syllable of the word *walnut* has the same linguistic roots as *Walachia*, the Romanian region bordering on Moldova. But it was during the Soviet era that the trees were planted in rows along the public highways. They were supposed to provide shelter from the wind in the summer, and, in the winter, keep pollinating insects enclosed and mark out the roads through the snow-covered fields. People were always free to pick nuts along the roads whenever they wished.

AFTER THE DISSOLUTION of the Soviet Union twenty years ago, the Moldovans realized there was a global market for the nuts.

Moldova is the poorest state in Europe. Maxim, a driver from the capital city of Chișinău, is taking me south to Gagauzia. “People are really poor here”, Maxim says when I return to the car after a house call in a village. “Two of them who walked by while I was waiting here cadged cigarettes. Imagine not being able to afford cigarettes. And you don’t see such worn-out, dirty shoes where I come from.”

“I’ve never regretted coming home for the nuts

fifteen years ago”, says Aleksandr Chernovenko. “And the profits end up in the pockets of humble people who really need the money”, he adds.

Chernovenko, an aerospace engineer and a PhD, worked for many years at the Academy of Sciences in neighboring Ukraine. When the Russian financial crisis of 1998 hit Moldova, an acquaintance of his at a wine company back home in Komrat, the largest city in Gagauzia, called him up. The company wanted to start selling walnuts as a new product line, and Chernovenko agreed to come manage it.

WITH THE NUTCRACKERS

The walnut trees growing here and there in people’s yards are low to the ground, and the nuts are easily harvested by beating them down with a rod and then gathering them up. But the trees lining the avenues are tall. I see people using sticks to knock down the nuts from low-hanging branches, and here and there young men trying to hit nuts higher up by throwing branches at them. The rest are gathered from the ground in mid-October when they fall naturally.



I figure at least one or two of the Moldovan companies – out of at least 20 in total – buy walnuts in Komrat, but none of my friends knows of any. But we are given an address by some women selling knitted goods in the bazaar. From the outside, the low building looks like a closed up warehouse, but inside

it’s as busy as Santa’s

workshop. The pickers arrive carrying their nuts in plastic bags, for which they are paid according to weight and quality, with a higher rate for shelled nuts. Hardworking pickers can manage a ton over the season, at the most, for which they earn about 1,100 euros. The unshelled nuts are poured into sacks and carried out to the storehouse. They are taken from there to the sorting trays, one or two at a time, where women work in teams of three. Nuts that fell or were picked from the trees when green have blackened by now and are put in separate sacks. The nuts allowed to ripen on the trees are paler. They get sorted into

It might well be that walnuts are more familiar in the big wide world than in the country where so many of the inhabitants grow them.



The nutcrackers quickly crush the nuts with a few well-placed blows of a hammer and then pick out the contents of the shells with a motion of the hand.

the highest quality category. The sorted sacks are then put in a corner of the room, where they wait for other women to crack them.

The nutcrackers of Gagauzia do not move in either march or waltz time as in Tchaikovsky's ballet. Instead, I discern a refined 7/10 time as they rake a few nuts out of the bag, crush them with syncopated hammer blows, and then pick out the nutmeats from the shells.

SEVENTY PERCENT OF Moldovan walnuts go to the EU, twenty-five percent to the Arab world, and the rest to Russia. Wine produces ten times more revenue for Moldova than the nuts, but many small walnut groves are being planted these days while several wine producers are waiting for better times before they think it will be worthwhile to bottle wine again. One exception is Cioc Maidan Vin, located about 20 kilometers east of Komrat. Their production was exported in tank cars to Russia until 2006, when Russia banned imports of wine from Georgia and Moldova. But Cioc Maidan Vin found other buyers in Abkhazia across the Black Sea, so the cars now trundle along the railroads via Ukraine.

"In Abkhazia, they add sweetened fruit juice to make our wine taste like theirs", says product manager Maria Politsmerskaya with a sigh. The wine has

been babied in her lab and wine cellar for many years before export. She suspects the sweetened wine is sold on to Russia as Abkhazian.

THE REMNANTS OF THE GAGAUZIAN PEOPLE

There is no hotel in Gagauzia, so while I'm conducting my interviews I stay at an inn in Cahul 70 kilometers away, almost at the Romanian border. Several vineyards around Cahul have been abandoned because they haven't been profitable for many years. There's a waiter at the hotel, also named Maxim, who becomes my local driver. He calls his native language Romanian, even though the state language is officially called Moldovan – which is basically Romanian with a large contingent of Russian loanwords, especially when it comes to technical terms. When I first meet him, Maxim says he thinks the Gagauzians should speak Romanian with him, but they are used to using Russian to talk to anyone other than Gagauzians. But Maxim is curious – he tags along to my interviews and asks his own questions, getting more interested all the time. After all, he says after a couple of days, the Gagauzians live the same way we do. When we visit the Gagauzian theater in Țadîr-Lunga, he is keen to tell actors that his father is a teacher and

that he also has great respect for the dramatic arts.

I came to Gagauzia the first time in the early 1990s. Two days before that, I had lain in a foxhole at Bender and interviewed men of the Moldovan home guard while snipers on the Transnistrian side fired inches above our heads; that was the civil war that would eventually claim more than a thousand lives.

When I was later taken toward Gagauzia, the Moldovans had set up roadblocks there. Some were manned by police, but most were patrolled by the civilian guard, who were armed with a motley collection of weapons. Once I got to Gagauzia, there was not a single defensive line. The Gagauzian civil defense was known as the National Guard, with the local police making up its core. The National Guardsmen remained in their usual workplaces, but kept their weapons at hand. Keeping patrols at border stations could have provoked a confrontation.

"It's ridiculous", National Guardsman Sasha told me then. "They've put up roadblocks because they're afraid of us. There's 150,000 of us and four million of them. Do they really think we're going to attack them?"

A COUPLE OF PEOPLE were murdered in Gagauzia during the period of greatest tension, but war never broke out.

In Gagauzia there are no hotels. One may assume there is great hospitality there.



Left: Everyone has the right to pick the walnuts that have fallen to the ground from the trees by the road. Above: The nuts are sorted by quality. Right: Actors at the regional theater in Gagauzia.



Several indigenous peoples had “autonomous republics” in the Soviet Union, a system intended to guarantee certain services in the local languages. When the Union fell apart, these republics declared themselves sovereign, usually in a bid to strengthen their negotiating position when Russia was drafting a new constitution, for example. The tiny Gagauzian remnant had not been granted status as an autonomous republic, but they declared themselves one to fend off Romanian nationalism in response to Moldova’s independence. When another region in Moldova, Transnistria, also declared itself sovereign, however, the issue was not ethnicity alone. As in the rest of Moldova, there are Romanians, Ukrainians, and Russians living in Transnistria, although in Transnistria the Slavic element is larger. The crux of the Russian demand for sovereignty in Transnistria was that the country’s key industries were found there and were often managed by Russians and others who had ended up there in the course of their Soviet careers.

RUSSIAN WAS THE SECOND language of the Gagauzians and rumors that the government in Chişinău intended to shut down the Russian TV channel sparked outrage.

When I interview a school principal in Çadır-Lunga one afternoon, a pupil is there who she believes is one of the best remaining at the school. When I ask 16-year-old Olesa to tell me the names of people in the Moldovan government, she just shakes her head. Olesa reads Russian literature, watches a Russian-language channel from Ukraine, prefers to listen to Russian rock music, and is concerned that fewer and fewer people believe in God. She dreams of moving to Ukraine, where there are more educational opportunities. She would love to be a teacher. The countries she would most like to visit are Egypt and the remnants of Greco-Roman civilization, but also China, India, France, Germany, and Holland. Why Holland? “I don’t know”, she says. “I once saw a TV show from there.”

As a result of massive unemployment, at least 600,000 Moldovans work abroad and the money they

send home amounts to one third of the GDP. People have a better chance of finding a job in a country where they can navigate in Russian rather than Romanian. Students who speak Gagauzian, a Turkish language, can manage relatively well at Turkish universities. Since the job market does not generate a lot of inter-language meeting places in the country, the barrier of suspicion remains.

THE THEATER AND CULTURAL IDENTITY

Mikhail Konstantinov, director of the Gagauzian regional theater, actually has a daughter who works for the National Opera in Chişinău. When he took on the post in 2007, he tried to broker an agreement on sending young actors from Gagauzia to a state school for the dramatic arts in Chişinău. The idea was rejected on the grounds that Gagauzians do not speak fluent Romanian.

I end up sitting with the actors as they eat their bag lunches in a chilly room above a closed-down theater space in Çadır-Lunga. It’s so cold here in winter the theater cannot be used. The rest of the year, the space is often used as a meeting room, so the ensemble does not have a permanent venue. The actors soon fall into a discussion with Maxim about where you can buy the cheapest potatoes in southern Moldova. Their wage, paid from the Gagauzian state budget, is around 500–800 lei, or 30–50 euros a month. That is about equal to an ordinary retirement pension.

Gagauzia’s arts budget is shrinking, and as of 2012, the theater has been administratively merged with a folklore ensemble and an orchestra in Komrat in an attempt to keep everything going. The theater tours the villages and some plays are also performed in Romanian, Ukrainian, and Bulgarian in order to reach a wider audience. One third of the audiences are children. Tickets cost 10 lei (60 euro cents) and the receipts just about cover the cost of transporting the actors and props. Directors and stage designers are sometimes

invited in from Chişinău. An American director who was financed through development aid was very well received.

THERE ARE NO resources for understudies, so if an actor falls ill and cannot be there for a rehearsal or performance, it affects the entire ensemble. The actors and actresses assure me they do not have the time to moonlight, but Konstantinov says the income from his private vineyard has occasionally saved him.

Here, as at other meetings, the gap between the Gagauzian cultural and political elites is apparent. The culture workers assert that the main purpose of the autonomy Gagauzia was granted after the difficult years in the early 1990s is to strengthen Gagauzian cultural identity. The politicians I encounter are more inclined to talk about how Gagauzia should have the right to make its own laws in most areas and even to engage independently in foreign trade. The Communist Party received sixty percent of the votes in the last parliamentary election in Gagauzia. This can partly be explained by the strong support for the party even after the fall of the Soviet Union in the agricultural belt that stretches across parts of Moldova, Ukraine, and southern Russia. In their rhetoric, the Moldovan Communists seem more modern than their Russian counterparts, but they still appeal to many Russian-speaking voters.

“We’ve thought about reorganizing the theater as a business with its own website and trying to find foreign sponsors to get around the internal political squabbles”, says Konstantinov. “But a theater without its own venue, or at least a technical base, is an impossibility.”

We have to break off the conversation when a group of pre-adolescent girls troops into the room with expectant faces. It’s time for one of the actresses to give them this week’s lesson in the performing arts.

“You can never stop using your imagination”, Konstantinov says on the way out. “When I got married, I bought an electric accordion. People thought I was



Piotr Sirkeli is concerned about quality. He grows, picks, presses, and stores the wine himself. Upper right: Maria Politsmerskaya, production manager at the winery Cioc Maidan Vin, Praskovia Tonku, laboratory director, and an unidentified employee in the background.



nuts and wasting my money. But actually, it was the accordion that made it possible for me to buy a house and other things. With my accordion and my professionalism, I could replace an entire band and I was hired to play at a lot of weddings.”

Poet, prose writer, painter, and film director Dmitri Kara-Çoban is one of the prominent figures of Gagauzian culture. At his death in 1986, he left as a legacy a museum of history and ethnography in the community of Beşalma, where we are reminded that the Gagauzians declared the autonomous Republic of Komrat for a few days in 1906, but quickly fell under Russian control again. Forty percent of the Gagauzian people died in the famine of 1946.

When I sat with the head of the Gagauzian Chamber of Commerce, Vitali Kyurkchu, one evening a couple of years ago, he dwelled on all the evil Lenin's party had done to the Gagauzians and their culture, including the deportations to Kazakhstan. It is thus a mystery why the statue of Lenin still stands in front of the administrative building on the main street running through Komrat. Of course, until there is something to put in its place, you wouldn't be able to guess the location of the center of town without it. Over the years, I've been accustomed to arranging to meet people at Lenin's feet, for lack of any other landmark.

At the Kara-Çoban museum, Maxim the waiter remarks enthusiastically to the guide when he realizes that the Gagauzians use the same farm implements as the Romanians do back home, a few dozen kilometers away. And how could it be otherwise? Like the nuts, the wine has been here for millennia. Peoples have come and peoples have gone over the centuries, but the crops have determined the tools of production.

WINE BOTTLES, GRAPES, AND EWE'S MILK CHEESE

Winemaking is an important sideline for most farmers in Moldova. Piotr Sirkeli in Kirsova spends one week a year harvesting and pressing one ton of grapes. When

his son was at school, he bought an additional two tons from other growers for his wine production. The plants that make wine for bottling are going through hard times, in part because the younger generation has discovered beer. But the new wine from the farms is much sought after in the cities. It tastes of grape must, both before and after fermentation. Like so much else in Moldova, the farm wines are sold on the black market. But Piotr Sirkeli is already retired and gets 570 lei a month from the state. The extra income from his wine is below the taxable threshold. He also makes his own ewe's milk cheese and sells it to order. The cheese is stored next to the four oak barrels of wine in the cellar. One of the barrels is thirty years old, the others five.

“You just have to replace the hoops once in a while”, Piotr says. There is a shortage of wood for new barrels, since oak trees are protected in Moldova. “But that can usually be got round”, he adds with a sly smile.

A DARK GRAPE CALLED Moldova is a popular choice for the farm wines, but Piotr sometimes mixes in a couple of other varieties, including a light grape his wife prefers.

After I've been allowed to see how Piotr presses his wine, I am invited to have a bowl of potato soup in the kitchen. The position of the kitchen makes it easy to come in and out while working in the garden. Piotr explains that despite the hard times he can find customers for his wine because he has taken care of the vines and maintains high quality. The same goes for the ewe's milk cheese. He sold the first batches in the town square, but his customers loved it so much they started ordering it directly from him.

Otherwise, he and his daughter-in-law Maria, who is sitting with us at the table, both know very well that Moldovan wine has been subject to a lot of manipulations over the years. She is Bulgarian, and speaks Russian with her husband and in-laws.

“Almost no wine is exported in bottles; it is thus

susceptible to tampering along the way, by watering it down, for example”, Maria says, whose family is in the wine business.

I reply that I've seen Moldovan wine in bottles in many countries and had in fact seen it only a month before at restaurants in Kyrgyzstan.

“I don't think all the wine sold as Moldovan really comes from here”, Maria answers. She tells me about some people who collected bottles from several different countries containing wine that, according to the labels, was of the same Moldovan origin.

“They all tasted very different”, Maria says.

IT'S TIME TO SAY farewell to Gagauzia this time round. The Maxim who lives in Chişinău has come to pick me up. Something broke in one of the rear wheels, so he has had to leave the car on the side of the road and get a taxi the rest of the way. When the taxi passes the last community on the main road out of Gagauzia toward Chişinău, we end up in a traffic circle planted with bushes and a tree in the middle. After having nearly completed the turn, we discover a big dog on the asphalt behind the bushes. It is sitting with its back toward us, basking in the sun. The taxi driver swerves at the last second. He exchanges a look with Maxim and then Maxim glances at me.

We see the dog in the rearview mirror, still sitting in the same position, unaware that its life was in danger only seconds ago. And so the last picture burned into my retina in Gagauzia this time was of a dog sitting next to a tree and enjoying life, like Ferdinand the bull, although this tree bears nuts, not cork. ✕

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Dissertation review.

The struggle between Romanianists and Moldovanists

Andreas Johansson
Dissenting Democrats
Nation and Democracy in
the Republic of Moldova

Stockholm 2012
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 263 pages

Andreas Johansson's dissertation is an exploration of what has been called the most understudied country in Europe: Moldova. More specifically, the author is interested in the relationship between nation and democracy in the country between 1989 and 2009. Johansson defines nation as a "political community", a definition that is discussed more closely later in this review. Scholars like Rustow (1970) and Linz & Stepan (1996) posit national unity as a necessary condition for democratization. Essentially, there must be fundamental consensus on the borders of the nation and no separatist claims that might cause division. As Johansson interprets it, the unity postulate implies a people who perceive a national, collective "we". The author argues that doubts about national unity would seriously hamper the democratic ambitions of a state.

OTHER SCHOLARS, however, argue that the case of Moldova is proof that the assumption does not hold: the country is, so to speak, the bumblebee that flies against all odds – its wings are too short and its body too fat and heavy (Way 2002). Beyond Rustow's assumptions, the case also challenges central arguments in the modernization tradition, such as those advanced by Lipset (1959). Despite national cleavages, weak economic development, and an inability to control its own territory, a process of democratization has been carried out in Moldova. After Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, Moldova is sometimes represented as the most democratic of the post-Soviet states. However, Way (2002) has suggested that Moldova is more an example of failed authoritarianism than of successful democratization. This state of affairs is partly explained by the country's national fragmentation. This "pluralism by default", as Way has chosen to describe it, offers a perhaps less encouraging explanatory model of the democratization of Moldova. The fundamental assumption is that the elites actually want authoritarian rule, but because each stymies the other, they have failed to realize their intentions. From his point of departure in Rustow's and Way's at least partially opposed assumptions about the role and preconditions of national unity in the democratization process, Johansson has formulated his main research question: How and why has Moldova, despite being a nation divided, been able to achieve relatively high democratic standards?

This question is followed by two sub-questions: What are the effects of Moldova's national division on political developments in general and democratization in particular?

How does national identity influence the nature of Moldovan political support? Here the author examines whether there are other factors influencing political support by the population at large.

Johansson's dissertation is based on extensive secondary literature in Swedish, English, and German, as well as Russian and Moldovan. Dense, descriptive accounts are supplemented by statistical analyses of survey data: the results of a survey of 1,100 respondents performed in 2003, as well as a correspondence analysis. As is customary, all of these scene-setting elements are presented in chapter 1 of the dissertation.

A COMPACT HISTORICAL and socioeconomic background to Moldovan political development is provided in chapter 2. The author relates how present-day Moldova, like other European countries situated in borderland areas, has been overrun by different empires over the centuries: first the Ottoman and later, under the name Bessarabia, the Russian. This was followed by a brief interval as an independent state in 1917–1918, the first experience of independence in modern times. Later in the chapter, Johansson describes the history of Moldova as a Soviet Republic, its incorporation into Romania during the period 1941–1944, and its subsequent restoration to the status of Soviet Republic at the end of World War II. The historical outline extends to the achievement of independence in 1991 following the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Incorporated as it was in the Soviet division of labor, with all central plans drawn up in far-away Moscow, Moldova was politically and economically as ill prepared as most other Soviet Republics for the speed with which independence arrived.

Chapter 3 establishes the theoretical groundwork – or perhaps one could more accurately say that it articulates the conceptual nodes to which the dissertation relates thereafter, for while the author cracks the doors to allow a glimpse of vast and wide literary traditions, he never really enters the rooms. He seldom discusses theoretical arguments in depth; *using* theory mainly as context, he has no ambitions to *develop* it further. However, a number of key concepts are introduced, discussed, and put in relation to one another, such as nation, ethnic group, national identity, and nation-building, on the one hand, and democracy, democratization, political support, and transition, on the other. While Johansson deals with the canon of nations and nationalism rather cursorily, he builds his arguments concerning levels of democracy on Robert Dahl's (1971) polyarchy model, with its focus on democratic institutions such as free and fair elections and freedom of expression. On the matter of political support, Johansson draws on Pippa Norris's (1999) expansion of David Easton's (1965) model, ranging from the most diffuse object of support (with bearing on the political/national community) to the most specific object (support for parties as political actors). With regard to transitology, Johansson defends leading scholars like Schmitter & Karl (1994) and Linz & Stepan (1996) against the frequent charges of determinism in their perspective on the direction and end results of transition. He argues that the allegations simply do not correspond to what these authors wrote. The link between democracy and the nation often advanced in the literature is also recounted and discussed here and Johansson again points to the tension between Rustow's (1970) and Way's (2002) premises.

Chapter 4 presents the ethnic minorities in Moldova,

including, in descending order of size, Ukrainians, Russians, Gagauzians, Bulgarians, Jews, and Roma. A key section presents the competing Moldovan and Romanian nationalisms, which claim to represent essentially the same ethnic group – the Moldovan- or Romanian-speaking population – but on different grounds, either that the Moldovan nation constitutes a unique community (Moldovanism) or that it is part of a Greater Romania (Romanianism). This antagonism is the empirical hub around which the dissertation's analysis revolves.

The likewise central chapter 5 discusses five phases in the evolution of independent Moldova from 1989–2009, which were informed by either Moldovanism or Romanianism. The chapter describes the rise and fall of the Popular Front during the nascence of the Moldovan state, Gagauzian separatist claims during the early years of independence, and, most importantly, the *de facto* division of the country in 1992 when, after a brief civil war, Transnistria declared independence, with Russian military support. The chapter recounts how serious conflicts sometimes arose in Moldovan politics over national symbols, the writing of national history in school curricula, and contention over a national language, primarily the extent to which Russian should be granted official status alongside Moldovan (or whether Moldovan should be called Romanian, a tricky question to which the author often refers). The main elements of Moldova's bumpy road toward democratization are explained. Until 2000, the constitution decreed that the president was directly elected by popular vote, and the parliament and the president counter-balanced each other throughout the 1990s. After a protracted struggle between the president and the parliament, the constitution was changed in the legislature's favor and the president was thenceforth elected by the parliament. When the Communist Party achieved a qualified majority in parliament, the former beneficial balance of power between the legislature and the executive went up in smoke. Nonetheless, elections were free, regular, and reasonably fair throughout the entire period.

IN CHAPTER 6, Johansson employs a few of the most common indices of democracy (Polity IV, Index of Democracy, and a few variants of the Freedom House Index) to estimate on qualitative grounds the historical development of Moldovan democracy. He concludes that democratic consolidation remains distant, even though the formal institutions have been established and their arrangements not seriously questioned. Democracy – to use the expression Johansson

often quotes – is still not “the only game in town”.

In the seventh chapter, Johansson analyzes data collected in his 2003 survey, which was, as noted, subjected to correspondence analysis. According to the author, the results of the analysis indicate that popular support for all or parts of the political system cannot be traced merely to national or ethnic identity. Instead, he identifies partitions along generational, educational, and urban-rural divides, all of which seem to have greater impact than national identity.

CHAPTER 8 CONCLUDES and summarizes the dissertation. Johansson finds that the national division in Moldova is an important determinant in political developments and that political parties in the country have often used national identity to underpin their message.

Nevertheless, issues of national and ethnic identity seem not to have played any prominent role in how people conduct their affairs in daily life.

Addressing the main question of the dissertation, how and why Moldova has, despite being a nation divided, been able to achieve relatively high democratic standards, Johansson concludes that Moldova’s institutional arrangements have been an important factor. He points to the now lost balance of power between the legislature and the executive as a beneficial influence at an early and formative stage. In concluding, the author asks whether Moldova should be seen as a divided nation or one in the process of formation. In agreement with Rustow, he argues that shared national identity and shared beliefs about the ways and means of political development indeed seem to improve opportunities for successful work toward democracy. He is somewhat more cautious about the second prominent scholar cited – Way – concerning the relationship between nation and democracy. According to Johansson, Way’s “pluralism by default” postulate is weakened by the assumption of autocratic intentions on the part of the elites, an assumption that is virtually impossible to prove.

DEFINING “NATION”

In several places in the manuscript the fundamental distinction between state and nation is unfortunately not maintained. I believe this is a consequence of the less than ideal choice to define *nation* as a “political community”. The strong emphasis on the political dimension at the expense of the socio-cultural, ideational, or identity-based blurs the distinction between the nation and

the political-legal framework of the state. The confusion between state and nation becomes almost painfully clear at certain points in the text. One example is when Johansson (p. 70) argues the following:

If the nation manages to claim a certain territory, governs it, and is recognized by other states in the international system as the legitimate holder of the land, then a nation-state exists.

Beyond the fact that the quoted text diverges from the common Buzanian understanding of the nation-state as a unit where the borders of the state coincide with the pervasive ideological affinity with a specific nation (Buzan, 1983), it also suggests that Johansson assigns to the nation a number of political-legal functions that are usually and rightfully assumed to exist in the state, such as governing a territory and being recognized by other states.

ALTHOUGH THERE are more aspects of the author’s use of the term “nation” and related concepts that might warrant a discussion (such as nationality, nation-building, core nation, ethnicity, people vs. population, contested vs. consolidated nation, etc.), I will confine further remarks here to just one other element under this heading. The distinction between *ethnic* and *civic* nationalism, where the former is represented as origins-based, exclusive, and malignant, while the latter is portrayed as values-based, inclusive, and benign, is not only relatively shopworn but often misleading (see Brubaker 1999). Nevertheless, it is used so often in the literature that it is hard to ignore. Johansson indeed writes that the civic-ethnic dichotomy is problematic and should therefore not be applied, but he seems nonetheless to use it implicitly, if only by asserting several times in the text that national affinity is usually, albeit not always, based on ethnicity (see for example p. 76 and p. 80). When, relatively early in the dissertation, he gives an example of national affinity with a non-ethnic identity construction at its base, he chooses to cite Mauritius and not, for example, the United States, which could otherwise have served as a powerful refutation of notions of both the marginal nature of

socially based nationalism and its always beneficial effects. I would have preferred clearer positioning and a more consistent argument by the author here.

THE PRESUMED NATION-DEMOCRACY LINK

The connection between nation and democracy is thus a key question for Johansson. First, I believe the formulation should instead have been aimed at the connection between nationalism and democracy; the nation can hardly be an active agent, but nationalisms and their interpreters certainly are. That said, my objections under this point are closely linked to the use of the concept of the

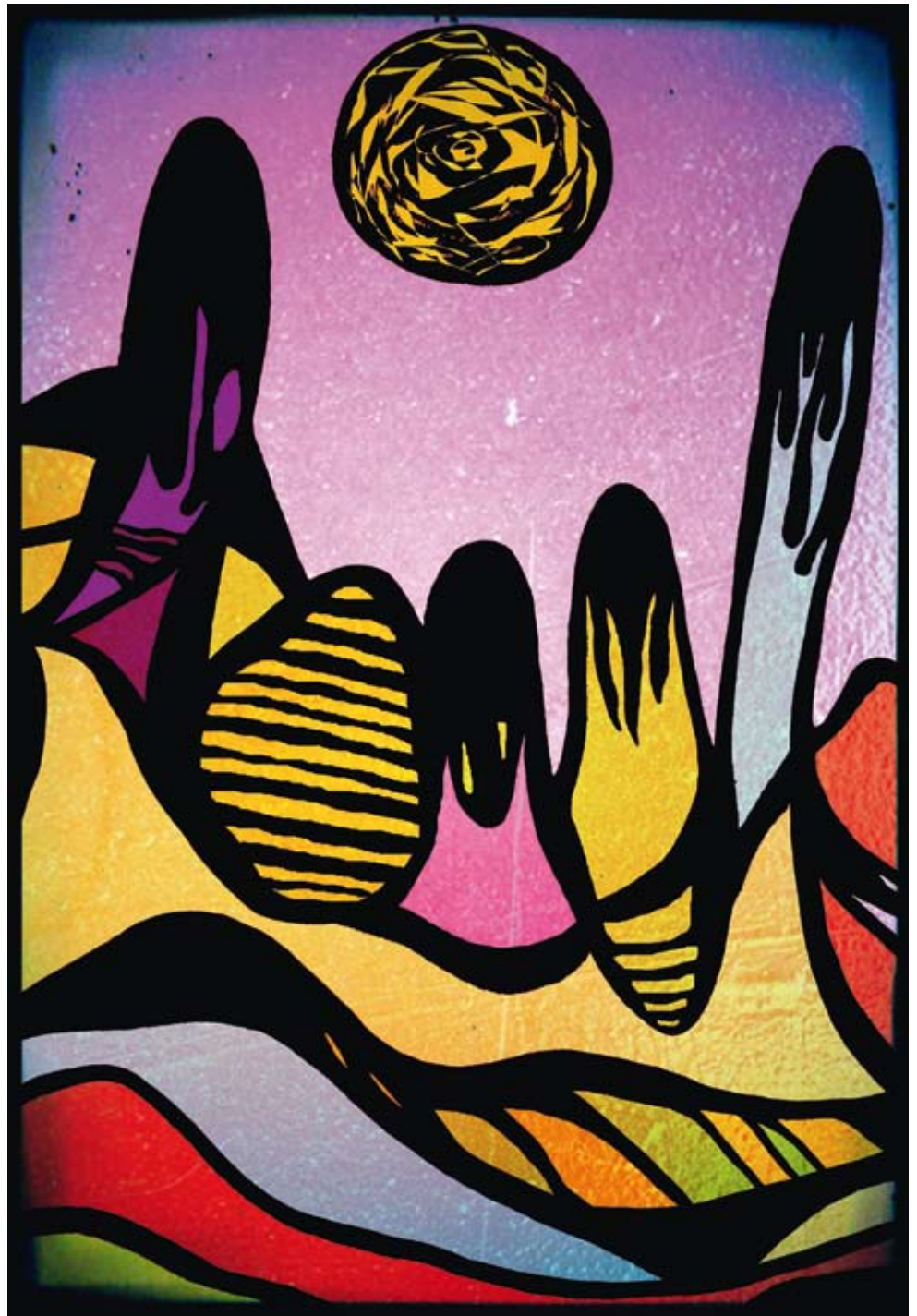


Illustration: Katrin Stenmark

Continued. Dissertation review

nation. Once again, the problem lies in designating the nation as a political community: Johansson (p. 32) writes:

Without a clearly defined citizenry that acts as members of and agrees on the boundaries of the same political community, possibilities for acceptance of the rules of the democratic political game grow slim.

This is where the danger in defining a nation as a *political community* becomes apparent: state and nation flow together in a way that makes them practically impossible to separate.

RUSTOW'S POSTULATE that unity on the borders of the national territory is a precondition for democracy thus constitutes a fundamental premise for the entire dissertation. As Johansson interprets it, we are talking here about the borders of the *nation*, not the *state* (p. 71), but as far as I understand it, *political community* according to Rustow is a matter of relatively minimal agreement on borders. Rustow does not talk about shared national identity: for him, political community is about the state (1970: pp. 350–352). When he talks about “national unity”, “theory of nationhood”, etc., he is probably, in line with common usage at the time he wrote, referring to the state, not the nation. When he approaches identity, he talks instead about “issues of community”, matters that democracies must tussle with even in the habituation phase. I believe Johansson has over-interpreted Rustow; it is hardly justified to cite Rustow concerning the connection between the nation (or nationalism) and democratization. One could however talk about national unity, but that is something entirely different, and it is likely that the adjective then refers to the state.

STRUCTURE AND INTERPRETATIONS

With respect to the second main concept of the dissertation, *democracy*, the author initially mentions Moldova as a successful example of how democracy has been established against the odds in a former Soviet Republic. Towards the end of the dissertation, however, and in connection with his exposition of the flaws in Moldova's democratic development, the author increasingly talks about the country as an example of successful *democratization*, which is, of course, an entirely different matter (see pp. 30–31, 33, 140). The bumblebee is indeed flying, but perhaps not doing much else.

Another objection concerns the correspondence analysis based on the survey which Johansson performed back in 2003 when the dissertation process was, it can reasonably be presumed, at a very early stage. When this survey was performed, it was probably expected to be considerably more central to the dissertation than it turned out to be. This begs the question how much value can actually be derived from it, considering that the survey refers to a single measurement period early in the research process, during a year when even Johansson concedes not much happened in Moldovan politics. It seems that repeating the survey and the subsequent correspondence analysis toward the end of the research process would have been a reasonable alternative to heighten the usability and relevance of the collected data. The results have instead become a chapter whose place in the whole does not seem entirely clear, although it does contain interesting empirical findings per se.

On one occasion, Johansson describes the divide in the Moldovan national identity as follows: “For the time being, the core nation is being divided into two narratives” (p. 101). This phrasing seems to suggest what might have been a promising analytical doorway. Here, one could very well imagine an analysis of the discursive battle in Moldova on the nature of the national narrative, how hegemony is being pursued, and how various political elites are fighting for interpretive precedence. I believe this would have been a more accessible and promising route than reliance on dated survey data. In the analysis, the author would also have avoided having to constantly and painstakingly express how what he calls the core nation is divided into two groups, and how part of the population belongs to both. If the orientation had instead been narrative analysis with focus on the rhetoric of political elites within the Moldovan nation, the structure of the study would have been clearer and the interpretations less forced.

The empirical hub around which the analysis revolves thus concerns the antagonisms surrounding what the Moldovan nation is: a separate, “unique” nation or a part of the Romanian nation. Johansson consistently emphasizes this struggle over interpretations and their implications for the political development of independent Moldova. A question presents itself, which is actually never answered in the dissertation, as to whether there have been any serious attempts to form and legitimize a more inclusive Moldovan identity that would offer affinity to all ethnic groups in the country, including Russians, Ukrainians, and Gagauzians for instance. In an identity category like this, the question of whether or not one's first language is Moldovan/Romanian would not have been a marker of identity. The present-day Moldovan national identity is, however, based precisely on the participants having Moldovan as their native language: this Moldovan nation seems therefore, in terms of the familiar dichotomy, at once both *ethnic* and *civic*.

EXECUTIVE POWER IN Moldovan politics has never actually been held by the Romanianists, but only by the Moldovanists. It seems as if the Romanianists' moment in the sun came in the early 1990s when everything was in flux and new conditions prevailed after the fall of the Soviet Union (Popa 2011). At the same time, Johansson gives the impression that the dichotomous struggle between the Romanianists and Moldovanists had a decisive impact on politics. This raises the question: How can the persistence of the struggle be explained

when it actually seems to be one group that has had an almost hegemonic hold on power? One alternative interpretation might be that political developments have been shaped by rather pragmatic considerations of whether Moldova should retreat from or draw closer to the Russian great power. While conflicts about school curricula and official languages are shown in Johansson's analysis, one does not see much else that could underpin the notion that political developments are necessarily driven by conflicts of identity. How do we know that Johansson's interpretation is the proper one? Might the early 1990s be only a temporary deviation from the pattern? Mightn't good old discontent with those in charge – simply because they are in charge – be an equally strong explanatory factor? The Soviet nostalgia that seems to flower in bad times – “things were better in the old days” – fits into such an explanation, while the Soviet nostalgics, who presumably include ethnic Russians and perhaps even the Ukrainians, are not easily placed in the dichotomous Romanianist/Moldovanist matrix. On the contrary, one has to wonder what happened to these large ethnic groups, presented so carefully in an introductory chapter, in the analysis.

Other elements are also strangely absent. Johansson often refers to Moldova as “a nation divided”, and when I began reading the dissertation, I thought this referred to the tangible fact that a part of the country, Transnistria, since the short civil war in the 1990s, has been de facto independent from Moldova, partitioned and with a significant Russian military presence. The fact that Transnistria has separated from the independent and, under international law, sovereign state of Moldova, and is a base for foreign troops should have been a significant national trauma for any country. It would have been reasonable to expect this to be a theme around which national politics revolved, but once the Transnistrian issue has been dispatched in the introductory chapter, it disappears from the analysis of the dissertation, and the author's dense description of Moldovan politics focuses instead on disputes about school curricula and the matter of an official language, which of course feel epiphenomenal given the context. In the analysis, Transnistria takes on the nature of the proverbial elephant in the room: palpable, embarrassing, and hard to ignore, but not explicitly mentioned. ✕

bo petersson

The human hunt that nearly paralyzed the party.

A microstudy of Soviet mass terror

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Wendy Z. Goldman
Inventing the Enemy
Denunciation and Terror in
Stalin's Russia
Cambridge et al.

Cambridge University Press
 2011
 320 pages

The Great Terror in Stalin's Soviet Union began as a campaign against terror. A systematic hunt for enemies of the regime was triggered by the assassination of Leningrad party boss Sergei Kirov on December 1, 1934. Was it part of a plot, or not? Was the resistance against the regime plot, or not? It is hard to imagine that Kirov represented an oppositional faction – in fact, he had supported Stalin in all disputes within the party – and all the speculation and conspiracy theories presented thus far suffer from a troubling lack of empirical support. As with the Reichstag fire in Berlin the previous year, the bulk of the evidence suggests an *Alleintäterschaft*¹, a lone perpetrator on the loose.²

That the perpetrator was acting on his own, if he was, does not necessarily mean he was alone in his desire to strike a blow against a power that few could accept as legitimate. At the moment of seizing power, neither the Bolsheviks nor the National Socialists could rely on a popular majority. Yet how many revolutions, whether national, political, or social, ever have? At best, the legitimacy of the Russian Communists was based on victory in a protracted civil war (which was in part a defensive war against foreign military intervention). And as for the popular appeal of the Hitler regime, it was not based on a call for ethnic war – that was actually a complicating factor. What Hitler and his cohorts claimed they were able to do was to govern an ungovernable country, something none of his competitors had managed to do.

WITH THE REICHSTAG fire came the emergency decrees, the obliteration of political opposition, and the regimentation of the social system, *Gleichschaltung*. The Kirov assassination was followed by repressions unprecedented in the history of modern states, but also by social chaos that threatened the foundations of the Communist monopoly on power: relatively cohesive cadres, a party machine with a long-term perspective, and the capacity to attract and retain sufficient administrative and intellectual competence to avoid being regarded as rabble by the masses. The line between populism and brutishness, between simplicity and foolishness, had to be held. When the fight against individual terror, albeit under the pretext of prevention, evolved into state-organized terror against undesirable party members (and undesirable non-party elements) who were also fully behind the fight against terror or at least willing to shut up and accept the brutalization of society, the line was jeopardized. The unity of the Soviet state collapsed. Only a fast-approaching confrontation with the archenemy Germany did change the course of a manipulative Soviet leadership. It was, nonetheless, almost too late.

Reading Wendy Z. Goldman's book, one is struck – not once but several times – by the impression that a regime capable of unleashing such political madness as repressions of the party, the nomenklatura, and the technical intelligentsia – which would ultimately victimize tens of thousands of innocent engineers, technicians, and military personnel – must surely have expected a political opposition that wanted something completely different and whose ultimate aim was to topple it. And honestly: would it not have been *extremely surprising* if no attempts, however fumbling, had been made to organize a resistance, albeit symbolic and in rather desperate forms, against a leadership that did not tolerate the least objection, did not respect human life, and regarded its daily

political work as one long, steady military campaign against a myriad of class enemies who would never admit defeat? After all, you may not be surprised to find an absurd rationality in Stalin's, Molotov's, Vyshinsky's, Kaganovich's and Yezhov's many calculations – even in the "National Operations" of 1937–1938, when hundreds of thousands of Soviet citizens charged with working on behalf of foreign powers were executed or given long GULAG sentences.³ That hardly makes them more appetizing.

The framework of the mass terror, most recently portrayed with a masterful hand in a monumentally structured book by Karl Schlögel⁴, was the three major trials of Joseph Stalin's main competitors and opponents in the internal party struggle, with Zinoviev-Kamenev, Pyatakov-Radek, and Bukharin-Rykov as the principal leaders – and at least in Nikolai Bukharin, posterity has been tempted to see something approaching a credible and effective alternative to Stalinist centralism and tyrannical outrage. Yet these persons had been, at least ostensibly, outmaneuvered and disarmed long before, and if any of them had planned a coup d'état, it had already been nipped in the bud.⁵ The show trials can be seen on one level as personal acts of revenge, delayed vendettas, or political paranoia pure and simple. However, this staged indignation and perverse paranoia ought to have had its own peculiar rationality.

FOR IF, AS INDICATED by the charges, Bukharin and a couple of parallel centers had conspired against the Soviet government, personified in Stalin and his henchmen, like Zhdanov and – yes – Kirov, they could hardly have done so only by entering into secret and treasonous alliances with an enemy power (and with the exiled Trotsky, who was by no means averse to the exercise of terror, considering that he was the early chief architect of Bolshevik state violence⁶): they must have relied on battalions of willing activists within their own country and among their own people. Only then did the equation work. And it was these real, potential, or imagined sympathizers and collaborators who were the targets of the mass terror. It was the Trotskyites and Zinovievites at the local level who had to be arrested and interrogated. The most committed proletarians and party workers of the "workers' state" had to be put under the microscope, and both the scale and the targets were utterly unlike the cleansings and purges (of bourgeois experts, the Menshevik All-Union Bureau, etc.) of the late twenties and early thirties. "The Party grows stronger when it purges itself", Stalin's ominous 1924

Continued. The human hunt that nearly paralyzed the party

slogan read, casting the Party as organism and the membership as corpuscles, impurities and poison in the blood.

ANOTHER EQUALLY ominous slogan was, “The cadres decide everything”. When something went wrong at a workplace or in an organization, there was always a human factor to finger, and this living and usually identifiable human factor *could never shirk its responsibility*. He (the targets of these accusations and subsequent purges were nearly always men) could not put the blame on a design flaw or an incorrect shipment, the laws of nature, or an accident. There were no accidents, only damage done. There were no unintentional omissions, only sabotage. And if there was a fault, there was always someone who had failed to detect or report it. Goldman’s accounts of the open human hunt at Dinamo, a large machine plant in Moscow with 10,000 employees, zero in on the unwavering suspicion directed at saboteurs, at elements (such as people of foreign extraction: Poles, Lithuanians) who could conceivably be agents for a hostile foreign intelligence service or espionage organization. Dinamo (like other factories) had a daily newspaper that aired suspicions, criticized suspect individuals in responsible positions by name, and called for resolute interventions in personal matters. The wall newspapers were a rumor mill, and zeal decayed into a competition for pettiness. The security organs invited written denunciations of coworkers and shop heads in such utmost secrecy that no one was told, until matters came to a public action, who had denounced whom.

And public actions and exposures did take place – at Dinamo and a number of other factories in Moscow that Goldman has studied at the lowest possible level. The author has combed through newspaper materials, letters to the NKVD and higher party organs, and stenographic records from local party meetings that could, in the end, assemble hundreds of members and that decided on matters of expulsion from the party or continued membership. Goldman has selected a large number of individual cases and focused on personal histories and attitudes, individual strategies and counter-strategies, career patterns, techniques of argumentation, and family relationships. What emerges is a microcosm of emotional outbursts, self-righteousness, and rigidity of principle, vengefulness, naïveté, empathy, shrewdness, and reckless frenzy. How might individuals behave? Being politically correct, devoted, loyal was by no means enough. People also had to be prudent, suspicious, vigilant, and informative. Yet even those perceived as too

eager to unmask hidden enemies and wreckers were at risk of attracting attention. Hyperactivity might be a way to conceal true intent, as fury might be misdirected sympathy. Goldman’s source material is boiling with political magma.

In a few brief years (1935–1938), the mass terror at workplaces went through a number of phases. At first, accusations of sabotage and deliberate mismanagement of production were obviously widely believed among ordinary workers and party members. Events often happened that put them in danger: a collapse, an explosion, or a fire. Foolish managers and cadres ought to be punished and replaced: this was a reasonable local logic. Accusations of misuse of authority, drunkenness, and injustice by officials had been made in complaints to the leadership, even by non-party members, for several years.⁷ Initially, this did not escalate into hysteria. On the contrary, those higher up in the hierarchies were displeased that so many took the unsatisfactory state of affairs with too much composure, sometimes verging on lethargy. It was thought that factory party committees were too restrained in their correctional methods. Exchange of party documents was not enough. At this point, the Communist Party Politburo in the autumn of 1937 adopted a resolution aimed at “democratizing” and including every individual member in internal party criticism as a way of counteracting the relative lack of interest in the human hunt. The hectic era of mass meetings began. Earlier that year, the targets had been expanded from “class enemies” to encompass “enemies of the people”, which meant that a proletarian class background and a worthy revolutionary past could no longer be counted as an automatic merit. Everyone, without exception, could be made a scapegoat: political immunity could not be relied upon anywhere.

THE OUTCOMES WERE multifarious. The turnover of cadres, especially at the highest level, had a devastating effect: Dinamo had three directors in six months, and one out of ten party members was sent to prison in 1937. Anxiety and instability crept into every corner; promotions to fill gaps put incompetence in the driver’s seat. General chaos spread and production losses were huge, much greater than under the management of wreckers who were eliminated early on. Goldman applies a rule of thumb concerning well-attended factory-wide meetings for mass criticism: “These larger assemblies, dominated by the most aggressive speakers, often voted to mete out harsher punishments than the party committees handed down. The rank and file tended to be more rabid than their leaders, and their participation was apt to produce a worse outcome for those



A poster from 1935 showing Stalin under the slogan, “The cadres decide everything.” [Artist: Gustav Klutsis.] (From Maria Lafont, *Soviet Posters: The Sergio Gigorian Collection*. Prestel 2007.)

subjected to their judgement.”

The atmosphere could become intimidating, monstrous. Rumors were taken as evidence and kinship as an aggravating circumstance. Even a gesture, a turn of phrase, or a general boorishness could be made politically discrediting; it was not, after all, the action that counted but the presumed

intent.⁸ Paradoxically: the more who came to grief, the less credible became the individual denunciations. An inflationary cycle of blame and accusation arose. At the same time, the trust that may have existed in the beginning – the intent to clean up a swamp of poor conditions that no one was doing anything about (dangerous work procedures, horrible housing) – was replaced by fear of persecution and undeserved suffering. That culture of suspicion and distrust had been germinating long before the mass terror blossomed. In early 1934, Stepan Podlubny, a 20-year-old printing apprentice at Pravda who is trying to “transform” himself from the son of a kulak to Soviet man, notes:

I do not know why, but I constantly have a suspicion that Kol’ka Galankin is spying on me. Behaving very strangely. Either he is a spy, or he idolizes me, a hero in his eyes. Minor facts and evidence speak in favor of both, but neither makes complete sense. Don’t understand the matter, but must continue being careful.⁹

Over the course of 1938, those in the highest ranks realized something had in fact gone wrong. This insight was gained through the countless reports submitted to Stalin and the Politburo from meetings, interrogations of arrested technicians, engineers, and directors, Stalin’s own notes about the interrogations and decisions as to whether the investigations should continue or be suspended, along with his remarks to other Politburo members which bore witness to rising frustration over the fact that unsatisfactory conditions in industry and the transport system seemed as widespread as before the purges.⁹ The masses had taken excessive liberties in the destruction of enemies of the people. Nothing worked as it should in strategically vital industries. As during the collectivization of farming and the campaigns to exterminate the kulaks as a class, high-handed potentates had become “dizzy with success” (the title of a famous article by Stalin published in 1930).¹⁰ Considerable numbers had denounced someone with a view to gaining a position held by the accused, while others had made denunciations in order to gain a reputation as particularly vigilant – in other words, in a naïvely pre-emptive sort of self-defense. Naïve, because the more people who were deposed, expelled, convicted, imprisoned, deported, and executed, and the more who were dragged onto the carousel, the greater the risk that the individual, including the denouncer, who must always expect to be

denounced in turn, would end up in the claws of the security organs. The pre-emptive move had become a chimera.

AT THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE level, the Party had no desire to change policy, nor did it find reason to engage in self-criticism. It was rather, as Moshe Lewin put it, a matter of camouflage meant to give the impression of a return to “normality”, and in 1939 the Party gained as many as a million new members.¹¹ This required a re-examination of individual cases: when a party member had been excluded without subsequent intervention by the NKVD, a mistake had obviously been made and the mistake had to be rectified. (The opposite did not apply: if a person had been arrested who had been a party member all along, then the matter was clear and the case remained closed.) But the hunt for enemies had ceased to be the Party’s top priority, and from now on its local organizations had to deal with things other than humiliating and condemning individual comrades, which had been their all-overshadowing preoccupation for a number of years. The gigantic bleeding of resources needed somehow to be stopped and the lost skills and readiness for action regained. The Party was for all practical purposes paralyzed. The ones they wanted to get at now were the “careerists”, those promoted through machinations and chutzpah. Effective authority somehow had to be restored.

WENDY Z. GOLDMAN has conducted a beautiful empirical investigation, a study in everyday Stalinism in the inspiring spirit of Sheila Fitzpatrick. An inquisitorial ritualism prevailed in the war against enemies of the people, but there was also, in the rumormongering and slander that was officially encouraged, an almost anarchistic dynamic that made every petty inquisitor into a weak vessel.¹² Goldman’s insights into the smallest mechanisms of terror call into question *just how totalitarian the system was*: during this period, she argues, the system was becoming ungovernable and on the verge of spinning totally out of control.¹³ The author does not align herself with any specific theory and it is difficult to assign the work to any particular school of Soviet studies. Beyond doubt, the strength of her book lies in the narrative. Goldman’s political/psychological interpretations can sometimes feel a bit light on substance, although without deteriorating into speculation and propagandizing, which has become tediously fashionable in a certain type of historical writing about the Soviet epoch. Goldman’s basic research into the repressions at the lowest level makes it possible to examine the scanty accounts from contemporary testimony, mainly by German and American workers, who published their memoirs of the time they spent at Soviet companies. ✕

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- 2 See Åsmund Egge, *Kirov-gåten: Mordet som utløste Stalins terror* [The Kirov enigma: The murder that unleashed Stalin’s terror], Oslo 2009; Matthew Lenoe, *The Kirov Murder and Soviet History*, New Haven 2010.
- 3 For a study of the repressions at the regional level, see Lennart Samuelson, *Tankograd: The Formation of a Soviet Company Town; Cheliabinsk 1900s–1950s*, London 2011, chapter 5.
- 4 Karl Schlögel, *Terror und Traum: Moskau 1937*, Munich 2008. The “lynch-mob justice” Schlögel talks about (p. 114 ff.) can be examined closely in Goldman’s book.
- 5 The liquidation of the Ceaușescu in Romania in December 1989 may be considered strong evidence that notions about coups d’état executed by the system’s own are not necessarily figments of the imagination. As is known, there was also an internal opposition against Hitler that was ready to take action, although without proper preparations.
- 6 As Sheila Fitzpatrick notes, “Lenin and Trotsky expressed contempt for socialists who could not understand the necessity of terror.” (*The Russian Revolution*, Oxford 2008, 3rd ed., p. 77.)
- 7 See for example a 1932 letter from a technical director at Transmshtekh, an energy company, to Mikhail Kalinin, head of state of the Soviet Union, in Lewis Siegelbaum and Andrei Sokolov, *Stalinism as a Way of Life: A Narrative in Documents*, New Haven & London, 2000, p. 122 ff.
- 8 “Anti-communism” may be a mirror image of the attitude: an intent, an opinion, is considered equal to an accomplished fact, a crime.
- 9 *Tagebuch aus Moskau 1931–1939*. Ed. Jochen Hellbeck (ed.). Munich 1996, p. 150.
- 10 See, however, Vladimir Khaustov and Lennart Samuelson, *Stalin, NKVD, and the Repressions, 1936–1938*, New Haven, forthcoming 2012, chapter 2 (“The Destruction of the Soviet Nomenklatura”).
- 11 Was there also an inherent fear among the top dogs that exposures made to the government would sooner or later impact the elites themselves? As Sarah Davis notes, “The terror against the elites was clearly popular. However, in some cases, it seems to have stimulated hostility towards all those in power, including Stalin himself.” (*Popular Opinion in Stalin’s Russia: Terror, Propaganda and Dissent, 1934–1941*, Cambridge et al., 1997, p. 131.)
- 12 Moshe Lewin, *The Soviet Century*. Ed. by Gregory Elliott, London & New York 2005, p. 110.
- 13 Even the grand inquisitor himself, Nikolai Yezhov, was swept out of the way before 1938 came to an end.
- 14 See here, however, Oleg Khlevniuk, *Master of the House: Stalin and his Inner Circle*, New Haven 2008. Tracing Politburo archives, rather than studying in detail reports and wall newspapers from the base level, factories, and workshops, the author sees – like Khaustov and Samuelson – that Stalin never loosened his hold on the doings of regional Party and NKVD bosses.

COSMOPOLITANISM OUTSIDE THE COMFORT ZONE

HOW WAS COSMOPOLITANISM faring in Europe at the end of 2011? A press photograph illustrates the situation better than most political analyses. Posters showing Angela Merkel in an SS uniform were pasted on building facades in Athens last October, in a visceral response to the EU's stringent demands for cutbacks in Greece imposed by EU leaders, including the German chancellor. The swastika on Merkel's arm is crowned by the stars of the emblem of the European Union. The picture is, of course, extraordinarily provocative, but it nonetheless shines an unforgiving spotlight on the current failure of the European project, at least if one chooses to interpret the construction of the EU as a political and economic peace project explicitly aimed at preventing future conflicts among the nation-states of Europe. Large segments of the populations of indebted member states obviously have strong misgivings about the transnational body, which is for all practical purposes asking ordinary citizens to pay the bill for the carnage wrought by global capital – or so goes, at any rate, a widely held belief among the rank and file of Europe, ordinary people who are struggling to pay their own bills. Xenophobic parties with nationalist agendas have lost no time in exploiting widespread discontent and thus strengthening their positions in several member states. The question then becomes: What place does the idea of world citizenship have in a Europe informed by mutual distrust between population groups and nations?

AGAINST THIS BACKDROP, many of the discussions at the conference arranged by CBEES at Södertörn University November 24–26 seemed particularly relevant and urgent. The critical review of cosmopolitanism as a historical, philosophical, and moral concept was afforded a special place on the agenda, but presentations oriented towards practical policy applications of cosmopolitan ideas were also represented. In his keynote address with the expressive title “A Reluctant Cosmopolitan: The Problems of Cosmopolitanism”, Andre Vincent, professor of political theory at Sheffield University, outlined the evolution of the concept from Kant's *Perpetual Peace* of 1795 to the renaissance of political theory in Western European academia in the 1990s. At that point, cosmopolitanism began to be studied as a concept in its own right and various disciplines fought for their respective definitions of the c-word, from the transnational ethical pathos of moral philosophy, to the focus of jurisprudence on international law aimed explicitly at transcending national borders by drafting laws that spoke to the individual rather than the nation-state. In his historical overview, Vincent argued that academics have had a strong tendency to idealize Kantian cosmopolitanism and that both Rawlsians and neo-Kantians have painted the philosopher from Königsberg as more of a cosmopolitan than he actually was. Instead of regarding Kant as the “Godfather of Cosmopolitanism”, we should instead read him as a cautious proponent of certain cosmopolitan ideas, according to Vincent. Despite his open skepticism towards cosmopolitanism as a normative political and moral program, Vincent found fault with post-colonial critique of cosmopolitanism



The text in Greek reads: “From Hitler to Merkel”, “Political Union Door to Door”.

as Eurocentric. As Vincent interprets it, many post-colonial critics argue that the universalist pretensions of cosmopolitanism ignore the “situatedness of human beings”, and therefore ethical principles and laws must instead be rooted in this particularity. Vincent rejected this criticism by referring to how people the world over do in fact manage to communicate with each other, which would not be possible if universally applicable human beliefs – that injustice is wrong, that murder is wrong, and so on – did not exist. Vincent himself argued for a kind of golden mean of pragmatic cosmopolitanism oriented towards resolving current and pressing problems rather than rationalizing our way to universal, normative solutions.

ONE OF THE TWELVE conference sessions emphasized the period after the fall of the Iron Curtain under the heading “The Legacy of 1989: Methods, Concepts, Controversies”. All of the contributions evinced an ideology-critical attitude towards cosmopolitanism as philosophical abstraction. The speakers’ various concrete, geographical-historical examples often illustrated the fluid and contradictory nature of the concept. Sociology researcher Michael Skey from the University of East London argued that cosmopolitanism is in danger of becoming a “dumping ground for different approaches”. A general definition of cosmopolitanism as “engagement with others” must therefore be scrutinized critically and filled with substance, according to Skey, who maintained that trafficking and international crime could be included in such a definition – after all, they are both phenomena characterized by transnational relationships and genuine encounters with people from diverse ethnic and national settings.

Under the heading, “Patriotic Cosmopolitanism?”, sociology researcher Ksenija Vidmar Horvat of the University of Ljubljana stressed the importance of reevaluating the cosmopolitan project in light of the

nationalist backlash after 1989. Her example was the western Balkans, which, after the breakup of the socialist multinational and multicultural federal state of Yugoslavia, were characterized by violent nationalism and ethnic reengineering. But cosmopolitanism as described by Martha Nussbaum or Julia Kristeva is not a panacea against recent nationalist currents, according to Vidmar Horvat, because these scholars ignore the spatial dimension in human identity creation. She criticized Kristeva and other theorists of cosmopolitanism shaped by Eurocentrism for giving rise to the “fetishization and idealization of the ‘alien’”, which does not take into account whether the choice to give up territorial affiliation was voluntary or forced. The groups of people compelled to leave their homes and live a migrant life in the true sense, deprived of the social and cultural safety nets that the nation-state once could offer them, were at risk of being equated in the idealized cosmopolitan discourse with the ideal of liberation from ethnic and cultural origins. She also argued that the oft-repeated link between nationalism and territory on the one hand and cosmopolitanism and deterritorialization on the other is a false and unfortunate antagonism. Instead of regarding nationalism and cosmopolitanism as incompatible quantities in their relationship to territory, Vidmar Horvat posited that, on the contrary, the destructive dominance of nationalism could be challenged by incorporating the spatial dimension into cosmopolitan thinking. According to her, the post-Yugoslavian area is an interesting example of a process of this kind, which does not permit itself to be translated into the nationalism-cosmopolitanism dichotomy. She referred to ethnographic studies by Stef Jansen and Ivana Spasić, who identified a kind of “everyday cosmopolitanism” among people in Belgrade and Zagreb. By recalling the memory of the Yugoslavian era’s officially proclaimed cosmopolitan society, many Belgradians and Zagrebians have created a counterweight to Serbian and Croatian national hegemonic claims upon identity-creation and historiography in the post-Yugoslavian region. This everyday cosmopolitan resistance of the memory is, however, more of a nostalgic look back at a former national identity than it is “orthodox” cosmopolitanism in the traditional sense.

OVERALL, THE MAJORITY of conference participants seemed to be calling for a reevaluation of the concept of cosmopolitanism, from philosophical abstraction to concrete manifestation – in short, various attempts to pull the concept down from cosmos to polis, from the world of ideas to the ground level of cities and states. Considering the delicate political and economic situation in Europe and the rest of the world, the conference was an important step towards a more nuanced understanding of cosmopolitanism – and maybe, just maybe, towards a world inhabited by firmly rooted cosmopolitans. ✖

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“Stalin killed more Communists than all the world's fascist dictators combined. In terms of the classic revolutionary process, Stalin went beyond Bonapartism. The ultimate effect of his counterrevolution was to bring the country in practical terms to an imperial restoration. [...] The great anomaly of the Russian Revolution, embodied in Stalinism, was the continuity of the Communist Party as an institution and the official attachment to Marxist-Leninist ideology through all the ups and downs of the revolutionary process. It is this continuity that has so confused and distracted all too many students of the Communist phenomenon. Even post-Communist reformers in Russia proved unable to distinguish clearly between the evolving Soviet reality and the continuous ideological illusion.”

From Robert V. Daniels, *The Rise and Fall of Communism in Russia*.
New York & London: 2007, p. 270.

KHUTIN PUI, OR WHAT'S UP IN MOSCOW? ELECTION CAMPAIGN, A VIEW FROM BELOW

I have been following the events in Moscow via Facebook and a number of Internet portals.¹ Even through the distance that all media technology necessarily creates, one could not help feeling deeply affected by the joyous festivities during the protest events – tens of thousands strong at demonstrations, marches, flash mobs, and car rallies. Since television reporting ignored them, they were being streamed live through iPads and mobile phone cameras, and then reported on by hundreds of photographers on Facebook and Livejournal. In general, the inventiveness and technical acuity that the protesters demonstrated during this time, appropriating the most advanced, experimental technologies to publicize the movement, was amazing. The Internet, and especially social networks, are themselves highly carnivalesque media forms, encouraging non-formal, almost intimate relations between people, and abounding in pranks, practical jokes, obscenities, and symbolic violence. Another peculiarity is how the Internet treats time and events. It is a medium of incessant shocks: in contrast to television and newspapers, Internet news portals announce a new sensation practically every hour. Thus history comes to you in the form of sensational shocks replacing each other in a hysterical tempo. And since every click on “like” or “share” is not only a means of communicating how you feel about an event, but also a way of memorializing it (by leaving it to hang on your timeline, waiting for you to quote it), history is transformed into a total hysteria of faster-than-light reactions, while your Facebook page becomes an instantaneous archive and a museum of the here-and-now. However, since every recording system, as Plato told us many years ago, also serves oblivion, the Internet is also most effective at repressing memory and history, burying one



event in an avalanche of new sensations that are delivered by the minute.

It is not surprising that, under the press of such an intense history occurring all around you as you read the news – especially given the sense of an unholy celebration typical of the Internet in general – the viewer/reader aestheticizes and idealizes the new Russian revolution more than is probably warranted. However, it is precisely this utopian view of Russia from below, as it is created through the Internet, that I propose to examine, with a special focus on the new politics of representing politics.

ONE CHARACTERISTIC feature of this protest is the absolute absence of any social program. From the very start of the protests, one of Russia's leading political analysts, Liliia Shevtsova of the Moscow Carnegie Center, was warning that this could be fatal for the new revolution. However, *revolution* is a frightening word that practically no one among the protesters would ever endorse, apart from the desperate radicals.

Since the opposition does not want to split from within, social and economic questions are almost never discussed, and the idea that a political change must precede an economic discussion prevails. What everyone in the protest

movement is interested in is better representation. “Vy nas dazhe ne predstavliaiete” [“you don’t even represent us”, or “you can’t even imagine who we are”] thus became the most appropriate slogan of the season.

In the absence of a social program, the carnival, again, becomes the unifying principle that pulls together political forces from radical liberals to communists and anarchists, from millionaires to poor students and “office plankton”, from the well-to-do Muscovites to the poor intelligentsia outside, from those with a glamorous high life to street beggars – in short, people who otherwise never would have acted together for a common cause.

WHAT UNITES EVERYONE is a veritable “linguistic turn” towards what Mikhail Bakhtin called *niz*, “the domain of the nether”. To Putin’s demarche, the streets responded with a hurricane of quite risqué jokes and profane slogans mocking Putin (to which the protagonist publicly referred in his characteristically anal choice of words as “diarrhea”). Whatever tragic connotations the protests still preserved from the past (as in the dramatic detentions, by the otherwise neutral police, of radical activists, both the leftists and the Russian nationalists), this has for the time being almost evaporated, giving way to vigorous, robust pre-Oedipal mirth.

Thus, in contrast to the intervals between public actions, which get filled with analysis and gossip, loads of criticism within the opposition, hysterical news, conspiracy theories, revelations of the Kremlin’s sinister plans, intrigue, politicking, and, generally, fishing in

muddy waters – in contrast to all of this, during the actions themselves, when thousands of people get together on a Sunday afternoon to join their voices in expression of their political will, what emanates from my notebook is a spirit of pure, unalloyed joy, friendliness, even fraternity – which is a great victory for this weird anti-revolutionary revolution. As is universally known, Moscow is in general an extremely mean city with an everyday dog-eat-dog business-as-usual attitude, too capitalism-friendly, and drowning in unfairly distributed concentrations of crazy amounts of money. It was, therefore, a miracle to observe this traditionally “hard and loveless” city (as qualified by Walter Benjamin in his *Moscow Diary*) suddenly brimming with anarchic energies of self-organization, a new ethic, and an exciting feeling of respect. Until the moment it is defeated in violence and/or political game playing, revolution remains a feast, and it is this rare moment that we are witnessing in Moscow.

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CBEES, Södertörn University

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Note: A full version of Irina Sandomirskaja’s article can be found at www.balticworlds.com.