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The story of Papusza, a Polish Roma poet

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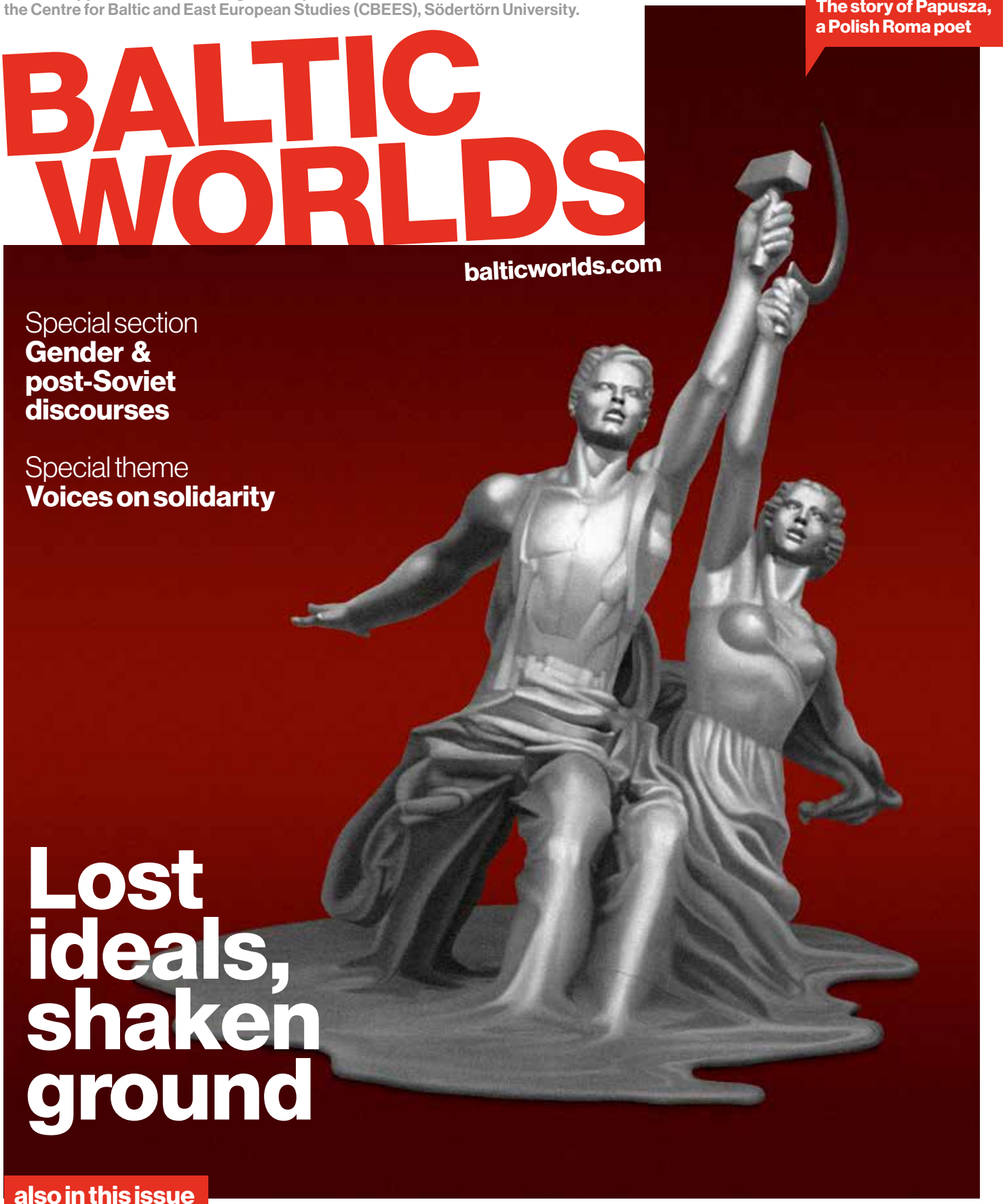

Lost ideals, shaken ground

Illustration: Karin Sunvisson

also in this issue

RUS & MAGYARS / ESTONIA IN EXILE / DIPLOMACY DURING WWII / ANNA WALENTYNOWICZ / HIJAB FASHION

BALTIC WORLDS April 2015. Vol. VIII:1–2

Special section: Post-Soviet gender discourses. Special theme: Voices on solidarity

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editorial

Times of disorientation

The prefix "post-" in "post-Soviet" or "post-socialist Europe" indicates that there is a past from which one seeks to depart. In this issue we will discuss the more existential meaning of this "departing". What does it means to have all that is rote, role, and rules – and seemingly self-evident – rejected and cast away? What is it to lose the basis of your identity when the society of which you once were a part ceases to exist and is condemned entirely to the realm of memories? Those sentiments, standing on loose and fractured ground, will be addressed in this thick double issue.

In the special section "Gender and post-Soviet discourses", a variety of articles will discuss the search for new models, new behaviors, and new identities for both men and women in the post-Soviet sphere. An intersectional perspective on gender in the post-Soviet space is applied in the contributions, all written by researchers who have lived or worked in the post-Soviet countries. Analysis of different representations – photos, media, comic books – uncovers those post-Soviet discourses. The lack of theories to understand and analyze the specific case of the post-socialist countries in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus is emphasized. In Madina Tlostana's essay, criticism is raised against the way Westernized images mark Caucasian women as "the Other". Yulia Gradskova in her essay brings up how the global equality agenda is pushed upon all societies in the same manner, ignoring and denying alternative ways of participating.

Ekaterina Kalinina and Liudmila Vornova write in their introduction that "gender appears as a conjunction between the past and the present, where the established present seems not to recognize the past, but at the same time eagerly re-enacts the past discourses of domination."

Another collection of shorter essays is connected to the concept of solidarity. Ludger Hagedorn has gathered together different voices, all adding insights into the meaning of solidarity. Solidarity is discussed as almost a verb, something we create, make, do, as an act of survival. Explosions of solidarity can occur when people overcome fear, writes Leonard Neuger. Alexander Kropotkin's analysis, that solidarity may be the fittest way for humans to survive is questioned. Solidarity is sacrificing yourself, argues Kateryna Mishchenko, writing from Ukraine. Solidarity is formed in opposition, suggests another essay, one discussing female participation in the *Solidarność*. According to the Czech philosopher Jan Patočka, solid grounds are not the foundation of solidarity; on the contrary, solidarity is a meaningful option when ground is tenuous.

TRANSITION IS OFTEN been discussed as having a direction, indicating that the "post-" era is a period that has a clear beginning, and a priori, also a clear end. But existentially, this "post"-state of mind rather seems to leave men and women disoriented in time and space; left in a state between what has been and what is not yet. In one sense, this could be an opportunity for change growing from within; confusion as a bearer of possibilites.

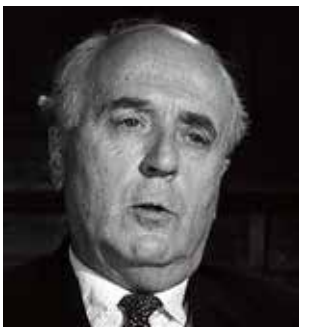
Ninna Mörner

WE WELCOME five new members of the Editorial Scientific Advisory Council: Sofie Bedford, political science; Michael Gentile, human geography; Markus Huss, literature; Katarina Leppänen, history of ideas, and Kazimierz Musiał, Scandinavian studies. We also warmly thank our three retiring members, all in political science, Li Bennich-Björkman, Lars Johannsen, Ann-Cathrine Jungar, for the inspiring and valuable contributions to the Editorial Scientific Advisory Council over the years.

in this issue

Papusza. The story of a Polish Roma poet

"Throughout the film, there is a sense that the walls, both perceived and real, are closing in on the Polish Roma." **Page 4**



A Swedish diplomat and his reporting on the Holocaust

"... it's still not clear what happened with von Otter's information and whether it reached Stockholm at all or remained stuck at the legation in Berlin." **Page 8**

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colophon

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In this issue we visit: Nazi Germany, Eastern Europe, Russia, Soviet, Scandinavia, and the Baltic states.

PAPUSZA

In recent decades, new relations between the majority population and Roma have been developing in Poland. This has partly been a result of normal assimilation processes, but there has also been a shrinking distance between Roma and non-Roma, as well as a growing mobilization and sense of agency within Roma society. The Roma people have entered the spheres of media, education, and popular culture on an unprecedented scale.[1] The film *Papusza* can be seen as a result of these processes.


"Papusza" (Bronisława Wajs).

Papusza was first screened in autumn 2013. The film offers interpretations of several phenomena: the fate of the Roma community in Poland from the interwar period to the 1970s; the personal fate of the renowned Romani poet "Papusza"[2] (Bronisława Wajs); and the poet's relationship with her husband, Dionizy Wajs. In addition to Papusza, Jerzy Ficowski, a student on the run from Communist repression – who, for a time, shared the couple's life of traveling in the late 1940s – is in focus. He translated what Papusza viewed as her "songs" into Polish. The idea of someone calling her songs "poetry" seemed outlandish to her. The screenplay seems to be based on Papusza's own account of her life – the events before the early 1950s in particular.

Born around 1910 in Lublin, she was declared to be fated to bring either pride or shame to her family. The next scene takes the viewer to a prison somewhere in Poland where Papusza is serving a sentence for repeated theft (due to her husband's love of stolen rather than bought poultry); she is put in a ministerial car and taken straight to the premiere of a bombastic piece of music to which her poems were set. She and her husband are seated along ministers, Party fat cats, and the cream of the Polish cultural establishment. Afterwards, she and her husband Dionizy, 24 years her senior, return to their miserable quarters in Gorzów Wielkopolski in western Poland, where they have been living since their tabor stopped traveling in 1954. One witnesses the degradation faced by the community prevented from traveling, forced to live in houses where the men, in particular, unable to practice their traditional trade as musicians, sink into despair, passing time drinking and chatting about the old times. In a particularly dramatic scene, a delirious Dionizy Wajs chops his former pride, the family wagon, into pieces. This is

Tears of Blood: How we Suffered under the German Soldiers in Volhynia from 1943 to 1944

In the woods. No water, no fire – great hunger.
Where could the children sleep? No tent.
We could not light the fire at night.
By day, the smoke would alert the Germans.
How to live with children in the cold of winter?
All are barefoot…
When they wanted to murder us,
first they forced us to hard labor.
A German came to see us.
– I have bad news for you.
They want to kill you tonight.
Don't tell anybody.
I too am a dark Gypsy,
of your blood – a true one.
God help you
in the black forest…
Having said these words,
he embraced us all…

For two three days no food.
All go to sleep hungry.
Unable to sleep,
they stare at the stars…
God, how beautiful it is to live!
The Germans will not let us…

Ah, you, my little star!
At dawn you are large!
Blind the Germans!
Confuse them,
lead them astray,
so the Jewish and Gypsy child can live!
When big winter comes,
what will the Gypsy woman with a small child do?
Where will she find clothing?
Everything is turning to rags.
One wants to die.
No one knows, only the sky,
only the river hears our lament.
Whose eyes saw us as enemies?
Whose mouth cursed us?
Do not hear them, God.
Hear us!
A cold night came,

THE STORY OF A POLISH ROMA POET

by **Piotr Wawrzeniuk**

not merely an act of blind despair, but a way of keeping the flat warm for the family weakling, Papusza's and Dionizy's adopted son Tarzan.

The fame won by the publication of Papusza's poetry proves problematic. Romani elders hold her responsible for revealing Romani secrets to the general public, and she is banished from the society of *Polska Roma*,[3] suffers a nervous breakdown, and spends some time at a mental institution. Her kin abandon her. Papusza continues on alone in a run-down flat, with her husband staying by her side.

We learn that Papusza found Tarzan in Volhynia, minutes after a Nazi German detachment massacred a group of Roma in a barn, leaving Tarzan the only survivor. The genocide of the Roma constitutes a short story within the film, containing the scene of the massacre and Papusza's group hiding in the woods. Traditionally roaming through Volhynia and Polesia, many among *Polska Roma* headed for the woods once it became clear they were becoming targets of the Nazis' genocidal policies.

The Polish Roma's shrinking space

Throughout the film, there is a sense that the walls, both perceived and real, are closing in on the Polish Roma. With the outbreak of the World War II their life space starts to shrink. While the viewer is not spared the hardships of nomadic life during the interwar time, including animosities with the settled population, the outbreak of war shows the spiral into outright disaster. There was a lack of understanding of the approaching threat, then dispersal into the woods and swamps of Volhynia and Polesia. Then, once the war is over, vegetation in the backyards of the suburban tenement houses to which Papusza's group is confined, narrow, dirty, and grim. Papusza's solitary moments of solemn contemplation, cigarette in mouth, are accompanied by the ominous sounds of screeching crows or distant train whistles, or both. Those sounds forebode disintegration. Papusza becomes an outcast from *Polska Roma* society, but also keeps society at large at arm's length. Although a member of the Polish Society of Literature since 1962, she refuses most literary prizes she is offered, as well as a writer's pension. While suffering a nervous breakdown, she burns many poems and her correspondence. She has been an outsider all her life, from the moment she began to learn to read and write, supported by an old Jewish female shopkeeper. The letters of the Polish alphabet, which she used when painstakingly writing down her songs phonetically in Romani, distanced her from her community, yet they brought her no closer to Polish society. The former would not understand her striving to knowledge; the latter would not let her in anyway, beyond the expressions of support when she was showcased as an elevation of one humble person from masses in the People's Republic of Poland.

The scenery and nature in the film are painfully beautiful. The

the old Gypsy women sang
a Gypsy fairy tale:
Golden winter will come,
snow, like little stars,
will cover the earth, the hands.
The black eyes will freeze,
the hearts will die.

So much snow fell,
it covered the road.
One could only see the Milky Way
in the sky.

On such night of frost
a little daughter dies,
and in four days
mothers bury in the snow
four little sons.
Sun, without you,
see how a little Gypsy
is dying from cold
in the big forest.

Once, at home, the moon stood in the window,
didn't let me sleep. Someone looked inside.
I asked – who is there?
– Open the door, my dark Gypsy.
I saw a beautiful young Jewish girl,
shivering from cold,
asking for food.
You poor thing, my little one.
I gave her bread, whatever I had, a shirt.
We both forgot that not far away
were the police.
But they didn't come that night.

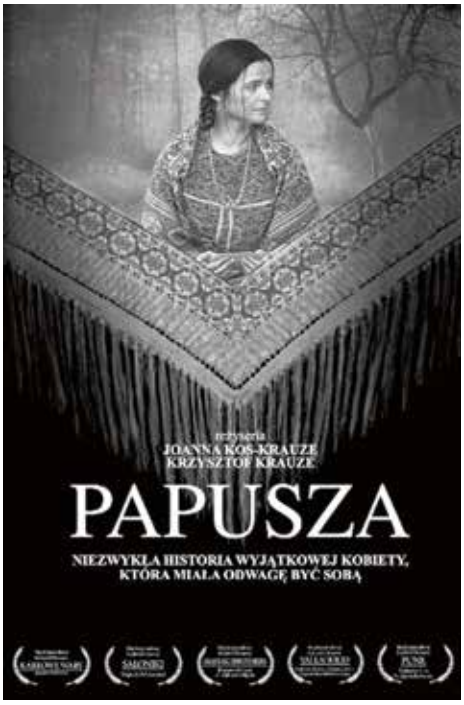
All the birds
are praying for our children,
so the evil people, vipers, will not kill them.
Ah, fate!
My unlucky luck!

Snow fell as thick as leaves,
barred our way,
such heavy snow, it buried the cart-wheels.
One had to trample a track,
push the carts behind the horses.

How many miseries and hungers!
How many sorrows and roads!
How many sharp stones pierced our feet!
How many bullets flew by our ears!

Translated from the Polish by Yala Korwin.

Scenes from the film *Papusza*.



The film poster.

Papausza as a bronze statue, in Gorzów Wielkopolski, where she settled in the 1950s.

story, shown in black and white, never turns into color. The tone remains muted. While the final text is scrolling, we witness a group of Roma wagons separating and leaving in unknown directions, disappearing. At the risk of over-interpreting, this scene can be viewed as the fate long faced by the four main groups of Roma in Poland: division between the groups, divisions within the groups, and physical remoteness from each other. Like the old Romani culture, the wagons disappear. One can wait a long time for a romantic streak from the directors Joanna Kos-Krauze and Krzysztof Krauze.

The episodic treatment of the genocide (merely three to four minutes of the film) is not coincidental. The persecution and genocide of the Roma, symbolized mainly by the conditions of the *Zigeunerlager* in Birkenau, brought about the breakdown of the traditional Romani culture and society. The ritual purity was compromised; the community shaken and turned upside-down. To talk within the Romani groups about what happened would have been incomprehensible. Even many years after the war, non-Roma interviewers often turned out to be the first persons to whom Romani survivors communicated their experiences.[4] One such person was Jerzy Ficowski (1924–2006).

The first testimonies collected among Roma

As a young student of sociology at the University of Warsaw, Jerzy Ficowski saw the value of collecting testimonies about the persecution of the Roma in the immediate postwar years. Soon, on the run from the Security Service (*Służba Bezpieczeństwa*) for his Home Army (*Armia Krajowa*) activities during the war, he gained the opportunity to learn first-hand about Roma society. For almost two years starting in 1949, Ficowski roamed the countryside of northwestern Poland with a camp of *Polska Roma* to which Papusza belonged. Earlier research on Roma stereotyping and fragmentary in its approach, but his studies, based on everyday socializing and interaction, were free from those flaws. Ficowski was the first person to collect testimonies among Roma and others on what had happened during the war.

In *Cyganie na polskich drogach* [Gypsies on Polish roads], Ficowski summarized his experiences and observations of those two years. Published in 1953, the book still makes excellent and informative reading on the customs, beliefs, and lives of Polish Roma in the late 1940s. It includes several of Papusza's poems along with a short biography of her. Unfortunately, the Romani elders found the book highly provocative because of its description of Romani customs. Although Ficowski built the text on his own observations, Papusza was hastily identified as the culprit. This meant social death for Papusza and her husband, who stood by her. *Cyganie na polskich drogach* was reissued several times, and Ficowski continued his work and published several books on the subject, in addition to numerous scientific articles and texts written for the general public.[5]

The valuable testimonies gathered by Ficowski could have provided much more information. Some issues important to researchers working today are still veiled; maybe they would

To tell people outside about life inside the Roma group. This was as a betrayal.

Post-war photo, probably taken for an ID.

With her husband's Dionizy's harp.

Papusza and her son Tarzan.

have been clarified had he asked more questions. But he seldom did. Most of the testimonies seem to have been recorded in a single take without the interviewee being interrupted, which gives them a very vivid touch while to read, but leaves one with questions. Of course, it was hard for Ficowski to foresee the value his material would have in the decades to come. Nor was he a historian, nor trained in the art of interviewing, a craft that would start to develop among historians in the 1970s. Throughout his life, Professor Ficowski had the qualities of a Renaissance man, and, in addition to his Romani-related research, was known for his poetry, children's literature, lyrics to popular songs, and his research on the Polish-Jewish writer and painter Bruno Schulz, who was killed in the Drohobycz ghetto in 1943.

A renewed interest in Romani Studies

While the film *Papusza* certainly represents part of a growing interest in and awareness of Romani matters among the Polish and international public, one should not overestimate its value as an eye-opener to Romani history. Rather, it constitutes a fascinating and beautiful story of a lifetime on the margins.

In 1984, Ficowski found that "Papusza does not bother the Gypsies any more". However, they still did not enjoy her works. Given the amount of knowledge of Romani history that has been lost, the professor maintained, it might well be that Papusza's name and poetry, with reference to her contemporaries, will be remembered as an "embellishment and pride of all Gypsy culture". He may well be right.

Thanks to the recent surge in interest in Romani culture – not only in Poland – the wider international readership is now being offered glimpses into Papusza's lyric landscape, including a harrowing poem on the Volhynia events: Some sixty years after the first release of her famous oeuvre "Tears of Blood", it has been translated into several languages and is once again being read widely. Baltic Worlds is contributing to this new presentation of her work by publishing the following poem, "How we Suffered under the German Soldiers in Volhynia from 1943 to 1944". ×

Piotr Wawrzreniuk, senior lecturer at the School of Historical and Contemporary Studies, Södertörn University, and Director of Studies, Swedish Defence University.

references

1 Slawomir Kapralski, "Jak Romowie pamietaja?", *Studia Romologica* 3/2010, 227.

2 "Papusza" means "doll" in the Romani language.

3 One of the four main Romani groups in Poland.

4 Kapralski, "Jak Romowie pamietaja?", 224–226.

5 Jerzy Ficowski, *Cyganie na polskich drogach* [Gypsies on Polish Roads], (Warsaw: Nisza, 2013) 6–8.

A SWEDISH DIPLOMAT AND HIS REPORTING ON THE HOLOCAUST

by **Mose Apelblat**

There are no worse or better nations. There are worse and better governments. Nations don't like wars. The governments conduct politics that lead to wars; then, they ask the nations to sacrifice.

I was an insignificant little man. My mission was important.

All nations under Hitler's occupation suffered losses, millions of victims. However, all the Jews were victims. Let no nation, any government or church appropriate this holy and cursed term. The Holocaust belongs to the Jews.[2]

Jan Karski

I started this study with the objective of finding Göran von Otter's missing report. The result of my modest effort to clarify the whereabouts of his reporting will be described in this article. The article also draws attention to the moral dilemmas that both Karski and von Otter must have faced, in very different circumstances, when learning about the atrocities and reporting about them in order to arouse their governments and world opinion.

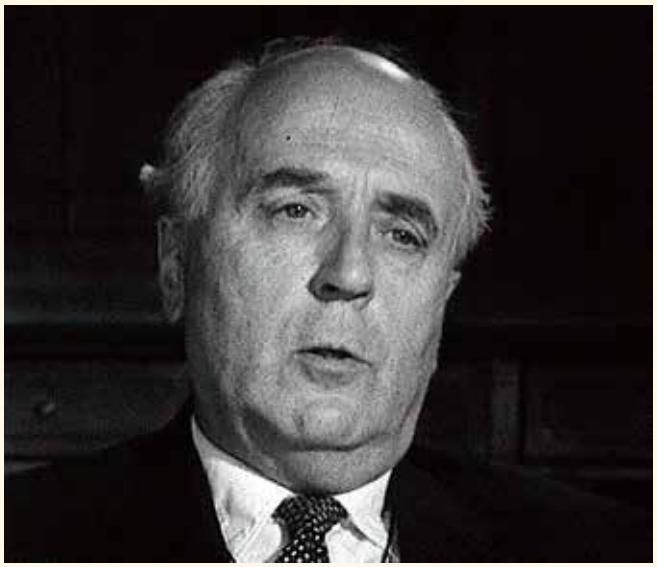
Göran von Otter was a Swedish diplomat with a baron's title ("friherre" in Swedish). His grandfather had been prime minister of Sweden. He did his military service in the Swedish navy, graduated in law, and practiced a few years at a Swedish court before joining the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. During the Second World War he served as legation[3] secretary at the Swedish legation in Berlin where he mainly worked with judicial questions and the return to Sweden of Swedish Jews.[4] After the war he continued his career in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with different assignments at the ministry and abroad until his retirement in 1973.

Von Otter happened to meet Kurt Gerstein, an SS officer who had studied engineering and medicine and become department head at the "Institute of Hygiene" of the Waffen SS at the central SS headquarters.[5] There, he soon was in charge of "disinfection" and the delivery of poisonous gases. However, he was deeply Christian with a moral conscience. After his sister-in-law had died mysteriously at a mental hospital, he decided to expose the Nazi extermination machinery and undertook to collect information from within. His wish was to convey the information to a neutral country and to drop leaflets on Germany in the hope of raising public opinion against the Nazi regime.

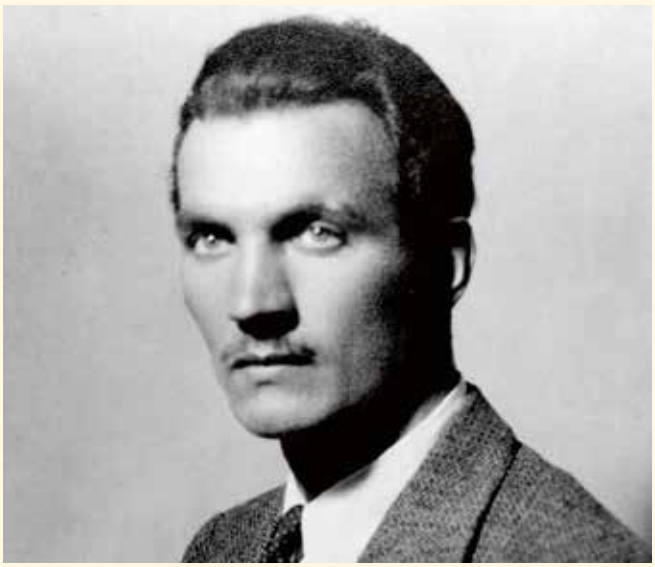
The two met accidentally on a train between Warsaw and Berlin, presumably on the night between the 20th and 21st of August 1942. Von Otter was returning to Berlin after having met some arrested Swedish businessmen in Warsaw. Gerstein was returning from the extermination camp Bełżec, where he had witnessed mass killings of Jews by gas, which had completely devastated him. Unable to rest, he had to tell someone about his feelings. He noticed that von Otter had lit a cigarette with a Swedish match and turned to him. A person from neutral Sweden, a diplomat as it turned out, was the perfect person to trust –and in whom to confide a secret to be published. Or so Gerstein must have thought.

Jan Karski and his reporting[6]

At about the same time that von Otter met Gerstein, a Polish officer and diplomat named Jan Karski[7] embarked on a "highly dangerous mission"[8] in his occupied country. Born in Łodź in 1914, a city known for its textile industry employing many Jewish work-



Göran von Otter.



Jan Karski, 1944.

ers,[9] he trained as an officer in the Polish army, studied law and international relations, and started to work at the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. At the outbreak of the war, he was mobilized and fought in eastern Poland. After the collapse of the war effort, he stayed behind and acted as a courier between the Polish government in exile in London and the resistance movement in Poland, and made secret trips between Poland, France, and Britain. At one point he was arrested and tortured by Gestapo but managed to escape.

In the summer of 1942, according to Robert Wistrich,[10] Karski toured the Warsaw ghetto with Jewish guides[11] and saw the results of the deportations and the Nazi German extermination policy at first hand. He also visited eastern Poland and scouted in the vicinity of the Bełżec death camp.[12] He identified Treblinka and Sobibór as places of mass extermination for Jews. In describing what went on in Bełżec, he specifically mentioned murder by poison gas.

On his return to London in November 1942, Karski informed the Polish government, which on December 10, 1942, formally appealed to the Allied governments to speak out against the extermination of the Jews. This resulted a week later in an Allied declaration that condemned for the first time the Nazi "bestial policy of cold-blooded extermination" and threatened to "ensure that those responsible for these crimes shall not escape retribution".[13] In practice, however, not much was done to stop the genocide and save any surviving Jews. The war against the Nazi German armed forces took precedence, and any military action to bomb the extermination camps was seen as a distraction and never carried out. The Allied powers might also have been afraid that any military measures against the extermination of the Jews would have fueled the Nazi propaganda that the Allies were fighting for the Jews.[14]

Karski did his utmost to inform British and American leaders, including the British foreign minister Anthony Eden and the US president Franklin Roosevelt, and to urge them to act. In October 1944, he published a book, *Courier from Poland: The Story of a Secret State*[15] (republished in 2013), on the underground Polish state in occupied Poland, including information from his mission, which still makes painful reading.[16]

WISTRICH WRITES THAT Karski encountered "a mixture of political hypocrisy, narrow national self-interest and sheer indifference in those Western political and military leaders who had the possibility of ameliorating the Jewish tragedy in a larger or smaller way."[17] After the war, Karski settled in the US, where he became a professor of political science at Georgetown University. For his outstanding deeds during the war he was awarded the highest Polish civil and military decorations.

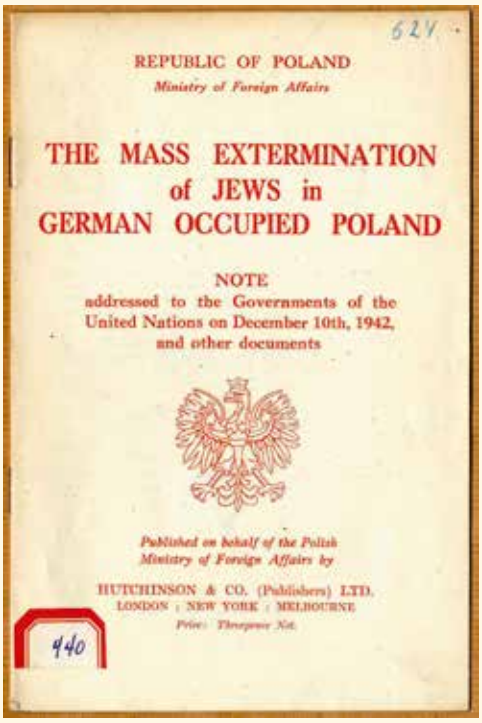
abstract

The Polish officer Jan Karski (1914–2000) risked his life reporting on the Holocaust. A Swedish diplomat, Göran von Otter (1907–1988), is also assumed to have reported in late 1942 on the Holocaust. But there seems to be no trace of von Otter's report.

During the war von Otter worked at the Swedish legation in Berlin. In 1942 he met an SS officer, Kurt Gerstein, who had witnessed killings by gas at the Bełżec extermination camp. Gerstein joined the SS to oppose the Nazi regime from within and he asked von Otter to report to his government on the atrocities. At that time the official policy[1] in Sweden was to not anger Nazi Germany by publishing reports on war crimes. There is much obscurity about von Otter's report.

KEY WORDS: Holocaust, international relations, WWII, diplomacy, Nazi Germany.

Otter met Gerstein. This is a fact. But could he have saved him?


REPUBLIC OF POLAND
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

THE MASS EXTERMINATION of JEWS in GERMAN OCCUPIED POLAND

NOTE
addressed to the Governments of the United Nations on December 10th, 1942, and other documents

Published on behalf of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs by

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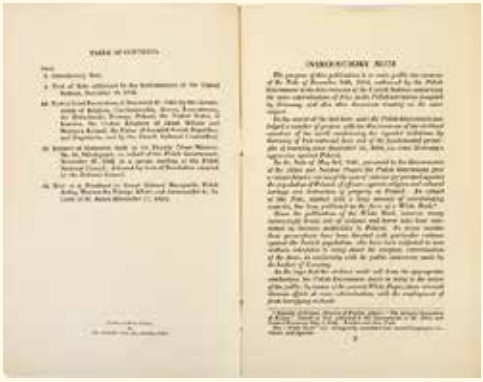

In December 1942, the Allied Powers were informed about the mass extermination of Jews in occupied Poland.

In 1982 Yad Vashem in Jerusalem recognized him as "Righteous Among the Nations", and in 1994 he was made an honorary citizen of Israel. In 2012 he was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Honor in the US.

It should be mentioned that Jan Karski and Göran von Otter were not the only ones who, each in his or her own way, reported in the summer–autumn of 1942 on the Nazi German extermination machinery. The reports transferred by Gerhart Riegner, the representative in Switzerland of the World Jewish Congress, to the American administration are well known and have been the subject of historical research.[18] On the 1st of August 1942, Riegner learned from a German industrialist that Hitler had ordered the exterminations of the Jews. The use of gas as the instrument of murder was even specified.[19]

After a week of investigation and additional confirmation, Riegner met with an American vice-consul on August 8, 1942. The latter took him seriously and transferred a report on the same day to the State Department, but there it was met with "universal disbelief" and was not disseminated to all concerned. Riegner did not give up but continued to meet American diplomats in Switzerland in September and October and to provide them with more documents. The information given by Riegner was finally released by the State Department on November 24, 1942. Riegner provided the US government "with its first specific evidence of a German plan for the total extermination of the Jews".

Historians on von Otter

The first historian who seems to have researched the whereabouts of von Otter's report is Steven Koblik.[20] In his book from 1987, he states that von Otter reported the meeting with Gerstein to the deputy head of the Swedish legation in Berlin, Eric von Post, and that the head of the legation, Arvid Richert, also heard about the reporting on his return to the legation. However, what was done with von Otter's report has not been clarified. No document has been found in Stockholm.[21]

According to Koblik, information was probably given orally to a limited number of officials at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and not in such detail as Gerstein had intended. In an appendix with documents, Koblik again states that, apparently, no written report was sent to Stockholm. However, he doubts that von Otter left no written documentation about his meeting with Gerstein, as detailed information on the meeting appeared in an aide-memoire in English of August 7, 1945, drafted by the Swedish embassy in London.[22]

Ingvar Svanberg and Mattias Tydén,[23] in a book published in 1997, also mention von Otter's meeting with Gerstein. They share Koblik's opinion that it is still not clear what happened to von Otter's information and whether it reached Stockholm at all or remained at the legation in Berlin. Unlike Koblik, however, they discovered von Otter's letter of July 23, 1945, to the Swedish embassy in London. The aide-memoire that Koblik mentioned was obviously based on a letter from von Otter.

Tydén[24] confirms that von Otter's letter is the only document (apart from the aide-memoire in English) that has been found

hitherto in the archives of the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This does not exclude the possibility that there could be other documents that haven't been found. If it turns out (see below) that von Otter did report, at least orally, to top officials in the ministry, the search should be directed to those officials for any internal or private papers on their meeting with von Otter. Such a search, however, is outside the scope of this paper.

Paul Levine discusses at more length what could have happened to von Otter's missing report, and the importance of its information, in his dissertation on the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Holocaust.[25] He doesn't exclude that a report may exist, since not writing a report would have contravened any standard reporting procedures. He also refers to interviews by other authors with the head of the law department at the ministry, Gösta Engzell. Engzell claimed that he was informed about the "Gerstein file" quite early, but he could have been mistaken.

The most recent, and probably final, account of Sweden during World War II is Klas Åmark's book from 2011,[26] the result of a collective research program over several years. Despite its comprehensiveness, the book does not mention von Otter. According to the author,[27] the importance of his reporting (whatever happened to it), has been exaggerated in view of other reporting that appeared in autumn 1942 from other sources and in Swedish media. It appears that it was the Swedish embassy, rather than the Swedish government, that was the main obstacle to the dissemination of von Otter's information.

In 2012,[28] the Swedish author and journalist Göran Rosenberg published a novel about his father, who was from Łodź. He survived Auschwitz and arrived in Sweden after the war. The book is partly non-fictional, as it is based on memories, private correspondence, and public reports.[29] In an interview, he mentioned von Otter's report and concurred with the common view in Sweden that the report had been misplaced somewhere in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which would explain why no attention was paid to it.

Von Otter's testimonies

It is difficult to acknowledge that von Otter's report was never intended to reach the decision-makers in the ministry, and that if it reached them in some form, it was deliberately ignored and buried by them. However, that is what emerges from a reading of testimonies given by Göran von Otter himself and by his daughter Birgitta von Otter. The testimonies were published in 1985 and 1991, respectively, but for some reason they were not taken into account in the later historical research referred to above.

The Swedish journalist Omar Magnergård published[30] in 1985 an anthology of 26 articles on Sweden during WWII, which had appeared in the daily *Svenska Dagbladet* in 1984-1985. One of the articles was an interview with Göran von Otter under the headline "Request to Swedish Diplomat".

In the interview, von Otter revealed that he had carried a burden since his meeting with Gerstein in August 1942 and that he blamed himself for not doing enough. He appears to have had a bad conscience for two reasons: for not having been able to rescue Gerstein, who had been arrested as a war criminal, and for failing to act sooner and to make a bigger fuss about what he had been told.

Concerning his conscience with regard to Gerstein, he acted by writing a letter dated the 23rd of July 1945 to Karl Gustav Lagerfelt, first secretary at the Swedish embassy in London, obviously in the hope that the latter would transfer it to the Allied powers. The letter has been found in the archives and is quoted in full in the interview. The meeting between von Otter and Gerstein is described in detail in the letter, as is the latter's information on the extermination he had witnessed in Bełżec. Von Otter also mentions in the letter that he had checked or compared ("collated") the information with a protestant clergyman and founder of the Confessing Church, named Otto Dibelius.[31]

HOWEVER, GERSTEIN DIED in prison on July 25, 1945, the same day as Lagerfelt received von Otter's letter. It is not clear whether he committed suicide or was murdered by Nazi prisoners. Much later, in 1981, von Otter would visit Gerstein's widow, Elfriede Gerstein.

"For Göran, that train trip keeps living on," Magnergård writes. That very morning, on his return to Berlin, he started to draft a report–a report, however, which has not been found and may have been destroyed. To his disappointment, his superiors at the legation–no names were mentioned in the interview – told him to stop writing: "He had better report orally on what he knew on his next journey home to Stockholm." His journey would be delayed by four months, during which time apparently no report was made to the ministry.

But when von Otter finally reported to the ministry – in the interview he does not mention to whom in the ministry – the "superiors in the ministry received my account with an indifference which made me both disappointed and surprised." "I still blame myself for my omission to act quicker and to make more noise about my information", von Otter told Magnergård.[32]

To this, Magnergård added that, according to the history professor Wilhelm Carlgren, information about mass executions of Jews can be found as early as in a handwritten letter from Juhlin Dannfelt[33] to the head of military intelligence Carlos Adlercreutz, dated October 29, 1941. The source was a Swedish noncommissioned officer who had joined the SS. The letter had been read by the head of the Swedish central command, ÖB Olof Thörnell, and his deputy general, Samuel Åkerhielm, and been reported to General Nils Björk, head of the operational department in the central command.

However, no one in the higher military and political echelons in Sweden had apparently paid much attention to this report, and von Otter's presumably more detailed (though oral) and shocking report met the same fate. The earlier report could possibly have been dismissed as unverified information on war crimes in the wake of the German invasion of the Soviet Union, but von Otter's report was much worse, as it told about systematic killings of Jewish civilians–men, women, and children–by gas, with the source a German "insider".

What is missing in Magnergård's unique interview with von Otter is one question: Why didn't you try more to disseminate

Kurt Gerstein.

Gerhart Riegner, probably at the meeting of the World Jewish Congress in Montreux, Switzerland.

the information? Luckily, some answers to this unasked question can be found in Birgitta von Otter's book from 1991.[34] The book is mainly an anthology of articles previously published in Swedish media, dailies, magazines, and radio, but with two chapters added at the end, about the Swedish legation in Berlin during the war and her father's meeting with Gerstein.

As a child, between the ages of 2 and 5 years, Birgitta von Otter lived in Berlin, where her father had been moved in November 1939 after having served shorter periods at the legations in Vienna, Budapest (where Birgitta was born), and London. He was second legation secretary, and in 1942 became first legation secretary. She tells us that about 60 to 70 people worked at the legation in Berlin. On November 22,1943, the building was totally destroyed in an Allied bomb attack. No Swedish casualties were reported. In the autumn of 1944, the family was relocated home to Stockholm, where they lived until the end of the war. In May 1945 her father moved with the family to a new post in Helsinki, Finland.

According to Birgitta von Otter, only two persons at the legation knew of her father's meeting with Gerstein: the ambassador himself, Arvid Richert, and his deputy, legation counselor Eric von Post. The reason for some kind of secrecy at the legation was that the staff feared that a German spy was working there, namely Richter's own secretary, who was married to a German Nazi. It was confirmed after the war that she had been spying.[35] Richert himself is described by Birgitta von Otter as having had to walk a tightrope not to antagonize the Germans, who often were angry at the alleged anti-German tone in Swedish media.

> **In the current situation it's better to be careful, and it seems to me that it's really desirable that several of our newspapers should adopt a more dignified tone, and a correct and less wishful treatment of the news and a less transparent assumption that Germany will finally lose the war.**[36]

Birgitta von Otter obviously felt that her father had been falsely accused of lying when he had told researchers, such as Koblik, that he never had written a report about his meeting with Gerstein. Her father didn't talk very much about what had happened, and she remembers only one occasion when he told the children about it, or rather replied to their questions. This seemed to have happened around 1970. She also refers to some other interviews her father gave to foreign media and researchers (some of which she found on tape in her parents' home).

She does not exclude the possibility that her father might have confused what really happened with what he learned afterwards. She hardly mentions anything about her father's personality and opinions, but stresses the similarities between her father and Gerstein. Von Otter was 35 and Gerstein 37 years old when they met, each had two children, and they were both 184 cm tall. Birgitta von Otter dwells more on Gerstein and his upbringing and personality and describes him as a person who took his Christian faith seriously. She quotes letters between Gerstein and his father that indicate the existence of a moral dilemma.

Göran von Otter, on the other hand, remains a rather unknown figure to people outside his family. He lived and passed away before the Internet era, and if he ever wrote anything, besides formal reports and documents in his diplomatic service, it cannot be found on the web.[37] If he did write about his work, his family does not know of any papers or letters left behind which could help us to understand him and his meeting with Gerstein.[38] According to Birgitta von Otter, her father never wrote a report about his meeting with Gerstein. He was instructed by Richert, the head of legation, to report orally at his next meeting at the ministry in Stockholm. Why?

Two possible explanations are given by Birgitta von Otter. First, the Swedish legation is said to have already known about the persecution of Jews, thanks to information that its military attaché had received from oppositional German officers. Furthermore, the Swedish consul in Stettin, Yngve Vendel, had, just a few days before von Otter returned to the legation after his train journey, reported "about the same things, although not in such detail".[39] Vendel's report was sent to the ministry with a cover letter signed by Eric von Post on August 22, 1942. Whether this is convincing or a justifiable reason will be discussed in the next section.

However, Birgitta von Otter also quotes her father as stating that the existence of previous information was an acceptable explanation (i.e., for the order to stop writing the report that he had started writing on his return), although he was aware that Vendel did not report on "details such as that people were forced in naked and that Ukrainian guards were used to extract the gassed people". Instead, von Otter reported orally to the ministry as he had been instructed to do, namely, to the head of the political department of the ministry, Staffan Söderblom.[40] Von Otter also learned that Söderblom had reported on their meeting to other civil servants in the hierarchy of the ministry, Deputy Minister Erik Boheman and Foreign Affairs Counselor Gösta Engzell.[41]

SECOND, IT APPEARS that von Otter himself did not believe in the possibility of influencing Nazi Germany's extermination policy, and in this he obviously shared Richert's opinion. He met Gerstein about half a year later in Berlin. Gerstein was eager to know what von Otter had done to inform the Swedish government. Von Otter told Gerstein (according to an interview in 1966)[42] that he had informed his superiors but that he was not optimistic about any concrete results. In another interview, from 1963, he said: "I don't believe that any country or government could have influenced Hitler, who had his own ideas on how Europe should be formed after the war. In this Europe there was no place at all for the Jews, and he was fully determined to implement his Endlösung."[43]

Reporting in August 1942

The absence of a written report on von Otter's information from the Swedish legation in Berlin to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Stockholm can be contrasted with the reports that actually were sent from the legation during the relevant period in 1942.[44] It turns out that there was a flow of daily reports from the legation on a diversity of issues, as if the main occupation of the legation was to keep the ministry constantly updated. Among other dispatches, the legation drafted press reviews on news in German media and German reactions to news in Swedish media. The legation also reported on meetings with German officials or visits by Swedish officials or personalities to Germany, for example, the visit in Berlin in June 1942 of the Swedish explorer Sven Hedin (reported on June 11, 1942).

The archive files also include reporting from the ministry to the legation, such as the visit in August to the ministry by the German ambassador in Stockholm, complaining about the publication in Swedish media about Norwegian King Haakon's 70th birthday, which was considered propaganda against Nazi Germany (reported on August 8, 1942). Another report from the ministry in August 1942 is a translation of a pro-German article from the Swedish consulate in Prague (dated August 17, 1942). A political report from the legation, dated August 21, 1942, deals with the German occupation in Europe, but without mentioning anything about the fate of the Jews. The report refers to an "easing of tension" in the relations between Nazi Germany and Sweden.

The most dramatic report from August 1942 is no doubt the one drafted by the Swedish consul in Stettin, Yngve Vendel. The report was signed by him on August 8, 1942, and sent on the 22nd of the same month to R. Kumlin, a head of department at the ministry in Stockholm, with a cover letter signed by the legation secretary Eric von Post. The report was registered by the ministry on August 24, 1942, and distributed internally and to other legations and to the military command. Noteworthy is that the report also reached Swedish prime minister Per Albin Hansson, as his initials appear on the cover letter.

This arrangement appears to be typical of the correspondence between the legation and the ministry. Reports were drafted by different people at the legation and accompanied by cover letters that summarized their content or drew attention to the main points in the reports. In this case von Post writes that the report is based on Vendel's impressions from talks with different people during a journey he made in "eastern Germany" with the permission of Richert.

Two pages of Vendel's seven-page report deal with a conflict between Heinrich Himmler and the former minister of food and agriculture, Richard Walther Darré, and this is highlighted and constitutes the main part in the cover letter. A sentence at the end of the cover letter states that "Vendel reports about the conditions in the General Governorate (Poland under Nazi German occupation), statements by Ribbentrop, and conditions on the large landed estates etc."[45] There is no word about any persecutions of Jews in the cover letter. Whatever information the report contained about the situation of the Jews was easy to overlook or underestimate.

The situation of the Jewish population is mentioned twice in the report. On page 3, Vendel refers to the food conditions in the general governorate. According to his source, it is often heard that "Die Juden haben alles" (The Jews have everything). Vendel is critical of this statement and is of the opinion that it is only true of a small number of "affluent Jews in the Warsaw ghetto". He corrects

PHOTO: GERMAN FEDERAL ARCHIVE

The German Order Police from Orpo descending to the cellars on a "Jew-hunt", Lublin, December 1940.

PHOTO: GERMAN FEDERAL ARCHIVE

Jewish women in occupied Lublin, September 1939.

PHOTO: GERMAN FEDERAL ARCHIVE

Jewish men are transported from the Warsaw Ghetto by Wehrmacht soldiers, Poland, 1941.

the statement to "durch die Juden kan man noch alles haben, die Juden beschaffen alles" (through the Jews you can get everything; the Jews can supply everything) which must have been a gross exaggeration and a prejudice.[46]

The next page in his report contains a paragraph with information of such a nature that "it hardly can be rendered in writing". Vendel therefore "limit[s myself] to some brief information". He mentions that the treatment of the Jews differs in different places, depending on whether there are ghettos or not. However, "the intention is gradually to exterminate them". The figure of the Jews already killed in Lublin is estimated at 40,000. In particular, people over the age of 50 and children under the age of 10 are being killed. He writes that in one town (not named) the Jews were assembled to be "disinfected" but in reality they were gassed to death and buried in mass graves. He is of the opinion that his source is trustworthy and that there "cannot be the slightest doubt about the veracity of his information".

This is all that is said about the Jewish situation. It is clear that there was a huge difference between Vendel's brief information above and the detailed information von Otter received from Gerstein during a whole night of talking in the train between Warsaw and Berlin. Von Otter himself indicated in his letter to Lagerfelt at the Swedish embassy in London the detailed account he received of the extermination machinery in Bełżec. Lagerfelt repeated the account, without mentioning von Otter's name, in his aide-memoire and added that his source had been shown "documents, identification cards and orders from the commandant of the camp for the delivery of hydrocyanic acid".[47]

Furthermore, Gerstein himself wrote a lengthy report during his imprisonment at the end of the war.[48] It is likely that von Otter received more or less the same information from him when they met. It is therefore difficult to understand how Vendel's brief report could have motivated the legation to suppress von Otter's reporting as superfluous.

Conclusions

As emerges from the above, Göran von Otter did explain why he did not report in writing. According to Birgitta von Otter, he received instructions from his superiors not to write a report. Birgitta von Otter is a close relative and may be biased, but there is no reason to doubt her account on this point. It is also possible that Göran von Otter was of the opinion that a written report would not have made any difference. This could explain his inaction in 1942–which he later regretted–but could also be an ex-post justification.

The result, however, might have been the same, considering the overall Swedish policy at that time, when Nazi Germany was at the height of its power, of appeasing the Nazi regime and avoiding doing anything that could anger it, even invoking a variety of measures to suppress press freedom in Sweden.[49] It is also striking that some people in Sweden – including some among the clergy, the military, and the government – who received reports on the Holocaust, shared anti-Semitic stereotypes.[50] If they supported Nazi Germany or believed in its victory, they were less inclined to arouse any public opinion or issue any government statements against the ongoing genocide of the Jewish people.

It is, of course, impossible to know what would have happened if a written report had been delivered by von Otter.[51] However, in the author's opinion, it cannot be dismissed that a written report, made public by the Swedish government or transferred secretly to the Allied powers, could have added more credibility to the other reports from the same period (forming a "critical mass") and pressed the US and Britain to act more forcibly. It might have induced the Allied powers to act sooner to condemn Nazi Germany and to intervene to stop the daily killings. A written report could also have been studied and revived later by the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs – after all, the horrors of the Holocaust had become fully known only after the liberation of the camps–and prompted the Swedish government to do more by way of rescue operations towards the end of the war when it no longer had to fear any Nazi German reprisals.[52]

Von Otter may have felt that he had betrayed Gerstein, who, with his own life in danger, had asked him to immediately transfer the information to his own Swedish government and through it to the Allied powers. He did not manage to save Gerstein's life because he seems to have acted too late and in an indirect way. Gerstein turned himself in to the French forces on April 21, 1945, and was sent to a prison in Paris towards the end of May. We cannot know if and when von Otter learned about Gerstein's imprisonment and trial. Did he actively try to find out his whereabouts? The newspaper France-Soir reported about his trial on July 5, 1945. Only on July 23, 1945, did von Otter write his letter to the Swedish legation in London.[53]

As mentioned in the beginning, the role of different civil servants at the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs is outside the scope of this study. However, the role of the person whom von Otter met in Stockholm, the head of the political department, Staffan Söderblom, seems at first glance questionable.[54] The head of the legation in Berlin, Arvid Richert, was biased in his attitude towards Nazi Germany and sometimes pursued his own agenda. Both Richert and his deputy, von Post, seem to have opposed any public Swedish appeals or the issuance of Swedish protective passports for the Jews even in February-March 1945.[55] When instructing von Otter not to finish his written report, Richert may have abused his power. If Richert was afraid that a written report might have been discovered by the Germans, he should, of course, have instructed von Otter to travel immediately to Stockholm to report. A Swedish report would have supported other reports from this time and could not have been easily dismissed by the Allied powers. Richert was probably not aware of these other reports, but in suppressing von Otter's report he deliberately took a decision that showed his attitude towards reporting on the Nazi German crimes against humanity.

TO UNDERSTAND retrospectively von Otter and his reporting, one must take into account the environment at the legation in Berlin and the ministry in Stockholm during the war. It appears that it was influenced by pro-German feelings – dating from long before the outbreak of World War II – and a fear of antagonizing Nazi Germany, at least when it looked as if Germany would win the war.[56] Von Otter was a man with a conscience – this is proven by his attempt to save Gerstein – but it also appears that, if there was any conflict between conscience and career he may have given priority to his career. It is tragic that he not only did not succeed in transmitting Gerstein's information to the ministry in an effective way, or make it public in some other way, but also failed to save the life of Gerstein, the person he obviously felt an obligation to save.

However, it would be unfair to compare von Otter with Karski. Jan Karski was a Polish officer who fought for his own country under occupation by Nazi Germany and who felt a strong empathy for his persecuted people, irrespective of religion. Karski was prepared to risk his own life by entering ghettos and camps in disguise to collect firsthand information on the ongoing extermination, and then to secretly travel to Britain to inform the Polish government in exile and the Allied powers. Karski was both an eyewitness and an emissary on behalf of the Polish government in exile.

VON OTTER DID NOT have to risk his life and, luckily, hardly anyone did in the Swedish legation or the ministry. He happened by chance to receive information from a trustworthy witness who begged him to forward it to the Swedish government. After having met Gerstein on the train, he met the protestant clergyman Dibelius in Berlin to verify the information. We will never know what Dibelius told him, but he might have been the wrong person to ask for advice. Von Otter was probably not aware that Dibelius was an anti-Semite and that the information may have fallen on deaf ears.[57] He managed more or less to carry out the mission–which he had not chosen himself–but in a way that did not leave any trace in Sweden and did not have any impact whatsoever on the course of events. The responsibility for the latter, however, falls on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Both von Otter and Karski met with indifference and disbelief in their reporting.

One can speculate as to whether another person in the same situation would have moved heaven and earth to disseminate the information, even though it might have caused him or her discomfort. Von Otter was a civil servant of relatively low rank at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the same background as most people in the ministry at that time, and did as he was instructed by his superiors, who all expected that Nazi Germany would be victorious. On the other hand, von Otter belonged to a distinguished noble family. Possibly, he could have tried harder to deliver a written report on Gerstein's shocking information, especially as he had taken some trouble to verify who Gerstein was. It cannot be totally excluded that such a report does exist somewhere.

Nonetheless, the meeting with Gerstein made a strong impression on him, which explains why he remembered it years later. It was not his fault that his report–which according to him was presented orally–did not attract the interest of his superiors at the ministry. This was rather the result of inconsistent reporting procedures at the ministry and the inability on the part of von Otter's superiors to distinguish between important and less important reporting. Their judgment can be questioned, in particular, that of Staffan Söderblom, who happened to be head of

PHOTO: INSTITUTE OF NATIONAL REMEMBRANCE

Deportation of 10,000 Polish Jews to Treblinka during the liquidation of the ghetto in Siedlce beginning August 23, 1942.

PHOTO: JEWISH HISTORICAL INSTITUTE

Jews being loaded onto trains to Treblinka at the Warsaw Ghetto's Umschlagplatz, 1942.

the political department of the ministry at the time and who only a few years later would mislead his own ministry and fail in the Wallenberg affair.[58]

Mose Apelblat, former official at the European Commission.

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references

1 Although no prior censorship was applied, news about alleged war crimes and atrocities was considered "cruelty propaganda" and suppressed in various legal ways. Newspapers may also have applied self-censorship. See Klas Åmark, ed., *Att bo granne med ondskan: Sveriges förhållande till Nazismen, Nazityskland och Förintelsen* [To be neighbors with evil: Sweden's relation to Nazism, Nazi Germany and the Holocaust] (Stockholm: Albert Bonniers Förlag, 2011), ch. 6, "Tryckfrihet and presspolitik i andra världskrigets skugga" [Freedom of expression and press policy in the shadow of WWII].

2 Quotation from Maciej Sadowski, *Jan Karski Photobiography* (Warszawa: VEDA, 2014).

3 The Swedish diplomatic representation in Berlin before and during the Second World War was called a legation, which was lower than an embassy. After the war it was upgraded to embassy.

4 Birgitta von Otter, *Navelsträngar och Narrspeglar* [Umbilical cords' and Fools Mirrors] (Stockholm: Alba, 1991), 268. The author does not give any more details about this task.

5 Ibid., 280 (excerp from Gerstein's own account).

6 See papers from the international conference in Zamość in November 2013, "Jan Karski: Witness, Emissary, Man", http://www.jpost.com/International/Memory-of-Polands-Jan-Karski-early-reporter-of-the-Holocaust-honored-330959.

7 He was born Jan Kozielewski. During the war he adopted Karski as his nom de guerre and became known to the world by this name.

8 Robert Wistrich, *Hitler and the Holocaust* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2001), 213.

9 Jan Karski had Jewish friends at school in Łodź and Jewish teachers at the university in Lvov. After the war, in 1965, he married Pola Nirénska, a choreographer and dancer of Polish-Jewish origin. About one third of the 670,000 inhabitants in Łodź before the war were Jews. Almost immediately after the Nazi German occupation, a ghetto was established in Łodź. When the ghetto was liquidated in August 1944, 200,000 Jews had been killed.

10 Wistrich, *Hitler*, 213–214.

11 Marian Marek Drozdowski, *Jan Karski Kozielewski, 1914–2000: The Emissary who Sought Help from the Allied Powers for the Polish Underground State and Holocaust Victims* (Warsaw: Oficyna Wydawnicza ASPRA, 2014), ch. 8.

12 The two persons whom Karski met in Warsaw have been identified as

leaders of the Jewish resistance organization, one representing the Zionist organizations and the other the Jewish socialist organization Bund. In their desperation they asked Karski to convey to the allied powers that they should bomb German cities without mercy and drop leaflets telling the Germans about the fate of the Jews in Poland, threatening them that this would also happen to the Germans during and after the war. They thought that this was the only way to put an end to the Nazi-German atrocities. According to Nir Rakovski, Karski was not taken to Bełżec but to a transit camp in Izbica Lubelska, halfway between Lublin and Bełżec, where he witnessed awful scenes. See Jan Karski, *Courier from Poland: The Story of a Secret State*, French to Hebrew trans. Nir Rakovski (Tel Aviv: Sifrei Aliyat Hagag, 2014), 374 and 390.

13 *The Joint Declaration by Members of the United Nations*, a statement issued on December 17, 1942, by the American and British governments on behalf of the Allied powers.

14 According to Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin* (London: Vintage Books, 2011), 213–217, when the invasion of the Soviet Union did not go as planned, Hitler changed strategy and the extermination of the Jews became his main wartime policy. For a comprehensive analysis of what the Allied powers knew and the possible reasons for not understanding and not acting, see Daniel Tilles, *Passive Accomplices or Helpless Bystanders? British and American Responses to the Holocaust, 1941–1945* (Kraków: Galicia Jewish Museum, 2008) 110–135.

15 Jan Karski, *Courier from Poland: The Story of a Secret State* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1944).

16 Two of the last chapters in his book describe his secret visits to the Warsaw ghetto and the transit camp Izbica Lubelska in vivid and terrifying language. What he witnessed defies human comprehension.

17 Wistrich, *Hitler*, 214.

18 Arthur Morse, *While Six Millions Died: A Chronicle of American Apathy* (New York: Random House, 1968), 3–36.

19 According to Wistrich (*Hitler*, 144), Riegner had already on March 3, 1942, sent a "remarkably detailed report on the fate of the Jews in Poland and the rest of Europe", which reached the Vatican through the papal nuncio in Bern. It spoke of "more than a million Jews exterminated by the Germans", pointing out that the old, the sick, and women and children were being systematically deported, a measure that clearly could not have been implemented for the purposes of forced labor.

20 Steven Koblik, *Om vi teg, skulle stenarna ropa: Sverige och judeproblemet, 1933–1945* [The Stones Cry Out: Sweden's Response to the Persecution of the Jews, 1933–1945], Swedish trans. Erik Frykman (Stockholm: Norstedts Förlag, 1987), 66, 67, 148–150, 266.

21 As is mentioned later on in the study, only Richert and von Post knew about von Otter's meeting with Gerstein. Von Post normally attached cover letters to the reports drafted by the embassy staff.

22 The aide-memoire is based on a letter dated July 23, 1942, from von Otter to Lagerfelt, first secretary at the embassy in London (see Koblik, *Stones Cry Out*, 266–267). Von Otter's letter, although drafted almost three years after his meeting with Gerstein, gives quite a detailed account of the meeting; see excerpt in Birgitta von Otter, *Navelsträngar och Narrspeglar*, 271. The letter is included in extenso in Omar Magnergård's interview with Göran von Otter, *I andra världskrigets skugga*. Birgitta von Otter also quotes an interview on tape with her father, made in the beginning of the 1980s when he was well over 70 years old, where her father reproduces, in detail, what Gerstein had told him about the killing of the Jews in death chambers using exhaust gas from trucks (*Navelsträngar och Narrspeglar*, 273). This information was probably not known to Koblik.

23 Ingvar Svanberg and Mattias Tydén, Sverige och *Förintelsen: Debatt och dokument om Europas judar 1933–1945* [Sweden and the Holocaust: debate and documents on the Jews of Europe 1933–1945] (Stockholm: Arena,1997), 38, 236–237. The authors give a detailed overview of the reporting on the Holocaust in Swedish newspapers, with extensive extracts from the articles. The persecutions and mass murders of the Jews in Nazi-occupied countries were known in Sweden as early as 1942. What was less known, before 1943, was how the killings were carried out.

24 Clarification by e-mail of June 9, 2013, from Tydén to the writer.

25 Paul A. Levine, *From Indifference to Activism: Swedish Diplomacy and the Holocaust* (Uppsala: Uppsala University, 1996), 123.

26 Åmark, *Granne med ondskan*.

27 Clarification in e-mail of June 17, 2013, from Åmark to the writer.

28 Göran Rosenberg, *Ett kort uppehåll på vägen från Auschwitz* [A brief stop on the way from Auschwitz] (Falun: Bonnier, 2012).

29 At about the same time as von Otter met Gerstein, "between 3 and 12 September 1942, 15,859 children, sick and elderly people from the ghetto in Łodź had been killed in gas vans in Chelmo"(Rosenberg, *Kort uppehåll*, 55).

30 Magnergård, *Skugga*.

31 Gerstein also disclosed his information to Dibelius, who, according to Birgitta von Otter (*Navelsträngar och Narrspeglar*, 271), conveyed it to the Swedish archbishop Erling Eidem. Regarding Dibelius and the church in Germany, see Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966), [references to 1997 paperback ed.], 108–114. According to Goldhagen, Dibelius had described himself as an anti-Semite even before Hitler came to power and had expressed the logic of the reigning eliminationalist anti-Semitism. According to Åmark (*Granne med ondskan*, 330, 334–336), Eidem's activity with regard to Nazi Germany and the persecutions of the Jews is disputed. Koblik, who devotes a whole chapter in his book to Eidem and the Swedish organization for the religious conversion of Jews (SIM, Svenska Israelmissionen), paints a more detailed picture of Eidem's role, but reaches the same conclusion: He did not act on the information he received from Dibelius among others because he was influenced by the Swedish government, which considered information about the Nazi German extermination campaign a "potential security risk" against Swedish interests and relations with Nazi Germany (Koblik, *Stones Cry Out*,106). When he refused to issue an appeal for the Hungarian Jews, he first asked the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs whether it would be the correct thing to do. The reply was affirmative (Ibid., 112). This happened as late as July 1944, when it was only a matter of time before Nazi Germany would be defeated, and Sweden had little to fear from its reaction.

32 Magnergård, *Skugga*.

33 Curt Juhlin Dannfelt was military attaché at the Swedish legation in Berlin during the whole Nazi period (1933–1945) and was considered a competent and reliable person. However, the Swedish security or intelligence service reported to the government only at its own discretion (Koblik, *Stones Cry Out*, 147). An investigation by the security service during the war showed that up to 10% of the officer corps were suspected of being Nazis or pro-German (Åmark, *Granne med ondskan*, 298). Though a small minority, it was more than in the general population. The pro-German "National Sweden–Germany Society" had many officers among its members, some of them with high rank. The commander of the defense forces, Olof Thörnell, had himself congratulated Hitler on his 50th birthday. Åmark (*Granne med ondskan*, 300) writes that a general, Samuel Åkerhielm, had been compromised because of (presumably) pro-German statements. Both Olof Thörnell and his successor Helge Jung favored a Swedish military intervention on the side of Finland against the Soviet Union. (This would effectively have put Sweden on Nazi Germany's side and could have been a secondary motive among pro-German officers. Author's comment.)

34 Von Otter, *Navelsträngar och Narrspeglar*.

35 Ibid., 258.

36 Ibid., 259, letter by Richert on September 2, 1942, to the ministry. Richert is characterized by Åmark as one who staunchly advocated that Sweden should conduct a friendly and positive policy towards Nazi Germany to secure its role in a Nazi-dominated Europe after the war (Åmark, *Granne med ondskan*, 101, 108).

37 Judging from von Otter's letter to Lagerfelt, he was a good writer, and his Swedish still reads well and is easy to understand.

38 E-mail of August 22, 2013, from Ann Sofie von Otter to the author of this article.

39 Von Otter, *Navelsträngar och Narrspeglar*, 274.

40 Staffan Söderblom, the son of Nathan Söderblom (Sweden's most famous archbishop before the war), was head of the political department during 1938–1944. During 1944–1946 he was Swedish envoy (ambassador) to Moscow, where he dealt with the Raoul Wallenberg affair. An official Swedish commission (SOU 2003:18) on the Wallenberg affair and its management by the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs was very critical of Söderblom's reporting and handling of the affair. It appears that his policy was to do anything to avoid antagonizing the Soviet government. See *Ett diplomatiskt misslyckande: Fallet Raoul Wallenberg och den svenska utrikesledningen* [A diplomatic failure: The case of Raoul Wallenberg and the Swedish foreign authorities], SOU 2003:18, 151–161, http://www.regeringen.se/sb/d/108/a/1455. In the report Söderblom's reporting from Moscow is described as whitewashing. A colleague describes his management of the political department in Stockholm as a dictatorship. In 1954 Söderblom was put on leave for personal reasons. Birgitta von Otter has drawn my attention to an interview with her father in Paris in 1981 by Gitta Sereny, according to which Staffan Söderblom told Göran von Otter, at their meeting, to forget everything and wished him a pleasant vacation. See Gitta Sereny, *Albert Speer: His Battle with Truth*, (London: Vintage Books, 1995), 355–359.

41 Gösta Engzell was head of the legal department of the ministry during the war. After the war he told authors who interviewed him that he had been informed about Gerstein much earlier. For an evaluation of his role as administrative rescuer in a situation of moral ambiguity, see also Paul Levine's paper "Teaching the Hero in Holocaust History: The Case of Raoul Wallenberg and Gösta Engzell", October 14, 1999, http://www.yadvashem.org/download/education/conf/Levine.pdf.

42 Von Otter, *Navelsträngar och Narrspeglar*, 286.

43 Ibid., 286–287.

44 The correspondence from and to the embassy during the months June–September 1942, is in the Swedish National Archives (Riksarkivet) in Stockholm. The documents referred to in the text can be found in dossiers HP 1 Ct vol. 321, 322, 323, 324, 325 (UD 1920 dossier system).

45 Vendel, P.M. (Promemoria/Memorandum), dated Berlin, August 22, 1942, quotation from cover letter (Swedish National Archives).

46 Vendel obviously never entered the Warsaw ghetto, as Karski did. If he had, he would not have written as he did. From autumn 1940 to July 1942, about 92,000 Warsaw Jews died of starvation and disease. (Karski, *Courier from Poland*). In July 1942, the first deportations to the extermination camp Treblinka started. By September 1942, about 300,000 Jews had been murdered. After two months of killings in the ghetto and deportations to Treblinka perhaps 60,000 Jews remained in the ghetto. See also Snyder, Bloodland), 263–269 on the deportations to Treblinka and 280–292 on the uprising in the ghetto.

47 Koblik, *Stones Cry Out*, 267.

48 Von Otter, *Navelsträngar och Narrspeglar*, 291–297.

49 Åmark, *Granne med ondskan*, chap. 6–7.

50 Ibid., ch. 11. It is noteworthy that Söderblom, in one of his reports from Moscow, describes the purging of Jews in the administration as a means of avoiding the reoccurrence of anti-Semitism in the country (SOU 2003:18, 154). See also Åmark, *Granne med ondskan*, 368, on the influence of anti-Semitism in the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

51 Daniel Tilles is skeptical as to whether an additional report would have had any effect in inducing a firmer response from the US or UK (e-mail of January 28, 2015, from Tilles to the author). According to Tilles, both countries already had plenty of information; the problem was (a) the collation and analysis of that information, but also, and more importantly,(b) the lack of willingness to act on the information (for various reasons). Klas Åmark shares the assessment (e-mail of December 9, 2013, to the author) that it was the aggregated reporting on the Holocaust that influenced the Allied powers during the war, and that it is not very likely that their willingness would have been affected by a written report by von Otter directly after his meeting with Gerstein.

52 Koblik, *Stones Cry Out*, 157–158.

53 In his aide-memoire of August 7, 1945, Lagerfelt does not mention von Otter by name but refers to a "member of a neutral embassy in Berlin". On August 14, 1945, Lagerfelt informed von Otter about his aide-memoire and pointed out that von Otter's name was not indicated (von Otter, *Navelsträngar och Narrspeglar*, 300).

54 According to Walter Laqueur, *The Terrible Secret: Suppression of the Truth About Hitler's "Final Solution"* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1980), 65–67 (reference is to the German translation in paperback, 1982), Söderblom said about von Otter's report: "We thought that it was too risky to transfer information from one belligerent party to another." He is also said to have remarked that many rumors were floating around during that time. Laqueur wrote that Söderblom's argument could hardly be taken seriously, since there were, of course, different means and ways to forward the news without implicating the Swedish government as the source.

55 Koblik, *Stones Cry Out*, 255–257.

56 The role of the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs has not been studied in detail by the author of this article. The ministry could have asked von Otter to write a report after hearing him, but evidently did not. Åmark (*Granne med ondskan*, 536) mentions that the head of the legal department at the ministry, Gösta Engzell (who, according to Göran von Otter's testimony, had been informed by Söderblom about his meeting with Gerstein), was engaged in the Swedish activities at the end of November 1942 to rescue Norwegian Jews. Von Otter's meeting with Söderblom took place around January 1943, so any information from that meeting could not have influenced Engzell (unless he had known about the information much earlier). Altogether, 1100 Jews fled from Norway to Sweden with the support of the Norwegian underground movement. In October 1943 the majority of the Danish Jews (7900 persons, according to Åmark, *Granne med ondskan*, 538) were rescued by boat to Sweden. However, the action came too late for the 770 Norwegian Jews who had been deported of whom the majority were murdered in Auschwitz. Sweden felt a special responsibility for the Jewish citizens in a neigboring Nordic country and for Jews with a connection to Sweden. For a detailed overview of the reporting and protests in Sweden against the deportation of the Jews in Norway, see Svanberg and Tydén, *Sverige och Förintelsen*, ch. 12.

57 See note 31.

58 See Ingrid Carlberg's article, "Raoul Wallenberg: Sveriges svek", *Dagens Nyheter*, January 17, 2015, http://www.dn.se/nyheter/sverige/sveriges-svek/. She describes the handling of the disappearance of Wallenberg as a Swedish betrayal and diplomatic failure, in which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs failed to act on information and uncritically accepted disinformation. A key person was Staffan Söderblom, the envoy in Moscow, who in his meetings with the Soviet authorities accepted their allegation that Wallenberg had fallen victim to an accident.

BEYOND BORDERS

THE RETURN OF KIN-STATE POLITICS IN EUROPE

by **Kjetil Duvold** illustration **Karin Sunvisson**

The relationship between ethnic homelands, co-nationals in neighboring states, and host countries, a triangular relationship referred to here as *kin-state relations*, tends to be complex and often fraught with instability. Kin-state relations, which for a long time were a somewhat neglected topic in the literature on nationalism, became highly explosive with the breakup of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. Moreover, these relations raise a range of questions that cannot necessarily be dealt with smoothly within the prevailing European notions of minority protection.

In this article I will examine two distinct cases of kin-state relations, namely those of Russia and Hungary. Today there are approximately 25 million Russians living in states neighboring Russia and some three million Magyars living in states around Hungary. At 23 percent of Hungary's population versus 18 percent of Russia's, the Hungarian diaspora is relatively speaking larger than the Russian. But as the heir to the Soviet Union, Russia's case is clearly more complex and volatile than Hungary's. Contemporary Hungary is a comparatively small country within NATO and the European Union, while post-Soviet Russia remains a vast multi-ethnic federation with many trappings of a traditional empire. There are several obvious differences between the two cases. First, while Russia became a kin-state only after the end of the Cold War, Hungary has been a kin-state since the end of the First World War. Second, while contemporary Hungary must be classified as a "normal" nation-state within the framework of the European Union, Russia seems bent on restoring and reinforcing the ties that made up the empire of the Soviet Union. Finally, while Hungary hase come up with relatively well-defined instruments to interact with Magyars in other states, Russia has been inconsistent and far from transparent in its handling of Russians in former Soviet republics. Even if they differ in their approaches, Hungary and Russia, however, are similar in the sense that they have taken very active measures to shape and strengthen the ties between the "homeland" and the external minority. On the other hand, both countries have engaged in kin-state politics without the direct use of violence. Russia, however, abandoned this position in 2014, with the annexation of Crimea and the war in eastern Ukraine.

abstract

Two distinct cases of kin-state relations are examined: that of Russians living in states neighboring Russia and that of Magyars living in states around Hungary. The role of kin-state relations in Europe is studied from a historical perspective and, with reference to Rogers Brubaker's concept of a triadic nexus between nationalizing states, a national minority, and an external homeland. It is argued that the fall of communism – and the fall of several multi-ethnic federations, in particular – revived old territorial conflicts and hostility among national groups both within and between states. The question of kin-state relations is put at the forefront of European minority issues.

KEY WORDS: minorities, kin-states, nationalism, Eastern Europe, border studies.

Kin-state relations and the borders of Europe

The phenomenon "kin-state relations" is rather straightforward: ethnic boundaries rarely coincide perfectly with state borders, and the presence of minorities across the border has caused tensions between states, accusations of ethnic discrimination, and suspicions of disloyalty against minorities. Needless to say, it has also led to wars and military interventions on behalf of external minorities, and to expulsion and mutual population transfers.

On the whole, during the Cold War the continent experienced relatively few conflicts based on kin-state relations. There are several obvious reasons for this. For a start, many of the formerly divided

states became much more homogenous. National groups with potential for pursuing a kin-state agenda, like the Serbs and the Russians, were now united under the same state (i.e. the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia). In addition, the communist regimes restricted direct expression of ethnic allegiances. The issue certainly did not vanish entirely; nevertheless, under those regimes, it became unacceptable to emphasize ethnic allegiances above class interests.

Across the Iron Curtain, Western Germany had several issues to settle regarding German nationals residing in the Soviet Union and Soviet satellite states. Considering itself to be the only legitimate German state, the Federal Republic of Germany refused to accept the Polish-German border along the Oder-Neisse line, but was hampered by the fact that Germany itself was divided and that Poland and the German Democratic Republic had agreed on their common border. Throughout the Cold War, Western Germany continued to pursue a policy of improving conditions for its co-nationals in Eastern Europe, although the scope for action was highly restricted.[1]

"CONSIDERING ITSELF TO BE THE ONLY LEGITIMATE GERMAN STATE, THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY REFUSED TO ACCEPT THE POLISH-GERMAN BORDER ALONG THE ODER-NEISSE LINE."

THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN Western and Eastern forms of nation-building is well tested, fairly banal, and yet controversial.[2] It comes down to the following: national identity in Western Europe has predominantly been tied to the territory and institutions of the political community, while the Eastern European notion of national identity has always placed a strong emphasis on cultural uniqueness, kinship and organic community – often without the support of institutions and clearly defined territorial borders. In a nutshell, the state usually preceded the nation in the West, while the nation was formed in opposition to existing empire states in the East. The absence of well-defined cultural boundaries is a key factor here. Certainly, the political and cultural boundaries in Europe are rarely fixed – with a few exceptions, such as those of Iceland. But the cultural and political boundaries in eastern parts of the continent are exceptionally fuzzy. An ancient problem in Central and Eastern Europe is that many members of a national community have either been left outside the confines of the state or that significant numbers of "non-members" have ended up inside. Countries as diverse as Russia, Germany, Poland, Hungary, Romania, Serbia, and Albania have all faced this dilemma at some point – and many still do.

West European states were, on the whole, consolidated at a much earlier stage, borders were contested to a much smaller degree, and cultural standardization was implemented on a more comprehensive scale.[3] In short, the territorial model of nationalism, which arguably has been dominant in Western Europe, left small scope for kin-state nationalism. The presence of, for instance, Italian-speakers in Switzerland has not caused conflicts based on the triadic kin-state relationship. The thorniest and by far most violent example of kin-state nationalism in post-war Western Europe was played out between the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland, and the Protestant and Catholic communities of Northern Ireland.

After the Second World War, a policy of non-interference regarding kin-minorities became prevalent among Western democracies; individual rights came at the expense of collective rights.[4] Indeed, the question of ethno-cultural relations became increasingly marginalized and was considered to be a diminishing force in the light of modernization – despite the rise of regional opposition in several Western democracies. However, when the communist regimes fell apart so suddenly towards the end of the 1980s, this almost exclusive focus on individual rights came under challenge. Most urgently, with the breakup of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, Europe experienced a sudden and radical upsurge in conflicts based on kin-state relations, which led to an unprecedented number of territorial splits and newly independent states. Many of these entities were not in the business of building up just any statehood: they were clearly bent on carving out their own, narrowly defined national states, sometimes with rather limited concerns for minority interests.

As a result, preventing these conflicts from escalating quickly became the main concern among Western leaders. It involved a shift away from individualism in favor of active promotion of and support for minority rights. In a parallel fashion, the stronger focus on minority rights can be linked to the emergence of liberal pluralism, which was largely a response to the increasingly multicultural composition of many Western societies.[5] It also fit well in the liberal international framework – such as the European Union (formerly the EC), the OSCE (formerly the CSCE), and the Council of Europe, which have all tied Western European democracies closer together.[6]

Ménage à trois?

The extent to which a kin neighbor – often a larger, more imposing country – actually interferes on behalf of its co-nationals will vary a great deal. However, certain states continually declare their undisputable right – even *duty* – to monitor and promote the interests of their kinsmen across the border. It is vital to stress the interactive aspects of this nexus.

In contemporary nationalism literature, Rogers Brubaker's *Nationalism Reframed*[7] is an obvious reference point describing kin-state relations. Brubaker has elaborated a simple model of this triangular relationship. At one pole, there is the host state. Often it is a comparatively new, small and insecure state with strong urges to promote itself and express its uniqueness. Brubaker labels it a "nationalizing state".[8] The nation may perceive itself as historically threatened, vulnerable, and in a "weak

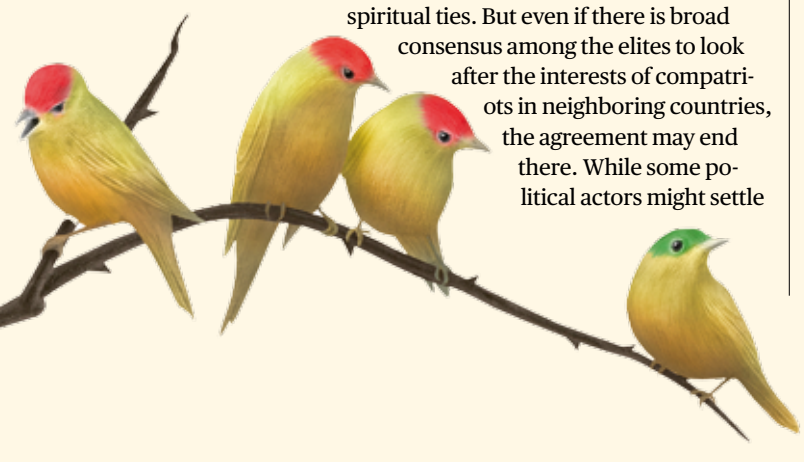
Nations are after all only administrative entities. People may be on either side of a border.

cultural, economic, or demographic position within the state". It feels threatened by the ever-present larger neighboring state and its co-nationals as a national minority. Nationalists might consider such minorities as intruders or colonists – potentially disloyal groups. Exclusive nation building may thus be considered as suitable compensation for past oppression. Characteristically, a nationalizing state has a relatively high proportion or concentration of national minorities, but nevertheless holds on to the ambition of becoming a nation state. In a sense, it can be regarded as an "incomplete" nation state. A nationalizing agenda is obviously at work if these aims are more or less explicitly stated by the ruling elites of the state. National elites may deny that they are pursuing a nationalizing agenda, but these claims are of little importance as long as the minority or external homeland perceive them to be pursuing one. As Brubaker [9] puts it:

> **To ask whether policies, practices, and so on are "really" nationalizing makes little sense. For present purposes, a nationalizing state is not one whose representatives, authors, or agents understand and articulate it as such, but rather one that is perceived as such in the field of the national minority or the external national homeland.**

But it is not sufficient for the minority (or the external homeland) to simply claim that the state is undertaking a nationalizing project; it also has to be socially sustained and directed towards certain objectives or policies, which again can produce a political battle.[10] Perceptions and subjectivity are also factors that are difficult to account for when such inter-ethnic nexuses are studied.

National minority is a very broad term, capturing several sub-categories from small, indigenous minorities to labor immigrants and refugees from other parts of the world, to minority groups that happen to be residents of a particular state as a result of border revisions. Minorities of this category are likely to have co-nationals in one or several neighboring countries, including their external homeland, the third actor in this nexus. Often a large power (or a formerly large power) the external homeland may have experienced border changes that have effectively cut it off from many of its co-nationals. It is common practice for any state to protect its citizens abroad, but the peculiar point about what we call kin-state relations is that citizenship is not a precondition. The claim to "protect" co-nationals is rather founded on ethnic belonging or linguistic, historic, and spiritual ties. But even if there is broad consensus among the elites to look after the interests of compatriots in neighboring countries, the agreement may end there. While some political actors might settle for a mild form of moral support, others are prepared to take a much more active stance, ranging from providing material or financial support to repatriation programs. Much of it is obviously rhetoric, such as complaining loudly about violations, imposing demands upon the host country, or talking about recapturing lost territories. In extreme cases, the external homeland may actually use its self-declared right to protect co-nationals as a pretext to wage war on a neighbor. Some minorities may ask for assistance from their kin nation. But rather frequently, the minority is reduced to a spectator, a pawn in the conflicts between the host nation and the external homeland.



As a heuristic tool, Brubaker's model for understanding contemporary kin-state relations in Europe has been met with some important criticism. One critique has focused on its reliance on interwar Poland to understand contemporary kin-state issues.[11] Others have focused on the concept of "nationalizing nationalism" and questioned whether it really differs substantially from the nation-building pursued by West European states at an earlier time.[12] But perhaps the most serious criticism of the model comes from a number of scholars who point out that it really should be a quadruple nexus which includes international organizations.[13] Unquestionably, the Council of Europe, the OSCE, and, in particular, the European Union have played vital roles in shaping kin-state relations on the continent since the end of the Cold War.[14] But exactly how strong the impact of normative pressure and conditionality have been is a matter of scholarly debate and hard to measure precisely – partly because former communist states entered the post-communist era with their own perceptions and expectations of Europe and the West.[15] As Vello Pettai has pointed out, "deriving generalized hypotheses about how the axes work becomes almost impossible to the extent that there is no longer any reality in the model, just subjectivity and multiple contestation".[16]

The role of diaspora in rebuilding Russia

One of the most pressing issues in the breakup of the Soviet Union was that some 40 million former Soviet citizens ended up outside their titular republic, more than half of them Russians residing outside the Russian Federation. This factor certainly had a profound impact on many of the former Soviet republics, not least on Russia itself. As the spiritual and ethnic homeland of 25 million co-nationals in the borderlands, there has also been wide consensus within Russia that the country has a right, and even a duty, to protect these groups. But other than that, there has in fact been no coherent, long-term strategy on what kind of role Russia should play in relation to other former Soviet republics. The formation of a Eurasian Economic Union, officially launched in January 2015 and initially comprising Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Armenia, and Kirgizstan, might thus be seen as the latest attempt to revive the ties between former Soviet republics – with Russia very much at the center stage. "Russia" is itself not a very homogenous and clearly designated entity, which may explain why it is often understood in a cultural or even *civilizatory* way, rather than in terms of ethnicity. A broad, non-ethnic under-

standing of Russia and Russian-ness undoubtedly makes it easier to reach out to former Soviet citizens who considered themselves spiritually linked to Russia and Russian culture. But this rather ambiguous understanding of Russian identity also carries drawbacks, as it has proved difficult to build a coherent policy towards external Russian communities around this loose concept. It also serves as a reminder of how difficult it is to pinpoint the extent and essence of Russia and Russian identity. Just before the fall of the USSR, the late Alexander Solzhenitsyn posed the question "What is Russia?"[17] The question seems to be as difficult to answer today as it was when the Soviet Union collapsed.

RUSSIAN POLICYMAKERS have used a range of terms to define Russia's relationship with Russians and Russian-speakers in neighboring countries, including "Russian diaspora" (*russkaia diaspora*), "Russian-speakers" or Russohones (*russkoiazychne*) and "compatriots" (*sootechestvennik*). More recently, the term "Russian world" (*russkii mir*) has been frequently employed, by Putin himself among others, to describe the bonds that allegedly unite Russian-speakers, Slavs or even Orthodox Christians. In the words of Kirill, the Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church, the "Russian world" is a distinct civilization whose unique spiritual and cultural values must be preserved.[19] A Russkii Mir Foundation was established by Putin in 2007 to promote the Russian language and "Russian values". Envisaging Russian-speaking communities worldwide as an "archipelago", architects of the "Russian world" concept have emphasized the vast potential in reaching out to Russians and Russian-speakers not only in neighboring countries, but also the diaspora beyond the post-Soviet space.[20] A global language community in the vein of the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie *La Francophonie* might itself seem like a rather benign idea. However, the scope of the *russkii mir* clearly goes well beyond a shared love for the Russian language and has eventually come to serve as a set of ideas that underpins Putin's evolving geopolitical doctrine, which also juggles distinct yet overlapping concepts like nationalism, imperialism, pan-Slavism, Eurasianism, and Soviet nostalgia.[21] Arguably, the Kremlin's approach to its "kin-minority" was for a long time quite incoherent and seemed to lack real clout. To put it differently, there was quite a bit of noise, but not much substance. This state of affairs might be linked with the fact that there is not really such a thing as a single Russian minority outside Russia: from Central Asia to the Baltic states, Russian communities are products of different circumstances.[22] But after the annexation of Crimea and the intervention in southeastern Ukraine, Moscow's approach to its neighbors and Russian-speakers beyond its borders has been sharpened to a significant degree and a full-scale irredentist agenda might indeed be on the table: to reunify "lost" territories inhabited by ethnic kinsmen with their mother country. Citizenship has turned out to be another vital tool for Russia vis-à-vis the "near abroad": the Russian citizenship law of 1993 allowed every citizen of the former USSR living outside Russia to become a Russian citizen by a simple procedure of registration. Hence, the law made it apparent that Russian-speakers living abroad would enjoy the protection of the Russian state. And after some intense promotion, substantial numbers of people were indeed persuaded to take Russian citizenship. Some of them, as in Estonia, were non-citizens, but most of them were already citizens of another state. Since most of these countries refuse to accept dual citizenship, the de facto dual citizens usually hide their Russian passports. It should be pointed out that ethnic affiliation or place of birth are not the sole criteria for obtaining Russian citizenship: in the run-up to the war with Georgia in 2008, Russian passports were widely distributed to people living in South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Most of them were not ethnic Russians. Nevertheless, by turning them into Russian citizens, Moscow could claim that it was intervening in order to "protect Russian citizens".[23] Conversely, the "right to protect" is by no means restricted to Russian citizens. Apparently "whole segments of the Russian world" may require Moscow's protection: "It has to be stated with sadness that a huge number of our compatriots abroad (...) continue to face serious problems in securing their rights and lawful interests", one Foreign Ministry official proclaimed, singling out the "creeping offensive against the Russian language" as one issue that Russia would not tolerate.[24] The "right to protect compatriots" became a pretext for intervening in Ukraine in the spring of 2014.

"UNQUESTIONABLY, THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE, THE OSCE, AND, IN PARTICULAR, THE EUROPEAN UNION HAVE PLAYED VITAL ROLES IN SHAPING KIN-STATE RELATIONS."

IN THE FOLLOWING, I will sketch out some of the most significant developments between Russia and co-nationals in Russia's "near abroad" from region to region.

A community of 4.5 million Russians comprise one-third of the total population of Kazakhstan. Although by far the largest and most important Russian population in Central Asia, this number is a significant drop from Soviet times. According to the Soviet census from 1989, the Russian-speaking share of the population was actually above the 50 percent mark. The region as a whole was, for a long time, seen as a Russian frontier – the wild east as it were.[25] But since the 1990s, large numbers of Russians have left Central Asia.[26] Today, northern Kazakhstan is practically the only significant area of Russian settlement. Although local Russians and Moscow alike complain about repression and exclusion, Russians do indeed make their presence felt in Kazakhstan. So does Russia – by far the country's most important trade partner. However, it is noteworthy that ethnic tensions between Russians and Kazakhs have rarely erupted. In 2000, the uncovering of an alleged Russian separatist plot heightened the tensions somewhat, perhaps also exposing the volatility of the region.[27] But the relative tranquility between the new Cen-

The EU is the larger administrative unit. Embracing all minorities on either side of the border.

tral Asian republics, their Russian minorities, and Russia itself partly comes down to large-scale suppression. The last thing the leaders of the region want is to unleash the forces of nationalism, which in Central Asia also have a pronounced religious dimension.[28] Without a strong nationalist agenda, the scope for Russian minority opposition is obviously reduced. This state of affairs stands in contrast to several post-Soviet states, including Ukraine and the Baltic countries.

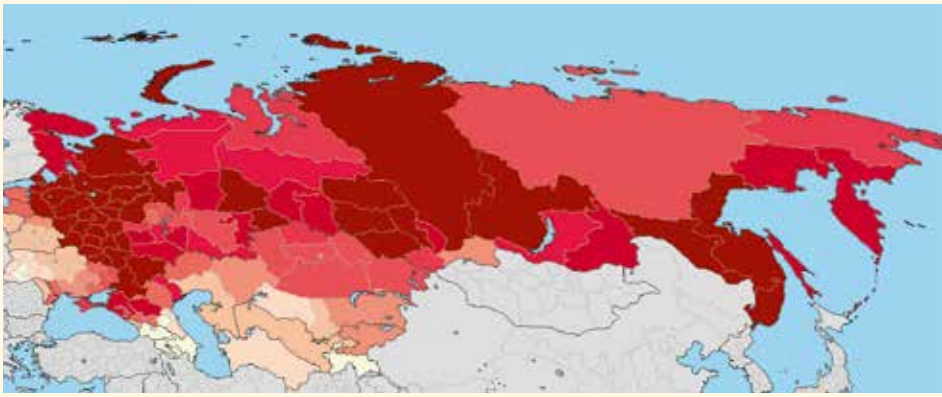


ILLUSTRATION: FUTURIST110 [CC0], VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Ethnic Russians in former Soviet Union states according to the most recent census.

THE PRESENCE OF ethnic Russians in the three former Soviet states in the Caucasus is almost negligible. But even though the proportion of ethnic Russians in Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia is comparatively small, the ties with Russia are often much more complex and volatile than those in Central Asia. The most significant and highly instructive example emerged in 2008, when ethnic violence broke out in the Georgian breakaway region of South Ossetia. Tbilisi had staged a campaign to bring South Ossetia and its fellow breakaway region Abkhazia back into the fold. Meanwhile, Russia pledged to protect its citizens abroad, citing Article 51 of the UN charter on the right of self-defense. Indeed, very few ethnic Russians live in the two regions, but virtually all South Ossetians and Abkhazians had been handed Russian citizenship beforehand.[29] The result was a brief but extremely disruptive war between Russia and Georgia in August 2008.

It was not the first time that post-Soviet Russia intervened militarily in its neighborhood. In 1992, the Moldovan enclave of Transdniestria – a region of only half a million inhabitants, evenly divided among Moldovans, Russians, and Ukrainians – broke with the rest of the country, causing a brief civil war. Tensions had been mounting for some time, and by the time war broke out, Russia's 14th Army – formerly the Soviet 14th Army, with headquarters in the Transdniestrian "capital" of Tiraspol – had been transformed into a fully-fledged army for opposition to Moldovan independence.[30] The ceasefire brokered by Russia imposed Russian peacekeepers on the region. The forces included a special Russian unit in addition to the 14th Army, which was rebranded the Operational Group of Russian Forces in Moldova. Russian forces were supposed to leave by 1997, but are still stationed in the self-proclaimed *Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic*. After the Russian annexation of Crimea, an issue evaluated below, the political temperature in Transdniestria might rise even further.

The Russian population of Moldova stands at a modest 6 percent. Another 8.5 percent are Ukrainians, many of them Russified denizens of Transdniestria. But this is a relatively small minority compared with the Russian and Russian-speaking population of Ukraine. Unlike Moldova, Ukraine shares a long border with Russia and is clearly of much greater importance for Russia. Russia has for centuries referred to Ukraine as "Little Russia". Once a geographical denotation, it is clearly a derogatory term to many Ukrainians today, but one that nevertheless illustrates the perception widely held among Russians that Ukraine is an indispensable part of Russia and Russian-ness. President Putin made this very clear in his speech in Crimea on March 18, 2014: "Our concerns are understandable because we are not simply close neighbors but, as I have said many times already, we are one people. Kiev is the mother of Russian cities. Ancient Rus is our common source and we cannot live without each other."

At eight million, the number of Russians in Ukraine comprises the largest Russian kin-minority anywhere.[31] They make up 17 percent of the total population, with a heavy concentration in the eastern part of the country, as well as in the annexed peninsula of Crimea in the south. The presence of many "Russified" ethnic Ukrainians in the east adds to this picture.[32] This ethno-geographical cleavage has had a serious impact on Ukrainian politics and at times threatened to pull the country in opposite directions, a possible scenario that has been emphasized by many analysts since the breakup of the Soviet Union,[33] Few analysts, however, could have predicted that the outcome would be the declaration of the Luhansk and Donetsk "people's republics" and a full-scale civil war in eastern Ukraine. Then again, this scenario would have been unimaginable without the larger picture: the protests at the Maidan, the ousting of the Yanukovych regime, and Russia's reactions to the events in Ukraine.

With its one million Russians, Crimea is in a place of its own. Transferred from the Russian to the Ukrainian SSR in 1954, partly as a friendship gesture and partly for practical reasons, it was also the only autonomous region of post-Soviet Ukraine. Generally pro-Moscow and accordingly anti-Kyiv, the Autonomous Republic of Crimea never quite accepted its fate as part of Ukraine. It is home to the Russian Black Sea fleet and several high-profile politicians in Russia had suggested for a long time that the peninsula ought to return to Russian hands, although Russia had recognized the territorial integrity of Ukraine.

ETHNIC RELATIONS on the peninsula are further complicated by the presence of Crimean Tatars, a minority that was deported en masse to Siberia and Central Asia by Stalin in 1944, but allowed to return during the Gorbachev era. Today there are almost

300,000 of them, and they have fought hard for ancient land rights but have often been met with hostility – particularly from the Russians. Because they are a disaffected Muslim minority, there has been fear that some Tartars might slide towards extremism.[34] In the hastily arranged referendum of March 2014, the Tatars were overwhelmingly against joining Russia and stayed home instead of voting. Their future in the Russian-held peninsula remains highly uncertain: their unofficial leader, Mustafa Dzhemilev, is barred from entering the peninsula and some Tatars have decided to emigrate.

There were certainly separatist aspirations to be found in Crimea before 2014, but they were little more than occasional harsh statements and some low-level violence. Nonetheless, there were evidently no guarantees that it would stay that way: Russia had quietly set the stage for a confrontation by handing out passports to Russian Crimeans – a practice it also followed in other former Soviet republics. Ukraine does not allow dual citizenship, but this did not deter large numbers of Russian Crimeans – all Ukrainian citizens since 1992 – from taking Russian citizenship. In 2008, this development prompted speculation about Crimea becoming the next South Ossetia: Russia was steadily whipping up tensions in the region and waiting for an excuse to step in on the pretext of defending its citizens.[35] By March 2014, these predictions took on an entirely new meaning when Russia – at a breathtaking pace – not only wrenched control of Crimea from Ukraine, but even incorporated it in the Russian Federation. This turn of events will certainly have repercussions on upcoming studies of kin-state politics and, more seriously, international relations.

RIGHTS OF CITIZENSHIP have been a major topic in the two Baltic states of Estonia and Latvia. Both countries took the radical step of denying automatic citizenship rights to residents (and their descendants) who had moved there during Soviet times. This move systematically affected the position of the Russian minority and other mainly Slavic immigrants in the two countries. The core argument, then as now, was that the countries had been annexed and occupied by the Soviet Union, and hence, immigration which had taken place during those years must be deemed illegal. Many nationalists demanded a large-scale exit of Soviet-era immigrants.[36] More pragmatic forces acknowledged that this was an improbable and impractical solution. They opted instead for gradual integration of Russian-speakers, but only within a more or less predefined national framework. After more than two decades of independence, many of Estonia's and Latvia's Soviet-era immigrants have finally become citizens, while an undisclosed number have opted for Russian citizenship (particularly in Estonia), and many remain stateless, although the latter numbers are steadily dropping. Meanwhile, relatively few have voted with their feet (i.e., moved to Russia or another former Soviet republic).

"AFTER MORE THAN TWO DECADES OF INDEPENDENCE, MANY OF ESTONIA'S AND LATVIA'S SOVIET-ERA IMMIGRANTS HAVE FINALLY BECOME CITIZENS."

Russia has quite skillfully managed to draw attention to the issue of stateless Russian minorities and alleged breaches of human rights and democratic deficits in Estonia and Latvia, appealing frequently to the EU and the Council of Europe.[37] However, there has been very little action from the Russian side. Given that Russia had some 130,000 troops stationed in the Baltic states during the early post-Soviet years, it could have turned out rather differently – perhaps on a par with what happened in Moldova's Transdniestria region. Russia did indeed use the issue of troops as a stick, threatening to halt – or even reverse – the withdrawal process unless Estonia and Latvia agreed to grant citizenship to all Russian-speakers.[38] But ultimately these attempts failed entirely. Several years later, Russia protested loudly against NATO membership for the Baltic states. But the issue never became a red line for Russia, as some analysts had anticipated.[39] In the meantime, Baltic-Russian ties hit another low in the spring of 2005, when the presidents of all the three Baltic countries were pondering the question of participation in the VE Day celebration in Moscow to mark the 60th anniversary of the victory over Nazi Germany. The Baltic leaders reasoned that, although it marked the end of the Second World War in most of Europe, it was also the beginning of another fifty years of occupation for the Baltic countries. Many believed that attending the ceremony would effectively amount to recognition of the Soviet annexation in 1940. The event sparked a heated debate about the Second World War history of the Baltic states: the three countries insist that Russia must apologize for the Soviet incorporation of the republics. But Russia was – and remains – completely unwilling to give in to these demands, maintaining that the term "occupation" cannot be used as a legal assessment of the situation: "The term 'occupation' cannot be used for legal assessment of the situation prevailing in the Baltic region in the late 30s of the past century because the USSR and the Baltic states were not in the state of war and no hostilities were on. The introduction of troops was done on the contractual basis and with manifest agreement from the then authorities of these republics, no matter what they are thought of", according to the Russian Foreign Ministry.[40]

MEANWHILE, RUSSIA OFFERED Estonia and Latvia border agreements to be signed in connection with the VE Day celebration. Fifteen years after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the border issues between the Baltic countries and Russia had yet to be resolved. Estonia and Latvia maintained that the peace treaties they had signed with Soviet Russia after the First World War were still valid. When the Baltic states were incorporated into the USSR, both Estonia and Latvia lost a certain amount of territory as a result of border revisions.[41] Theoretically, the claims about the peace treaties implied that the two countries had made territorial claims towards Russia, as Moscow argued. It was

evidently not the territories that concerned the two countries: if anything, a return of territory would only increase the number of Russians in their populations. Their purpose was rather to force Russia into recognizing the illegality of the Soviet annexation.[42]

Russia has for centuries seen the Baltic region as strategically vital to its security interests. From the beginning, the Russian Federation was reluctant to treat other Soviet successor states simply as foreign states, instead labeling them collectively as the "near abroad". On the other hand, since the breakup of the Soviet Union, the Baltic states have tried to distance themselves from the rest of the former Soviet region as much as possible, politically, economically, and culturally. Meanwhile, the more Russian nationalists and communists talked about "restoring the old Soviet borders", the more the Baltic leaders were inclined to turn to the West for protection. Independence from Russian influence became a matter of survival. As of 2015, not only fringe groups talk about restoring the Soviet borders. In the Baltic capitals, tensions are running high.

Hungary and the wound of Trianon

After the breakup of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Hungary was severely reduced in size. Validating the military advances of the Romanian, Czech, and Yugoslav armies after the war, the Treaty of Trianon (1920) stripped the country of no less than two-thirds of its territory. Some of it went to Czechoslovakia, other parts to Yugoslavia, while the entire region of Transylvania went to Romania. Hungary regained some of the territories in its alliance with Nazi Germany, but inevitably lost them again after the Second World War. The Trianon Treaty did not of course just mean a major territorial loss; Hungary also lost three-fifth of its population (including many people of non-Magyar origin). Today around 3 million Magyars reside outside Hungary. Hungary itself has some 10 million inhabitants.

There can be no doubt that Hungary, a defeated power, was treated harshly by the Allies after the First World War. The Austro-Hungarian Empire was an obvious target for the victorious powers, which, led by the USA, were bent on breaking up Europe's multi-ethnic empires permanently. But the Hungarian part of the empire arguably lost much more than its imperial assets. While the Allies seemed to consider some lost territories as colonial possessions, Hungary saw them as core parts of Hungary. The Magyar population of Transylvania, Ruthenia (Transcarpathia/Zakarpattia), Vojvodina, and Upper Hungary (Slovakia) stood at approximately 30 percent. In some areas, such as Transylvania, partition could quite easily have followed ethnic lines, but the Allies wanted none of it. The various regions were instead granted to Hungary's neighbors. Strikingly, Hungary lost on every count. Hence, it is hardly surprising that Hungary went through a long period of national

A Cossack patrol near the Baku oil fields, 1905.

trauma and political turmoil after Trianon.[43] The pact with Nazi Germany notwithstanding, it is noteworthy that no wars broke out over the 1920 settlement. Nor were there any major outbreaks of violence between any of the host states and their Magyar minorities in the interwar period.

In the aftermath of the Second World War, the Magyar minority groups did not perhaps face as dramatic a fate as the Germans did. The Czechoslovakian government in exile, led by Edvard Beneš, had wanted to expel all "disloyal" minorities, but failed to receive acceptance from the Allied powers for a wholesale expulsion of the Magyars.[44] But like Magyars in Transylvania and Vojvodina, many were stripped of their citizenship and property. Some were expelled, while others escaped to Hungary. A limited population transfer also took place. The Magyars of Ruthenia probably faced the bleakest prospects when they became a part of the Ukrainian SSR. It cut them off from Magyars elsewhere and they were given no autonomy within the USSR.

The imposition of a communist dictatorship never did away with ethnic tensions, but unquestionably put a firm hold on them. When the communist regimes of the region fell in quick succession, the minority question returned to its former prominence. Hungary's first post-communist leader, József Antall, declared that he wished to be "the spiritual prime minister for 15 million Magyars".[45] The statement irked Romanian and Slovak officials, who saw it as part of a shadowy irredentist plot to undo the territorial settlement of Trianon.[46] Antall's suggestion that some of the post-Habsburg states were "artificial political creations" did not improve matters. Partly inspired by the German reunification, but also by the Slovenian and Croatian aspirations to independence from Yugoslavia, Hungarian officials openly began to advocate border revisions.[47] While criticism from Brussels, Washington, and Western governments seemed surprisingly muted in the beginning, domestic opposition parties flatly rejected such talk, suggesting that Hungary instead had to make it very clear that she had no intention of acquiring any of her neighbors' territories, either by force or by peaceful means.[48]

For their part, Romanian and Slovak officials happily joined in on this ethno-political spat. Slovakia made a huge leap in a

Tsar Nicholas II among his troops during World War I.

nationalist direction when the Czechs and Slovaks decided to go their separate ways. Before the "velvet divorce", Prague had appeared to be rather accommodating towards Magyar minority demands, even supporting the idea of a Magyar university in Bratislava.[49] But it was ultimately Vladimír Mečiar, not Václav Havel, who ruled in Slovakia. The Magyars had been opposed to Slovak independence. In the new republic, Slovak became the sole official language and the constitution made no reference to the more than one in ten Slovak citizens of minority background. Hungary protested and tried to add strict conditions for the Slovak candidacy of the Council of Europe, even attempting to block its entry when these conditions fell through.[50] But Hungary's leverage was limited. Subsequently, the Magyar minority had to put up with a rather orthodox policy of Slovakization and electoral manipulation of boundaries throughout the 1990s. Before he was ousted from power in 1998, Mečiar even proposed a "voluntary" population exchange between the two countries.[51]

BUT A CHANGE of direction did in the end occur when a large coalition government, which included a party serving Magyar interests, the Hungarian Coalition, replaced the increasingly authoritarian Mečiar government. The new government was preparing for EU membership and introduced a new language law that pleased the Magyar minority and, not least, the European Commission. The inclusion of the far-right Slovak National Party in the government in 2006 certainly increased the pressure on the minority question. Infamous for his radical remarks, the National Party leader Ján Slota remarked that the "Hungarians are the cancer of the Slovak nation, without delay we need to remove them from the body of the nation."[52] Shortly afterwards, his proposal to re-enact the Beneš Decrees was adopted by the National Assembly with the support of a large majority. Members of the Czech parliament had had their minds fixed on former Sudeten Germans when they had voted for a similar bill five years earlier. The Slovaks had the Magyars in mind. The decrees had led directly to the expulsion of about 2.6 million Germans and 100,000 Magyars from Czechoslovakia, and remain a point of contention between the Czech Republic and Slovakia and their neighbors Germany, Austria and Hungary to this day. The Czech rationale for confirming the decrees had a lot to do with fears of opening a floodgate of claims from expelled Germans and their families. The Slovaks may also have been worried about restitution demands, but the decision also smacked of chauvinism and revanchism – particularly since a far-right party had first proposed it. Slovakia's lawmakers must surely have known that to continue imposing collective guilt on the large Magyar population would affect interethnic relations in the country and infuriate Hungary, the external actor. The relationship between the Slovakian government, on the one hand, and the Hungarian minority and Hungary itself, on the other, hit another low in 2009 when Slovakia introduced an amended language law, which severely limits the use of minority languages. Under this law, only Slovak can be used for official communication, but the law is rather vague in determining what constitutes "official communication", particularly in regard to private businesses and associations.[53] Infringements are punishable by fines of up to 5,000 euros.[54]

UNLIKE SLOVAKIA, ROMANIA is not a new, nationalizing state. But even though Romania was not a recent, insecure state, ethnic relations in the country looked rather unpromising in the mid-1990s. Romania's problems stemmed from the particularly harsh and nationally-minded brand of communism championed by Nicolae Ceaușescu. Relations between the government and ethnic minority groups were immediately improved after his sudden downfall: the interim National Salvation Front made overtures to the Magyar minority by promising proportional representation, and even spoke of reopening the Magyar-speaking University in the Transylvanian city of Cluj. But this peaceful state of affairs would not last long. As in Slovakia, but in an intriguing contrast to many of the Russian communities outside Russia, the Magyars were unified and politically well organized. From the start, the Hungarian Democratic Federation of Romania (HDFR) successfully captured the Magyar voters, who have continued to rally around the party. A vocal and self-assured party, the HDFR rallied against the constitution in the early 1990s, since it offered no guarantees for specific minority rights, such as the use of Hungarian in public. More irking for many Romanians, the party sent a complaint to the Council of Europe, accusing the government of colluding with ultra-nationalists.[55] The party went a step further than the Slovak Magyars when it pressed for territorial autonomy, a demand that was flatly rejected by the rest of the political establishment. The party also suggested a law that would give minorities status as autonomous groups with collective rights, which were ignored.[56]

Romania, for its part, had indeed made a turn in a nationalist direction in the early 1990s. Two strongly nationalist parties started to make their presence felt just as the mainstream conservative parties shifted to a more nationalist orientation. Transylvania became a battleground in the standoff between nationalists and Magyars. The former did well in national and local elections and became a force to be reckoned with. Tensions reached a boiling point when nationalists started a local

campaign to remove all symbols of Magyar culture and history.[57] But the situation improved after the elections in 1996, which produced a coalition of moderate Romanian parties and the HDFR. The latter was forced to lower some of its demands, including territorial autonomy, but successfully bargained for bilingualism in towns and regions where Magyars made up at least 20 per cent of the population, as well as for schooling in Hungarian.[58]

Romania also earned international recognition for implementing the Charter on Regional and Minority Languages and the Framework Convention on the Protection of Minorities (both Council of Europe documents).These improvements coincided with Romania's application for membership in the European Union. Despite some wrangling between Bucharest and Budapest, including early attempts to block Romania's entry to the Council of Europe, it is noteworthy that Hungary remained supportive of the Romanian EU bid.[59] Hungary was presumably concerned about the fate of the 1.5 million Romanian Magyars, if Romania had not become part of the Union. EU membership opens up possibilities for interaction among Magyars that were unimaginable in the past.

In the meantime, Hungary passed a controversial Status Law in 2001, which granted a range of privileges to Hungarians living beyond the borders of Hungary. They included educational opportunities, work permits, and access to health care and social security normally only granted to Hungarian citizens. The aim was to "ensure that Hungarians living in neighboring countries form part of the Hungarian nation as a whole and to promote and preserve their well-being and awareness of national identity within their home country".[60]

THIS CREATED A VERITABLE STORM of protests from Romanian and Slovakian officials, who accused Hungary of undermining their sovereignty, interfering in domestic affairs, hinting at extraterritorial claims, and breaching regular conduct of inter-state relations.[61] Three years later, Hungarian voters had the opportunity to further strengthen these ties when they were asked in a referendum if Hungarians living in neighboring states should receive preferential naturalization if they wished to become Hungarian citizens. The proposal came about because the World Federation of Hungarians managed to collect the required 200,000 signatures to stage the referendum. A wafer-thin majority did support the proposal, but it fell through due to a turnout of only 37.5 percent. This time it was the Magyars outside Hungary who were furious, staging demonstrations and threatening to cut ties with their spiritual homeland.[62] Meanwhile, the defeat could, at the time, be interpreted as a sign that Hungary had, despite the considerable support for the proposal among elites and ordinary citizens alike, finally come to terms with the fact that it was better off as a nation state than a bitter ex-empire. But with the stunning victory of Fidesz in the 2010 parliamentary election, a bill allowing dual citizenship for Hungarians in other countries put even more strain on the troubled relationship between Hungary and her neighbors. The new government quickly changed the citizenship law, allowing Magyars residing outside Hungary to become citizens. They were initially not to be allowed to vote in Hungarian parliamentary elections, a restriction that was scrapped in 2011. Slovak officials had warned that Hungarians in Slovakia who took Hungarian citizenship would be stripped of their Slovak citizenship. Nevertheless, around half a million individuals, many of them from Slovakia, had become Hungarian citizens by the time new parliamentary elections were held in 2014. Not surprisingly, the new citizens overwhelmingly endorsed Fidesz.

Kin-state relations and European norms

When Hungary passed its Status Law in 2001, Romania and Slovakia claimed that it ran counter to international law. Romania went on to ask the Council of Europe's Venice Commission to examine the compatibility of the law with the norms of the European Union. Predictably, the verdict was mixed: in its report, the commission carefully avoided direct criticism of Hungary, but also acknowledged that the Romanian allegations were in part were justified.[63] Indeed, the Venice Commission seems to share with Romania a critical approach to the basic tenets of the law. The Romanian position may of course have been born of convenience rather than conviction: it is worth keeping in mind that Bucharest wrestles with similar dilemmas as Budapest in relation to Moldova. In fact, both Slovakia and Romania have their own status laws, albeit more limited than Hungary's.

But the practical and essentially self-serving calculations of individual countries aside, what are the prevalent attitudes in Brussels towards kin-state relations – if any? The European Union does have a policy on minority protection, but its Community law says little about *standards* of minority protection – which leaves plenty of scope for independent action among its member states. Since 1993, however, all new and aspiring EU members have been bound by the Copenhagen criteria, which indirectly also involve becoming a signatory of the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM). But what the EU does not have is a clear policy concerning kin-minority protection, which makes it rather difficult to assess the appropriateness of Hungary's Status Law. True, Article 12 of the EC Treaty explicitly forbids all discrimination based on nationality.[64] The catch is that the Status Law cannot be said to discriminate in terms of *nationality*, but rather of language and ethnic origin. The FCNM is itself open to different interpretations on this point. But as long as Hungary unambiguously respects the territorial sovereignty of other states, treaties that have been signed, and good neighborly relations among states, as well as fundamental principles of human rights and anti-discrimination,

> "WITHOUT A STRONG NATIONALIST AGENDA, THE SCOPE FOR RUSSIAN MINORITY OPPOSITION IS OBVIOUSLY REDUCED."

Hungarian traditional costumes. Illustration for *Il costume antico e moderno* by Giulio Ferrario, 1831.

PHOTO: DRAGOSASAFTEI

Magyar folk assembly.

there is little to suggest that the Status Law directly violates the EU's basic principles. Moreover, the idea of a transnational language community is not unheard of in Western Europe. By way of example, France cultivates links with French-speakers elsewhere through the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie.

HOWEVER, THE HUNGARIAN approach seems to go several steps further than La Francophonie in linking its national interests with those of Hungarians in other countries. When Viktor Orbán, several times prime minister of Hungary, asserted that "the future of Hungary lies not in the Hungary of 10 million but in the Hungarian nation of 15 million,"[65] he echoed his predecessor József Antall's wish from the early 1990s to be a "spiritual prime minister for 15 million Hungarians". Moreover, he made it clear that the days of extraterritorial politics are not yet over in Europe. And Hungary is not the only country in the region to have a clause on "preferential treatment of co-nationals abroad" in its constitution: Croatia, Macedonia, Poland, Slovakia, and Romania are cases in point, albeit of less importance than Hungary.[66] But whether the spirit of kin-state relations can be accommodated within the liberal framework of the European Union is a moot question. To grant special provisions to a particular ethnic group in terms of, say, education is certainly pushing the boundaries of kin-state politics beyond the acceptable for many member states. It might also be a challenge for the liberal institutional framework of Europe to try to define "ethnicity" in legal terms.

The issue of kin-state relations is undoubtedly far more complex in the case of Russia than Hungary. Although Moscow actively makes use of European platforms – the Council of Europe, the European Court of Justice and even the European Union – to pursue its interests and to voice its opinions, Russia is not a member of the EU and hence not bound by its regulations and codes of behavior. Russia appears to be unwilling and unable to come to terms with the loss of an empire and to redefine her role in world politics as something other than a superpower. Given the assertion that the Russian approach to neighboring countries is highly intertwined with domestic issues, one of the most alarming undercurrents of Russian politics has been the way nationalists and hardliners have exploited the diaspora issue. However, what used to be a fringe position has been elevated to the mainstream in Russia since Putin started his third presidency. At the time of writing, Russia has already annexed Crimea and is asserting its power in eastern Ukraine. Since the military intervention in Georgia in 2008, Russia has also insisted that it has a "duty" to protect its "citizens" abroad.[67]

The 25 million-plus Russians residing outside Russia (which does not include all those who are Russian-speakers) may not share a pronounced Russian identity, but they certainly have one important characteristic in common: the legacy of the Soviet Union and their fate as ethnic minorities in post-Soviet states. Although many of them might not care much about a "common destiny", this factor is nevertheless a powerful weapon in the hands of hardliners within Russia. There have been speculations about a revanchist Russia since the early 1990s: Russia had "lost" the Cold War, its global status and much of its territory. Meanwhile, former satellite states joined ranks with "the other side" and the borders of NATO rapidly moved much closer to Russia itself. Russian leaders and many ordinary citizens have expressed that they were being "humiliated" by the West. The loss of the Soviet Union also became a source of mourning and regret. On the eve of the VE celebration in 2005, Putin declared that the collapse of the Soviet Union was the biggest geopolitical catastrophe of the 20th century. Almost a decade later, he declared that the "Russian nation became one of the biggest, if not the biggest ethnic group in the world to be divided by borders."[68] Many observers have drawn parallels to interwar Germany and the way Adolf Hitler sold his message of humiliation at Versailles and promises of restoring German pride. There are also parallels to the exploitation of some 10 million Germans in other countries as a pretext to invade Germany's neighbors. By March 2014, these parallels no longer seemed so far-fetched. By annexing a part of a sover-

eign state, Russia had turned the most pessimistic predictions into reality. Whether it stops at Crimea remains a moot question.

Concluding remarks

In this article I have argued that the fall of communism – and the fall of several multi-ethnic federations, in particular –revived old territorial conflicts and hostility among national groups both within and between states. It also put the question of kin-state relations at the forefront of European minority issues. The kin-state issue is by no means a new one, but its political relevance had practically vanished in Western Europe (with few notable exceptions, such as Northern Ireland and Cyprus). The notion of collective minority protection in Western Europe had rather low priority immediately after the Second World War, and was almost ignored. The experience of war and extermination made West European leaders staunchly favor promoting individual rights at the expense of collective rights. The liberal state would, it was maintained, ensure fairness and equality regardless of ethnic belonging. But the rapid increase of new minorities as a result of immigration in the 1960s and 1970s eventually forced a re-thinking of minority strategies. Instead of pretending that ethnic identities were not important, many European countries moved towards a much more active policy of minority protection, fully endorsing the idea of ethnic diversity and multiculturalism.[69] At the same time, the notion of collective rights was embedded in agreements on minority protection, notably in the 1995 Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. However, it is important to keep in mind that the emphasis on individual rights and anti-discrimination was not abandoned in favor of collective rights. The latter merely became a *supplement* to the former.

In certain respects, the communist half of the continent followed a parallel development. Nationalism did not disappear under communism, even after the extensive migration and expulsions that took place just after the Second World War. But nationalist sentiment was heavily wrapped in officially sanctioned Marxist-Leninist rhetoric. Hence, there was a lot of public denial concerning minority issues. On a pragmatic level, the communist states often made generous provisions and even provided institutional platforms for minority groups. But whereas many Western European states, together with the EU, CoE, and OSCE, gradually came around to a more proactive approach to minority questions, the sudden implosion of the communist model exposed a great deal of antagonism between ethnic groups and states in Central and Eastern Europe. Kin-state politics re-emerged either as a result of state disintegration (Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union) or because old and essentially unresolved territorial issues re-emerged (such as those resulting from the Peace of Trianon and even the postwar borders between Poland and Germany). Traditional kin-states have asserted their "duty" to protect and speak up for their kinsmen in neighboring countries and have often accused the host states of neglecting or even mistreating their minorities. The host states, on the other hand, have been provoked by what they see as meddling in internal affairs. They have also been suspicious about potentially disloyal minorities, apprehensive that these groups would betray them under pressure. Meanwhile, the minorities have often protested against what they believe is a form of ethnocide – the scope for expressing their identity being dismantled. They sometimes seek support from their external homeland to halt this process, or the homeland may protest first. In the end, it is difficult to judge who exactly is provoking whom.

UNRESOLVED KIN-STATE RELATIONS have increasingly become a Europe-wide issue and might eventually change the way that European organizations like the EU, CoE, and OSCE handle them. While, for instance, all EU member states have committed themselves to a predefined framework on minority protection, they are also in a position to put their mark on this framework. While the conclusions of the Venice Commission's report on Hungary's Status Law seem somewhat ambiguous, it is clear that the participation in the EU of countries like Hungary, Slovakia, and Romania (the latter actually being in a double position with its approach towards Moldova) will shape Europe's approach to kin-state relations in the years to come.

How can we envisage the role of kin-state politics in the Europe of the future? It is evident that the approach taken by Hungary towards its co-nationals in other states has stirred up conventional notions of sovereignty and non-interference – cornerstones of the Westphalian state. But the European Union is itself challenging the time-honored state system in several respects. Some scholars are pondering the emergence of a post-Westphalian Europe – a neo-medieval empire with pooled sovereignty and porous borders.[70] In such a perspective, the Hungarian approach might not be so out of touch. It arguably points to a Europe of *national* rather than *state* sovereignty.[71] On the other hand, the Status Law is more reminiscent of a neo-medieval Europe than a cosmopolitan, post-national Europe. More problematic still, it may have repercussions in other parts of Europe, notably in candidate countries in the Western Balkans; it also demonstrates that kin-state politics remains a source of nationalist resistance to the EU project.[72]

"THE APPROACH TAKEN BY HUNGARY TOWARDS ITS CO-NATIONALS IN OTHER STATES HAS STIRRED UP CONVENTIONAL NOTIONS OF SOVEREIGNTY AND NON-INTERFERENCE."

With regard to Europe beyond the European Union, I have discussed Russia's position vis-à-vis its neighbors, including the current EU members Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. While Russia is not asking for EU membership, other countries in the region might want to join – although none are likely to receive an invitation from Brussels soon. In order to overcome the growing barrier between insiders and outsiders, the EU has designed a European

Hostility is easily evoked in kin-state relations. This might lead to violence.

Neighborhood Policy (ENP), whose heavy emphasis on cross-border development between communities across the external EU borders could point towards a novel form of kin-state relations among EU members and between EU countries and adjacent states. However, Moscow's own ambitions in the very same neighborhood are strongly at odds with Brussels' evolving framework: the drawn-out battle for Ukraine might ultimately determine the shape of European kin-state politics in the 21st Century.

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UKRAINE: THINKING TOGETHER
"HISTORY DOES NOT HAPPEN BY ITSELF"

An international solidarity-cum-discussion conference concerning the Maidan revolution and its effects took place almost one year ago, in Kiev, during five days in May 2014. "Ukraine: Thinking Together" was arranged by the Krytyka Institute in Kiev, in cooperation with the American historian Timothy Snyder and Leon Wieseltier from the American news magazine *The New Republic*. The conference featured over 50 panelists, of whom 21 were Ukrainian, and gathered over 300 participants in the big hall of the Diplomatic Academy of Ukraine in Kiev. Seven panel seminars were arranged in sequence around specific questions, and in different languages, simultaneously interpreted to the auditorium.

The first panel, conducted in Russian, had been asked to address the question "Do rights make us human?" The panel chose to link the issue of human rights to values. Panelist Sergei Lukashevsky, director of the Andrei Sakharov Museum in Moscow, stated that in Russia, human rights are supposed to be defended by the Constitution, but have in reality become powerless. The Russian writer Victor Erofeyev defined Euromaidan and the conflict with Russia as a war about values and thus an existential conflict. While the Cold War was about life or death, "this war is about how to live". Erofeyev emphasized that the West is too heavily focused on the western parts of Russia, which is predominantly pro-Western. But now, "The strong center strikes back in its archaic Russian tradition – the world is our enemy, but we are closer to God. Europe has lost its soul, but we have our soul intact."

DEPLORING THAT NUANCES perish during conflict, the historian and journalist Konstantin Skorkin reported that, in Luhansk, many students who previously discussed matters in terms of nuances and complications, now see only black and white. However, it seems clear that many in Eastern Ukraine want the old system back. While liberty was welcomed after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the development of more and more European values in the country has alienated many, who now have turned back towards Russia. Josef Zissels, chairman of the Association of Jewish Organisations and Communities in Ukraine, suggested that the country encompasses two different identities, a European one and a Eurasian one. All elections have followed this division. While the line between them moves, the difference stays. Furthermore, one identity should not be imposed on the other – they should meet and respect each other. "Ukrainians in the East need time; Ukrainians in the West did not become European overnight."

Maintaining that "history repeats itself", Karel Schwarzenberg declared, "Now we are back to where we were in the twentieth century, where peace is a dream." After having fought many years to destroy the Ukrainian business sector, Russia now needs to be confronted, he argued. While Putin, according to Schwarzenberg, "has been successful in lifting the army out of its shambles, he still sees that he would never survive a military conflict with the West, so he developed this new tactic." Mykhailo Minakov, director of the Krytyka Institute, concluded that now there is a genuine opportunity to establish a third Ukrainian Republic. The most important task at the moment is constructive destruction, bringing down the old system. Oligarchs already seem to be moving back into their positions of power and corruption, according to Minakov.

CONFERENCE INITIATOR Timothy Snyder also emphasized that "we can make history, and through our analysis, we can contribute to change – history does not happen by itself." Now that this revolution has happened, we should expect a counterrevolution. And as the Maidan revolution had a European character, the counterrevolution must also be European. What Putin is offering "is his alternative kind of democracy: in effect, fascism. We need to be present; this is an important opportunity to meet his offer. And we need to keep together the Europe of Faith and the Europe of Rules, the two must not be split." To this, the French philosopher and author Bernard-Henri Lévy commented, "Vladimir Putin is a chess player."

Timothy Snyder was one of the enthusiastic organizers of the conference.

"While we think that Russia is attacking Ukraine," opined the Ukrainian philosopher and essayist Volodymyr Yermolenko, "the Russians feel that they are counterattacking in response to another attack. They refer to Hitler and Napoleon, and would probably ultimately be prepared to march on Berlin and Paris." He also emphasized that the issue now in Ukraine should not be federalization at all but decentralization, which is badly needed in the country. Closing the fourth panel, Bernard Kouchner noted that Putin is supported by both the radical right and the radical left in the EU. "We need to shock Europe. We should speak about European values – why did we create the EU in the first place? All this is actually being challenged by Russia today, something that may ultimately lead to war."

krister eduards

Former counselor at the Swedish Embassy in Moscow.

Note: A full report on the conference in Kiev can be found on the Baltic Worlds website.

Snyder's conference is still talked about, one year later. We saw it coming!

REVOLUTIONS AND THEIR AFTERMATH. A YEAR AFTER EUROMAIDAN

The round table "Revolutions and their aftermath: A year after Euromaidan" was dedicated to the first anniversary after the mass protests in Ukraine. The scholars from Ukraine, Germany, and Sweden who specialize in history, regionalism, gender, social movements, and mass media gathered together to discuss the legacies of the events that led to the regime change in the country.

From the perspective of the use of history, Euromaidan became a space for a re-actualization of the process of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* – coming to terms with the past, as the historian from Ruhr University Olena Petrenko argued. On the example of the use of history during the street protests, she demonstrated how Soviet and anti-Soviet legacies – respectively represented through such historical topics as Cossackdom and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) – reinforced each other in producing revolutionary symbols for mobilizing purposes.

THE SOCIOLOGIST FROM Kyiv Mohyla Academy Tamara Martseniuk stressed that through studying women's participation in mass protests one can better understand the diversity of Euromaidan. It proved to be a heterogeneous space with grassroots initiatives where traditional gender stereotypes were both reaffirmed and contested. Commenting on women's role in the protests, Martsenuik emphasized that women were not helpers (as they are often perceived) but *makers of* the revolution. She concluded that as a result of Euromaidan one can observe a general shift in Ukrainian society. In contrast to the situation after the Orange Revolution, when the people lost their interest in self-organization the moment Yushchenko came to power, since Euromaidan people feel their own responsibility for their future, thus the locus of control is internalized and solutions to problems are looked for inside the community and not outside, in the government, etc.

In her presentation on regionalism in Ukraine, the political scientist Valentyna Romanova argued that the reason for the mass protests was the lack of institutions which could bring the change demanded by civil society. One of the most obvious consequences of Euromaidan was the beginning of decentralization which is seen by many experts as a necessary step towards the democratization of the country.

ONE OF THE LEADING Ukrainian intellectuals, Mykola Riabchuk, stressed that we should be careful when speaking about Ukraine as a community divided along ethnic or language lines. If there is a division, then it is based on value differences. He argued that the Russian annexation of Crimea and the Russian invasion contributed to the consolidation of the nation: what we can observe now in Ukraine is the civic nation in the process of formation.

The Swedish journalist Torgny Hinnemo saw a huge discrepancy between what he learned from books on Ukraine and what he observed in Ukraine during his 25 years of travelling through the country. He stressed that the language and ethnic issues are too exaggerated in the literature, while people are more concerned with corruption and low standards of living.

Jakob Hedenskog from the Swedish Defense Research Agency argued that, according to international observers, the Russian intervention in Ukraine had nothing to do with defense of Russian compatriots. It was a geopolitical move that was seen by Russia to be in its own geopolitical interest. Yet, the longer the war continues, the more expensive it gets for Russia to keep it going. He stressed that by its aggression in Ukraine Russia is trying to destroy the European security architecture. Thus, what is going on in Ukraine is directly connected to Europe, but the leaders of the European Union often underestimate the impact of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict on their own countries.

The round table contributed to a deeper understanding of events, too complex to put into clear-cut categories and well-established explanatory schemata of Ukraine as a divided community or as an arena of geopolitical power games.

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Note: The round table was organized by the Ukraine Research Group under the patronage of the Center for Baltic and East European Studies (CBEES), and financed by the Baltic Sea Foundation (Östersjöstiftelsen). A full-length report can be found on the web.

Euromaidan protesters fill central Kyiv on December 1, 2013.
PHOTO: NWSSA GNATOUSH

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Baltic Worlds special section

BALTIC WORLDS
Special section 1–2/2015

Guest editors: Liudmila Voronova, Ekaterina Kalinina, and Ulrika Dahl
Illustration: Ragni Svensson

Introduction. Gender and post-Soviet discourses

During the last decade, the debates about social transformations in post-Soviet countries have mainly been focused on whether these processes have come to an end, what kind of trajectory they have or had, and, most importantly, whether it is possible to place countries so different from one another under the common rubric "post-Soviet".[1]

In this issue, we take up this discussion using the framework of gender studies, providing the reader with the perspectives of researchers who have lived or worked in the "post-Soviet countries" and whose research is primarily concerned with that space.

The idea to put together this special Baltic Worlds section, "Gender and post-Soviet discourses", was much inspired by a workshop with the same name that took place in May 2013 at Södertörn University.[2] We realized that despite the numerous academic and public discussions about gender transitions in the post-Soviet and, more broadly, post-communist and post-socialist space.[3] there is an urgent need to reach a deeper understanding of the everyday discursive practices implicated in these changes. We follow the lead suggested by the prior research in this field by discussing the presence of history in what are now defined as "post" discourses, by talking about the Western-Eastern symbolic axis that runs through both the cultural space and the academic perspectives, and by highlighting the political nature of gender issues.

The Soviet past appears in the articles of this issue as a common denominator that apparently has never dissolved and now more and more visibly determines the present, defines the everyday in the most bizarre and unexpected forms. The authors highlight the different sides of what Alexander Etkind and several other scholars refer to as the "conservative revolution" of the beginning of the 21st century.[4] This revolution, as we see it, becomes the third one to mark the post-Soviet countries as belonging to the same space: although scholars have talked about the "post" countries in relation to the two modernist revolutions of the 20th century – the socialist/communist and the capitalist,[5] – it is this third, *counter-counterrevolution* that to a large extent forms the gender discourses of today. The main aim of this revolution, as we understand it, is to articulate the uniqueness of the given national culture by referring to "roots" and "origins", which in many countries of the post-Soviet space in fact leads to a strengthening of traditionalism and patriarchy.[6] Paradoxically, in this search for originality, the countries use the same technologies and tools as every other country and follow the global trend of establishing their "unique national identity".

What does this tendency mean to the scholars focusing on gender issues? Our contributors show that gender today becomes not only a political issue, but also a political trigger. It becomes a platform for political domination and ideology mainstreaming as well as for political activism and engagement. Whether our authors talk about online political activists, the portrayal of Fathers of the Nation, or comic books and education, gender appears as a conjunction between the past and the present, where the established present seems not to recognize the past, but at the same time eagerly reenacts the past discourses of domination.

These discourses of domination are constructed through various dimensions. In this issue, we try to provide an intersectional perspective on gender in post-Soviet discourses in which the contributors focus not only on gender, but also on class, ethnic, racial, and religious background, and on sexual identity.

The issue opens with an article by Madina Tlostanova, who looks at the importance and specificity of the geopolitical positioning in postsocialist gendered discourses using Central Asia and the Caucasus as graphic examples and highlighting the intersection of the postsocialist and the postcolonial.

Ilkin Mehrabov continues the discussion on the southern Caucasus by addressing the political challenges and threats to female online activists and journalists in Azerbaijan. His main focus is on state *surveillance apparatuses*, both online and offline.

The role of the state in defining the limits of women's presence in the public sphere and public space is also discussed by Ekaterina Vikulina, who turns to the political meanings behind the prevalence of paternalistic images in Soviet and post-Soviet photography.

Daria Dmitrieva continues the discussion of representations of masculinity by turning to early post-Soviet comics, discovering that comic art becomes a form of sublimation of post-Soviet trauma.

Despite the evident need for research in the subfield of masculinity studies, thanks to Tetyana Bureychak's thorough overview, we learn that masculinity studies have not succeeded in becoming established as an academic discipline in Ukraine – nor in the rest of the post-Soviet countries.

Rounding out the issue is Yulia Grad-

skova's essay, which reveals some of the possible reasons behind the problems we have highlighted in this introduction, one of which is gender equality being "lost in translation" into national languages and local discourses.

We are delighted that this issue appears as a forum for both emerging and established scholars who are engaging in an exciting discussion about gender and post-Soviet discourses.

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1 The post-Soviet space includes 15 independent states that emerged from the Soviet Union after its dissolution in 1991. The 15 states form five groups: the Russian Federation (recognized as a successor state to the USSR); the Baltic states – Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania; East-Central Europe – Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova; the Southern Caucasus – Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia; and Central Asia – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

2 The workshop "Gender and Post-Soviet Discourses" was sponsored by the Centre for Baltic and East European Studies (CBEES) at Södertörn University and by the academic network CERES (http://www.helsinki.fi/aleksanteri/ceres/).

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contents

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Postcolonial post-Soviet trajectories

and intersectional coalitions

by **Madina Tlostanova**

abstract

The article considers the centrifugal trajectories of the postsocialist world in the direction of the secondary Europe and the global South as seen through the prism of gender relations and at the intersection of the postsocialist and the postcolonial. The author focuses on the importance and specificity of geopolitical positioning in postsocialist gendered discourses using Central Asia and the Caucasus as graphic examples. Some attention is given to the analysis of border tricksterism as it is expressed in gender theorizing coming from the non-European post-Soviet ex-colonies, and to the issue of the continuous invisibility of these theories and practices for the larger feminist frame – both Western and non-Western — which continues to hinder successful coalitions.

KEY WORDS: postcolonial condition, post-Soviet women, intersectionality, feminist coalitions, geopolitics of knowledge.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, many nations and ethnicities artificially collected under the umbrella of the Soviet empire – the so-called Second World of the Cold War era – have started their centrifugal movement away from the metropolis in quest of other vassals, partners, and zones of belonging and influence. This process has been going on for over two decades. Today, not only the CIS but also Russia itself with its remaining colonies (e.g., the Northern Caucasus) seems to have lost all of its cultural bonds, except for linguistic ones. There are no values or goals left to link the millions who had the misfortune of being born in this huge and uncontrollable territory. Yet a number of scholars still insist on the existence of some common post-Soviet imaginary, most probably doomed to be erased, museumized, and/or commercialized with the stage exit of the last generation of people formed in the USSR. This imaginary is grounded in a specific spatial history, generating unhomed subjects forced to survive in the doomed spatial-temporal localities of post-dependence: "the prison-bitched country where no repentance ever took place and people submissively forgave and forgot their humiliation", according to Alexei German[1] and the portrayal in his disturbing film *Khrustalyov, My Car* (1998).

Post-Soviet centrifugal processes take place with varied success as courses change from the neoliberal West to Russia (often involuntarily), and sometimes in yet another direction of de-Westernization. The European ex-colonies of the USSR are able to join Europe, albeit as poor cousins, whereas the situation of non-European ex-colonies is complicated by racial and religious othering. Made into the honorary Second World in the Soviet era, today these people are rapidly slipping into the position of the global South, with its own human hierarchy, where the best places of the world proletariat have already been taken by the ex-colonies of the modern Western empires. Consequently, the non-European Soviet ex-colonies have no choice but to reproduce their doubly colonized status, or to build coalitions with de-Westernizing China, Malaysia, the Arab Emirates, or Turkey. The latter option does not automatically guarantee a better attitude on the part of the coalition partners, but it at least leaves behind the old Orientalism and progressivism that stalled relations with both Russia and the West. It is important to take into account the gaps between the official politics of the post-Soviet states and their neocolonial leaders, and the grass-roots social movements that are connected with common people's efforts to survive, and that lead to the mass migration and diasporic existence of millions of dispensable lives.

In this context it is important to take into account the *politics of location in knowledge production*, in Adrienne Rich's words,[2] the situated knowledges, as Donna Harraway

Scene from Alexei German's film *Khrustalyov, My Car.*

would have it,[3] the "small stories, situated in specific local contexts" according to Nina Lykke,[4] or the *pluriversality* in the formulation of the decolonial option.[5] Pluriversality is a coexistence of many interacting and intersecting non-abstract universals grounded in the geopolitics and body politics of knowledge, being, and perception, in a conscious effort to reconnect theory and theorists with experience, with those who are discriminated against, to reinstate the experiential nature of knowledge and the origin of all theory in the human lifeworld and experience.

The decolonial option stresses our inescapable localization in the colonial matrix of power that cannot be observed from the outside – from the convenient vantage point of God or Reason – as the products of the colonial matrix promoted through its enunciators. They present their option as an abstract universal, hiding its locality and appropriating diversity in the form of its control by universal epistemology as demonstrated in numerous multicultural projects. In the pluriversal world where many worlds coexist and interact, countless options communicate with one another instead of promoting one abstract universal good for all. These options intersect, sometimes inside our bodies and selves, and each locus of intersection is an option. Decolonial pluriversality is parallel to intersectionality, but operates on a different level: its target is not the constellation of race, gender, class, and other power asymmetries, but rather the aberration of the universal as such.

The geopolitics of knowledge and the post-Soviet women

Geopolitical positioning has long been an important element of intersectionality as exemplified in women of color and transnational feminisms. Nina Lykke points out that the analysis of geopolitical positioning "requires a self-reflexive stance on global/local locations not only in relation to crude and rather abstract categories such as East-West/North-South [...] it is necessary to engage in much more detailed reflections on unequal relations between nations, regions, mother tongues, and so on and to analyze the ways in which they generate various kinds of problematic methodological particularisms or universalisms in research".[6]

THIS OBSERVATION is particularly true in relation to the experience of the post-Soviet women who are today either aspiring, in the endless catching-up logic, the status of the second-rate gendered subjects of the First World, or sliding from the position of the honorary Second World to that of the global South, marked by the secondary colonial difference and acting as the subalterns of the subaltern empire Russia, multiplying the numbers of dispensable lives unable and unwilling to fully share the postcolonial stance. From the specific Soviet modernity with its own colonialism, we shift to the situation of global, neoliberal colonialism, equalizing in a way the ex-colonizers with the ex-subalterns, casting us all out from modernity and making the postsocialist subject silent and invisible,[7] yet able to retain the internal power asymmetries and discriminations not always visible to the external observer. For instance, the post-Soviet racial taxonomy and normalized epistemic asymmetry still tags everyone with Asian or Caucasus blood as underdeveloped and arrested "savages" unfit to theorize any experience including our own (particularly if this experience includes an obvious racial and gender discrimination on the part of the Russian state and the Russian majority in power) and dictates that the non-European, post-Soviet gender theorists occupy the position of native informants and diligent pupils of their Russian and/or European teachers.

An Egyptian writer and gender activist, Nawal el Saadawi, detected a similar syndrome in a Wellesley conference on women

Azerbaijani Soviet poster.

PHOTO: ARIAN ZWEGERS/FLICKR

Shah-i-Zinda, Samarkand, local girls displaying Central Asian hijab fashion.

and development: "The well-meaning US organizers . . . had no idea how maternalistic and condescending they sounded, in both words and attitudes, when they read papers or talked at the participants, telling them how to behave . . . . For the US organizers, power was not the issue, because they had it, and thought it normal for us not to participate . . . ." The organizers had the capacity to turn the Third World women's protests into "personal defects".[8] Something similar is to be found in the post-Soviet space with its silences and omissions, unspoken resentment and continued scorn between Russian and non-Russian, secondary European and non-European gendered subjects. These non-Europeans are often even less aware of their position and the discrimination they face, and less ready to formulate a specific stance, than European women of color are. This is an indicator of thoroughly colonized minds and bodies marked by one maniacal urge to become a peripheral part of someone else's modernity, even at the expense of their own kind. These people, in contrast to many honest and open-minded European feminists, are not really expressing any interest in coalitions with the Orientalized gendered Others, but instead stick to their own agendas which belatedly repeat and reproduce the Western ones. In the case of post-Soviet inequalities, intersectionality can hardly act as a reconciling device in the way it can in Europe, where anti-racist gendered migrants claim it as a weapon and a way of identifying the ongoing conflict with European white feminism.[9]

THE LOCAL HISTORY of the non-European ex-colonies of the Russian empire and the USSR – the Janus-faced second-class empire, marked by external imperial difference and double colonial difference USSR – generates specific multilayered identifications, modes of survival and re-existence, and intersectional tangents growing out of the multiple dependencies on modernity/coloniality in its Western, and also its insecure Russian and Soviet forms, as well as complex and often contradictory religious and ethnic cultural configurations. They disturb the simple binarism of the modern/colonial gender matrix as they multiply and distort many familiar categories and discourses such as Orientalism, racism, Eurocentrism, imperial and colonial masculinity and femininity, and colonial gender tricksterism evolving in the domain of individual agency and social change. The specific Soviet experience of an *other* emancipation and efforts to create its own New Woman in her metropolitan and colonial versions, grounded in the double standards and reticence that was typical of the whole Soviet system, places the gendered subjects of the ex-colonies of Russia and the USSR into conditions that are not quite postcolonial and not entirely postsocialist, and that cannot be attributed to race, ethnicity, or religion, nor to ideology and class. Yet in the continuing situation of epistemic power asymmetries, the nuances of the Soviet gender trajectories, to say nothing of the presocialist local genealogies of women's struggles and resistance, tend to be erased.

MARIA MATSUDA URGES us to "ask the other question" in order to avoid the inevitable blind spots in intersectional investigations. She suggests that we include categories that would not appear obvious in this or that particular study, which of course enriches the complexity and subtlety of intersectional analysis: "When I see something that looks racist, I ask, 'Where is the patriarchy in this?' When I see something that looks sexist, I ask, 'Where is the heterosexism in this?' When I see something that looks homophobic, I ask, 'Where is the class interest in this?'"[10] This is crucial for any effort to understand the situation of non-Russian women from the former and present colonies of the Russian/Soviet empire. A good example in this case is the flat and frozen interpretation of veiled Caucasus women exclusively through terrorist discourses as black widows and potential suicide bombers.

The hijab and the trajectory of Central Asian women

For a limited number of Caucasus women, the hijab indeed becomes a sign of political-cum-religious identity, as in other Muslim locales in the world. Yet there is a larger group of women in the Caucasus who choose to veil themselves for reasons other than religion or politics. In this case we find a specific intersection of class, religion, and ethnicity which does not easily yield to the simple "but for" logic. These women obviously experience discrimination when they travel to Moscow or other predominantly Russian cities. Yet in their native republics they are often marked by the hijab as possessing a certain social status, not anything religious as such, but rather a piety whose Muslim interpretation mingles with the ethnic-national traditional ethical codes. These are mostly middle class women for whom it is prestigious to cover themselves. (In some cases, it is a necessary condition for a good marriage; in other, it is a play on a stylized archaization, the construction of a *halal* self, similar to subcultural youth identities, behind which often stands an urge to become rooted in an essentialized or escapist identity.) Ostracized as potential terrorists in the Moscow metro, in their own world they would show a condescending attitude to those women who cannot afford a good, expensive hijab and who simply must work to support their families. Discriminated against in one world, they themselves become discriminators in a different world. This logic was pointed out by Patricia Hill Collins, who wrote that in the matrix of domination there are no pure victims or oppressors and the oppressed often becomes the oppressor.[11] This new Caucasian hijab fashion defies most other interpretations of the hijab because there was and is no traditional, unmarked hijab here. There are only political and boutique versions of hijab in the modern Caucasus since veiling has come only recently, and from the outside, to this region – one of secondary and late Islamization, where Islam is hybridized with local polytheistic and often feminocratic cosmologies.

BY CONTRAST, the Central Asians are universally seen in modern-day Russia as dirt poor, and are placed lowest on the scale of humanity, to the point of erasing the gender markers so that the so-called illegal women migrants have a status akin to that of the African-American slaves: these women are seen as biologically female, yet culturally and socially subhuman. These bare lives are used and abused in compulsory long workdays, sexual trafficking, and as producers of children to be sold as live goods. The religious factor is completely erased from their othering, since religion is a cultural marker and these dispensable lives are located outside culture. They were born and made to exist in the grip of global colonialism in its different versions – the neocolonial world of Central Asia and the post-imperial (and also neocolonial) world of metropolitan Moscow. Any serious intersectional study would have to take into account the diachronic element of these women's positioning – their trajectory towards today's condition, which is different from that of African-American women or Latinas in the US. In some cases clearly deprived of their social status and rights by Russian and Soviet colonization, and in other cases first discriminated against by their own ethnic national and religious environments and later accorded a number of rights thanks to colonization and Sovietization, the ancestors of these future post-Soviet slaves traveled the forced path of Soviet modernism with its double standards, racism, othering, violent emancipation, and low glass ceilings in relation to all non-Russian women, but also with such socialist advantages as universal education (although Russified, and not always of good quality), minimal social guarantees within the Soviet colonial mono-economic model, limited vertical social mobility for national minorities in accordance with Soviet multiculturalism, and honorary membership in the Second World. It is crucial to keep this in mind when tracing the trajectory of Central Asian women towards their contemporary condition of neo-slavery and their firm placement in the global South, without a share in its political agency and epistemology.

There is one more group of Caucasus and Central Asian women that does not fit the usual discrimination dichotomies. I define them as tricksters and border dwellers who switch codes and identities as a way to survive and resist. These people often belong to the middle-class educated strata of the post-Soviet societies; they are the postcolonial products of the Soviet multicultural policies who often grew up in the metropolis, and, through their linguistic and cultural competence, can easily belong to mainstream society, yet are constantly reminded of their inferiority and eventually choose not to assimilate. Such people experience discrimination in subtler but no less profound ways. Moreover, their assumed privileges, in comparison with those of illegal migrant slaves, turn into more sophisticated derogations on academic, cultural, and intellectual levels. The very existence of this group of people is not convenient to many Western and Russian researchers as it destroys their progressivist taxonomy, which is grounded in Orientalist stereotypes, and pigeonholes Central Asian and Caucasus women as stereotypical downtrodden and retarded Orientals/Muslims, or as Soviet modernized party activists and Westernized emancipated gendered subjects – invariably rejecting their culture to become New Women according to the standards of Soviet or Western mod-

PHOTO: QUINN DOMBROWSKI/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Feminist graffiti in St Petersburg: "Cooking and fashion – that's NOT freedom".

ernism.[12] If Central Asian or Caucasus gender theorists are ever allowed into the international feminist club, it is usually in the capacity of meek apprentices of the Western gurus, who trade their independent thinking for a comfortable place in Western universities, and, despite experiencing Orientalism in their everyday academic lives, refuse to question the generally accepted Western scientific approaches, defending them as objective and uncontaminated by locality and/or ideology.

Postcolonial gender theorists mimicking Western feminism

The few existing investigations of gender issues in the non-European Soviet ex-colonies seldom depart from the West-centric, fundamentally Orientalist yardstick and universalized set of concepts and assumptions for analyzing non-Western gendered Others. Many Western specialists reproduce this unconsciously. Their Russian clones follow the incurable Russian penchant for mimicking the West and reproducing its theoretical paradigms applied to local material, yet at the same time retain their old role as mediators and translators of modernism into the non-European colonies, compensating for their own inferiority complex vis-à-vis the West in the persistent habit of teaching colonial Others how to be. The post-Soviet ex-colonial Others are the most promising group of researchers, having all the ingredients for an insightful analysis of their local histories and contemporary struggles. Yet they are too often victims of the old parochial epistemic regimes that assume that knowledge is produced in the West, or in a few exceptional cases, in Russia, and agree to play the role of native informants or diligent pupils of Western and/or Russian feminism, reproducing derivative discourses delegitimizing any previous models of gendered resistance.

The obvious reason for this is economic and institutional. The massive indoctrination with Western feminism, supported by grants and accompanied by particular ideological demands in the first post-Soviet years, resulted in the emergence of many gender centers and programs willing to start from scratch, as if there had been no Soviet history of gender struggles. Or, in some cases, the history was acknowledged, yet misinterpreted by the mostly metropolitan post-Soviet scholars utilizing Western approaches such as post-Lacanian psychoanalysis. This syndrome is obviously a manifestation of a new kind of mind-colonization, which has resulted in an unhealthy self-orientalizing and self-negation on the part of the ex-colonial Others [13] that is hard to resolve.

TODAY, WHEN RUSSIA is rapidly turning into a fundamentalist police state, any type of feminism, and particularly the gendered forms of political and social activism, raise suspicions in the corridors of power. Practically all post-Soviet feminist organizations in Russia are now either banned or harassed as "foreign agents". These unfavorable conditions further postpone the possibility of any intersectional coalitions and alliances. The miniscule islands of institutionalized academic gender studies and the exceedingly moderate and conciliatory state-supported gender institutions abstain with increasing frequency from any independent theorizing, preferring to collect statistical facts and apply someone else's methods to the analysis of mythologized post-Soviet reality.

In the Caucasus and Central Asia, Soviet modernism is replaced with either the Western progressive model or the peddling of nationalist discourses characteristic of young postcolonial nations that permit only specific ideas and propagandistic models of national culture, mentality, creativity, and religiosity. The complex indigenous cosmologies, epistemologies, ethics, and gender models discordant with modernism and colonialism are erased or negatively coded, even in the works of indigenous scholars, who are forced to buy their way into academia by conforming to Western mainstream gender research. So the tripartite scheme of the colonial and ex-colonial post-Soviet gendered Other persists: it sees women as forever climbing the stairs of modernity – from traditionalism through the Soviet half-traditional, half-modern model to the Western liberated female.[14] In contrast with Chinese gender theorists, who refused to walk the path of universal feminism wearing Western shoes uncomfortable for their feet – for the simple reason that they had already walked a long way on their own path,[15] gender discourses in peripheral Eurasia often remain in the grip of progressivism and developmentalism. It thus becomes all the more important for the ex-colonial, postsocialist gendered Others to get acquainted with some alternative non-Western approaches to gender, to be "indoctrinated" by the theorists and activists of the global South.

There is still little reciprocal interest between the ex-socialist postcolonial world and the global South. The global South was disappointed in the ex-socialist world, which failed to accomplish its expansionist mission. It also still codes "postsocialist" in ideological, not racial terms. As a result, gender activists are seldom ready to accept the equation between colonialism and socialism. However, this misunderstanding is already vanishing with the growth of contacts, dialog, and genuine interest on both sides, and a conscious refusal to follow the logic of modernism with its agonistic rivalry.

Intersectional coalitions, creolized theories, and transversal dialogues

By finding intersections in our experience and sensibilities, we can recreate a flexible gender discourse which would answer local logic and specific conditions, yet would be able to find resonance with other voices in the world. In order to do this, it is necessary to take a border pluritopic position that negotiates between modernity in its various forms and its internal and external Others. Such a strategic intersectionality allows different de-essentialized flexible and dynamic groups to understand each other in their mutual struggles. What is at work here is a horizontalized transversal networking of different local histories and sensibilities mobilized through a number of common yet pluriversal and open categories, such as colonialism or the postsocialist imaginary. As a result, we can replace the frozen categorical and negative intersectionality that often entraps the groups of women it focuses on in a situation of sealed otherness and victimhood, merely diagnosing their multiple oppressions, with a more positive resistant and re-existent stance of attempting to build an alternative world with no Others. Such a positive

Frontline defenders' view on the situation of NGOs in Russia.

intersectionality would develop in the direction of an open creolized theorizing as defined by Françoise Lionnet and Shu-mei Shih: "Creolized theory is open to vernacular grammars, methods, and lexicons [...] in the sense that it is a living practice that precedes yet calls for theorization while resisting ossification. Creolized theory enables unexpected comparisons and the use of different analytical tools". It becomes "urgent to attempt theory in the many idioms and languages that are congruent with our diverse orientations as transnational producers of knowledge."[16]

AN OPEN AND CRITICAL intersectionality helps to make a shift towards a more conscious agency, laying the groundwork for a future solidarity. Transversal crossings of activism, theorizing, and, often, contemporary art, are among the most effective tools in social and political struggles against multiple oppressions and in the creation of another world where many different worlds would coexist and communicate with one another in a positive and life-asserting intersectional way aimed at restoring human dignity and the right to be different but equal. It is necessary to further elaborate an open critical basis that would take into account the existing parallels between various echoing concepts and epistemic grounds of gender discourses and would find an interdisciplinary, or better yet, transdisciplinary language for expressing oppositional gendered being, thinking, and agency across the transcultural and transepistemic pluriversal loci. Then the post-Soviet non-European gendered Others can finally hope to exercise our right to keep our dignity and no longer plead to be accepted by the West, the global North, or Russia.

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Gendered surveillance and media usage in post-Soviet space

The case of Azerbaijan

by **Ilkin Mehrabov**

abstract

This article is an attempt to explore the limits of gendered surveillance in Azerbaijan – that is, how and to what extent female activists and women journalists are monitored and affected by the surveillative apparatuses of the state, both online and offline. The article also very briefly examines the gender dimension of Azerbaijani political activism and protest practices. The questions of how gender stereotypes, together with the more general problem of the digital gender gap, are being used by the state authorities to control the public opinion are also addressed.

KEY WORDS: Gendered surveillance, surveillative apparatuses, Khadija Ismayilova, Azerbaijan.

The global magnum opus of smear campaigning against journalists happened in Azerbaijan when the sex video of the famous anti-corruption journalist Khadija Ismayilova was released on the Internet. Ismayilova, known for her critical investigative reporting, is a journalist associated with the Azerbaijani service of *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, where she frequently reports on the issues of misconduct, malfeasance, and unethical business dealings of government officials and bureaucrats. As she herself describes events in an interview given to *Ms.* magazine, which she conducted while in Los Angeles to receive the Courage in Journalism Award from the International Women's Media Foundation,

> **the government planted a video camera in my bedroom, and they filmed me when I was with my boyfriend. In Azerbaijan you are not supposed to have a boyfriend, and you are not supposed to have sex if you are not married. Honor killings are still a huge problem in Azerbaijan. I feel that was a calculation in taping me in my bedroom. They did it in the hopes that someone in my family would arrange to kill me after seeing it. So they blackmailed me by sending me pictures from the footage and told me to behave or I would be defamed. And, well, I didn't behave. I made it public on my own and said I was being blackmailed.**[1]

Khadija Ismayilova's case is an illuminating example of how semi-authoritarian governments are engaging in disruptive moves against disagreeable journalists and political opponents based on the normative gender dynamics that exist in various socio-cultural contexts. Within this scope, this article is an attempt to explore the limits of gendered surveillance in Azerbaijan – that is, how and to what extent female activists and women journalists are monitored and affected by what I call the *surveillative apparatuses* of the state, both online and offline. The article also tries, albeit very briefly, to investigate the gender dimension of Azerbaijani political activism and protest practices; and how the gender stereotypes, together with the more general problem of the digital gender gap, are being used by the state authorities to control public opinion. The conceptual framework of the article is based upon two main sources of information: the netnographic narrativization of Khadija Ismayilova's case in con-

PHOTO: YOUTH MEDIA CENTRE, BAKU

Young protesters being detained by police after an unsanctioned protest in the center of Baku, October 2012.

junction with an electronic correspondence conducted with her on March 30, 2013; and quantitative analysis of Internet connectivity data in Azerbaijan, obtained from the Caucasus Research Resource Centers' *Caucasus Barometer 2011 Azerbaijan* survey.[2]

Gender and offline surveillative apparatuses in Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan currently ranks 177 among the 196 studied countries (Sweden and Norway head the list) in the *Freedom of the Press 2013* report of the Freedom House;[3] it ranks 156 among the 179 countries in the Reporters without Borders' 2013 *World Press Freedom Index*;[4] and, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists, is among the "top 10 worst jailers of journalists"[5] in the world. But what happened to Khadija Ismayilova was extremely shocking even under the circumstances of a country where people are accustomed to frequent mistreatment and jailing of journalists. The blow was so low that, contrary to the blackmailers' expectations – those who had demanded that she "abandon her investigation of links between President Ilham Aliyev's family and lucrative building projects in Baku"[6] – the journalist was fully backed by the whole society, to the point that even the "religious figures of the country [...] expressed their support"[7] for her cause. According to Ismayilova, it was precisely because this support came from the "mosque communities and other conservatives", who are otherwise "usually among her critics",[8] that her life was saved. As a result of the journalist's keen insistence in trying to uncover who was behind the attempt to blackmail her with the sex video, events unfolded in a way such that "Ismayilova did not hide. Instead, she tracked the letter to a Moscow post office. She discovered curious wires inside her apartment and then found the phone company worker hired to install them"[9] – and due to her investigations it was revealed that the camera was set up in her bedroom in July 2011, almost eight months before the blackmailing attempt took place. This incident caused a number of heated debates among the local and global human rights and media advocacy groups, as

> **Ismayilova is not the first Azerbaijani journalist to fall victim to such an attack. Other victims include editor-in-chief of "Azadliq" newspaper Ganimat Zahid, finance director Azer Ahmadov and reporters Natig Gulahmadoglu and Gan Tural. Video clips containing intimate scenes were posted on internet, in violation of the journalists' privacy. This pattern indicates that the Azerbaijani government, illegally deploying the technical and human resources of intelligence agencies, repeatedly organizes centralized smear campaigns against journalists who publish material critical of the government.[10]**

All the people cited above, in a quotation taken from the Institute for Reporters' Freedom and Safety's declaration about the case, are male journalists, with the exception of Khadija Ismayilova, who so far is the only woman publicist to be targeted with such defamation and shaming campaign attempting to silence her critical reporting. According to Ismayilova herself[11] there are no other accounts of female journalists or activists who were

ever targeted in such ways or imprisoned[12] – except for the very few examples of women protesters being taken into short-term custody or put into jail for brief, token periods of time, like the five-day prison term of Gozel Bayramova, deputy head of the opposition Azerbaijani Popular Front Party. Yet, as the recent consecutive arrests of first Leyla Yunus,[13] head of the Institute of Peace and Democracy, and human rights defender working on the issues of political prisoners; and then Khadija Ismayilova[14] herself, also clearly indicate, national law enforcement agencies, and hence surveillative apparatuses, are rapidly shifting towards a more gender-neutral position. Now, when it comes to the defamation of political opponents, smear campaigns against disagreeable journalists, or the jailing of professionals with oppositional stances, there are no gender differences anymore, and women are targeted in exactly the same way as their male counterparts. The similar trait can be observed when skimming through recent years' Azerbaijani protest photos and videos as well, which are filled with disturbing imagery of women activists being verbally and physically harassed, emotionally abused, forcefully dragged away, or bloodily beaten by police officers, military personnel, security guards, civil agents and other representatives of various law enforcement agencies. So, in the real, offline world, women now started to be treated in the most brutal ways, paralleling the treatment of male dissidents and journalists – be it the close surveillance of their intimate lives or the outright violence against them. Such transformation invites a closer look at the situation of women activists in the online realm.

Between modernism and traditionalism: Azerbaijani women online

Despite the numerous claims that most of the imprisoned Azerbaijani male dissidents were closely monitored and detected with pinpoint accuracy through their social media communications and usage – such as Jabbar Savalan, a 20-year-old student member of an oppositional youth organization, being taken into custody "after he posted on Facebook calling for a 'Day of Rage' in Freedom Square in Baku, echoing the calls for protest in the Middle East"[15] – there is no known example of any female activist being specifically targeted for her online presence and activities. Based also on the thorough quantitative and qualitative analysis of 2003-2013 Azerbaijani offline and online protests – the subject of another study seeking to build a categorical map of protests in Azerbaijan, which is not reproduced here due to the space constraints[16] – it can be argued that the surveillative apparatuses of Azerbaijan, aiming to monitor and keep under control Internet users' online media and social networking practices, are currently targeting male activists only, since there are no clear indicators that the women protesters are kept under the close online surveillance as well. It can be speculated with some confidence that the national surveillative apparatuses are not fully aimed at women yet; or, to be more precise, there is no persuasive evidence that the same measures – taken to prevent an online call for action from turning into an actual offline protest, as in the case of Jabbar Savalan – are being used against women within the online world. Several phenomena could explain this.

FIRST OF ALL, DESPITE ALL the secularization and modernization processes Azerbaijan has undergone during the Soviet era, it is still very much a traditionalist country, where most of the male politicians and bureaucrats put constant emphasis on family values and "women's primary identities as mothers and wives"[17] – despite the fact that Azerbaijan has one of the highest ratios of female parliamentarians[18] among post-Soviet countries. In this sense it is very hard to disagree with Manijeh Sabi's claim that "Azerbaijan society remains as a fortress for patriarchy"; it is also not very easy to explain an "inconsistency between women's economic participation in the labor force and formal emancipation of women on the one hand and their apparently subservient and male-protected position on the other".[19] Suzanne Rothman, a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant based in Baku, observes that the "gender attitudes, specifically the way men interact with women in public, remain stuck in an anachronistic rut" behind the "façade of modernity" in Azerbaijan – with women constantly being "constrained by the preferences of their male relatives" and thus mostly remaining "locked in tradition-bound roles as mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters".[20] Within the socio-cultural context of such a dominant patriarchy – where women are already heavily monitored and patronized within the course of everyday life through the normative gender codes established by their fathers, brothers and husbands – very little state effort is required for the additional monitoring of women's

PHOTO: VINCE BUCCI/IWMF

Khadija Ismayilova received the prestigious Courage in Journalism Award from the International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF) in a 2012 Los Angeles ceremony.

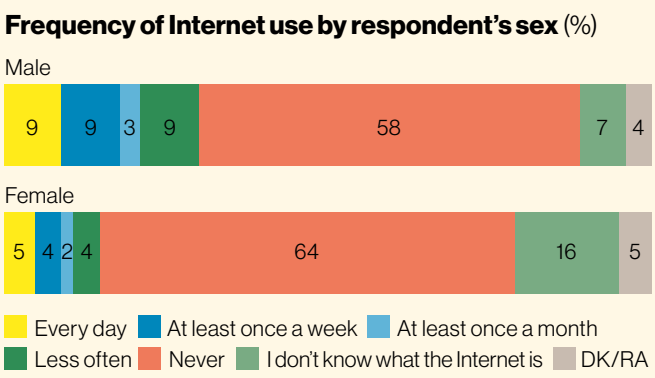

Figure 1: The distribution of Internet use by gender in Azerbaijan.[21]

online behavior and conduct. And most of the time – due to the country's extremely low Internet penetration – such state surveillance might not even be necessary, since, despite all the claims of government officials for establishing widespread and far-reaching Internet connectivity within Azerbaijan, analysis of actual numbers reveals gloomy picture, especially in relation to women's Internet usage.

As the figure provided above clearly shows, only 15% of 711 women respondents of Caucasus Research Resource Centers' *Caucasus Barometer 2011 Azerbaijan* survey use the Internet frequently, if at all, and an astonishing 80% either have never used it or do not even know what the Internet is. By combining Facebook's own Ads-selling program data with the World Bank's demographical information, Katy E. Pearce, assistant professor at the University of Washington, and one of the leading experts on information-communication technologies usage in South Caucasus, provides a much more elaborated and detailed analysis of Facebook usage,[22] social media platform claimed to be carefully watched by the national law enforcement and intelligence agencies in Azerbaijan. According to Dr. Pearce's calculations, only 36% of Facebook users in Azerbaijan are women – whereas in neighboring Armenia the gender balance of users is fairly even; and in Georgia there are about 10% more women than men on Facebook. In this sense, the low number of people and households having an Internet connection, combined with the much lower percentage of women – compared with men – using the Internet in everyday life, might explain the lack of evidence of surveillance of online women activists.

Concluding remarks

Although the conditions of the Azerbaijani female activists depicted here might seem depressing – with women dissidents being surveilled and intimidated in the offline world because of their professional roles and oppositional positions, and the lack of women in the online realm – not everything is so gloomy. The case of Khadija Ismayilova being blackmailed with a sex video proved the emergence of something extraordinarily different in relation to the classic operational grounds of Azerbaijani online and offline female activism. The attempt to silence a woman journalist through a defamation campaign based on her private life was widely discussed, especially in the Facebook forums of religious women dissidents; and although many of these religious women did not approve of premarital sex at all, the plain fact that this most intimate moment was recorded and distributed through the Internet, with the putative governmental involvement, elicited open criticism and harsh condemnation. Such an expression of strong solidarity of religious women with Khadija Ismayilova's quest for justice might also explain – although this is pure speculation – the surprising support the journalist received from the religious communities in Azerbaijan. Circumstances like this point to an emerging possibility and potential for the formation of alternative online platforms, leading to a greater empowerment of women and gender equality through merging various, otherwise separate, female activist movements – especially given that so far there is no proof of online women dissidents being surveilled. Despite the currently low number of women connected to the Internet, there is a growing tendency among Azerbaijani women's organizations and female activists to build websites, start discussion forums, and establish Facebook groups – indicators of a healthy growth of Internet portals and milieus related to women's issues, which might foster a dialog and mutual understanding among women with different backgrounds.

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Paternalistic images of power in Soviet photography

by **Ekaterina Vikulina**

abstract

The study was based on the power images of the Soviet period during seventy years, from the beginning to the end of the Soviet regime. The images of the leaders in the widely distributed press played an important part in shaping the ideological platform in the Soviet Union, including the regulation, control and support of a certain gender order.
The representation of gender was studied in the subjects of pictures of the country's authorities and heroes. A significant role in power representations was given to the body, which is the basis of ideological norms and rules.

KEY WORDS: Representation, gender, power, Soviet photography.

The focus of this study is the gender aspect of Soviet power, its focus, and its normative status in mass media representations, particularly in magazines. Dynamics of change were traced over a period of seventy years, from the beginning of the Soviet regime to its end. A period of such great length was chosen in order to delineate the full range of changes that took place during the Soviet era, changes that nonetheless overlay a certain continuity in the way media functioned as a means of regulating, controlling, and supporting a gender order.

The images of leaders and officials were published on the front pages of Soviet magazines and served as a pattern of gender norms and bodily codes for the rest of the citizenry. These photos, which appeared in popular, widely distributed publications, played a significant role in shaping the ideological platform of the state. The visual rhetoric of those photos, the context of their emergence, and the techniques used in their production are considered to be one manifestation of power in Foucault's sense of the term.

The media is a space for biopolitics,[1] a means of impacting on our sensuality and our bodies through images of popular culture. Power, politics, and the media are inseparably linked in the creation of "true values" for the masses, including forming representations of gender.

A photographer's selection of a frame is not accidental. He or she stops at one of the endless fragments of reality and makes a choice about its visual embodiment. This makes photos subjective, expressive of the author's opinion, but at the same time, it transmits existing public views about the subject. As Peter Burke noted, what images record "is not social reality so much as social illusions, not ordinary life but special performances", and that is why they offer unique evidence for the history of values or mentalities.[2]

Photography had a special role in representations of Soviet power. This medium had to certify a historical fact, to indicate the success of the socialist construct, to convince people who were assessing communism. Nevertheless, attitudes towards photography as a propaganda tool changed throughout the Soviet period. Bold experiments of the 1920s, marked by a fascination with sharp angles and the technique of photomontage, were replaced during the Stalin period by caution, a fear of uncontrolled information, which led to the retouching of many photographs, transforming them into something with the poses and gestures found in the fine arts.

In turn, the democratization of Khrushchev's image was closely related to the development of photography, the dissemination of amateur photography, and an extended arsenal of pictorial means and options. In the 1960s, photography was promoted as a modern technological medium and was used to propagandize the success of Soviet science, notably the space program.[3]

THE OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH presented here were to analyze how the country's leader appeared in the press, how images of power changed throughout the period, and what representations of power were valid. In addition to the analysis of iconographic schemes, it is important to see who is represented together with the leader in the pictures, his entourage. The image becomes paternalistic in relation to someone who is represented nearby. Hence considerable attention was paid to images of the "First Lady". In this article, the difference between representations of leaders is examined with regard to the relation of a main character to the secondary subjects in the picture (common people, a wife, etc.). A significant role in power representations was also given to the body, which is the basis of ideological norms and rules.

Because the official view of gender roles in Soviet photography was manifested most completely in magazines with wide readership, the present study is based on the material of popular Soviet magazines such as *Sovetskoe Foto* [Soviet Photo], *Ogoniok* [Little Flame], *SSSR na stroike* [USSR in Construction], *Sovetskii Sojuz* [Soviet Union], *Krestianka* [Woman farmer], *Rabotnitsa* [Woman worker], *Sovetskaia zhenshina* [Soviet Woman], *Fizkultura i sport* [Physical Culture and Sports], and *Zdorovie* [Health]. These periodicals are the most appropriate for the research thesis because they are mass-produced and because of their propagandistic function; but they are also important because of the greatly varying contexts in which images of politicians appeared. This gives us a wide spectrum of leaders' representations.

Images of revolutionary women from the magazine *Sovetskaia Zhenshina*. Nadezhda Krupskaia is the first one in this list.

The methods of semiotics and the approaches of visual and cultural studies are essential to this study. Feminist critiques of visual culture, with their attention to the construction of female and male images and to the political meaning of their circulation in media production, have special significance for this type of analysis. In addition, these concrete historical images were examined in the wider cultural and political context. The importance of such an approach has been noted by many authors.[4]

The representation of gender was studied with regard to the characters, events, scenes and settings of pictures in which authorities and heroes of the country appeared. Attention was given to the context of the image's publication (the type of magazine and the accompanying text), the choice of the genre (staged photography, reportage, official portrait), the artistic methods (composition, framing decisions) and the set of photographic codes (close-up, camera angle, distance from the subject) that allows us to see how the image was constructed. The presence or absence of certain iconographic schemes, such as traditional poses, was also noted.

In this analysis, I distinguish several modes of constructing a paternalistic image of power. First, there is the presence of certain iconographic schemes in pictures glorifying the figure of the leader. This was observed mainly in photos of the Stalin period, but it was also noted to some degree in shots of Lenin. This is not to suggest these schemes were not used in other periods, only to highlight the dominant trends. Second, the demonstration of the principle of familial relations through kissing and hugging is analyzed in the photography of the "Thaw". Finally, the image of the First Lady serves as a marker of gender attitudes in society and represents the female hypostasis of power. Photos of First Ladies from throughout the Soviet period are reviewed, as well as some from post-Soviet times, in order to emphasize the similarities and differences of the two epochs.

Members of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet and Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union published in *Ogonek* 32 (1966).

Iconography of the leader

As is known, Lenin firmly discouraged visual representations of living Bolsheviks, including himself, but the fact that the Monumental Propaganda project was his initiative "legitimized the practice of singling out individuals for heroization".[5]

The iconography of Vladimir Lenin was made up mainly of portraits and shots for longer news stories that emphasized the uniqueness, simplicity, and humanity of the political figure, and of his family photos.[6] One of the most famous photographs of Lenin had been taken in January, 1918, by Moisei S. Nappel'baum.[7] This first official portrait was reproduced countless times in magazines and newspapers. It shows a close up of the leader looking directly at the viewer. The close distance, the steadfast gaze, the play of light and shadow created the personification of a new kind of power, expressing Lenin's individuality, his unpretentiousness and his attention to other people. The clothes also accentuated the simplicity of the leader. Artists were guided by photos presenting Lenin wearing a suit, vest, tie, overcoat, and cap, which was considered informal attire in this period.[8]

Lenin was photographed with his comrades and with Red Army soldiers, peasants, and workers. Reportage shots from meetings stressed the exclusivity of his personality, but most of the photos showed the leader among others, equal to the people photographed. Nevertheless, certain gestures of the leader, such as his outstretched arm, and camera angles elevating his cutting figure at the podium, were subsequently used in artworks to create the canonical image.

Paternalistic traits can be seen not so much in the photos as in the photomontages of that time, in which Lenin was often presented as a larger-than-life figure raising his hand and pointing in the direction of the bright future. Such proportions show Lenin's grandeur in relief against other people. The masses appeared in representations of Lenin after his death, and by the early 1930s "had become an indispensable ingredient" in posters featuring the leader.[9]

Such a representation of Lenin as the leader of the masses, was close to Stalin's iconography, which visually realized the metaphor of "the father of the nation". At the end of the twenties, Stalin was still portrayed together with his colleagues and the people, but the thirties tended to present him in the figure of the leader. At the beginning of the 1930s, Stalin became the Lenin of his day, and then some. A drawing of Stalin in profile with Lenin's profile behind him was published in *Pravda* in 1930; the next year *Bol'shevik* for the first time ranked Stalin together with Marx, Engels, and Lenin as a source of wisdom on materialist dialectics.[10]

When Stalin was portrayed together with Lenin, his image was usually placed on the right. Jan Plumper writes that in symbology the left side means the beginning and the woman, and the right side – the end and the man. Thus Lenin always had to appear to the left of Stalin.[11]

Another example of Stalin's magnification was to show his figure against a background of people and things much smaller than him. Perspectival distortion was widely used in Soviet posters. The most famous exponent of this technique is Gustav Klutsis, a Latvian artist who worked with photomontage and who "forged a new path in the creative application of this device for the glorification of Stalin".[12]

Few people had the honor of being photographed with Stalin. Several children were among these exceptions, and served the symbolic generalization of a paternal guardianship over the nation. For example, in the magazine *USSR in Construction,* Stalin is seen applauding a happy, multinational group of children.[13]

Widely known are the pictures with the little Buryat girl Gelya Markizova in his arms. The Tajik girl Mamlakat Nahangova presents another variation on this theme. She was a schoolgirl who exceeded the norm for cotton picked, and Stalin personally presented her with an award in 1935.[14] From the very beginning of the cult of Stalin, he was portrayed only with girls. The presence of girls emphasized the inaccessibility of the leader: the differences of sex and age expressed the distance between him and others.[15]

The body of the leader had a special status: "Accordingly, while the population dissolved into a single united hyperbody, the singular body of the Leader hypertrophied and multiplied".[16] Paintings and photographs before the Thaw dealt primarily with the ideal body of the leader, transforming his physical features into the perfect figure of the national leader.

Changes in the ideological regime during the Thaw had profoundly affected various aspects of politics, including the representation of power. They are evident if we compare the pictures of Joseph Stalin and Nikita Khrushchev. Photography of the Thaw did not seek to embellish the image of the leader; it did not avoid ordinary physical details of the head of the state. The First Secretary of the Communist Party was represented as an ordinary human being. While the images of Lenin and Stalin were

V. Lenin and N. Krupskaia. *Sovetskaia Zhenshina* 3 (1970).

Indira Gandhi and Leonid Brezhnev in Moscow, 1976.

timeless ("He is always with us" and "Lenin lived, Lenin lives, Lenin will live"), the figure of Khrushchev was rooted in the present. Where Lenin's expression "was serious, determined, thoughtful, or slightly ironic, but never jovial",[17] Khrushchev allowed himself to laugh, to smile broadly, and to show his emotions in other ways.

The image of power became prosaic and everyday. Periodicals did not gloss over the image of the head of state; they did not hide the features of his mediocre body.

COMPARED WITH THE STRICT, frozen photo portraits of Stalin, of which there were few,[18] power during the Thaw was represented more informally. Images of Stalin were glorified by the angle of the composition and the lighting, but portraits of Khrushchev did without such expression and represented the uncomplicated appearance of a Soviet bureaucrat. His clothing emphasized the ordinariness of his appearance: a jacket and tie replaced the military uniform of the Generalissimo.

Khrushchev's photos were published in great quantities on the pages of periodicals. He was often surrounded by people – Party members, workers, and others. Photographers often used wide-angle shots of the Party's meetings and activities, capturing not only the leader, but also his entourage. This expedient also worked to "democratize" the image of power.

Hugs and kisses: the sensualization of power

Corporeal confirmation of the promulgated ideas was important to the authorities during the Thaw. A hug and a kiss became a representation of concern for the population of the country, of the granting of assistance to downtrodden people of Africa, or of gratitude for a mission fulfilled. Thus, in the pictures of the Thaw, a kiss and a hug acquired the meaning of a political act. The significance was contextual; it depended on whether the action took place during an official meeting, at a meeting with heroes of the country, or with representatives of a particular group.

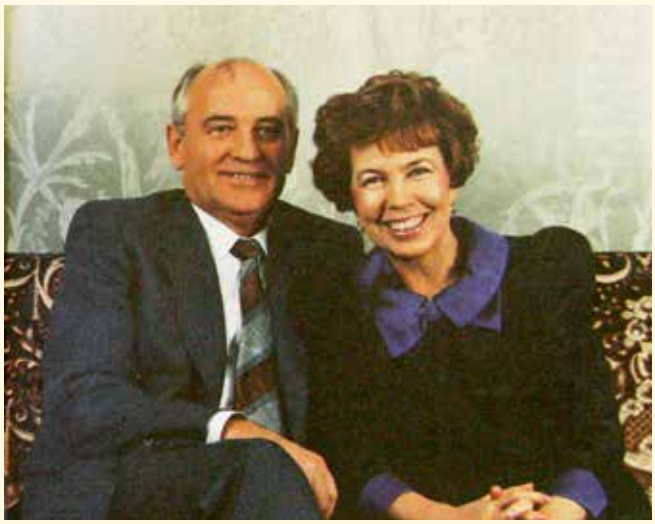
"The era of kisses" began not with Leonid Brezhnev, as many think, but in the time of the Thaw. It was then that the authorities resorted to emotional expression, to warm gestures – whether a handshake or a hug. Power involved physical contact; it became sensual and tactile. Hugs became the norm at official meetings, as evidence of a trusting relationship, but also extended to Khrushchev's meetings with ordinary people. The emphasis on sincerity during the period demanded the confirmation of feelings by appropriate gestures.

Khrushchev and his entourage confirmed agreements and cemented their friendship with numerous hugs and kisses. Others of the epoch tried to follow suit. Khrushchev pressed German Titov to his chest ("Fatherly Hug")[19]; cosmonauts in turn threw themselves into each other's arms ("Star Brothers")[20] as well as those of family and friends ("Joy of the Meeting").[21] It is noteworthy that the titles of the pictures referred to family relationships.[22] This emphasized warmth, but at the same time signified a hierarchy. The hugs duplicated in the names and captions of the photographs became the norm for visual and verbal expression.

"Parental" discourse was also reproduced directly by Valentina Tereshkova at a press conference in the mention of a "space brother" and Khrushchev's "fatherlike" concern.[23] The photo "Good Luck and Happiness to the Discoverers of Stellar Roads!" by Vasily Peskov also demonstrates the "family ties" of the leader and cosmonauts.[24] Khrushchev is raising his glass to the health of the newlyweds, Valentina Tereshkova and Andrian Nikolayev. Khrushchev stands next to the bride and groom in a place normally occupied by their parents. Actually, "parental" power also lay in the fact that the marriage was arranged by the authorities as a propaganda move.

A similar expedient, in which love or marriage received a blessing by the intervention of higher authorities had long been known in Stalinist cinema.[25] Photography in this case repro-

Mamie Eisenhower and Nikita Khrushchev in 1959.



The Gorbachev couple. *Sovetskaia Zhenshina* 3 (1991).

duced the familiar story. A kiss and a hug in the Soviet photography of fifties and sixties belonged to the public space and often took place in front of witnesses. They were framed with people around, ordinary citizens or top government officials, which had the effect of verifying and confirming the event. There are similar situations in the Soviet cinema of that time.

Hugs also expressed political support for particular nations. Khrushchev embraced Fidel Castro and black young men with emphatic enthusiasm, and held a Burmese girl and a Russian boy ("Good Hands").[26] He symbolized assistance to the oppressed African people by a welcoming gesture, gathering black students into his arms.[27] At the Sixth Youth Festival, fraternization took place among all nations, but special attention was given to guests from Africa. Support had to be demonstrated for these countries' fight against colonialism.

These photos represented Khrushchev as the "father of the nations", as a "friend" and a "brother", thereby implying family relationships between peoples. This was a way to demonstrate the international nature of Soviet power and the "parental" tutelage of the Soviet state in relation to other nations. This indulgence in the form of "Helping Hands" produced the friendly image of the Other, building a hierarchy and ensuring the cultural hegemony of the socialist society.

The Thaw cultivated a sensual approach to the world. Displaying hugs and kisses, their permissibility or prohibition, depending on the context, created a sexual tension that attracted attention. But mostly it was a demonstration of familial relations.

Female hypostases of Soviet power: images of First Ladies

In his book *The Women's Liberation Movement in Russia: Feminism, Nihilism, and Bolshevism*, Richard Stites points out that the Soviets never succeeded in matching educational and economic equality of the sexes with political equality on any level. From 1918 until 1924, Stasova was the only woman to appear of the Central Committee; from 1924 to 1939 there were only four women members in the Central Committee (Nikolaeva, Artiukhina, Krupskaia, and Kalygina). Before 1956, no woman ever sat on the Politburo or the Presidium, the chief political bodies of the Party.[28] Nevertheless, despite their factual absence in the higher echelons of power, women were not excluded from the scope of power's representation.

Lenin's wife, Nadezhda Krupskaia, for example, always occupied a special place in the Soviet pantheon. She often appeared in the pictures of her high-ranking husband. A great deal of attention was given her in particular by the *Sovetskaia Zhenshina* magazines. The image of Krupskaia as a faithful friend and fellow member was to be an inspiration to millions of women. No female image appeared so close to power during the years that followed. None of the wives of later Soviet leaders – not Nina Khrushcheva nor Raisa Gorbacheva, nor the minister of culture Ekaterina Furtseva, nor the first woman cosmonaut Valentina Tereshkova, nor many others – could begin to approach the status of the "grandmother of the Russian Revolution". The image of Lenin's wife remained intact as the image of Lenin, whose only competition after his death was Stalin.

NEVERTHELESS, THE IMAGE of Krupskaia typically used was not an aesthetically pleasing one, one that would alleviate or hide physical imperfections. For the young Soviet country, that would look like a shameful rewriting of the past. The Nadezhda Krupskaia in these pictures was a "comrade in a skirt", with minimal references to sexual identity.

For generations of Soviet people, Krupskaia was a model Communist. Materials about her appeared in the Soviet press regularly, from the early twenties to the late eighties.

Such attention can be explained partly by Lenin's respectful attitude to his family circle, and, in particular, to Krupskaia, a fact noted by researchers.[29] But this issue was not limited to the personality of Lenin, but was rooted in the new ideology. Pre-

cisely in Lenin's era, the role of women in the political process was taken to be important. Maria Ulianova, Lenin's sister, and the Western communists Clara Zetkin and Rosa Luxemburg shared with Krupskaia the image of "flaming revolutionaries". Their portraits were set in honorable places in Soviet textbooks and magazines, but Krupskaia was always on the top of this "female list".[30]

Stalinism accentuated the gender division, the polarized concepts of femininity and masculinity. Stalin's time continued to cultivate heroic revolutionaries, to glorify female workers, collective farmers, and delegates. However, in the higher echelons of power, there was no representation of women. In the shadow was also Nadezhda Alliluieva, Stalin's wife, whose image did not appear in the Soviet press.

The role of the First Lady changed with the Thaw. Nina Khrushcheva, who accompanied her husband on state visits, occupied a special place in relation to the higher echelons of power. For the first time, the wife of a Soviet leader was present in the pictures of official visits of the head of state. Khrushcheva was captured with her husband in a meeting with the Eisenhowers, and with Charles de Gaulle and Yvonne de Gaulle at the Élysée Palace. These photos placed Soviet leaders in a new context of high-society life.

In several pictures, Nina Khrushcheva was even shown without her husband. She was seen giving interviews to American journalists, shaking hands with children, talking with the chairman of the UN General Assembly, Victor Belaunde, communicating with young Frenchmen. Through these pictures, power acquired its feminine hypostasis. At the same time they emphasized the role of women in the Soviet Union and the importance of family ties by presenting the leader of the country as a good family man.

Hugs and kisses of Nikita Khrushchev: V. Egorov, "Nikita Khrushchev and Fidel Castro", *Sovetskoe Foto* 11 (1960). V .Smetanin, "Fatherly hug", *Sovetskoe Foto* 9 (1961).

IN SOVIET PHOTOGRAPHS, women were represented as having power, mainly as delegates of the congress. Their role in the political life of the country was limited mainly to the declaration of women's rights in the Soviet Union, and to the struggle for peace. It was these issues that were most important at the World Congress of Women, for example, which took place in Moscow in 1963. However, although magazines wrote a great deal about the labor achievements of female workers and peasants, the Soviet era actually had created few recognizable figures of women in power.

These included the minister of culture Ekaterina Furtseva, the only woman to become a member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPSU, and the cosmonaut Valentina Tereshkova. Both greeted the Soviet people from the tribune of the Mausoleum.

The most recognizable Soviet woman was Valentina Tereshkova. Her image played an important role in the representation of women's rights in the USSR. Tereshkova symbolized and validated the victory of socialism and the equality declared by the Constitution. She was an example for all Soviet women, because she functioned in such a difficult role on a par with men. After passing the physical and intellectual trials at the same level as men, Tereshkova proved the power of the "weaker sex". The first woman in space was a deputy and a member of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and the Chairman of the Committee of Soviet Women until 1989. Her image became a symbol and guarantee of gender equality in the country, and her pictures appeared in the press on a regular basis right up until the end of the Soviet era.

The vast number of members of the Politburo was a visual sign of the stagnation period. Only portraits of the general secretary of the CPSU could compete with their numbers. All magazines were crowded with photographs of Brezhnev. Even during Stalin's cult of personality, there were not as many images of the leader as there were in the seventies. Brezhnev was everywhere: applauding from the tribune, shaking hands with workers, signing agreements at the negotiating table, receiving awards, saluting the people from the mausoleum. Pictures were staged of his speeches at the congresses, with the hall full of applauding delegates.

Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev was by no means the sole representation of power – his comrades in the Party also appeared in pictures, but no one else stood out from the faceless state apparatus. The other members of government constituted the background for the leader of the country. Among the women pictured next to Brezhnev were Indira Gandhi and Valentina Tereshkova, as well as ordinary Soviet female workers in reportage photos. Brezhnev's wife was not featured in pictures. Even in the compilation of the family archive, which was published by *Ogonek* on the occasion of his seventieth birthday, her pictures were absent.[31]

The Gorbachev couple clearly contrasted with the tradition of downplaying family ties, appearing together at official meetings and visits abroad. For Soviet citizens such behavior presented an unusual image of power, so it caused considerable misunder-

Boris Yeltsin with the Patriarch Aleksy II. Photo by Y. Feklistov, *Ogonek* 31—33 (1992).

standing and annoyance. This rejection was even discussed on the pages of *Sovetskaia Zhenshina*, which tried to rehabilitate Raisa Gorbacheva in the eyes of the public.[32]

Even in the last moments of his reign, coming down the steps of the plane from Foros with his wife and daughter, Gorbachev was shown as a perfect family man.[33] But in the eyes of the public, this was not a positive characteristic, and it did not win him any points as a political leader – quite the contrary.

The post-Soviet postscript

At the beginning of the 1990s, Boris Yeltsin was portrayed in a crowd, among people, thereby embodying democratic values.[34] In another shot, with dozens of microphones focused on him, he presents a visual metaphor of publicity.[35] He was also shown drinking tea with the Patriarch – this meant that he respected tradition.[36] In general, the new government tried to surround itself with churchmen in order to express its continuity with the prerevolutionary past.

At the same time that the royal family was rehabilitated, there were publications about the family relationships of royal personages, and about the execution in Yekaterinburg.[37] Materials were accompanied by photographs of a married couple, the Tsesarevich, and the Grand Princesses. The declaration of prerevolutionary values and a call to go "back to the roots" that came after perestroika initiated a return to the patriarchal model.

After Raisa Gorbacheva, who had irritated her compatriots because of her various activities, the figure of the First Lady vanished into the shadows for a long time. Naina Yeltsina did not appear in the press. Her absence in the pictures of her husband indicated a change in the view of the social role of women: public and private were separated even more than before.

Since the election of Vladimir Putin, the First Lady has rarely been seen in the media. In the words of the *Daily Beast*, during the second term of Putin's presidency, his wife was, in effect, "invisible".[38] The disappearance of Lyudmila Putina from the public sphere indicated that Putin had built his image ignoring the family context, as if he were an old bachelor.

The image of Superman – practicing judo, skiing, surfacing out of the deep sea with ancient amphoras – does not need a women's supplement, which would simply detract from the main character. The image is created simultaneously for all women in the country. Leadership is represented in all spheres and even beyond normal human limits. He is not only the head of state, the "father of the nations", but also the "king of beasts", the leader, quite literally, of a flock of cranes.

The reign of Dmitry Medvedev was described by many as a weakening of vertical power. It is symptomatic that the President's wife became a more powerful figure at this time. Thus, the active position of the First Lady is one of the most important markers of democratic tendencies. The historical process in Russia attests to this.

THE RELATIVE FREEDOM of the twenties, which created and glorified the image of the woman revolutionary in the faces of Krupskaia and Kolontai, was replaced by the patriarchy of Stalin's time, which passed under the shadow of the "father of nations". After Khrushchev's Thaw, which took Nina Khrushcheva from the home into the public sphere and placed Valentina Tereshkova on the same level as the men atop the Mausoleum, there came, with the cult of personality of Brezhnev, stagnation. The process of perestroika weakened the old gender mindsets, but not for long. With the post-Soviet "return to the origins", the patriarchal model came back again, reinforced by market relations.

Paternalism in its visual embodiment asserts itself through iconographic schemes which emphasize the role of the leader through the scale of his figure contrasted with others and depict him as the "father of nations", the leader of the masses, and their high patron. Gestures also play an important role, expressing trust relationships of the ruler and the people to approve the family character of their connection. Finally, the presence or the absence of the First Lady in power representations, as well as that of female politicians, also indicates the gender politics of the society. The paternalistic model determines the position of a monarch as a sole ruler, while the wife is reduced to at most a decorative function, to a symbol stripped of its power.

The study of images of power permits the revelation of their ideological character, and the detection of a paternalistic attitude and the degree of authoritarianism of a regime. It thereby helps to formulate a critical position towards power, because truly democratic reforms are possible only with a change of gender norms, where equality is a vaccination against the scourge of autocracy.

Ekaterina Vikulina, lecturer at the Russian State University for the Humanities in Moscow.

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2 Peter Burke, *Eyewitnessing: The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence* (London: Reaktion Books, 2001), 28.

3 Susan E. Reid, "Photography in the Thaw", *Art Journal* 53 No. 2 (1994): 33. The Soviet space program included not just space exploration but rocketry in general.

4 For an example, see Burke, *Eyewitnessing*, 187.

5 Victoria Bonnell, *Iconography of Power: Soviet Political Posters under Lenin and Stalin* (Berkeley: University of California Press), 139. Monumental art was proclaimed by Lenin as an important means for propagating revolutionary ideas.

6 Key elements in the aesthetics of Leniniana were simplicity and humanity: "Leniniana cultivated the image of Lenin as a simple and modest man whose outstretched arm projected a new type of power". These attributes were later transferred to Stalin, with whom they acquired unprecedented proportions (Bonnell, *Iconography of Power*, 146).

7 Bonnell, *Iconography of Power*, 140.

8 Bonnell, *Iconography of Power*, 143.

9 Bonnell, *Iconography of Power*, 154.

10 Bonnell, *Iconography of Power*, 158.

11 Jan Plamper, *Alchemy of Power: The Stalin Cult in the Visual Arts* (Moscow: NLO, 2010), 110.

12 Bonnell, *Iconography of Power*, 163. One example is Klutsis's 1936 poster "Kadry reshaiut vse", in which Stalin is posed against a red background like Christ in many icons and surrounded by smiling men and women bearing flowers. Klutsis's poster "K mirovomu oktiabriu" (1933) utilizes a perspectival distortion to aggrandize Lenin and Stalin, whose giant feet are positioned near crowds of very small people (Bonnell, *Iconography of Power*, 163, 166).

13 [Photomontage], *SSSR na stroike* 8 (1937): front cover, 1.

14 [Photo], *Sovetskii soiuz* 5 (1953): 8.

15 Plamper, *Alchemy of Power*, p. 110. Starting in 1947, these girls did not represent the national republics, but rather had a typically Russian appearance.

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20 Valery Gendo-Rothe [photo], *Sovetskoe Foto* 9 (1961): back cover.

21 Gennady Koposov, "Joy of meeting" [Photo], *Sovetskoe Foto* 10 (1962) 23–25.

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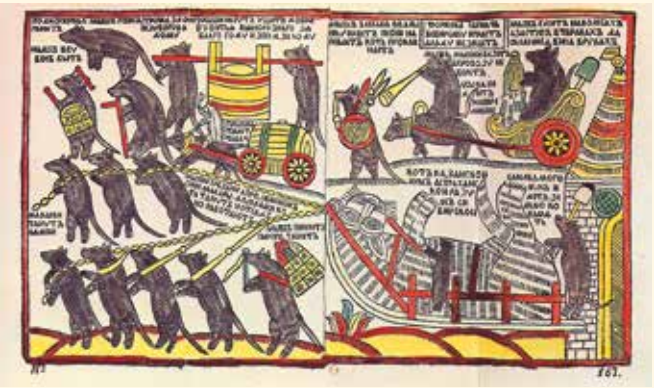
Going west or going back?

Searching for new male identity

by **Daria Dmitrieva**

"Russia, the year of 199... The state does not exist. There is no army." With these words, the action and fantasy comic book *Through Blood and Suffering*[1] begins. No army: the main structure that organized male identity has collapsed in the crisis of the 1990s. The great search for the post-Soviet male identity begins.



The Mice Are Burying the Cat, a 1760s lubok print. It has been commonly thought that this plot is a caricature of Peter the Great's burial.

One of the symbolic forms in which this search took place was the comics. What answers can research into comics give us about male identity? Comics show and tell at the same time. This symbiosis creates a special type of narration – text and visual line complement each other, forcing the reader to perform two types of work – reading the text and reading the visual narration, which, without a doubt, requires a greater engagement by the reader, and allows the authors of comics to enlarge their expression.

In this paper, I will show how the comics of the publishing house Veles-V.A. produced symbolic forms that represent problems of masculine identity that existed in the 1990s in Russia.

abstract

The stereotype of the Soviet man was destroyed in the early 1990s. New forms of culture, such as comic books, tried to invent new male models. In 1991, a group of authors started to publish the comic magazine *Veles*, in which patterns of male identity were constructed. The comics expressed a form of sublimation of post war and post Soviet trauma. The new patterns drew inspiration from three areas: American superheroes, epic Slavic characters, and the heroes of the war in Afghanistan. The army and the Afghan experience became the cornerstone, on which the new understanding of the male identity in the new cultural environment was built.

KEY WORDS: Comics, postsoviet Russia, monsters, male identity, Veles.

When the authors of these comics created their images of heroes, they tried to find some exemplars and fundamental values on which to base them, instead of the broken idols of the USSR. Where did they search for them? How were their fears and hopes symbolized? In the end, what values did they find? I studied Russian comic art produced by the publishing house Veles-V.A. in Ekaterinburg, which existed from 1991 to 1998. During this period, seven issues of the magazine *Veles*, two issues of humor comics, and two issues of "The Collections of Comics" were published.

THE FIRST THREE RELEASES of the comic strips were published in 1991 on black-and-white newsprint. The issues were called "The Collection of Comics". Starting in 1992, the issues began to be published in a magazine format, called *Veles*.

The authors were searching for models of their heroes in Western culture (Mazda, Batman, Conan, Spider-Man, and others), Slavic mythology, the Far East, the fantastic future, fairy tales, and the historical past. Connecting mythological and media modes creates a special type of imagery, the new heroes of the 1990s – New Slavs or "new Russians". According to my estimations, 20% of the stories in all the Veles-V.A. issues are devoted to humorous topics, and the remaining 80% to heroic stories in different genres, mostly fantasy and fiction. Veles's comics contain no stories centered on a female character; these stories are narrations by a man about a man in a situation of social crisis.

I argue that the search for a hero is very symptomatic of the Russian male consciousness of the 1990s. By examining comics by Veles-V.A., I will also show how a man of the 1990s thought of his body, his role in the family, his social status, and more: his place in the political system, his relations to authorities, his purpose, and his highest aim.

The roots of comic art in Russia

The tradition of comic art in Russia commences with primitivistic pictures, *lubok*. The peculiarity of *lubok* is that it involves a viewer – a reader – in a kind of game with socio-political signs.[2] In the beginning of the Soviet era, the same role is occasioned by the political poster. As Jose Alaniz writes,[3] visual culture forms the central front in the war of ideas. The Proletkult's projects are the primary example of this. In the second half of the twentieth century, two currents of comic strip art were formed in the Soviet Union. The first are the dissident comics. Some people who had been subject to persecution shared their experience in visual form. The most striking example is *The Rock-Painting* by E. Kersnovskaya.[4] Her notebooks, which she created in the Gulag, with comments, which she inserted later, is a story transferred to a visual form – "the evidence of the historical process", as Walter Benjamin wrote.[5] The second, official line of comic development in the USSR is children's comics. Everyone read the magazines *Funny Pictures* and *Murzilka* as a child. Here, the comic strip performs an entertaining and humorous function.

"Red blood". *Veles* no. 6, 1996.

It can be concluded that the comics' themes were always either burning social issues, containing direct political statements, or merely childish.

The situation changed in the 1990s. Comic art began a new life in Russia. At the beginning of the post-Soviet period, comics were produced by keen enthusiasts, who knew Western comics and admired them. With the help of such an unexpected cultural form as comics, authors tried to embody in visual images their anticipation of a new life, new stories, new possibilities, and new identities.

The Veles-V.A. publishing house existed from 1991 to 1998; and published comics until 1995. It was not the only project of its kind: there was also, for example, the comic magazine *The Fly*[6] in Ufa and the PIF publishing house in Yekaterinburg. All these were individual initiatives: people without experience and professional knowledge, but full of enthusiasm, began to draw and publish comics.

War, identity, masculinity, and comics

The publishing house was originally registered as a company of the Russian *Union of Afghan Veterans Veles-V.A.* – and this was no accident. The title *Structural unit Veles* was placed on the cover of the first issue. At the bottom of the page was the note, "By purchasing our products you are making a contribution to assistance work for disabled people and the families of the fallen".

Initially, the publishing house was conceived as a patriotic project associated with veterans of Afghanistan. The editor-in-chief and manager of the project was an agent of the Air Force, Igor Ermakov. In 1985 to 1987, he had participated in combat operations in Afghanistan and received many military awards.

The Afghan War generation tried to create comics in post-Soviet Russia. They were not businessmen and knew nothing about marketing and the comics industry. Still, their work is very representative, because these authors' comics also became a sphere in which the fears and stress of 1990s could be sublimated. Afghanistan formed their values and it is not surprising that the topic of war and defense was extremely important to the publishers.

THE DISCOURSE OF WAR in the USSR spreads far beyond the phenomena directly involving the military and its activities. V. A. Sukovataya[7] notes that war is a central topic in the Soviet public consciousness. Even the topic of labor is understood in terms of a military struggle, such as a "feat of labor" or a "battle for the harvest". The feat on the battlefield is one of the central cultural scenes in the formation of masculinity. Its image on the screen served an ideological function in Soviet gender ideology, in which the role and the image of the soldier is somehow incorporated into other contemporary heroic roles and images of masculinity, whether as a miner or a builder of an underground railway, a steeplejack, a communist, an engineer, or a seaman.

War increases collective masculine identity and forms a set of connections between the dominant masculinities, the hierarchies of homosocial power, and the politics of the male body. The discourse of protection of women and children designates the constancy of the protected. The enemy, which can also be constituted by the problem faced by labor (in the battle for the harvest, etc.), is always assigned by the state. This characterizes the Soviet masculine identity as opposed to that of the West.

What happens to the structure of "Who is protecting whom from what?" of Orwell's perpetual war during the period of political and social crisis of the early 1990s?

In 1991, with the nearly complete elimination of the regulatory function of authorities, all suppressed aggression and sexuality becomes free and is immediately directed towards

a great number of objects: at formerly protected women and children, at other men; autoaggression and a whole complex of phantasms appear – vague media representations consisting of indistinct images of an enemy. A Soviet man, unaccustomed to the new active role, starts to search for "his own war" or to create it artificially. The comics of the Veles-V.A. publishing house, in this regard, are very symptomatic.

Searching for the new masculinity: why?

We may examine the traumatic experience of the state's collapse in the two-part comic story *Through Blood and Suffering*. The plot is extremely vague; the full importance of what is happening is transmitted by the particular details. The country is experiencing a post-apocalyptic shock. The protagonist, Andrew, a soldier, is sitting at home doing the laundry. Suddenly he receives the order (it is not known from whom: the letter is slid under the door) to go to the forest and find a messenger there. The scene of Andrew's packing for the campaign is significant – originally, it is the classic Soviet cliché "Portrait of a Man with Vodka": he sits at the table, shown full face, in front of him a bottle, a faceted glass, and sliced bread. We also observe a live grenade on the table, which indicates the status of a warrior. The next few shots involve him equipping himself in his uniform and grasping the weapon. The equipment of the hero is drawn in detail right up to his cap, which he wears in the manner of an action hero from an American movie.

Military attributes become the key to the restoration of the usual picture of the world of a Hero-Defender – the mission is received, he starts to fulfill it. Andrew goes to the forest, where he accidentally meets the family of the former university employee, Yura with his wife, son, and sister. The situation "women and children" is restored. Yura is a typical unemployed man of the 1990s, trying to adjust to the new capitalist way of life. This need to adjust, to change, is embodied in the following figure: at night it turns out that Yura and all his relatives are vampires, robots, and zombies, and at night they attack Andrew. Social transformation is shown as a process of physiological mutation. The topic of lycanthropy is found in practically all of the comics. In the comic book *Duel,*[8] a lovely wife suddenly turns out to be a monster; in the fairy tale about Ivan, a peasant's son, a woman turns into mermaid; in the comic book *Veles* a warrior man turns out to be a woman; and so on.

These transformations indicate two important things: the fragility and instability of the familiar world and the enemy's image blurring and dissolving into everyday life.

Through Blood and Suffering. 1992.

Blurring the contours of the enemy leads to blurring the concepts of friend and foe: familiar relationships are being shaken. (An example is the comic book *Duel*: in the first frame, the hero is sitting with his wife drinking wine, and in a second frame, she becomes a zombie and tries to kill him.)

But let us come back to the comic book *Through Blood and Suffering*. The shaky, restored structure collapses. Andrew destroys everybody, leaving only the child Sergei alive, but nearly turned into a monster, half robot, half zombie.

Foreseeing trouble, Andrew still cannot kill Sergei; he takes him along instead. Here again is the logic of protection: a child needs to be protected. They fight together against savages and the communist helicopter, the pilot of which calls Andrew "the Democrat." However, it is obvious that if there is no army, the tasks to be accomplished still seem vague. As a result, Sergei attacks Andrew and turns him into a vampire.

Andrew, in turn, attacks the messenger whom they have been going to see. Thus, the hero is transformed into something else entirely.

In this comic, the logic of the loss of identity of a Hero-Defender is sequentially presented: initially it is the providers of goals that disappear – state and army (a kind of totality), then the representation of the protected individual ("women and children" turn out to be monsters), then the enemy (anyone can be an enemy, even a child), then the task (the messenger becomes the victim), and then the hero himself (I'm a monster, not a military man).

BUT THE COMIC'S STORY does not end there. A rather non-trivial way out of this situation is offered as one more transformation happens. The boy, Sergei, returns to being a nude blond boy with a perfectly proportioned body, and caps off the triumph of the developing race, which appears through the sequential transformation "man-vampire-superman". The pronounced physicality of the new Sergei bears emphasis. The political and economic situation in 1991 resulted in a change of moral ideals, involving most of all sexual liberation in the public sphere. "Post-Soviet masculinity is trying at any cost to overcome the Soviet 'trauma' of asceticism and asexuality, and as a result, becomes a 'neurotic masculinity'," writes the professor and theorist in the field of gender studies V.A. Sukovataya.[9] And in the image of the transformed Sergei, we see the new type of masculinity – a narcissistic masculinity. In *The Theory of Libido and Narcissism*, Freud[10] speaks about secondary narcissism – numerous cases of delusions of grandeur and erotomania in

which the subject is the main protagonist. The individual is trying to reproduce his infancy, where there are not boundaries between subject and object. The *Veles* comics manifest the same effort.

Search in the Slavic mythology

The example is one of the central comic strips of the magazine – the serial comics story *Veles*.[11] The main character is a young man called Veles, the adopted son of the Slavic god Volos. He was brought up by his servants – pseudo-mythological persons – Pleshilo and Baba Yaga. Pleshilo is a small creature, who can perform magic if needed, and Baba Yaga is an old woman living in the forest. Vladimir Propp saw her as the guardian of the border between life and death, but in the comic, she is just the foster mother of the main hero.

Veles himself has a heroic, mythological body. The body of the hero has manifest gender characteristics – broad shoulders, powerful trunk, muscles in sharp relief, large stature. His face also has all the signs of masculinity – wide square jaw, broad nostrils, large eyebrows, high cheekbones. There are clear similarities between the hero of the Veles series and a savage man in the Western tradition such as Conan the Barbarian.[12] (Indeed, the Russian authors make no secret of their sympathies: they had already published a translated comic book about Conan in the second issue of the *Collection of comics* in 1992.)

IT IS INTERESTING that at a certain moment the hero Veles turns out to be naked and then for some time continues his exploits without clothes. Nudity is an important factor in the development of the hero, his achievement of excellence and of superhuman status. We have already seen this in the comic story *Through Blood and Suffering* in the updated image of Sergei.

The hero Veles fights various enemies. Originally, the purpose of the battle is to test himself. Having passed three tests (battles with a bear, with wolves, and with an eagle), Veles is given a task by his adoptive father Volos. The mission is extremely obscure – to get the "datura flower" (some kind of drug, with the help of which Almighty Volos will supposedly conquer all people – but this is unknown to the hero). Having received the task, the hero, without further questions, begins to execute it – it is a comfortable situation for him, as we have already seen. He has incredible strength and the ability to conjure. However, there is one condition – loving a woman will deprive the hero of strength.

Veles, no 5, 1994.

IN GENERAL, IMAGES OF WOMEN are rare in the pages of these collections and only four types can be found: a friend or companion-in-arms, a forbidden sexual object, an enemy, and a monster. Often a woman who is initially attractive turns into an ugly monster, threatening the hero's life.

At a certain stage in the adventure, Veles meets a beautiful girl, Vesnyana, who attracts him, but the formidable Old Queen of the country tries to shift the hero's attention to herself. The hero turns both women down because he remembers that love can strip him of his strength. As a result, young Vesnyana is replaced by an older woman, an enemy, who in the end causes the loss of a young lover and an attack on the hero by a huge swarm of wasps. The hero cannot influence the events, so he does not respond to the rupture of relations with his beloved.

The comic's authors try to oppose the Soviet pattern of suppressed, injured masculinity to an ideal image, an "I-man" of flourishing physicality and sexuality. But it is still suppressed by two things: an unmotivated prohibition on sexual relations, and an unauthorized and unmotivated purpose. Both of these factors are introduced from the Soviet past and make him experience the trauma of his own masculinity again and again through the impossibility of realizing it in normal sexual relationships. The hero has to sublimate his strength in new exploits; he actually falls into an exclusive circle: he is lonely, and women and other men are excluded from the field of vision. Limited sexuality with expressive physicality turns the hero's adventures into a process of continuous traumatic experiences.

The trauma returns in the form of fantasies of more and more gigantic enemies. All of them best the hero several times; they have dark threatening appearances: mammoths, dragons, snakes, monsters. . . .

Finally, the hero arrives at the place where the datura flower grows, but he cannot seize it: he does not have the strength to pull it out of the ground. The situation is resolved unexpectedly. The goddess of death Morshana appears, who uproots and gives a flower to the hero for no special reason, without any conditions, just because she liked him: "I liked you, pretty,

stupid!" she says and gives him a flower. This turn of events raises the question about the value of the flower and of the heroic deed of its acquisition. Indeed, a great deed is not important in itself, it is only important as the formal presence of a task and the activities involved in executing it.

We see the narcissistic masculinity of the hero with the perfect body who admires himself. He and his exploits form a single world where monsters are a required element. Any difficulty is resolved by external influence, as if that is the way things should be.

Searching in the West

Masculinity also develops, in a different way, as the adaptation of something foreign. Comics are a phenomenon of Western culture, and, of course, the authors try to adapt characters to create a model of masculine identity. Their adaptation of the superhero Batman[13] is illustrative.

Batman. *Humor comics* no 1, 1992.

The author of the work is unknown; only one series of comics was released, and the adventures remained unfinished. Interestingly, Batman is used on several levels. First, there is the formal graphic level: Batman is painted in the style of the contemporary comics about this superhero; it is the Batman of the 1990s. The authors were graphics masters and knew contemporary American comics well, as indicated by how their use of the graphic organization of the panels to express the dynamic structure of the plot, the choice of foreshortenings, and the representation of the characters.[14]

Second, he is adapted as a hero: he is presented as a defender, although active and independent. Third, at the level of plot: Batman, as the American millionaire, decides to help the children of the Volga region, not with his millions, but by struggling against a maniac with an axe.

ALSO IN THE COLLECTIONS of Veles-V.A. are comics involving Conan the Barbarian, the Japanese-American hero Mazda, calques from multiple action films, and the agent Z (a detective comic character) – to name just a few. Around some Western heroes an original story is created – for example, the comic strip *Save the Earth*[15] uses the stylistics and the heroics of *Star Wars*.

In fact, the comics of the early 1990s, the aim of which was to entertain teens and adults, were often created by direct transfer of the Western tradition to the Soviet sphere.

Neither Batman nor other adapted characters can reduce the stress associated with the loss of male identity. The authors of these comics enthusiastically and expertly replicate the original stylistics of the prototype, but cannot develop an alien for their type of heroic character, cannot give him a fully developed life in the literary work.

The comics about Western heroes are episodic; they do not occupy a significant place in the pages of the issues, being rather a kind of literacy campaign in the culture of comics rather than a serious attempt to set the behavioral model of a Western hero before the Russian reader.

The appeal to a variety of Western heroes, from Conan to Batman, from Ninja Turtles to characters from *Star Wars*, shows the uncertainty of the Russian authors' search. None of the series achieves much development, or completeness.

Searching in the Soviet past

We see that the search for a hero – a model for the formation of a new type of masculinity – takes place in comics in several ways: in mythology, in Western popular culture, and in fictional epics. But the search in the recent Soviet past turns out to be the most productive.

The first issue of serial comics, *Red Blood*, became a sensation.[16] The main character Ivan endures challenging trials and tribulations during the war in Afghanistan. He loses friends, and witnesses death, cowardice, and heroism. At home waiting for his girlfriend. . . . The authors narrate their experiences of the war in Afghanistan, and the comic book receives the greatest response, judging by letters reprinted from readers.

"Each generation has its own war – the Civil War, the Great Patriotoc War, Afghanistan. . . " says Ivan, the *Red Blood* comics' hero, to his girlfriend before his mobilization. Ivan reproduces the most important Soviet male identity: that of the warrior-defender. "War, as an experience of gender policy, is one of the key methods of forming the male/virile body," the researcher Irina Novikova[17] says.

The authors classify this comics as a documentary, inscribing it in the tradition of such works as *The Rock-Painting* by

Kersnovskaya, and the Western graphic novels about a Holocaust survivor *Maus,* by Art Spiegelman, and *Persepolis* by Marjan Satrapi. The purpose of works like this is to compensate for the absence of photos and documents – any visual fixation of the experience – and to create the author's own version of events from the perspective of a sharp social criticism. According to Peter Burke,[18] acts of "obvious–vision", such as making documentary comics or photographs, are the moments that permit us to imagine the past and bring us face to face with history. Similar processes take place in the comic book *Red Blood* by Veles about the war in Afghanistan. The authors specifically point out that some of the images in the comics are based on actual photos, such as those depicturing mutilated bodies of soldiers who have been tortured by the mujahedeen.

Red Blood. *Veles* no. 1, 1992.

IN THE COMIC BOOK, Ivan's strength, endurance, self-control, and ability to stand up for himself are often depicted. But more actively, the authors of the comic book unfold a discourse of the soldier's code of honor and the importance of testing oneself "for heroism". The first series of comics is dedicated to the period before departure for Afghanistan, which is particularly interesting.

Symptomatic is the scene in which the hero and his friends are walking through the streets of the city, and retirees are talking about them: "What have we come to? Look, young people wear everything American." Indeed, the characters are dressed in the fashion of the time – skinny jeans, jackets, and so on. T-shirts and other types of shirts tightly cover their muscular chests. The girls passing by stare at them. The hero is understood as a real man – he gets approval from a woman, and the disapproving comments of the elderly only support the image of his manliness – he looks unmistakably like a man. Moreover, thanks to the remarks of old women we begin to sympathize sharply with the hero: these retirees do not know that the man they are criticizing has enlisted in the Air Force.

In the comics, we see that for its authors the Red Army is an ideal place for identity formation. The reminiscence about the oath of allegiance occupies the central place in the first chapter of the comic book as an event of paramount importance. The main character Ivan enlists in the army as a volunteer and specifically wants to get to Afghanistan to "test himself".

FURTHER EVENTS UNFOLD around the hero's service in Afghanistan, his military missions and Afghan fighters, the mujahedeen. A man's body is a soldier's body. At the level of the plot, the comic story gradually unfolds from the memory complex about the Soviet era to the chaos of war and captivity; however, the hero does not lose himself in it. This is no longer the post-apocalyptic chaos of the comic *Through Blood and Suffering*, and the enemy is not a fantastic monster, but one designated by the state: in the first issue the hero says that he must "fulfill his international duty in Afghanistan".

The appeal to the topic of war symbolically restores the order connected with the structure of a warrior-defender, and produces a powerful nostalgic impulse, forcing authors and readers, as early as 1993, to turn to the Soviet past for the reconstruction of male identity.

The hero remembers "his war", and, following him, we encounter history.

According to Benjamin,[19] modernity takes the image of destroyer of the present. The present is dissolved in the past, transformed into debris before the eyes of the astonished angel of history:

> **His face is turned towards the past. Where we see the appearance of a chain of events, *he* sees one single catastrophe, which unceasingly piles rubble on top of rubble and hurls it before his feet. He would like to pause for a moment so fair . . . to awaken the dead and to piece together what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise, it has caught itself up in his wings and is so strong that the Angel can no longer close them. The storm drives him irresistibly into the future, to which his back is turned, while the rubble-heap before him grows sky-high.**

Red Blood takes us back to the point in the past, to the lost Paradise, when everything was right – there was a war and a sense of confidence in the reality of one's own experience of being a man.

Conclusions: which identity, then?

The Veles-V.A. comics present a broad, complete coverage of the social problems of the transition to the post-Soviet period, and, in symbolic form, represent for the Russian reader a new form of entertaining comics. This form becomes not so much simply a guide to new values, but, to a greater extent, a mirror that reflects the complex of the loss of male identity that occurred after the collapse of the Soviet state system.

As we have seen, the "Hero-Defender" type of masculinity was shaped in the Soviet discourse, for which the most important structuring phenomenon is war. The entire reality of work and family life is also understood as a military situation, in which every man has a clearly defined place – he was the defender of "women-and-children" from an enemy assigned by the state.

The man still remains passive and depressed, he did not choose his goals, and in the job assigned him by the State and the Party, it is not his duty to try to achieve for himself and his family any kind of well-being, but rather to defend and protect.

Comics thus appear in the crisis period of rupture with the traditional Soviet masculinity and become the bearers of traces of this trauma. The authors of comics try to find new hero models, searching for them in Slavic mythology and in Western culture. In the second half of the 1990s, they produce the comic book *Red Blood*, which returns to the figure of the war, allowing the hero to reconstruct his identity nostalgically, and to survive the traumatic experience of the crisis of the 1990s. A man returns to his past and finds confidence in himself in the present.

Since the late 1990s, this process still has not been completed. Designing one's own history, fantasizing about it, giving it additional values and meanings – this is one of the strongest trends in contemporary Russian culture. Symbolization of the experience of the past to overcome the crisis gave rise to the liquidation of historical reality as a whole. In its place, it creates a wonderful new past where it is possible to find the necessary identity – the patriarchal warrior – as if the 1990s had never happened.

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Studies on men and masculinities in Ukraine

Dynamics of (under) Development

by **Tetyana Bureychak**

Over the past two decades, gender relations have become an issue of growing public and academic interest in many post-Soviet states. This can be clearly seen in the increase in gender studies publications, research, and dissertations, as well as in the introduction of gender studies courses in university curricula and the establishment of gender studies research centers. At the same time, the major focus of most of these projects has been on women, femininities, and sometimes sexualities, which are primarily discussed in relation to patriarchy and gender inequalities. Masculinities, meanwhile, remain on the fringe of academic discussion to date. This paper aims to discuss the underproblematization of men and masculinities in the post-Soviet context with a particular focus on Ukraine. It offers an overview of the dynamics and contextual peculiarities of the development of men and masculinities studies, questions their comparability with the "Western" history of this discipline, and discusses the potential of this field of studies in the post-Soviet context.

abstract

Despite the growing field of gender studies in the post-Soviet context, issues of men and masculinities remain on the fringe of academic interest. This paper discusses the underproblematization of men and masculinities in the post-Soviet context with a larger focus on Ukraine. It offers an overview of the dynamics and contextual peculiarities of the development of men and masculinities studies, questions their comparability with 'Western' history of this discipline, and discusses the potential of this field of study in the post-Soviet context.

KEY WORDS: men and masculinities studies, gender, post-Soviet context, Ukraine.

Gender studies in Western academia

Academic interest in the analysis of men and masculinities from a gender perspective is quite recent, not only in post-Soviet countries, but also in Anglo-Saxon countries (Australia, the US, and Great Britain), where this field of studies primarily emerged.[1] The explicit emergence of this field dates back only to the late 1970s. The initial interest in men and masculinities from a gender perspective is related to the second wave of feminism, as well as to other, rather mixed factors, such as gay liberation movements, the spread of both pro-feminist and antifeminist men's rights organizations, growing public concerns with the changing roles of men, and debates on the crisis of masculinity. Despite the different agendas pursued by these initiatives – which ranged from criticizing and combating patriarchy to protecting men's traditional roles – they contributed to the recognition of men's gendered experience and questioned the concept of masculinity. Strengthening emancipatory movements and discourses related to gender and sexuality coincided with the development of gender, LGBT, queer, and men and masculinities studies in academia in North America and Europe. The pro-feminist men and masculinities studies aimed to contribute to a more critical analysis of men's experiences, one that did not seek to empower men, but instead constituted an important exploration of gender power relations by looking at how power is reproduced, sustained, and normalized in relation to men. To emphasize this pro-feminist orientation of the contemporary research, the field is sometimes labeled "critical studies on men and masculinities".[2]

The dominant analytical perspectives in men and masculinities studies have been substantially reconsidered since the late 1970s.[3] The key emphasis of the first wave of studies on men and masculinities was to demonstrate the socially constructed nature of masculinity and its detrimental effects on men's psy-

chological and physical well-being, but since then – as a result of the immense criticism this approach received – the focus has shifted to complex relations of masculinity and power. The second wave of men and masculinities studies (since the 1980s) emphasized the limitations of sex role theory and drew attention to pluralities of men's experiences. Inspired by Gramsci's theory of hegemony, R. W. Connell[4] introduced the concept of hegemonic masculinity, which has become one of the most influential in the field. The third wave of men and masculinities studies (since the two thousand aughts) has been inspired by post structuralism, intersectionality theories, and queer and postcolonial studies. It has deepened the focus of analysis on material and discursive gender power relations, and on linkages between social action, power, and fluid, contingent, and performative identity processes. Despite the growing recognition of cultural diversities and global and transnational processes, the Anglo-Saxon tradition continues to dominate men and masculinities studies.

Some of the books on men and masculinities studies published in the post-Soviet space: Sharon Bird and Sergei Zherebkin (eds.), *Naslazhdenie byt' muzhchinoi: Zapadnye teorii masculinnosti i postssovetskie praktiki* [The pleasure of being a man: Western theories of masculinity and post-Soviet practices] (Saint Petersburg: Aleteya, 2008); Igor Kon, *Muzhchina v meniaiushchemsia mire* [A man in a changing world] (Moscow: Vremia, 2009); Tetyana Bureychak, *Sotsiologia masculinnosti* [Sociology of masculinity], (Lviv: Magnolia, 2011).

Challenges of the post-Soviet context

The post-Soviet context represents dynamics of political, social, and gender transformations that are rather different from those found in Western Europe and North America. Although particular aspects of gender agendas in post-Soviet states may vary due to local political, economic, cultural, and religious situations, the Soviet heritage is one of the important common reference points in the process of establishing new gender hierarchies. It affects the current nation-building processes and visions of gender relations. One of the important peculiarities of some post-Soviet countries, including Ukraine, lies in the parallel coexistence of mutually exclusive gender agendas, i.e. gender-egalitarian and gender-traditional discourses. The former reflects the aspiration of the country to be seen as a part of Europe and to follow its democratic traditions. Ukraine is one of the few post-Soviet countries that has adopted a special law on equal rights and opportunities of women and men[5] and has supported a range of state initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality. At the same time, the absence of effective mechanisms and efforts to enforce the legislation on gender equality, combined with regular sexist speeches by leading Ukrainian politicians, reveal the merely formal or declarative character of these legal initiatives. Despite the integration of gender-egalitarian principles in current Ukrainian legislation, the dominant public discourses and practices remain patriarchal.

"UKRAINE IS ONE OF THE FEW POST-SOVIET COUNTRIES THAT HAS ADOPTED A SPECIAL LAW ON EQUAL RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES OF WOMEN AND MEN."

THE POPULARITY OF THE gender-traditional discourse is largely connected to resistance to the communist past, a resistance that has become vital for the framing of national identity in the post-Soviet Ukraine. According to the new national narratives, restoration of traditional gender relations is often presented as a way to revitalize the Ukrainian nation, to preserve the family, and to renew moral traditions that the Soviet system destroyed. These views have received particular support from the national media, as well as from political, religious, and non-governmental organizations. This tendency, also common in other postcommunist and postsocialist countries, is sometimes referred to as a "patriarchal renaissance".[6] The situation in recent years is particularly aggravated by the advent of "anti-gender organizations", by the intensification of a self-styled "moral agenda", and by legislative initiatives to ban abortion and "propaganda for homosexuality".[7] There has been a wide range of initiatives of far-right and religious groups aimed at the protection of traditional Christian values, the traditional family, and national identity. The form of these initiatives has varied from Internet attacks and trolling of organizations and persons promoting gender equality issues to the organization of massive street demonstrations (called "family carnivals") and violent attacks against events and people connected with LGBT issues. The common discourse behind most

of these initiatives and attacks emphasizes corrupt morality, a weakening of the institution of the family, and the undermining of national traditions, all of which are seen as consequences of gender equality politics, feminism, and the visibility of the LGBT community.

Promoting pro-feminist gender studies in such conditions is rather challenging, as it goes against the dominant political and public discourses. Although women and gender studies are taught in many Ukrainian universities nowadays, the field is still not formally recognized. Even where courses on gender studies have been introduced, they often have a marginal status within the curriculum and are treated as unimportant and unserious, e.g., as an attempt to follow fashion, or as a mere diversion for the students. Apart from the symbolic devaluation of gender studies, some other common challenges for the development of this academic field are connected with the dearth of good academic resources in the Ukrainian and Russian languages, the inaccessibility of international academic databases and the most recent international scholarship in the field, and the limited number of translated works even by the classical gender studies and feminist writers. Although this situation has improved, the problem remains significant. All these challenges are highly relevant to men and masculinities studies.

GENDER STUDIES in the post-Soviet context originated from women's studies. Despite the broadening of the scope of problems discussed and the diversification of the research agenda of the humanities and social sciences by the recent addition of gender perspectives, the focus on women remains dominant in gender studies in Ukraine. An explicit academic interest in men and masculinities in the post-Soviet space has emerged predominantly in Russia in the early part of the past decade. In contrast to Anglo-Saxon history of men's studies, this interest was to a much smaller degree connected with grass-root activism and pro- or anti-feminist men's organizations. The interest originated within academia as a part of gender and women studies. The temporal dynamics of the academic development of research on men and masculinities in Russia is reflected in the publications on these issues.[8] The first academic books on men and masculinities from a gender perspective were published at the beginning of the two thousand aughts. This publication process, however, was not sustained, and had significantly decreased by the end of the decade. Despite the peculiarities of the Ukrainian context, the similarities of the post-Soviet gender processes in Russia and Ukraine make these publications important and relevant resources for Ukrainian scholars.

Men and masculinities studies as an academic subject is still marginally represented in Ukrainian academia. Although many gender studies courses taught at the universities integrate discussion of masculinities, teaching men and masculinities studies as a separate discipline is still uncommon. Only two universities have offered such courses up to now.[9] Although the reception of these courses has been positive,[10] this situation cannot be seen as representative. The fact that there are no similar courses indicates low interest in this area or challenges in its fulfillment, insufficient institutional support, and a lack of experts in the field.

Western theories and post-Soviet practices

The influence of the Anglo-Saxon theoretical traditions on the development of men and masculinities studies in the post-Soviet context is in evidence on at least two levels – terminological and theoretical. The Anglo-Saxon terminology in gender studies is widely applied and integrated in the vocabulary of post-Soviet gender studies. It has, in particular, resulted in the transliteration of the term "masculinity" and its validation as a category of gender analysis. This shows that it was easier to adopt what was, in the local context, a relatively value-free term, instead of redefining the semantically loaded term *muzhnist* ("masculinity" in Ukrainian).

Another influence of the Anglo-Saxon theoretical tradition on the post-Soviet men and masculinities studies is the application of Anglo-Saxon theories in the analysis of post-Soviet masculinities and men's experiences. The problematization of the applicability of the Western theoretical heritage to the post-Soviet context is not unique and has been discussed by gender studies scholars for a long time.[11] This discussion is also highly relevant to men and masculinities studies, which, due to its rather short history, has not developed any significant theoretical models that would be able to capture the peculiarities of the local masculinities. Given the insufficiency of local methodological tools, importing theoretical terms from the West becomes almost inevitable. To legitimize this practice, Igor Kon remarks that, since there is much more research on men and masculinities conducted in the West, it is likely that the quality of the research is higher. "If you have little milk, how can you get the cream?" he asks, metaphorically referring to the insufficiency and potentially lower quality of the local research on men and masculinities.[12] At the same time, the uncritical application of theoretical tools developed in a different context may be problematic, which is not commonly recognized by the post-Soviet scholars.

"THE ANGLO-SAXON TRADITION CONTINUES TO DOMINATE MEN AND MASCULINITIES STUDIES."

ANALYSIS OF PUBLICATIONS on men and masculinities in Ukrainian academia gives a good picture of the content and accents of the research in this field. Most of them have been published since the second half of the two thousand aughts, which indicates the newness of interest in men and masculinities issues in Ukraine. The publications examine a wide range of problems, such as the

socialization of boys, discussed by Martsenyuk;[13] fatherhood, by Koshulap[14] and Martesnyuk;[15] nationalism and masculinity, by Bureychak;[16] Cossackhood as a contemporary model of masculinity and a historical practice, by Bureychak[17] and Zherebkin;[18] dominant social roles of Ukrainian men, by Janey et al.;[19] homeless men, by Riabchuk;[20] men and sports, by Bureychak;[21] Martsenyuk, and Shvets;[22] men as clients of social work, by Strelnyk;[23] representations of masculinities in Ukrainian literature, by Zagurskaya[24] and Matusiak;[25] and men's subcultures, by Hrymych.[26]

Analysis of references to Anglo-Saxon theories in the works of Ukrainian scholars reveals the following common patterns: (a) key concepts in the field are mentioned without being followed by an explanation of their application in the research;[27] (b) Western theories are most commonly referenced without reflection on their relevance and applicability to the local context;[28] (c) Western theories are often taken for granted as appropriate and accurate with respect to the local context, and they are rarely questioned or modified.[29] One can thus observe a minimal critical perspective towards the application of the Western theoretical tools in the research of Ukrainian scholars. This situation can also be seen in frames of post-colonial theory as a kind of colonization of the mind,[30] where Western feminist theories are perceived as normative points of references regardless of context.

The potential of studies in the post-Soviet context

Apart from many structural problems that hinder the development of critical research on men and masculinities, an important reason for the low interest in the studies on men and masculinities in the post-Soviet context is misunderstanding or undervaluation of their potential by gender studies scholars in Ukraine. The few attempts to include the discussion of men and masculinities in gender research and gender studies have been accomplished mostly as a way to compensate for the previous lack of interest in this subject, and as recognition that men, too, are gendered. Although these research motivations are important, they are not enough. Attempts to counter the strengthening of the patriarchal gender order in many post-Soviet states should not ignore the critical potential of research on men and masculinities. Problematizing and counteracting the power hierarchy, violence, discrimination, and symbolic exclusion cannot be effective if it is focused only on the experiences of people traditionally categorized as vulnerable and oppressed. Since men or particular groups of men commonly benefit from patriarchal privileges, leaving men and masculinities issues unexplored means leaving those privileges unexamined, invisible, and hence unchanged. How this situation can be changed is an important question. It is doubtful that any significant and effective initiative for the promotion of studies on men and masculinities will be introduced at the political level in the near future. Thus, a likely positive scenario for promotion of this field can be fulfilled by strengthening individual scholarly initiatives, consolidating efforts by scholars through diverse academic projects, and promoting crossdisciplinary and transdisciplinary gender studies and studies on men and masculinities. This would open up new possibilities for fruitful dialogs and joint research. Another important vector for contributing to greater visibility and institutionalization of men's studies is to transcend academic boundaries and establish closer cooperation between gender studies scholars and others involved in strengthening the pro-feminist agenda, e.g. grassroots organizations, the media, and policy makers.

Conclusions

The analysis of the development of the research interest in issues of men and masculinities provides evidence that this direction of studies has not yet become a legitimate and strategic component of gender studies in the post-Soviet context. The experience of Ukraine in this respect does not stand out, despite the fact that the political climate there is less conservative, at least on a formal level, than in many other post-Soviet states when it comes to the development of pro-feminist gender studies. The dominant discussion of gender relations and structures, inequalities and discrimination mostly focuses on their consequences for women as one of the most vulnerable groups. The knowledge about women thus remains knowledge of the "Other", i.e., the group that is systematically discriminated against and that does not fit the norm. At the same time, the mechanisms by which certain social groups are empowered – for example, white middle and upper-class heterosexual Ukrainian men – the reproduction of the gender system which supports these gendered hierarchies, and the analysis of differences in men's experiences are still poorly explored. Although there have been some attempts to "add men" into gender analysis, so far these attempts have primarily been made in order to balance the gender perspective and demonstrate that gender is not only about women. Critical analysis and deconstruction of men's privileges, which could intellectually and politically invigorate post-Soviet gender studies, has not yet taken place. Pro-feminist men and masculinities studies in Ukraine is emerging under rather problematic anti-feminist ideological conditions. This, combined with limited local academic resources, limited access to international scholarship, and undervaluation of the critical potential of this field, further marginalizes this area of studies and makes developing it a tremendous challenge.

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Translating "gender equality"

Northwestern Russia meets the global gender equality agenda

by **Yulia Gradskova**

PHOTO: XAVI/FLICKR

The iconic Soviet statue of a male worker and a kolkhoz woman by Vera Mukhina symbolizes the ideal of equality under communism.

abstract

The article analyzes discourses and practices of gender equality as a part of Nordic cooperation with Northwestern Russia. I explore how ideas and institutions of gender equality were approached by those involved and what problems of "translation" were present. While some of the representatives of the local authorities in Northwestern Russia saw cooperation on gender equality as an opportunity to realize the new ideas, in most of the cases the Soviet-style interpretation of women's issues as a part of "social problems" and protection of motherhood prevailed.

KEY WORDS: gender equality, Northwestern Russia, Nordic-Russian cooperation.

After the annexation of Crimea and the growing international isolation of Russia, it might be difficult to think about local politics in the Russian subregions[1] as having to accord with the international discourse on human rights, justice, or gender equality. However, in the more than 20 years during which Russia was classified as one of the "transitional" and "post-socialist" countries, it was assumed that Russian officials, members of city, subregional, and local elective bodies and civil servants of various categories and levels, would be aware of important international documents regarding global standards of governance, and would be expected to work towards the realization of such standards. Among the many international documents ratified by Russia were the UN's Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)[2] and the ILO's Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention (ratified in 1998). Together with the Russian Constitution – which preserved Article 19 from the Soviet Constitution on equal rights, freedoms, and equal opportunities for men and women – the international documents constituted the legal framework during the 1990s and 2000s for different activities and institutions seeking to support women's rights and gender equality.[3]

THIS ARTICLE IS DEVOTED to the analysis of the discourses and practices connected to ideas and institutions of gender equality using the example of one of the regions of the Russian Federation, Northwestern Russia. I am interested in how the ideas and institutions of gender equality were approached locally, in particular, by the civil servants involved in the cooperative projects with Western (mainly Nordic) partners.

The article is the result of my participation in the project on gender equality politics in the Baltic Sea region[4] and is based on documents and publications on gender equality in Russia as well as on the interviews with leaders of women's organizations and civil servants in Northwestern Russia and organizers of Nordic-Russian cooperation. In order to protect my informants in the current hostile political climate with respect to gender equality and feminism in Russia, I refer to them by initials, and have changed some personal details.

PHOTO: RIA NOVOSTI

Valentina Tereshkova at a plenary meeting of Soviet Women's Committee July 1968.

Gender equality on the democracy agenda

The beginning of the political and economic transformation in Russia that started with perestroika and continued after the breakdown of the Soviet Union gave birth to a vital and diverse women's activism that was supported and encouraged through broader programs of support for civil society and women's rights.[5] The Northwest of Russia played a special role in this process. It is the only region of Russia having a border with the EU (indeed with several EU countries, since 2004) and is the region closest to the northern part of Europe, which is known for its gender equality achievements. These factors contributed to the rapid development of the multilevel Nordic-Russian cooperation, where ideas of women's rights and women's political and civic participation played an important role.[6]

According to CP, one of the coordinators of cooperation with the Baltic countries and Russia on gender issues (in the Nordic Council of Ministers), from the beginning the Nordic organizations viewed the work against discrimination on the grounds of gender as very important.[7] The Nordic cooperation partners (state departments as well as independent organizations) were encouraged to start working together with all public institutions in the ex-socialist countries that were ready to work for the protection of women's rights in one way or another.[8] As for Russia, during the 1990s and early 2000s, the cooperation with the regional and local authorities and civil servants seemed to be very promising, in particular because of a substantial autonomy of subregions from the center as a result of the political reforms of the early 1990s. Indeed, the head of the subregion was usually elected to her/his post, while the subregional legislative body was responsible for some specific set of subregional laws. All of this allowed researchers and some politicians to look at the subregions as unities that could be analyzed from the perspective of different political regimes.[9] The relative autonomy of the subregional authorities was important for the plans to create some kind of local machinery for gender equality in Northwestern Russia in the process of cooperation with Nordic organizations and under the pressure of the local women's associations.

The cooperative activities that included the civil servants varied, including invitations to join the delegations from different subregions of Northwestern Russia to big international conferences, training for personnel and volunteers of the crisis centers, big yearly women's forums (such as the one in Karelia), and excursions for civil servants, leaders of women's organizations, gender researchers, ombuds, and other representatives of Russian society to the Nordic countries in order to observe how gender equality institutions function there.[10] As is the case with other international and national organizations seeking to spread ideas on gender equality and women's rights, Nordic agencies and organizations saw distribution of knowledge about democracy, gender, and discrimination to be one of the important aims of cooperation. Indeed, the partners in Russian subregions were expected to learn about democratic citizenship and ways of defending equality of rights of all the citizens regardless of their gender and sexual identity.

THE DOCUMENTS PRODUCED in connection with the cooperative efforts mainly showed "best practices", and presented the Nordic countries as the gender equality experts. At the same time, the Nordic cooperation partners mostly ignored the fact that the Russian population was well familiar with the ideas of equality between men and women due to Soviet equality policies. For example, the President of the Nordic Council, Rannveig Gudmundsdottir, in her speech in St Petersburg in 2005, expressed the hope that one day Russia would experience the same level of

gender equality as women in the West: "Little by little, they [the Russian women] are also beginning to enjoy the same opportunities to play an active part in society and politics as women in the West have enjoyed for decades now".[11] Such an evaluation of the situation in Russia paved the way for joining the transnational feminist agenda on the promotion of women's rights in Russia and "unproblematically" making a connection between positive changes for women and the end of state socialism and the beginning of democratization. In the process of cooperation, the positive Nordic experience of gender equality and democracy had to be "translated into Russian" – linguistically but also in terms of more general social adaptation.[12] However, it was no easy task taking into account the Soviet history of the politics of "equality of women and men". For example, the "big campaigns" typical of feminist organizations in Western Europe did not work properly in the post-Soviet space: these campaigns were rather suspect to the extent that they were "too connected to the practices used during the period of state socialism".[13] Furthermore, the Nordic model of gender equality was inseparable from the ideas of women's participation in wage labor and the goal of achieving the same economic status as men. However, as had been shown in the publications on cooperation with American feminist organizations, many women in Russia (as well as many women in other parts of the world), did not see work as "unproblematically liberatory",[14] especially under current neoliberal trends.[15]

Obstacles and possibilities for gender equality

The collected interviews and documents show that the reactions of the local civil servants from the different levels of the subregional hierarchy to "gender equality" as a goal for cooperation were diverse. At the beginning, in the mid-1990s, the subregional and local authorities were rather surprised when confronted with the expectation that they support the NGOs working for gender equality and the prevention of discrimination on the grounds of gender. The story told to me by the head of the Gender Center in Karelia, LB, illustrates this very well.

When LB, after visiting the 1995 Beijing conference and a couple of other international meetings of Eastern European women supported by the Nordic Council of Ministers, returned to Petrozavodsk, Karelia, and established her organization there, she decided to start a cooperative effort with the subregional authorities. However, the local authorities were not ready for such cooperation, she recalled bitterly. Indeed, she had to explain to the representatives of the subregional government that "Russia has signed all these (international) documents on gender, thus (at the level of the region) they should be followed". The local civil servants did not trust her and wrote a letter to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Moscow asking for explanations with regard to the documents that were signed by the Russian state. According to LB, after receiving confirmation from Moscow, and after numerous long discussions, the head of the local administration finally decided in 1998 to create the special commission dedicated to the situation of women in Karelia.[16]

Later on, following the tactics learned in the seminars on lobbying for women's issues that had been arranged as part of cooperative effort, LB and her colleagues attempted to get the female civil servants interested in women's NGOs, and women's rights. It was by no means easy, however:

> **We were trying to engage women from the government in our work. We were drinking with some of them, had dinner with the others, were helping to take care of others' children – so everybody had the possibility of getting involved.**

In time, however, the civil servants from different regions and levels started to participate in the projects involving crisis centers, support for women's NGOs and the organization of seminars and workshops on different issues related to gender equality.[17] My study on civil servants supports mainly the data received by several researchers with respect to the rapid growth of women's organizations in Russia: it was usually explained with the help of "window of opportunity" theories.[18] Much like those NGO leaders who, in the situation where civil society activism became popular after the years of "stagnation" under late socialism, wanted to use their organizational skills and ideas related to the opportunity provided by grants to support new women's organizations, some of the civil servants were ready to take advantage of possibilities for cooperation in order to use their organizational skills and to bring some of those institutions that were functioning abroad into Russia and display their usefulness.

THE SUBREGION THAT probably achieved most in the way of the visibility of gender-related issues was the city of St Petersburg. That achievement was not only connected, most probably, to greater financial support from abroad, knowledge resources in the form of gender programs in several universities, and a large number of women's organizations passionately engaged in activism, but also can be explained by the active position of several civil servants who considered the implementation of gender equality to be important. One of them, X, was one of the key persons in the city "equality machinery" (consisting from three staff members).[19] The last was centered on the Council for Coordination of Realization of the Gender Equality Policy created in 2004 in the St Petersburg's government. This Council was responsible for the realization of the Statement for Advancement of Gender Equality; the last version of the statement (the planning up to 2015) was posted on the webpage of the state administration.[20] This statement is a unique document for the Northwest region and for Russia as a whole due to its direct use of "gender equality" in the text. In addition, the state-

"HOWEVER, IT WAS NO EASY TASK TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE SOVIET HISTORY OF THE POLITICS OF 'EQUALITY OF WOMEN AND MEN."

ment, from a purely rhetorical standpoint, seems to be fully in accordance with UN and EU policy on gender equality; the main aims of the activities include the creation of the conditions for equal participation in decision making, equal rights, and equal treatment on the labor market, equal access to social protection and health care, prevention of gender related violence, and anti-discriminative measures in the sphere of education.

CONVERSATIONS WITH several experts, including representative of the St Petersburg office of the Nordic Council of Ministers (Norden) and C, an expert on gender from St Petersburg University, showed that a lot of the "invisible" work for the adoption of the statement and the beginning of its implementation had been possible to a large extent thanks to the personal efforts of X.[21] In the early two-thousand aughts, X had been a student of the school for civil servants in St Petersburg, where she attended courses on gender, among other disciplines, prepared in coordination with the Moscow Center for Gender Studies.[22] She had become interested in the problems of gender equality and in the application of theoretical knowledge to city policy. Thus, in this case international cooperation on issues of gender equality at the level of subregional government and authorities led to important achievements not least as a result of personal efforts on the part of a particular civil servant.

On the other hand, the success of this cooperative project could be seen as rather limited if we consider its merely declarative character. Subsequent developments of the situation around the statement indicate that the success of the creation of the local machinery was only temporary. Indeed, the composition, functions, and name of the city government's department responsible for the realization of the statement were changed many times,[23] while progress towards the realization of the goals described in the document ceased for all intents and purposes around 2010.

The implementation of gender equality

The ideas and institutions of "gender equality" that were brought by the Nordic and other "Western" partners to Northwestern Russia were, as noted above, usually presented as components of the programs for the support of democracy and development. However, as the collected material shows, most of the local leaders of women's organizations as well as civil servants involved in the gender equality programs had to translate these ideas and institutions into the local context. Such a contextualization often led to significant changes in the interpretations of goals and policies connected to the sphere of women's rights and the improvement of the situation of women. As my informant C, the gender researcher and participant in the elaboration of the St Petersburg gender equality statement, conveyed to me, "gender" in the title of the regional program could be seen as a kind of neutral and unproblematic term: "It is something nice and not very clear, not like 'women' or 'feminism'.

Indeed, many of my interviewees, even when discussing issues of rights and discrimination, were still focusing on social rights and their "gender" aspects. Thus, GM, the civil servant from Novgorod, was proud that, during the years of active cooperation with foreign countries, the gender researchers from the university actively cooperated with local authorities and influenced the policy documents: the program for improvement of the situation of women in the Novgorod subregion was adopted. Still, as IB, the leader of an organization of businesswomen closely involved with the local authorities, sees it, it was not exactly a program trying to increase equality:

> **But the focus was on the social problems. It was not about women's education and transformation. It provided support for families with many children, the organization of holidays. . . . It was from 2001.**[24]

At the same time, IB mentioned financial problems as a significant impediment to the successful collaboration of women's organizations and local authorities in following the Nordic way:

> **Concerning the Swedish experience, for example, we were trying to create these resource centers. We know how it should be. But nobody gave us money. In practice, we continue working as such a resource center – we give consultations, we help different women find places in different structures. But, as opposed to Sweden, there is no support for such resource centers that deal with women entrepreneurs, or women trying to participate in decision-making at a different level. And there (in Sweden), such organizations could get money for an office, for activities, some small salaries. We do not have anything like that.**[25]

H, a civil servant from St Petersburg positioned rather high in the local hierarchy, presented a narrative on the development of cooperation with Nordic countries and the progress of gender equality policies in St Petersburg as Soviet-style stories about "victorious progress", in which "socialism" seems to have been replaced by "gender equality". She was ready to recognize the importance of cooperation, especially in the early post-Soviet period: "We must be grateful to those programs, the humanitarian, social programs that are realized by the (Nordic) Council of Ministers, among others".[26] However, the leading role in her story belonged to the city authorities, while women's organizations were presented only as "helpers" who "manifest quite high activity" in one or another campaign led by the authorities. Also, the women's organizations were described as those mainly dealing with giving practical

"THE WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS WERE DESCRIBED AS THOSE MAINLY DEALING WITH GIVING PRACTICAL HELP TO FAMILIES."

PHOTO: YADID LEVY

A sustainable society requires gender equality, because a work force that includes women creates a more sustainable economy.

PHOTO: EPA © EU/NEIGHBOURHOOD.INFO

Training on gender inequality in a school in Smolensk, Russia, as part of the EU Partnership, September 24, 2011.

help to families, women, and children, those who receive state financing in order to "perform tasks and provide services important for the state".[27] The feminist or political women's organizations were not mentioned at all.

Finally, another civil servant from St Petersburg, J, remembering the story of local politics on gender equality, stated that even if the difficult word "gender" was not easy to explain, the campaign for gender equality was more a success than a failure:

> **It was the first plan in Russia for gender equality for women. . . . We made an agreement with all the heads of administration in the city – there are 18 – we made an agreement with all the heads of the committees, thus we received 63 confirmations. . . . And everywhere we had to explain: What should be done so that men and women are equal and for the term "gender equality" to be used like other Russian words. In this way, we explained what "gender" means.[28]**

Conclusion

On the basis of the material studied, we find that cooperation on gender equality issues was a difficult task with contradictory outcomes. While now it seems obvious that the political agenda of gender equality has failed in Russia (at least for the term of the current political leadership), and that the current Russian government is not interested in independent women's organizations protecting rights and democracy, the collected materials show rather a complex picture of local discourses and evaluations of attempts to implement gender equality in the region during the last twenty years. Indeed, in some situations, the previous participation of the Russian local authorities and other state-related bodies in such cooperative efforts seems to be manipulative – an attempt to use cooperation and "gender" for their own political goals; in other cases, though, civil servants sincerely tried to cooperate with women's organizations in order to establish institutions that would protect the rights of women. In such cases, however, their interpretations frequently seem to be more in accordance with Soviet notions of "solutions to women's problems".

Nevertheless, the emphasis on social problems and social rights made by many of my interviewees (as opposed to the emphasis on democracy assistance promoted by most of the Nordic cooperation programs) could also be seen as an attempt to pay attention to the "local problems", to be more in accord with the post-Soviet context in which neoliberal economic reforms contributed to a decrease in the standard of living for a large part of the population, especially in regard to family welfare. Even if this emphasis on the "social" as opposed to the "political" could easily be explained by the growing strength of the authoritarian regime in Russia, the social aspects of the "women's question" in contemporary Russia could hardly be ignored (see, for example, recent publications of the Egida organization from St Petersburg dealing with the protection of women's rights as workers[29]).

Finally, the unsuccessful "translation" of "gender equality" into Russian reveals numerous difficulties and indicates that the realization of the transnational feminist agenda could meet with serious obstacles not only in the countries of the "Third World", but also in some former "Second World" countries.

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18 Julia Brygalina and Anna Temkina, "The Development of Feminist Organizations in St Petersburg!" in *Between Sociology and History: Essays on Microhistory, Collective Action, and Nation-Building*, Anna-Maija Castren, Markku Lonkila & Matti Peltonen eds. (Helsinki: SKS, Finnish Literature Society, 2004) 207–226; Sperling, *Organizing Women*.

19 Interview with X, civil servant, St Petersburg, June 2013.

20 *Kontseptsiia razvitiia gendernoi politiki Sankt-Peterburga do 2015 goda* [Statement on the development of gender policy of St.Petersburg till 2015](2007). Available at http://gov.spb.ru/gov/admin/otrasl/trud/gender/2007_02_21. Last accessed in 2012. The statement was removed from the new version of the citygovernment website in 2013.

21 Interview with C, gender expert, St Petersburg. April 7, 2010.

22 See the article on teaching gender courses for civil servants by Marina Kashina, "Gendernoe obrazovanie gosudarstvennykh sluzhashchikh: Problemy presentatsii i realizatsii,"[Gender education of the civil servants: Problems of presentation and realization] in *Gender kak instrument poznania i preobrazovaniia obshchestva: material mezhdunarodnoi konferentsii Moskva, 4–5 aprelia 2005 goda* [Gender as an instrument of knowing and transforming the society: Materials of the international conference, Moscow April 4-5, 2005], ed. EA. Ballaeva, O.G. Voronina, L.G. Luniakova, (Moskva: MTsGI, 2006). http://www.gender.ru/pages/resources/publications/common/2006/01/25.php

23 Renamed in 2010, the *Department of social protection, maternity and childhood, family and demographic politics*.

24 Interview with IB, leader of a women's organization, and GM, civil servant, Novgorod oblast, April 29, 2011.

25 Ibid.

26 Interview with H., St Petersburg, May 2013.

27 Such organizations were qualified by the Finnish researcher Suvi Salmenniemi as "Soviet-style" organizations – Suvi Salmenniemi, *Democratization and Gender in Contemporary Russia* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008).

28 Interview with J, St Petersburg, 05.2013.

29 *Uroki zhenskogo liderstva* [Lessons of women's leadership] (St Petersburg: Egida, 2013).

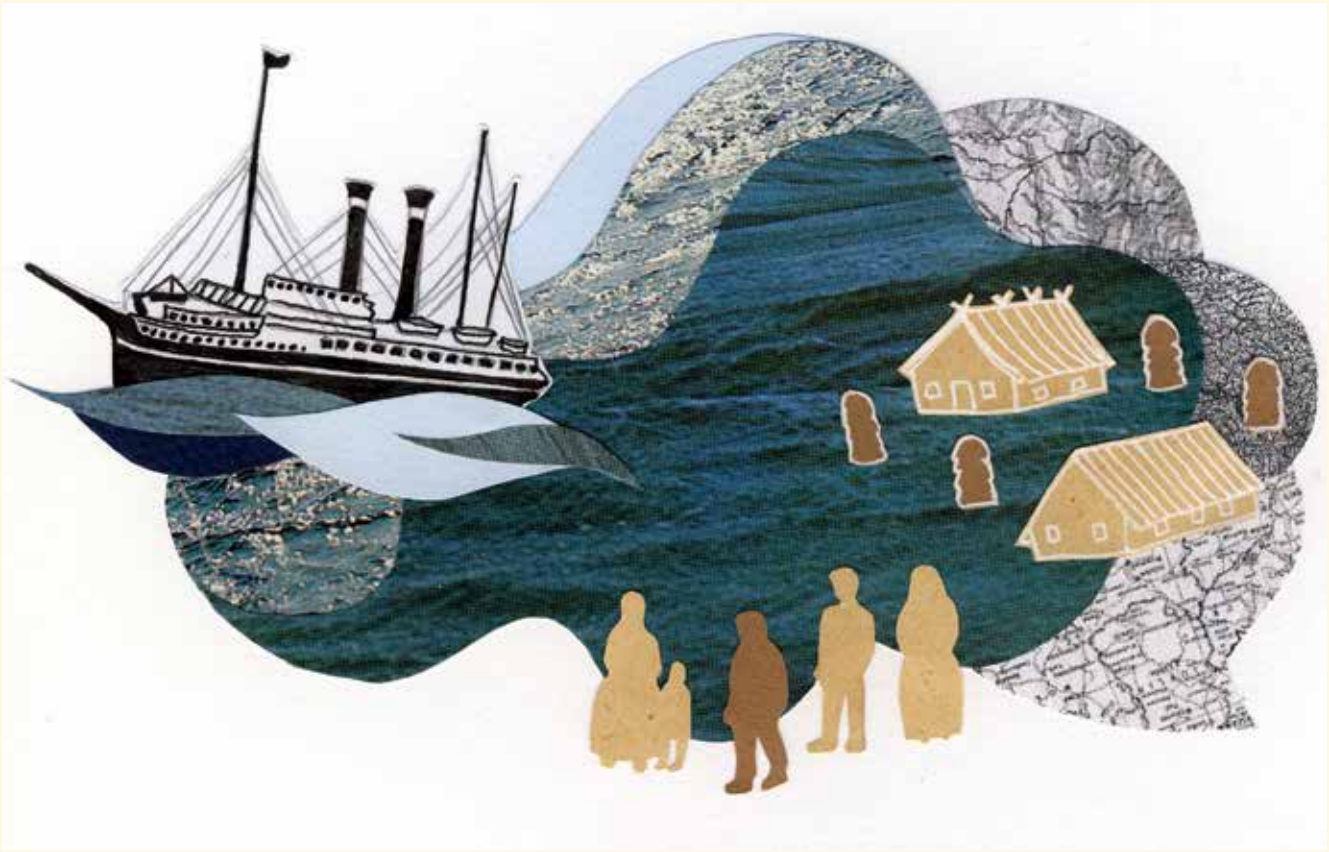


ILLUSTRATION: RAGNI SVENSSON

CRACKS IN THE "IRON CURTAIN"

The evolution of political contacts between Soviet Estonia and the Estonian emigration in Sweden before perestroika

by **Lars Fredrik Stöcker**

abstract

Almost throughout the Cold War, opportunities for interacting with the occupied home countries were severely limited for tens of thousands Baltic war refugees and their offspring in the West. However, the evolution of political contacts between exile activists in Sweden and the occupied homeland sheds light on the largely underresearched phenomenon of anticommunist cooperation between capitalist and communist societies and challenges the narrative of the impermeability of the "Iron Curtain" between the Soviet Union and the West.

KEY WORDS: Cold War, exile–homeland relations, Soviet Union, Estonian SSR, Sweden.

A quarter of a century after the fall of the communist regimes from East Berlin to Moscow, the political map of "Yalta Europe" remains etched into the collective memories of Europeans, whether their home country once was located in the communist or capitalist half of the continent. The era of Europe's political and military division lives on in iconic images of heavily armed soldiers patrolling barbed-wired checkpoints, which corroborate the narrative of a virtually impermeable border between two rival blocs. Thus, the topos of the "Iron Curtain" is a self-evident element of the language used in discussing Europe's Cold War past, even among scholars specializing in the field. As a rhetorical remnant of a

propaganda war that contributed to cementing the bipolar order of postwar Europe, however, the term is misleading. Under the impact of de-Stalinization, most communist governments in Central and Eastern Europe had abandoned dogmatic isolationism as a cornerstone of foreign policy. Over time, crossing state borders between East and West turned into an everyday affair. At least after the onset of détente, which paved the way for even greater East-West mobility, the number of tourists, businessmen, artists, scientists, and exchange students traveling between the blocs skyrocketed.

IN RECENT YEARS, historians have devoted considerable research efforts towards gaining a deeper understanding of the ambiguity of border regimes in Cold War Europe. Shifting the focus from the grand narrative of Cold War diplomacy to non-state actors, informal networks, and personal encounters across the Iron Curtain has enriched the field with innovative, transnationally framed approaches.[1] Numerous studies on tourism and trade between communist and capitalist societies, smuggling and black market activities, and technological cooperation and cultural exchange have provided a more nuanced picture of the history of the divided Europe, revealing a vast undergrowth of contacts below the governmental level. So far, scholarly research has been focused primarily on the satellite states, which indeed promoted an at times astonishing degree of openness towards the West, although the scope of cross-border contacts remained highly dependent on the overall international political climate. However, even the comparatively rigid border regime of the Soviet Union was affected by the dynamics of European détente, although the degree of individual mobility and the intensity of contacts with non-communist societies was decidedly lower.

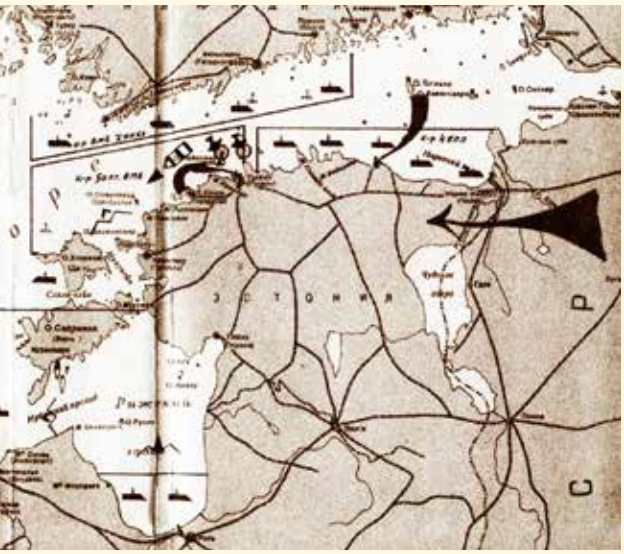
Due to its cordon sanitaire of more or less servile satellites, the Soviet Union shared few land borders with capitalist states. Hence, the Black and Baltic Sea basins formed the most important contact zones between the Soviet and the non-Soviet world. While the Soviet Union faced the NATO member Turkey in the Black Sea Region, Sweden's and Finland's postwar neutrality considerably lowered the level of ideological and military tensions around the Baltic rim. The dynamics of East-West interaction triggered by this geopolitical constellation had a decisive impact on the Estonian SSR in particular, the postwar history of which differs in some crucial aspects from that of other Soviet republics.

THE THREE BALTIC republics were among the newly acquired lands of the Soviet Empire. Populated by mostly non-Russian inhabitants with never-entirely-suppressed national sentiments and prewar traditions of close cultural ties to Western Europe, they generated a constant level of suspicion in the Kremlin. Moreover, due to their geographical proximity to capitalist countries, the Baltic territories were seen as possible gateways for hostile military forces and intelligence operations, but also as a bridgehead to the West for oppositional circles inside the Soviet Union. Thus, up to the late 1980s, Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians were generally denied access to their coastlines, where raked beaches and a chain of watchtowers reflected the status of the Baltic shores as military exclusion zones. Yet, despite Moscow's restrictive policies vis-à-vis the Balts, the republican elites gradually succeeded in negotiating certain concessions with the Soviet leadership. By the late 1950s, the Baltic republics had managed to acquire a reputation as the main Soviet testing ground for economic and cultural reforms, with the Estonians leading the way as a kind of Soviet avant-garde in many respects.

Declaration of independence in Pärnu on February 23, 1918. One of the first images of the Republic.

"THE DISSIDENTS' AMBITION TO INVOLVE COMPATRIOTS ABROAD IN THEIR OPPOSITIONAL ACTIVITIES OPENED UP A NEW CHAPTER OF EXILE–HOMELAND RELATIONS."

The liberal currents of the post-Stalinist era had a considerable impact on the Soviet Estonian border regime. During the better part of the two decades that followed the first Soviet occupation in 1940, Estonians had been almost completely insulated from foreign influences. The few sporadic visitors from non-communist countries who had been permitted to enter the Estonian SSR after Stalin's death were carefully selected delegates of fraternal communist parties, trade unions, or sports clubs. The vast majority came from neighboring Finland, in exceptional cases even from neutral Sweden or non-European countries.[2] In 1960, the Estonian capital of Tallinn, an architectural gem among the Hanseatic port cities that dot the Baltic coasts, opened up to Western tourists.[3] With the establishment of a direct ferry connection to Helsinki in the summer of 1965, which was facilitated by the Finnish president Urho Kekkonen's



Map illustrating the Soviet military blockade and invasion of Estonia and Latvia in 1940.

The ferry *Georg Ots* (in service from 1980 onwards, 1993–2000 chartered to Tallink) played a key role in the courier network between Soviet Estonia and Sweden.

excellent contacts in the Kremlin, foreign visitors were able to avoid the time-consuming travel via Leningrad's Inturist office. Due to the convenient connection across the Gulf of Finland, Western tourism to Estonia developed into a mass phenomenon and the provincial city of Tallinn into Moscow's preferred site for advertising the motherland of communism as a prosperous and modern state with a pronouncedly European cultural identity.[4]

The Estonian SSR indeed possessed the highest standard of living among the Soviet republics, which triggered a massive and steadily growing influx of Russian-speaking industrial workers from other, less wealthy parts of the vast country. Nevertheless, Estonia had a rather peripheral status within the Soviet Union: it was to a large degree simply the place from which the inhabitants of nearby Leningrad and Moscow were supplied with agricultural goods, dairy and meat. But taking into account the considerable masses of incoming foreigners and the subsequent spreading of Western fashion and taste in Tallinn, the Estonian capital could still compete with the grand metropolises of the Russian heartland as a major hub of Soviet interaction with the capitalist world. It is this extraordinary exposure to Western influences that makes the tiny Soviet republic an interesting case study for historical research on nongovernmental contacts between Soviet citizens and the non-communist sphere.

IT WAS FIRST and foremost the reformation fervor of Party bureaucrats in Moscow and Tallinn that paved the way for Estonia's gradual opening up to the West. The dynamic unleashed by the decision to liberalize the border regime, however, was triggered mainly by external factors and rooted in specific geographical and cultural conditions. There is already a quite substantial literature on the significance of neutral Finland for Estonia during the decades of Soviet occupation. Due to the linguistic and cultural kinship between Finns and Estonians and the 'Finnish-Soviet friendship', the inhabitants of the Estonian SSR were able to absorb a remarkable array of Western influences. As early as 1957, Finnish television could, according to Finnish reports, be received in the coastal areas of northern Estonia. The Kremlin's decision to jam only broadcasts produced in one of the Soviet Union's official languages made it possible for several generations of Estonians to get acquainted with life and consumption patterns in the West.[5] The impact of this breach in the informational Iron Curtain cannot be underestimated, not at least as it fostered a widespread familiarity with the Finnish language among the population of Tallinn. These skills considerably facilitated face-to-face communication with Finnish tourists, by far the largest group of Western visitors, which opened up numerous opportunities of de facto uncontrollable interaction between Soviet and non-Soviet citizens.

A MUCH LESS investigated factor that had an enormous impact on how Soviet Estonia's encounters with the outside world evolved was the sizeable Estonian exile community in neighboring Sweden. The neutral country was the main political and cultural center of the Estonian diaspora in Europe, hosting about 22,000 war refugees, who had escaped the westward advances of the Red Army that foreboded the second Soviet occupation of Estonia in autumn 1944, and their offspring.[6] Sweden's Estonian population adhered to an uncompromising anti-Soviet stance, categorically refusing to acknowledge the incorporation of Estonia into the Soviet Union, which led to regular clashes with the Swedish authorities' rather compliant attitude towards Moscow as far as the Baltic question was concerned. Nonetheless, the isolation of the Baltic territories from the outside world, which had been implemented immediately after their reoccupation and lasted until the post-Stalinist Thaw, had opened up a physical and mental abyss between exile and homeland that mirrored the

PHOTO: SIGURD ROOVE

Estonian refugees on the *Triina*, 1944.

general alienation between East and West in postwar Europe. While homeland Estonians for a long time lacked the possibility of contacting relatives and friends in the West, the exile community maintained a dogmatic reluctance to communicate with the occupied home country via Soviet authorities. Fear of infiltration and a strong aversion to collaborators had given way to a strictly isolationist stance that unconsciously imitated the traditional "Soviet phobia"[7] against all kinds of external influences. When the Estonian SSR opened up the gates to a growing number of Western visitors in the mid-1960s, the issue of homeland tourism thus became one of the most heatedly debated controversies among the exile community. For a vast majority of Estonians both in Western Europe and overseas, applying for a visa at a Soviet embassy or consulate severely undermined their political struggle, which was based on the non-recognition of the geopolitical status quo. Everyone who still decided to visit the old home country risked open condemnation and social exclusion within the exile community well into the 1980s.[8]

A PROFOUND TURN in East-West relations and a generational shift among the Estonian communities in the West eventually contributed to the bridging of the abyss between exile and homeland. The onset of détente altered the tone of international Cold War diplomacy. "Cold warfare" was to be replaced with a peaceful dialogue between capitalist and communist societies. This inspired a younger generation of Estonian exiles to engage in a fundamental critique of the voluntary isolationism of the old guard.[9] The categorical refusal to communicate with the homeland, they argued, merely reinforced Soviet Estonia's isolation and weakened any genuine domestic opposition to Soviet rule. While, in general, the large exile communities in North America remained rather skeptical towards the idea of visiting the homeland as a potentially effective counterweight to the ongoing Russification and Sovietization of Estonia, this more pragmatic approach was avidly discussed among Estonians in Sweden. Both the geographical proximity and the Swedish government's active commitment to promoting multilevel cooperation with communist Europe gradually fostered networking processes between exile and homeland that would considerably influence the course of Estonian history.

The willingness of a growing number of exile Estonians to make use of the facilitated opportunities to visit the home country was welcomed by the Soviet leadership, which, since the onset of de-Stalinization, had been striving to establish a dialogue with the Baltic communities in the West. Moscow's underlying goal was to neutralize the anti-Soviet lobbying campaigns and to weaken the non-recognition dogma by encouraging, in particular, a younger generation of Baltic exiles to open up to contacts with representatives of the new political order. According to the calculations of the Kremlin, the recovery of Soviet Estonian society from the gloomy years of Stalinist terror and repression had rendered it increasingly immune to anti-Soviet agitation. Indeed, the 1960s marked the peak of an era of political conformism and societal optimism in Estonia, which was partly the result of two

decades of mass education in the spirit of Marxism-Leninism, the "major vehicle for indoctrination and conformist mentality".[10]

DUE TO THE absence of any significant political opposition in the Estonian SSR up to the late 1960s, the decision to loosen the rigid travel and border restrictions thus turned out to have only minor side effects. Initially, the challenges the Soviet Estonian authorities had to cope with were limited to a greater availability of banned political and religious writings and an increase of black-market activities in the capital.[11] However, as Michael Cox points out, the perceived political stability of the early Brezhnev era eventually turned out to be a chimera.[12] The limited national autonomy that Moscow had granted the Balts was not sufficient to compensate for the failures of the planned economy and the migration policy, which, due to the unhampered mass influx of workers from other Soviet republics, triggered fears of Russification among the autochthonous population. A clear sign of rising discontent among Estonian society and of the initial breaches in the KGB's surveillance system was the formation of a nationalist dissident movement, whose protagonists quickly learned how to use the rapprochement between the Soviet Union and the neutral Nordic states for their own subversive purposes.

"THE FERRY ACROSS THE GULF OF FINLAND WAS IDEAL FOR SMUGGLING SHORTER MESSAGES, USUALLY TYPED ON INTERLINING CLOTH AND SEWN INTO THE COURIERS' CLOTHES."

In 1972, after having operated underground for some years, a small circle of dissidents decided to draft an open appeal, which would be directed to a broader Western public. The memorandum was addressed to the General Assembly of the United Nations, to whose predecessor organization Estonia once had belonged, and demanded a referendum on national sovereignty under the auspices of the UN, a return to democracy and the liquidation of the Soviet "colonial administrative apparatus".[13] The dissidents, who were well informed about the vigorous anti-Soviet campaigns driven by exile activists in the West, sent the memorandum to Stockholm, the European headquarters of Estonian exile organizations. Although solid evidence is lacking on how the document crossed the border, the most plausible explanation is that it was smuggled via Helsinki by a group of Finnish Baptists involved in a network that illegally imported religious literature into the Soviet Union.[14]


Ants Kippar.

THE DISSIDENTS' AMBITION to involve compatriots abroad in their oppositional activities opened up a new chapter of exile–homeland relations. For the first time since the end of World War II, communication between Estonians on both sides of the Iron Curtain contained a political element that reached far beyond the dimension of face-to-face conversations during private visits. The memorandum, which after initial hesitation was forwarded to the United Nations and disseminated to a wider public in Europe and overseas by Estonian exile activists, confirmed the vague rumors about the existence of organized nationalist dissent in the Estonian SSR. Moreover, its message revealed a striking similarity between the radical visions of the dissidents and the political agenda of the Estonian community in the West. A shared language of oppositional thought had the potential of uniting homeland and exile in a common political struggle, which considerably changed the angle from which leading exile activists in Stockholm viewed the opening up of Soviet Estonia to the non-communist world. Consequently, the main focus of their political activities, which traditionally had been information campaigns and the cooperation with anticommunist forces in the West, began to shift eastwards.[15] This marked the beginning of a transnational alliance that established a new anti-Soviet frontline of the "Second Cold War", which, under the impact of the increasing Western attention to human rights violations in communist Europe as well as the 1979 invasion in Afghanistan by Soviet troops, put an end to the era of East-West détente.

The network of Estonian exile organizations with its main hubs in Sweden and North America had been designed for the systematic collection and dissemination of uncensored information from behind the Iron Curtain, not for active interference in Soviet domestic politics. In view of the efficiency of the KGB and the risk of infiltration, which had led to a disaster in the 1950s, when Western intelligence services tried to smuggle Baltic spies across the Soviet border via Sweden,[16] Estonian exiles consciously avoided engaging in clandestine operations taking place in Soviet Estonia itself. This attitude remained unaltered even in the late 1970s, when Estonian dissidents started to act openly, counting on the protection offered by Western public opinion and the Helsinki Watch Groups. The arrest of the leadership of Estonia's dissident underground and the subsequent show trial in autumn 1975, a direct result of the publication of the memorandum to the UN in the West,[17] had taught the political leaders of the Estonian exile community an important lesson. Any ill-considered action contained the risk of seriously endangering the dissidents' personal safety.[18]

This rather passive stance was challenged by the appearance of a new figure on the stage of exile politics. The unexpected political comeback of the retired businessman Ants Kippar, who had resigned from his activities in Stockholm's Estonian organizations decades earlier after an alleged electoral fraud, led to a major twist in exile–homeland relations. In 1977, Kippar had gathered a small group of second-generation exile Estonians in order to form an aid organization for imprisoned Estonian dissidents. One year later, the Relief Center for Estonian Prisoners

of Conscience was officially established. The organization aimed at delivering humanitarian aid to convicted dissidents serving their sentences in central Russian labor camps, as well as to their families back in Estonia. Moreover, it aspired to become an information center on ongoing human rights violations in the Soviet Union.[19] Soon, however, the Relief Center became directly involved in clandestine operations inside the Soviet Union itself as the first exile organization that sought and found contact with the core of the Soviet Estonian dissident movement.

In the aftermath of the 1975 trial against the first generation of Soviet Estonian dissidents, a new network of activists had tried to mobilize the republican intelligentsia as well as representatives of Estonia's religious and ethnic minorities in order to establish a popular front against Soviet rule. Yet it turned out that the fears of repression were still strong enough to prevent an overwhelming majority of the Soviet Estonian elites from engaging in oppositional politics.[20] From the late 1970s onwards, the resurrected Estonian dissident movement thus gathered around a small circle of released political prisoners, who would form the backbone of nationalist opposition for years to come. Together with a number of younger men and women, a new generation of oppositional activists, the former prisoners of conscience focused on informing an international public on systematic human rights violations in Estonia and other parts of the Soviet Union. Ants Kippar's Relief Center quickly developed into an important hub for the dissemination of up-to-date information. Via Finnish couriers, who maintained close links to Kippar in Stockholm, the Relief Center had managed to establish functioning communication channels with Estonian dissidents in Tallinn.[21] Thus, the organization could soon claim the status of the major Western partner of the anti-Soviet opposition in the Estonian SSR, a statement reinforced by the fact that one of the Relief Center's members was a recently emigrated Estonian dissident himself.[22]

The close cooperation between the dissidents and the Relief Center marked a first crucial step towards a convergence of homeland and exile forces into coordinated opposition to the Soviet occupation and hence against the geopolitical status quo of postwar Europe. Although the clandestine network involved merely a small number of activists on each side of the Iron Curtain, it proved to be highly effective. By the turn of the decade, Kippar and his assistants had established a well-functioning courier system that facilitated a reasonably rapid flow of uncensored information between Stockholm and Tallinn. Helsinki was the crucial hub of this communication network, given that the intermediary activities were mainly carried out by Finnish tourists.[23] The ferry across the Gulf of Finland was ideal for smuggling shorter messages, usually typed on interlining cloth and sewn into the couriers' clothes,[24] across the Soviet border. Longer documents and underground publications, by contrast, posed a greater logistical challenge. Microfilms turned out to be a convenient and easily concealable medium for smuggling appeals addressed to Western governments or international organizations and samizdat writings, such as the underground chronicle *Some additions to the free flow of thoughts and news in Estonia*, to Stockholm. The main channel for smuggling microfilms was provided by the commitment of a number of Swedish and American correspondents in Moscow, who agreed to organize the transfer to the Relief Center, from which the information reached the Western media.[25] Due to the freedom of movement inside the Soviet Union, the dissidents could frequently travel to Moscow to meet up with the journalists, hand over the microfilms, and share the latest news about developments in Estonia.[26]

> "THE DE FACTO IN ITS ENTIRETY UNCONTROLLABLE DIALOGUE THAT DEVELOPED BETWEEN EXILE AND HOMELAND REPLICATED THE IDEOLOGICAL BATTLES OF THE COLD WAR ERA."

Ants Kippar's devotion to the cause of the Soviet Estonian dissidents significantly facilitated the establishment of a secret, but reliable communication system between Soviet Estonia and the West. Its existence was a crucial advantage for the protagonists of anti-Soviet opposition, who operated in difficult conditions. Printing equipment was lacking and it was, as everywhere else in the Soviet Union, hard to access unregistered and, thus, untraceable typewriters, which made any large-scale reproduction of samizdat writings practically impossible. Yet, due to Kippar's excellent contacts among the staff of Western broadcasting stations such as Radio Free Europe or the Voice of America, the dissemination of uncensored information even within Estonia itself was considerably accelerated via its transmission back to the Soviet Union.[27] The Relief Center thus played a crucial role for channeling news and uncensored information across the Iron Curtain, which turned Kippar himself into a well-informed, much-cited source for media reports on the current situation in the Baltics. It is largely due to this symbiosis of people and groups operating in exile and the homeland that Estonian experiences were noticed in the West and integrated into the post-Helsinki discourses on human rights in the early 1980s.[28]

THE OVERALL REACTIONS among the Estonian exile community to Kippar's activities were, nevertheless, mixed. While the dissidents highly appreciated his pragmatic and effective support,[29] direct interference in Soviet affairs remained a controversial issue, especially in view of the obvious risk of jeopardizing the well-being of the dissidents involved. Indeed, the KGB turned out to be utterly well informed about the secret communication channels, due both to successful infiltration and to the blackmailing of couriers.[30] In addition, the systematic interception of phone calls between Kippar and his contacts in Estonia had delivered useful information.[31] General concerns about the strategy of the Relief Center proved to be justified when the KGB

Baltic Institute's first two conferences, at Hässelby Castle, 1971, and in Stockholm in 1973.

launched a second wave of arrests in Estonia. During the political trials of 1981 and 1983, which essentially ended the era of Soviet Estonian dissent, communication with Kippar figured among the primary charges brought against the accused activists.[32]

The critics of Kippar's political commitment touched upon a whole array of issues. One of them was the narrow focus on a marginal group of radical dissidents, which, according to Arvo Horm, a prominent exile politician from Sweden, was highly problematic. "The national resistance of the Estonian nation in the homeland," he argued, "is much broader, deeper, more open, and considerably more diverse than Kippar currently is presenting it to the Estonians abroad."[33] The Relief Center was accused of having monopolized and unnecessarily limited the political dialogue between the exile community and Soviet Estonian society. It was, in Horm's opinion, the obvious risk of communicating with Kippar and his Relief Center that had induced the Soviet Estonian intelligentsia, which was generally unwilling to cooperate with dissidents, to refrain from establishing durable contacts with the Estonian communities in the West.[34]

By the beginning of the 1980s, however, a group of less radical exile activists from Sweden was already about to establish a parallel channel of communication with the home country. In contrast to Kippar's activities, which relied upon conspiracy and clandestine networks, their vision of a dialogue between exile and homeland was inspired by the spirit of European détente. The overarching goal was to bridge the gap to the Soviet Estonian intelligentsia via the official channels of Swedish-Soviet cultural diplomacy. Upon the Kremlin's approval, Swedish and Soviet Baltic authorities had signed bilateral agreements on fostering cultural exchange.[35] The major driving force behind their implementation were Baltic scholars and intellectuals in Sweden, who, covered by the academic and cultural institutions they worked for, succeeded in initiating a broad range of Swedish-Baltic projects. By transferring the organizational responsibility for the bilateral cultural cooperation to Swedish authorities and institutions, they managed to evade the propagandistic element which was characteristic of events hosted by the Soviet embassy.[36] Academic conferences, guest lectures, and cultural and artistic events offered a platform on which the Soviet Estonian intelligentsia was given the possibility of engaging in a broader dialogue with their compatriots in neutral Sweden. The numerous informal encounters that resulted from the cultural dialogue across the Baltic Sea were at least as significant for the gradual convergence of oppositional thought on both sides of the Iron Curtain as the transnational networks of the Soviet Estonian dissidents.

THE BALTIC INSTITUTE, an independent institution founded in 1970, and the Center for Baltic Studies, established ten years later by Baltic exiles at Stockholm University, were the main flagships of the official cooperation between representatives of Baltic cultural and academic life both in exile and at home. Established in a joint effort by Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians in Sweden, the Baltic Institute was primarily supposed to foster an "objective" discourse on Baltic issues, based on thorough scholarly research. A politically more dogmatic faction among the Baltic exile communities had initially insisted on transforming the institution into another anti-Soviet battle organization and categorically rejected any cooperation with scholars from the occupied homelands.[37] However, the moderate forces eventually succeeded in enforcing their vision of the Baltic Institute as a non-political institution whose primary official task it was to foster the rapprochement between the blocs in the spirit of the Helsinki Final Act. The election of a Swedish scholar as head of the Baltic Institute reaffirmed the new course, which kept a safe distance from the anti-Soviet credo of the Baltic exile community. It could thus officially figure as a Swedish institution, which considerably facilitated cooperation with the authorities in the Soviet Baltic republics.[38]

A major recurring event that manifested the Soviet leadership's new approach to East-West cooperation, the biannual international conference on Baltic Studies, had originally been a brainchild of the Baltic Institute, but was hosted by the Center for Baltic Studies from 1981 onwards. The sixth conference, held that year at Hässelby Castle outside Stockholm, was the first to welcome scholars from the Soviet Baltic republics among its participants.[39] As the organizers consciously avoided sensitive topics such as Baltic statehood in the interwar era, the conferences could develop into a forum where scholars from institu-

August 23, 1989, approximately two million people joined hands, forming a human chain from Tallinn through Riga to Vilnius, spanning 600 kilometers, or 430 miles.

tions such as the Soviet Estonian Academy of Science or Tartu University could establish personal contacts with colleagues and compatriots in the West. The lively exchange of ideas and opinions was facilitated by the possibility of inviting guest researchers from the Baltic republics to Sweden for a period up to several months, which was organized and coordinated by Stockholm University, acting in the name of the Center for Baltic Studies.[40] Nevertheless, there was still a considerable amount of distrust among Estonian exiles, especially in North America, where the geographical distance amplified the general skepticism against any form of official cooperation with Soviet authorities. Hence, the participation of Soviet Estonian scholars at the Baltic conferences in Stockholm was an issue that provoked heated discussions, although most of the visiting scholars did not even belong to the Estonian Communist Party.[41] Only in the mid-1980s, the atmosphere eventually changed in favor of broader academic contacts, as one of the visiting scholars reported back to the Soviet Estonian authorities.[42]

THE POINTEDLY NON-POLITICAL nature of the cultural and scholarly exchange notwithstanding, there was a hidden political agenda behind the ambition of Baltic scholars in Sweden to establish long-lasting channels of communication across the Baltic Sea. The strategy resembled the concept of 'change through rapprochement', the motor of East-West détente from the late 1960s onwards. "We know that a liberation by American tanks etc. is utopian," as representatives of the Baltic Institute wrote in 1979. "[T]he future resurrection of national sovereignty has to be achieved via the corruption of the communist regimes (including Moscow) and a liberation from within (...)." A broader range of contacts between the Soviet Baltic republics and the West was supposed to accelerate this process.[43] That was the subversive aspect of this new form of exile–homeland communication, which at an early stage caused Soviet propaganda to accuse the Baltic organizers in Sweden of using cultural and scholarly dialogue as a "sophisticated smoke screen" for covering up their anti-Soviet agenda.[44] By the early 1980s, however, interaction between exile and homeland had been intense enough to reveal that the ideological war was lost in the Estonian SSR, at least for the Soviet leadership.[45] There was no need to disseminate anti-Soviet propaganda among the visiting scholars and artists who came to Sweden in the framework of the official cultural and academic exchange, despite their apparent political conformism. The cooperation between Estonian scholars and intellectuals across the Iron Curtain was, as the prominent exile publicist Andres Küng put it, rather supposed to provide an intellectual 'breathing space' for the Soviet Estonian intelligentsia. In the eyes of a growing number of Estonian exiles in Sweden, this benefit justified the cooperation with Soviet Estonian authorities as an "inevitable communication channel".[46]

The credit for having turned Sweden into the country with most official links to Soviet Estonia after Finland in the pre-perestroika era belongs to a large degree to the activists behind the Baltic Institute and the Center for Baltic Studies.[47] Taking into account the additional significance of the Swedish connection for the underground opposition in Soviet Estonia, it becomes clear that the interaction between Estonian exiles in Sweden and their homeland had a dual political profile. Both the anti-Soviet dissident movement and leading representatives of Estonia's intellectual elite, who despite their reluctance to participate in oppositional manifestations still functioned as a traditional bearer of Estonian nationalism, were in various ways connected to the anti-Soviet exile community. Only with the emergence of a mass-based nationalist movement in the second half of the 1980s did the two isolated strands of active and passive opposition against Russification and Sovietization eventually join forces. This also led to the convergence of the various channels between Soviet Estonia and the West into a much broader web of exile–homeland cooperation, which had a decisive impact on the mobilization of an internationally well-interconnected secessionist movement.

Mikhail Gorbachev's perestroika changed the Soviet system beyond recognition, introducing "elements of capitalism, the rapprochement with the West and the re-legitimation of national

identity".[48] The Baltic peoples greeted the ongoing reformation and liberalization of the system with particular enthusiasm, which gradually spread to the Party nomenklatura and turned out to be impossible to stifle when a conservative turn in Moscow aimed at saving the unity of the disintegrating Soviet Empire. In view of the unexpected renaissance of an outspokenly nationalist rhetoric that evolved under the impact of glasnost in Soviet Estonia, relations between the homeland society and the Estonian communities in the West fundamentally changed. The rapprochement between exile and homeland in the pre-perestroika years had been a complicated process. The various strategies of bridging the mental gap between Estonians on both sides of the Iron Curtain had never been uncontested among the Estonian exiles, neither the Relief Center's attempts to support anti-Soviet subversion nor the exile intelligentsia's vision of establishing a dialogue with Soviet Estonian elites. Yet, with the onset of the Estonian emancipation from the imperial center in Moscow, the remarkable mobilization of the exile community bore witness to the successful "reunification of language"[49] that the years of rapprochement nevertheless had accomplished.

TRAVELLING TO THE WEST was considerably facilitated for Soviet citizens from the late 1980s onwards and the KGB gradually lost control over the rapidly developing, multi-layered network of contacts between Soviet Estonia and the outside world. Soon, "émigré influences on Soviet internal developments boomed" and fostered lively political, economic, scholarly, and cultural exchange between the Estonian SSR and Estonians in the West.[50] The decisive turning point was the reactivation of groups with a distinct pro-independence profile, which stemmed from the dissident movement. In 1987, a group of former political prisoners, among them those who in the early 1980s had closely cooperated with the Relief Center in Stockholm, started the so-called Estonian Group on the Publication of the Molotov-Ribbentrop-Pact, on whose secret protocol the Soviet occupation of the Baltic states in 1940 had been based. This was echoed by the establishment of a local offshoot in Stockholm by a circle of Estonian exiles, which functioned as the organization's official representation in the West.[51] Activists on both sides of the Iron Curtain were now able to coordinate public manifestations, which illustrated the efficiency of exile–homeland communication and echoed the networking activities between Kippar and the dissident movement. The Relief Center was still operating under the leadership of Jaak Jüriado, who had taken over after the death of Ants Kippar in early 1987. In view of the formation of a mass-based nationalist movement in Estonia, the organization redirected its activities towards supplying the most radical faction, which stemmed from the dissident movement, with technical equipment. With the financial support of US organizations, the exile community in North America, and Finnish sponsors, the Relief Centre coordinated the still officially illegal transport of cameras, tape recorders, neck-microphones, and slide films across the Gulf of Finland in order to enable its allies "to collect and give truthful information to the Estonian people".[52] As early as 1988, the first computers reached the leadership of the independence movement together with maintenance parts and software, again via smuggling channels in order to evade an official registration of the equipment by the KGB and the resulting undesired consequences in case of a restorative political turn. The participating Estonian activists in Stockholm even worked out a strategy of sending the technical equipment out to Helsinki for maintenance, after which it was channeled back to Estonia.[53]

The Soviet Estonian intelligentsia, which early on had been "Gorbachev's constituency of support" for the implementation of political reforms,[54] initially supported a less radical stance and opted for close cooperation with the Estonian Communist Party. However, Estonia's scholarly and cultural elites soon developed an increasingly nationalist agenda, which also affected the Party nomenklatura and increasingly marginalized the faction of loyal communists. Eventually, the majority of Party bureaucrats joined the Estonian Popular Front. Many of the leading protagonists of the Popular Front, which supported quickly expanding visions of national autonomy for Soviet Estonia, belonged to the humanistic intelligentsia, which since the early 1980s had maintained close contacts with the exile community in Sweden. The close communication continued in the late 1980s and extended to the Estonian communities in North America, which is reflected in the frequent trips of Popular Front leaders to Sweden, the US and Canada from 1988 onwards. Up to Estonia's secession from the Soviet Union in August 1991, the originally moderate faction of the nationalist movement gradually adopted the "symbols and slogans" of the political exiles. This contributed to bridging the gap between opposition leaders with roots in the Communist Party and the masses of the anti-Soviet exile community in the West.[55]

"UP TO THE DEMISE OF THE SOVIET UNION, THE ELABORATED SYSTEM OF FORTIFYING AND GUARDING THE PHYSICAL BORDERS REMAINED INTACT."

The genesis of the dialogue between the exile communities and the homeland society, which started from individual visits in the late 1960s and reached a much broader scale during the last decade of Soviet rule in Estonia, illustrates the shifting and, at times, ambiguous nature of the Iron Curtain. Up to the demise of the Soviet Union, the elaborate system of fortifying and guarding the physical borders remained intact – between 1947 and 1989, there were only fifteen registered cases of successful escape from Soviet Estonia across the Baltic Sea.[56] Yet, with the onset of détente, the much more intricate and multileveled pattern of East-West communication became increasingly difficult to monitor, even for a state in which the secret police had driven the surveillance of the population and foreign visitors to perfection. As many earlier studies on unofficial interaction between the

blocs have confirmed, uncensored information and ideas travelled across the most fortified state borders, which eventually had a long-lasting impact even on rather closed societies such as Soviet Estonia. In this context, the existence of well-integrated and interconnected Estonian communities in the West cannot be overestimated as a decisive trigger for intensified communication with the non-Soviet orbit. The compatriots abroad served as a source of inspiration and moral support for nonconformist circles in the Estonian SSR, but also as a mouthpiece for the silenced political opposition in the occupied homeland. The dialogue that developed between exile and homeland, de facto uncontrollable in its entirety, replicated the ideological battles of the Cold War era, elevating "cold warfare" and political alliances to a level that still counts among the rather opaque aspects of European Cold War history.

While historiography has come a long way in critically reassessing the topos of the Iron Curtain and juxtaposing it with an astonishing variety of East-West contacts on different levels, Cold War historians still meet fundamental challenges when it comes to scrutinizing the political dimension of informal interaction between East and West, especially as far as reliable sources are concerned. In the case of the Estonian SSR, the loss of most of the KGB's archives, which disappeared shortly before Estonia claimed independence, certainly hampers progress in the field. Yet, scattered copies of KGB files can be found in the archival collections of other Soviet Estonian state authorities and an impressive compilation has been published by the former dissident Arvo Pesti, shedding an interesting light on the dissident contacts to Stockholm in the early 1980s. A series of semi-structured, in-depth face-to-face interviews conducted with protagonists of the Estonian dissident movement and former exile activists has contributed insights that put this fragmented evidence into perspective. Juxtaposing the information obtained from the interviews with accessible sources and comparing the various stories has made it possible to get a quite clear picture of how politically motivated contacts between exile and homeland developed after the onset of détente. The vast archival documentation of political exile organizations as well as individual activists among the Estonian community in Sweden, which nowadays is stored in the State Archives of Estonia, has in this context turned out to be a veritable treasure chest. Throughout the Cold War, exile activists from behind the Iron Curtain acted as meticulous archivists, storing all accessible information about the ongoing development in their homelands and investing considerable time in analyzing and interpreting the communication across the bloc border. These still largely unexplored archives provide a good empirical basis for studies not only on the exile communities themselves, but also on East-West contacts in a much broader perspective.

AT THE END OF THE DAY, it is of course hard to measure the historical relevance of the informal interaction between Soviet Estonian society and the exile community, and especially its significance for the evolution of oppositional thought and action in the Estonian SSR. However, both the dissident networks and the rapprochement between the exile and homeland intelligentsia indicate that every accessible channel was used to maintain an increasingly uncontrollable exchange of information and ideas between East and West, which was facilitated by the increasing willingness of the regime to encourage nongovernmental contacts to foreign nationals. In the long run, the opportunities of omitting the boundaries of censorship and rigid state control contributed to perforating the Iron Curtain and undermining the stability of Soviet rule, as did the innumerable encounters with Western tourists and the possibility of receiving Finnish television broadcasts in Estonia. Essentially, all these various networking processes confirm the hypothesis of Jussi Hanhimäki, who stated that "détente was instrumental in setting in motion the many processes that ultimately caused the collapse of the international system that it was supposed to have stabilized".[57]

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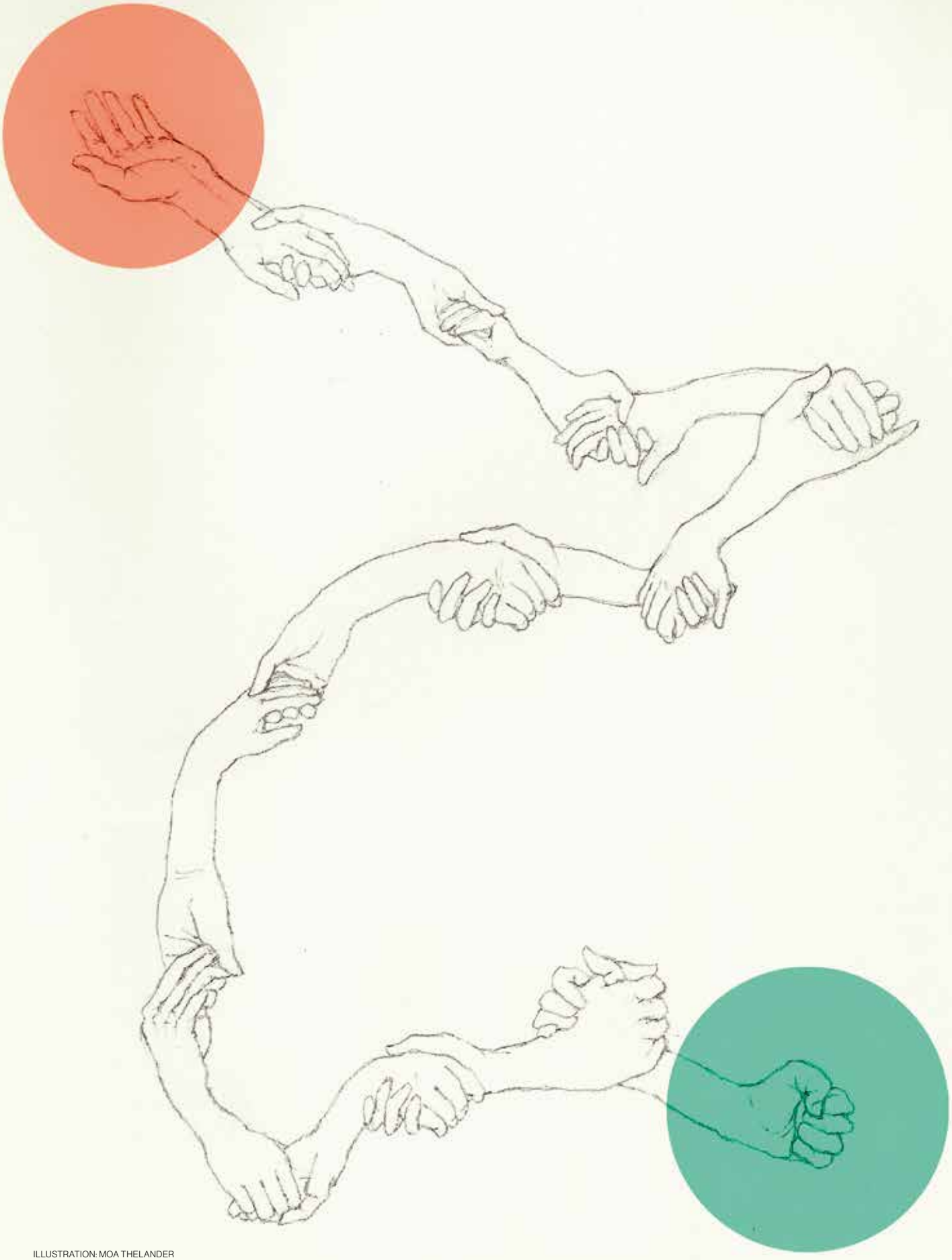


ILLUSTRATION: MOA THELANDER

INTRODUCTION. SOLIDARITY BEYOND EXCLUSION

guest editor **Ludger Hagedorn**

Solidarity is not an easy concept to deal with. It is widely used in intellectual debates and everyday discussions of political issues, but it appears to have manifold meanings, carrying a number of divergent claims and sedimented traditions. Historically, the concept hovers somewhere between its Roman origins, its Christian adaptation, and its heyday in the leftist movements of political and social emancipation. Although the proclamation of solidarity throughout the 19th and 20th centuries became inseparably linked with the international workers' movement and socialist ideals, it is significant that the very same word obtained almost emblematic meaning as an anti-communist slogan in the Polish *Solidarność* movement of the 1980s.

THE FRENCH SOCIOLOGIST Émile Durkheim famously differentiated between two kinds of solidarity: a solidarity based on kinship and similarity, which he called *mechanical* (to be found primarily in less developed, rural societies with a high degree of homogeneity), and the more refined concept of an *organic* solidarity, based on mutual interdependence and the insight that somebody else's work is constitutive for one's own well-being (characteristic of more developed societies practicing division of labor).[1] Yet the decisive question is whether solidarity should not be described altogether differently, namely as an ethical commitment that precisely goes *beyond* the confines of kinship and economy. Every "mechanical" or "organic" understanding of solidarity would then be deficient, because it omits the most characteristic trait of solidarity as an act of transcending. If solidarity is meant to designate a moral attitude, it will necessarily have to go beyond the confines of its naturalized reduction to the mechanical or organic bonds of similarity, kinship, and economic interdependence.[2]

In Roman law the *obligatio in solidum* denoted a common liability of a group of people: Each person was individually responsible for the liability of the group; i.e. everybody was liable *in solidum* (= for the whole). This understanding of solidarity as a juridical obligation can still be felt today in many usages of the word. A new tax levied in Germany after reunification, aimed at restructuring the former East Germany, was called Solidaritätszulage (solidarity surtax).[3] People are forced to pay, but it leaves no space for free individual commitment. The act of solidarity, in this case, is proclaimed and demanded by state law, degrading the word "solidarity" to a euphemism for enforced taxation. By contrast, an example of solidarity as an act of free support and sympathy may be seen in the case of the Swedish miners' strike in Norrbotten in 1969, when several artists donated their works in support of the strike fund.[4] It was a gift in the original sense, given to the striking miners as a means of support, whereby the symbolic meaning of this gesture was probably more important than its monetary value. Our colloquial notion of solidarity still tends to oscillate between these two extremes: between a juridical obligation and a free gesture of moral commitment and support for somebody or for the "good cause" – the meanings are rarely found in their purest form, uninfluenced by each other, but it is undoubtedly the second usage (the free commitment) that we would call an act of solidarity in the primary sense.

IT IS ALSO a difficult task to determine philosophically what comprises the core or the essence of solidarity. Leonard Neuger's reflections (published in this supplement) skillfully discern two divergent types of solidarity: *Solidarity against* is exclusive; it demarcates the in-group – "we" as opposed to "them" or "the others". "Solidarity against" creates identity and stability (solidity), yet it also presupposes the solid demarcation lines of who is "in" and who is "out". In this sense, it is a re-affirmative and self-affirmative action, corroborating the established order. *Solidarity for*, in contrast, is a risky and dangerous undertaking; it cannot build on any pre-established ground. It operates on a "groundless ground", trying to be open for that which is different and goes beyond the current order. It is, in very concrete terms, an openness towards those who are neglected, deprived or marginalized. Showing this kind of solidarity makes the individual vulnerable and dependent on others. One becomes dependent on trust and mutual responsibility. Yet as Neuger says, it also entails something "explosive"; it is a spark that can easily ignite the whole building.

Neuger's account of the historical de-

Loss of grounds as common ground

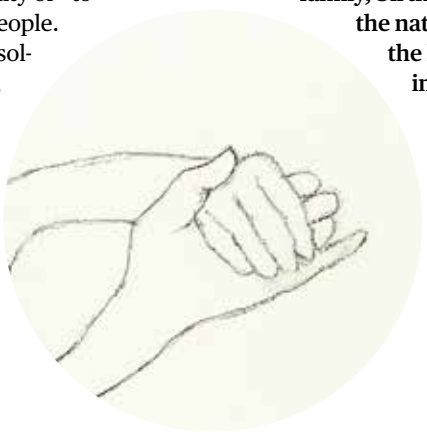
Between 2011 and 2014, a group of five researchers developed an investigation about "Loss of grounds as common ground – an interdisciplinary investigation of the common ground beyond liberal and communitarian claims".

The researchers involved: Marcia Sá Cavalcante Schuback (research leader), Irina Sandomirskaja, Ludger Hagedorn, Tora Lane and the doctoral student Gustav Strandberg.

Several activities took place, mainly at Södertörn University, but also at the University of Strasbourg and in Vienna at the IWM. Conferences and seminars as well as a lecture series were organized in the course of the project. Three of the project researchers received prestigious awards. Numerous books were published in the project. The researchers wrote a large number of articles and the doctoral student Gustav Strandberg is about to finish his doctoral thesis.

velopment of the *Polish trade union Solidarity* is an outstanding example of this: Starting from very inconspicuous and minor events, it grew into a solid movement of 10 million people. It is not always clear when and how and why the initial ignition takes place: "One begins by acting out of self-interest, and suddenly this horizon is transcended." Solidarity is not calculable – it has to do with the abyss of responsibility and trust that will always remain a risky undertaking. But neither is solidarity idyllic or innocent. At some point *solidarity for* can turn into *solidarity against*, easily evoking all the evils of nationalism, xenophobia, misogyny, homophobia, etc. Here lies the valuable insight in Ewa Majewska's contribution to this issue. Her article examines the historical development of *Solidarność* in relation to feminist issues. Without condemning the movement or ignoring the liberating effects of *Solidarność*, Majewska nevertheless directs our attention to the flaws in these events that grew to gain global historical significance. *Solidarność* was indeed carried by a wave of *solidarity for*, but this should not obstruct our perception that such a movement is not pure and might also entail aspects of *solidarity against*. Solidarity is not immune, and efforts to idealize it are probably the best indicator that the maxims of *solidarity against* are beginning to infect it. Neuger perfectly sums up this ambivalence in his remarkable final sentences: "In its explosive phase, solidarity opens a door, takes the risk. But solidarity also contains other foundations, leading to a closed door."

Jean-Luc Nancy's article, bearing the straightforward title Fraternity, examines a similar set of issues. Brotherhood or fraternity is not only a historical precursor to the modern political concept of solidarity; it shares the same characteristics in building a community or "togetherness" among people. Fraternity appeals to solidarity among equals, among "us" who are brothers. *Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité*, the tripartite slogan of the revolution of 1789 and afterwards, has taken on almost symbolic status in delivering keywords for modern politics. But whereas liberty and equality express civil rights, the role of fraternity is less clear. Is it a duty, a Utopian ideal, a sentimental and deceptive illusion? It is certainly by no means an unproblematic and innocent concept, since its rhetorical power of inclusion is gained by the tacit exclusion of those who are *not among the brothers*. Jacques Derrida in particular has expressed this critique of the idea of fraternity. Originating as an explicit answer to Jean-Luc Nancy, the reciprocal dispute between the two of them finally became what Derrida called "a fraternal squabble over the issue of fraternity".[5] The article published here constitutes a kind of belated epilogue to this debate.



NANCY RETURNS TO Derrida's mistrust of a term that is "simultaneously familial, masculine, sentimental and Christian-sounding". From the beginning, Nancy makes it clear that his idea of brotherhood is certainly not to be understood in the biological sense. According to him, "being siblings" is a "social model"; it is "an association without substantial (ontological, original) necessity", designating a model of social reality that has more to do with "having to adjust to living together" rather than with "being together". This attempt to play the "symbolic register" of fraternity (instead of the biological, substantial, ontological) was however already explicitly addressed in Derrida's earlier critical work. In *Rogues* he states:

> **In fraternalism or brotherhoods, in the confraternal or fraternizing community, what is privileged is at once the masculine authority of the brother (who is also a son, a husband, a father), genealogy, family, birth, autochthony, and the nation. And any time the literality of these implications has been denied, for example, by claiming that one was speaking not of the natural and biological family (…) or that the figure of the brother was merely a symbolic and spiritual figure, it was never explained why one wished to hold on to and privilege this figure rather than that of the sister, the female cousin, the daughter, the wife, or the stranger, or the figure of anyone or whoever.**[6]

In his answer, Nancy counters this objection with the assertion that fraternity in itself does not necessarily carry the values of the masculine and paternal. He sees the constant interpretation of family ties along this patriarchal model in itself as a projection that upholds the tradition of emphasizing the father and the transmission to and through males. Fraternity obviously includes elements of sorority (sisterhood), but Nancy's approach is not intended to counter one with the other. Instead, *both* of these concepts should be seen as independent of "nature", "origin" or "foundation". Sorority and fraternity interlace just as the masculine and the feminine do in general; therefore fraternity does not necessarily have to be a confraternity of males. The differentiation of these two terms is strongly reminiscent of Neuger's distinction between *solidarity against* and *solidarity for*: Confraternity "unites subjects tending to be identical since they are identified by a function, an occupation, a role" (and in this sense they form a *solidarity against*), whereas fraternity in Nancy's sense is "the conjunction of chance", just as in the case of the family, and it poses the continuous challenge of mastering that chance. Fraternity then – and this is Nancy's final claim – will always be an insufficient term, but it might nevertheless be seen as providing a model for a form of coexistence without necessarily referencing genealogy, privilege, or the logic of exclusion.

Solidarity and exclusion

This discussion of solidarity (and fraternity) takes place against the background of other attempts to define what is at the core of acts of solidarity. Richard Rorty once observed that solidarity seems to work especially within groups that have something in common or share a certain

identity. This would mean that solidarity is predominantly felt for somebody who is like myself. Somebody might be, as Rorty puts it, "a comrade in the movement" and accordingly she/he deserves solidarity because we are working for a common goal or share the same political convictions. A striking phrase describing exactly this feeling of a common bond is the popular "people like us". No further reason is needed – people have our solidarity simply because they are "like us", good people. Tacitly, the claim presupposes a flip side: no need, no reason to feel solidarity for the other people, the ones who do not belong.

This is a puzzling and disturbing observation in relation to a humanistic concept which is apparently based on the assumption that solidarity reaches out to *everybody*, to every *human being* regardless of any further qualification in terms of race, religion, nationality, social class, or political conviction. For whom is solidarity felt, and who feels it? Or to put it another way, what is needed for the bond of solidarity to be established? The answer to this is not as obvious as an enlightened optimist might suggest by referring to the common characteristic of sharing an essential humanity.

First of all, one should perhaps say that solidarity can only be strongly felt in relation to human beings. This counters what for example the Swedish Green Party (Miljöpartiet) defines as its party program which, briefly, consists of three forms of solidarity: with nature, with future generations, and with people.[8] Although the underlying intention of these forms might be plausible, all three of them clearly go beyond the concept of solidarity. If solidarity is a shared responsibility for and with the other, then nature and future generations can obviously not be the addressees of this common striving. Solidarity also seems to presuppose a mutual commitment – mutually binding and mutually emancipating. Even the proclaimed solidarity with "people" as an abstract entity is difficult to grasp: Is it possible to feel an obligation, a simultaneously emotional and yet deliberate, conscious tie to all one's fellow human beings without any further qualification? This idea might be found in the Christian tradition (everybody is your neighbor) and also survives in secularized universalism as in Kant. But isn't solidarity with all people as abstract and undefinable as solidarity with nature? What would it consist in? Solidarity, it seems, always has to be concrete, directed at somebody.

"BUT ISN'T SOLIDARITY WITH ALL PEOPLE AS ABSTRACT AND UNDEFINABLE AS SOLIDARITY WITH NATURE?"

WHOM THEN DOES it include, whom does it exclude? As suggested, Rorty holds that solidarity is always ethnocentric or clancentric, that it will always look out for a "fellow Roman", for "Greeks like ourselves" (as opposed to the Barbarians), or for a "fellow Catholic". This last example clearly shows that "clancentric" is not meant in a biological or racial sense – a "clan" does not have to be linked by blood; it may also be a common belief or conviction, the common fight for the good cause etc. Yet however the "clan" is precisely defined, it is a somewhat unsatisfactory conclusion that solidarity should always, and necessarily, be restricted to a certain predefined group, that it should always, and necessarily, be an inclusive as well as an exclusive concept. Can there be a solidarity that does not have its source in a substantial unity, however defined? Can there be a solidarity that defines a belonging, a togetherness, that may be only momentary, transitory; perhaps more in the form of a gift than of an obligation?

This is also the key question in Gustav Strandberg's contribution. Its cogent title *Solidarity of the Shaken* already indicates the direction of his approach which attempts to develop an existential understanding of solidarity. Strandberg bases his reflections mainly on the philosophy of Jan Patočka, whose famous formula "solidarity of the shaken" was evidently inspired by his life as a dissident in communist Czechoslovakia of the 1970s. Patočka was the first spokesman of *Charter 77* (next to Václav Havel and Jiří Hájek) and for a short historical moment his name became world famous in March 1977, when the philosopher died in dramatic circumstances while under police interrogation. Even his burial was a political manifestation, forever unforgettable for all who witnessed it. There is a strong link between his thought and the historical conditions and atmosphere of that time. The opposition against a seemingly unshakable order and the fragile, yet highly explosive character of a solidarity in resistance is very reminiscent of Neuger's account of the Polish *Solidarność* movement which was to emerge only a few years later. However, the most valuable impact of Patočka's sketch of solidarity might be that it can also be read fully independently of these biographical and historical circumstances.

As Strandberg states at the beginning of his article, solidarity traditionally has to do with solidity, i.e. forming a union with others on a firm and stable ground of a shared identity. Yet for Patočka, precisely this solidity is shaken. Those who join in a "solidarity of the shaken" do not obtain a common ground; it is a solidarity brought about by existential upheaval and disorientation, not by sharing something but, in a sense, by sharing nothing. It is a solidarity beyond solidity. The underlying experience is that of a confrontation with finitude and meaninglessness. Strandberg relates this closely to Heidegger's analysis of anxiety and Dasein's confrontation with his/her own death. He therefore rightly describes Patočka's approach as "a solidarity in and for finitude". It is our shared experience of a loss and of insufficiency that "will forever force us outside of ourselves in the direction of other people." One might also invoke Dostoevsky's literary portrayals of existential occurrences similar to those that were so crucially important for Patočka. What they depict literally is the same existential experience of an uprooting within which all worldly and egotistic relations are transcended (egotistic in the sense of ego-related, not as a value judgment). It is an existential breakthrough, opening up to a "new meaning of life", a life with others and a life in solidarity, the main event of which is to be described not in a moral

dimension but exactly as this ontological opening.

This is indeed a quite different and "new" concept of solidarity, a solidarity beyond solidity and a solidarity beyond the exclusion of *solidarity against*. It is revealing to compare this to the solution suggested by Richard Rorty. After stating that the new concept of solidarity should no longer be ethnocentric or clancentric, Rorty develops his own idea of a solidarity beyond these limitations. Solidarity, in his answer, should be a solidarity of all those who have come to distrust ethnocentrism! It is indeed a truly post-modern answer, addressing the liberal, urban and sophisticated people who have left behind (or think they have left behind) an essentialist view. But is it also a convincing suggestion? His attempt surely addresses a crucial and painful deficiency of the whole concept of solidarity. Yet it is also highly unsatisfactory: What solidarity presupposes most urgently is trust: it therefore is an almost absurd maneuver to base solidarity precisely on distrust. Would the distrusters ever do anything else other than exactly that, namely distrust: distrust the concept of solidarity and their supposed relationship of trust and solidarity to other distrusters? Although at a superficial glance, the "solidarity of the distrusters" seems to be not far removed from a "solidarity of the shaken", it is precisely the lack of any existential dimension that makes it difficult to trust an asserted solidarity of the skeptical post-modernists.

THE MOST APPARENT contradiction to this intellectualized approach is expressed in the article by Kateryna Mishchenko, whose contribution is quite different from all the other reflections. It does not deal with solidarity from a theoretical or historical point of view, but out of a sense of the immediate urgency of the topic. Written in a Ukraine in upheaval, a country inflamed by the revolutionary events on the Maidan and at the same time stricken by the atrocities of an undeclared war, the short essay mainly invokes solidarity on two levels: first, the international solidarity with a country in turmoil and endangered from the outside (Mishchenko sees the principle of solidarity itself under attack, inflated and hollowed out by "idle mind games" of the West and especially the European Left), second, the solidarity of and for those people bodily involved in the conflict – their only answer being the "wild savagery" of "self-dedication and self-sacrifice". This formulation exactly recalls the idea of sacrifice in Patočka, which is not sacrifice for a purpose or a goal, but the inner necessity of a life that is in "resistance to the 'demoralizing', terrorizing and deceptive motifs of the day."[9] This sacrifice is not a price to be paid for something, but – as Derrida put it – the "gift of death", [10] i.e. the invocation of life's finitude as a means of life in the face of the calculations of dead bodies.

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1 Émile Durkheim, *De la division du travail social* (Paris: Les Presses Universitaires de France, 1893), 73ff; 118ff.

2 The most famous example of a solidarity overcoming kinship and fraternity is obviously the Biblical story of the Good Samaritan taking care of somebody who is not his kin. Accordingly, a truly solidary stance is independent of being motivated by one's own profit.

3 Announced as a temporary act of solidarity, the levy still exists 25 years after the reunification and has long since become an extra general tax.

4 The *Miners' Strike Art Collection* was shown from March to May 2013 in Tensta konsthall.

5 Jacques Derrida, *Rogues: Two Essays on Reason*, transl. P.-A. Brault and M. Naas (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2005) 56.

6 Derrida, 58.

7 Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) 190.

8 The party program defines itself with the following three claims of solidarity: (1) solidarity for animals, nature and the ecological system, (2) solidarity for future generations, (3) solidarity with the world and the people.

9 Jan Patočka, *Heretical Essays in the Philosophy of History*, ed. J. Dodd (Chicago: Open Court Publishing, 1996) 134.

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PHOTO: ARCHIVE PHOTO OF THE INSTITUTE OF NATIONAL REMEMBRANCE, DATED DECEMBER 16, 1981

"Re-construction of December 16, 1981", 2011 steel, archival materials, (Historical Reconstruction of the Gdansk shipyard gate nr 2, dated December 16, 1981, after the destruction by T-55 tanks. Reconstruction based on archival photographs, IPN materials and witnesses of those events.) The collection of European Solidarity Centre, Gdansk; publication by courtesy of the artist Dorota Nieznalska.

SOME THOUGHTS ON SOLIDARITY

Before I begin there is something I must explain. I will not address the problem of how you should deal with solidarity *against*; instead, I will focus on solidarity *for*. Moreover, I will not talk very much about solidarity as loyalty, even though loyalty is the most important ingredient in solidarity. Solidarity/loyalty can also be found among thieves, criminals, religious groups, and various minorities, which means that an idyllic view of the phenomenon is problematic. And two further explanations:

1. I will analyze the content of the word "solidarity", not for the sake of linguistics, but in the belief that words contain memories as well as many other experiences, often conflicting ones.

2. I will talk a little about Solidarity, the trade union in Poland, which was created in August 1980 and crushed in December 1981. For the sake of convenience I will use quotation marks when referring to the union, or else use its official name: the Trade Union Solidarity, or something similar.

1.

The word solidarity is a French invention, more specifically of the Enlightenment. In the *Encyclopédie* (1765), *solidarité* was defined as mutual responsibility, but the word was also used in the sense of "independent, complete, whole" (from *solidaire*). In many other European countries, however, the word emerged and was assimilated in the second half of the 19th century. It derives from Latin and its origin is related to capital: *solidum* in Rome meant the whole sum, the capital. As I said, it was from French that the word made its way into English and many other languages. We thus have two almost contrary meanings: The first is based on the idea of a firm point that guarantees and creates independence. Its foundation can be economic, that you own the whole sum, the capital, the lot, and in this way you become independent. But it can also mean that you jointly take responsibility for somebody or something, that you create a community of mutuality, where you as a member of the group act with consideration and without self-interest, for the benefit of this group or its individuals. Here, the personal and the common intersect. The firm foundations intersect as well. Economic independence is based upon capital, that is to say, something over which the individual has power (and which can be formulated: "I have the whole sum, which is my firm point and guarantee"); but at the same time, this refers to a guarantee that lies outside of human control, namely the economy. Everything that builds up such independence must be part of the financial exchange represented by money. By contrast, mutual responsibility depends on trust, based upon the inner reliability of the group. This was how Jozef Tischner reasoned concerning the ethics of solidarity (the title of his book), arising in the encounter with the "Other", who can be very different indeed. Reasoning in this way, all foundations are erased. Responsibility for and openness towards that which is different becomes a groundless ground, an imperative. Tischner followed in the footsteps of Emmanuel Levinas, but tried to interpret him through Christianity.

"EVEN UNDER DIFFICULT CONDITIONS WE CAN SHOW SOLIDARITY, AND THIS MIGHT BE THE PRINCIPLE OF EVOLUTION."

HOWEVER, THINGS ARE not always as simple and idyllic as that: The word "solidarity" has explosive potential. Its content tends

to find robust, less fickle grounds: ideology, nationalism, xenophobia, misogyny, homophobia, politics, religion, etc. This is where you build "solidarity against", when you need to find a strong identity and defend it.

Economic independence is secure as long as there is an economy. But the "whole sum", as we know, can evaporate during revolutions, catastrophes or crises. Ethical independence too can be unstable, momentary, ecstatic, and explosive: as in a solidarity based upon closing ranks against, excluding, rejecting the other. To contain these significations in a single word, namely solidarity, seems an impossible task – which nevertheless becomes possible. In spite of everything, this is where some kind of impracticable, impossible attachment happens. Solidarity is a child of the moment. The English word "solid" has preserved this opposition: it means massive, compact, but also steady, firm, strong, stable, reliable. Not only that: "solid" can also mean affluent and creditworthy.

When the union "Solidarity" was founded in the autumn of 1980, as a result of strikes all over Poland, it was difficult to find a name for the phenomenon.

2.

The story is simple enough. In August 1980, a strike broke out at the shipyard in Gdansk. The workers, who were among the fairly well paid, wanted a raise. In the People's Republic of Poland, such a matter was not difficult to resolve. Either you agreed to the demands of the workers, or you used the police, the military; this had been done before and required victims.

"ONE BEGINS BY ACTING OUT OF SELF-INTEREST, AND SUDDENLY THIS HORIZON IS TRANSCENDED."

The workers demanded a meeting with top politicians in order to solve the conflict, and the politicians agreed to this. But they were in for a surprise. The negotiations took place in public: apart from the strike committee, the other workers also participated (through the internal radio at the shipyard). And the workers circulated between the room where the negotiations took place and other places in the shipyard. Every decision made by the strikers' committee was a joint decision.

Among other things, it transpired that a female worker had been sacked from her job for political reasons. The strike committee demanded that she should be reinstated. The politicians agreed to this. But now it turned out that many of those who had cooperated with the workers at the shipyard in Gdansk were imprisoned, and the strike committee demanded that the politicians should free them as well as all other political prisoners.

To this, the authorities would not agree. Now the issue was no longer Gdansk, the shipyard or money. It was no longer a strike, but a kind of revolution: all strike rules were broken, it was no longer a struggle based on self-interest, and before the politicians had time to find a solution (either agree to the demands or suppress the revolt by force), strikes had broken out all over the country, primarily in big enterprises: mines, ironworks and other companies of great importance for the economy. In these cases as well, therefore, the strikers were among the fairly well paid. Money, economic exchange ceased to be the foundation or model for representation. There were strikes demanding compensation for low-wage groups, instead of simply a rise in wages.

I am not going to relate the whole history of "Solidarity". What I want to point out here is that this is where the attachment, the inner connection contained in the word solidarity is most clearly manifested. One begins by acting out of self-interest, and suddenly this horizon is transcended.

WHAT SHOULD THIS new phenomenon be called? It was clear that what had been created must be called a union. At the same time, it was clearly not a union. Those involved were conscious that the strikes had succeeded by virtue of solidarity, but the word itself had become somewhat overused through propaganda, where you had to declare your solidarity with everything that the authorities pointed to. Thus the name: "the Trade Union Solidarity" had a somewhat suspicious ring. Therefore 'Independent' was added: "the Independent Trade Union Solidarity". But not even this was satisfactory. Why? I think it was because the word "independent" pointed to the outside world or, in plain language, to the authorities. It emphasized that those within the movement were independent from "those people", who could no longer influence them. But something was still missing. Intuitively, those involved wanted to find a name for solidarity that both preserved and erased the intersection between unselfishness and solidity. And so yet another word was added: "self-governing". Rather amusingly, then, the name of the emerging movement finally became, in its entirety, "the Independent Self-governing Trade Union Solidarity" – as a kind of explication of what was originally, from the very beginning, contained in the simple word solidarity. And so a relatively small strike by the workers at the shipyard in Gdansk turned into a very solid movement: out of Poland's whole population of 33 million, 10 million became members.

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3.

"Independent, Self-governing": can this be accomplished? Suddenly a new player had entered the political stage – with enormous force. Simultaneously it expressed an attachment with explosive energy. At once "Solidarity" became a troublesome player for the others, that is to say the Communists and the Catholic Church. Interestingly, when "Solidarity" exploded, it remained a democratic movement. It was extremely decentralized, in accordance with the pattern set during the strikes. Weaker organizations or companies could count on the support of the stronger ones. Strikes broke out almost incessantly. Note that the other players, the Party and the Church, were hierarchic or feudal. Decisions in such structures can only be made by one or a few persons. In "Solidarity" this was, paradoxically, both impossible and necessary: you had to adapt to the other participants. The country was on the brink of economic and social disaster.

A paradox: When the movement emerged, it was as a form of solidarity with vulnerable groups – workers, peasants, political prisoners and the intelligentsia. How is this compatible with its enormous force, which led to the movement becoming a massive majority in the country? They were also very proud of this success, so proud that it might be interpreted as complacency.

4.

Among the many literary and scientific works of Pyotr Alexeyevich Kropotkin (1842–1921), there is one with the title *Mutual Aid* (from 1902), in which he repudiates Darwinism's "struggle for existence" and claims that it is not competition but solidarity that is the main driving force of evolution. Kropotkin was a Russian aristocrat. In the second half of the 1860s, he spent a few years in Siberia, where he worked as a civil servant and geographer and experienced revolts among exiled socialists and Polacks, revolts that were bloodily suppressed. Geographically, then, his writing has its origins in what are perhaps the most inhospitable areas

"AND SO A RELATIVELY SMALL STRIKE BY THE WORKERS AT THE SHIPYARD IN GDANSK TURNED INTO A VERY SOLID MOVEMENT."

conceivable, where the conditions are extremely difficult for people and animals. Politically, it deals with Russia, that is to say, a country with an extremely autocratic and unrestrained government. Socially, the background of his work is formed by the theories of Darwin and his followers, in particular "Social Darwinism", which claimed that the struggle for existence is the core of evolution in both animals (Darwin) and people (the Darwinists), and that the stronger, better adapted will be victorious. Everything is about competing with and forcing out your competitors (the rat race). This did not accord with Kropotkin's experiences from Siberia. He pointed out that even the animals in these harsh conditions transcend the principle of Darwin, and that people stand by and support one another. This eventually became the core of anarchism. "Mutual aid", regardless of one's political stance, says a lot about our paradoxical situation: even under difficult conditions, we can show solidarity, and this might be the principle of evolution. Now, perhaps this only happens in a state of emergency, as an exception; but perhaps this exceptional state of emergency is to be found not outside, but inside of us? In that case, it happens instantaneously, and in a rift or an attachment. On this point, Kropotkin would certainly not agree with me, but I am convinced that the rift or attachment is something that can only be expressed in art, in an instant of explosion. That is to say – and here I am close to Kropotkin – in an extreme decentralization and individualization of life.

5.

Prince Pyotr Kropotkin died 1921 in Dmitrov. He was given a state funeral, despite the fact that he had been forceful in his opposition to the Bolsheviks and the Communists. "Where there is power, there is no freedom", he claimed. Masses of people followed his body on its last journey, both in Dmitrov and in Moscow where he was buried. 100,000 people turned out, despite the terror that prevailed in Russia. They turned out carrying the banners of anarchy and signs demanding that their fellow anarchists be released from prison. It has been claimed that this was the largest voluntary manifestation in the history of the Soviet Union, and the last on such a scale. Politics aside, the manifestation very much confirmed Kropotkin's theory. People conquered their fear – instantaneously. This was what happened in Siberia in 1884, in Moscow in 1921, and in Poland in 1980. But this was also what happened in Sweden in 1968, and in Czechoslovakia in 1968. The same is true of the revolutions in Iran, Tunisia, Egypt etc. that we witnessed recently: explosions of solidarity.

6.

Jacques Derrida once wrote about hospitality. Among other things, he pointed out how strongly hospitality is connected to the regulating norms of the law and also how much it depends on the unselfishness that lies at the basis of hospitality, against a background of relations of power. We are visited by someone extremely different. In fact, in such a visitation, we don't know for sure if the other has come to visit us or to haunt us. Derrida inscribes this event in the Messianic tradition and its way of thinking. He writes about the risks that the host takes in opening his or her door to a stranger: a stranger who might be Jesus, the Messiah, or a murderer. In its explosive phase, solidarity opens a door, takes the risk. But solidarity also contains other foundations, leading to a closed door.

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BETWEEN INVISIBLE LABOR AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Women in the Solidarność movement and in today's politics in Poland

A relation of cruel optimism exists when something you desire is actually an obstacle to your flourishing. It might involve food, or a kind of love; it might be a fantasy of the good life, or a political project. (...) These kinds of optimistic relation are not inherently cruel. They become cruel only when the object that draws your attachment actively impedes the aim that brought you to it initially.

Lauren Berlant, Cruel Optimism

The concept of invisibility always strikes me as deeply paradoxical, since most invisible things we know of have deep, materialized and often painful effects on the lives of humans. Their materialized, embodied consequences lead far beyond the basic issue of their existence. In her *Invisible Heart,* Nancy Folbre puts it as follows: "The invisible hand represents the forces of supply and demand in competitive markets. The invisible heart represents family values of love, obligation and reciprocity. (...) The only way to balance them successfully is to find fair ways of rewarding those who care for other people". In this short text I would like to discuss the (in)visibility of women in 1980 and in Polish politics today, suggesting a feminist perspective which will not focus solely on exclusions, but also recognize participation. The context of invisible labor allows us to see the duality, or even perhaps the dialectics, of the participation and exclusion of women in the political field.

The situation of women who joined the *Solidarność* Independent Workers' Unions in 1980 was in many ways similar to that of women in Poland today. One could even argue that it was better in many respects, since abortion was legal, jobs were stable and daycare was free of charge. Women were engaged in the movement; some of them actually started the strike in the Gdańsk Shipyard, like the crane operator Anna Walentynowicz, whose dismissal was the direct trigger of the strike on August 14th 1980, or the tram driver Henryka Krzywonos, whose famous action in stopping the tram in the center of Gdańsk paralyzed communications in the city center and led to the spread of information about the strike and subsequently to supporting protests in other workplaces. The nurse and political activist Alina Pieńkowska was the third of the women from the Gdańsk Shipyard, who helped force the continuation of the strike on August 16th 1980 when Lech Wałęsa and other men had their moment of doubt. These women became famous in the whole country, and rightly so. Subsequently they became the object of several feminist studies trying to understand the later exclusion of women in *Solidarność*. In *Solidarity's Secret*, Shana Penn focused on the women who published *Tygodnik Mazowsze*, the key periodical of the Solidarność underground after the introduction of martial law by General Jaruzelski on December 13th, 1981, and Ewa Kondratowicz published a series of interviews with women of the opposition in a study titled "Lipstick on the Banner".

Anna Walentynowicz

IT MIGHT BE WORTH recalling that in 1980 women constituted some 30% of the manual workers at the Gdańsk Shipyard. They usually operated the gantry cranes, mainly inside the shipyard buildings. Most of them led a traditional family life, doing the majority of the housework. Although most of them subscribed to the newly created *Solidarność* union, they did not usually have time to engage in it as much as men did, since they "had children" (apparently men do not have children, women do – at least in Poland) and housework to do. During an artistic project at the Gdansk Shipyard in 2004, I conducted interviews with ten female shipyard workers, some of whom had been working there in 1980. Their memories were bitter, as their hopes for better conditions for workers and women had clearly been betrayed in the economic transformation of 1989. The main thesis of David Ost's book *The Defeat of Solidarity*, published in 2005, seems fully legitimate in the context of these interviews; his thesis is that the *Solidarność* movement actually abandoned the workers and turned against them in the building of the new capitalist society after 1989. In 2004, facing their precarization on the labor market, these women were sometimes working three shifts in rough conditions and risking accidents. They were not active in labor unions, because apart from the burden of excessive paid work at the shipyard they also had unpaid housework to do. In most cases, their families were financially dependent on them, yet the traditional gender work division applied to them as much as it had to their mothers. While men working in the shipyard always had time to sit down and talk with me after their work, the situation was different with the women. I could only talk to them during their short lunch break, in the morning when they were changing clothes for work, or in the evenings when they got ready to leave the shipyard. For that reason, the process of conducting the interviews took some three weeks altogether, and I believe that no journalist interviewed women in the shipyard either before or after that, since it was so much easier to make an appointment for a long conversation with the majority of men working there.

The striking inequality in the division of labor between women and men persists not just in the working class families, but in households in Poland regardless of their class. It results from traditional values strengthened by the Catholic Church and by school education. It is also a typical effect of the precarization of patriarchal societies: When state institutions and employers cease to provide care structures and facilities, it becomes the task of women to take over these duties. These specifically gender-related aspects of precarity often escape the attention of theorists of precarity, such as Guy Standing or Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, yet they constitute a substantial part of feminist research in this field, particularly in the work of Silvia Federici.

PHOTO: LESZEK PASSIVE

Triumphant leaders of Solidarity at Nowy Targ, October 19, 1980. From left; Andrzej Gwiazda, Alina Pienkowska, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, Anna Walentynowicz, Lech Walesa, Ryszard Kalinowski, Marian Jurczyk.

Gender inequality in Poland is also an unfortunate result of a feminism which did not criticize the neoliberal transformations of the first twenty years after 1989, producing a narrative on gender equality which reduced women's participation in politics to the installation of the quota system and inviting more women to join political parties. Ironically, the political party which actually had the highest percentage of female delegates in the Parliament after 1989 was the ultra-conservative League of Polish Families (LPR).

THE HARSH CRITIQUE of feminism's involvement in the implementation of neoliberal politics offered by Nancy Fraser in her article published in the Guardian in 2013 most appropriately summarizes the complicity of the vast majority of the Polish feminist movement in the perpetuation of social and economic inequalities, both in Poland and globally. Her emphasis on the rejection of egalitarian feminism in favor of an individualistic entrepreneurial version also sounds very convincing in the Polish context: "Where feminists once criticized a society that promoted careerism, they now advise women to 'lean in'. A movement that once prioritized social solidarity now celebrates female entrepreneurs. A perspective that once valorized 'care' and interdependence now encourages individual advancement and meritocracy." Interestingly, some feminists in Poland and other countries of the former Eastern Bloc reacted to this article in a very critical way, pointing to the supposed "western-centrism" of Fraser and her possibly uncritical praise of care labor. I believe that this shameless attempt to hide behind the veil of the supposedly colonial aspects of Fraser's article only proves the inability to take responsibility for the human costs of the neoliberal transformation. As much as I agree with some feminists of color who rightly challenge Fraser's use of the "feminist we", in the case of Polish liberal feminism a more appropriate reaction to the article should consist in a sincere reflection on feminism's complicity.

"IN 1980, WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SOLIDARNOŚĆ MOVEMENT WAS FAR FROM INVISIBLE."

In 1980, women's participation in the *Solidarność* movement was far from invisible. Women were present from the start of the strikes in the shipyard in Gdańsk, they were on strike in Szczecin and Łódź, they "took over" several highly important activities in *Solidarność* after its de-legalization in December 1981, mainly printing and distributing the underground press, organizing meetings and education, supporting the thousands of imprisoned activists, documenting the abuses of the "*bezpieka*" (secret police), and arranging and redistributing material help from abroad. The invisibility of these tasks was compounded by the fact that all of this work was illegal. It was a form of housework, but directed at the common good; a personal involvement, but in public matters – a form of public involvement, which clearly escapes the classical notions of public sphere, such as the one proposed by Habermas. It might be seen as a form of counterpublic as defined by Nancy Fraser or Alexander Kluge, but a hybrid form, not a monolithic entity.

Carole Pateman suggests that the interconnections between what has been called the "public sphere" and the

"private" are stronger than most liberal theorists suggest. Thus she not only accepts the feminist slogan "the personal is political", but also provides philosophical legitimation for it. When analyzing the "republic of the brothers" and the "fraternal social contract" in liberal democracies, Pateman not only recapitulates the Freudian/Lockean visions of the contemporary republic, but also joins forces with the feminist psychoanalyst Luce Irigaray in suggesting that this triumphant institutionalization of organized boyhood usually takes place on the women's (sometimes dead) bodies. While Irigaray shows how the exclusion of women is grounded in the symbolic erasure of the mother from the origins of state and society, Pateman concentrates on domestic violence and career restrictions to explain women's de facto absence in politics.

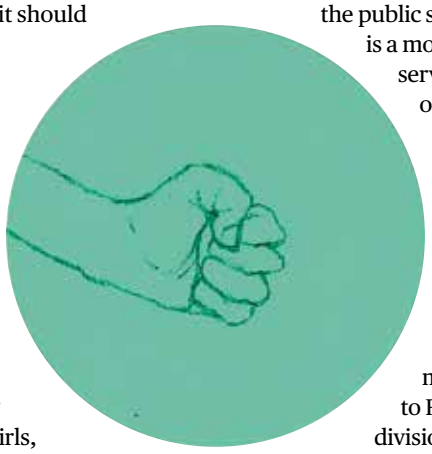
OTHER FEMINIST AUTHORS point out that even today, the fact that affective and care labor occupies women's time and energy, forcing the alienation and exploitation of women, constitutes a necessary element of the system of capitalist production. Domestic labor is not only exploitative, as Mariarosa Dalla Costa, Silvia Federici and other feminists have argued. It is also a way of sharing a life with others as depicted in the work of bell hooks, or even an element of "love power", as Anna Jonasdottir has argued in the last 30 years. The *Solidarność* movement made at least three *explicit* claims to embrace these efforts of women, in the "21 postulates" of the workers unions in 1980: the demands for women's retirement at the age of 50, for three years' paid maternity leave, and enough daycare centers for all children. However, the *Solidarność* movement lacked any comprehension of the structures of gender inequalities, and I believe this is the reason for the later exclusion of women from its structures, as well as for the conservative turn of the movement and the political parties which originated in it. This all led to the neglect of women's issues in Polish politics after 1989.

We can reduce *Solidarność* to a sexist, misogynist entity altogether, as has often been done, but before doing so we might also want to examine how the gender difference actually worked there. We might also want to compare this particular movement with other social movements of the time in order to understand whether and how it differed from them in its gender bias. Interestingly, the outcome of this comparison is surprisingly positive for *Solidarność* which had its known female leaders in the working class – the legendary trio of crane operator Anna Walentynowicz, nurse Alina Pieńkowska and tram driver Henryka Krzywonos – as well as in the intelligentsia, including counselors such as Jadwiga Staniszkis, journalists and authors such as Helena Łuczywo and Joanna Szczęsna, activists such as Barbara Labuda, probably the only declared feminist in the movement in 1980, and lawyers such as Zofia Wasil-kowska and Janina Zakrzewska. How many women do we know of in the working class resistance at the time of Thatcher's neoliberal takeovers in the early 1980s in England? How many women were there in the Free Speech Movement in the USA? In the Anti-Apartheid mobilizations in South Africa? Or in the French students mobilizations of the 1960s? Probably not more than in *Solidarność* – and I emphasize that not because I would like to idealize this particular social movement, but because I think that social and academic perceptions of it should be corrected.

In the first days of *Solidarność*, most of the international legal guarantees of gender equality had not even been prepared. The UN Beijing Declaration, probably the most famous and all-encompassing document concerning rights of women and girls, was not even written in 1980; it was only signed in 1995. The UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), had just been adopted in 1979, and the EU Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence would only be signed in 2011, not by all the EU members, not even by Poland (!). Feminist theory in 1980 already recognized the influence of domestic labor on the lives of women, as in the 1976 sociological study of Ann Oakley or in the short texts of the Italian Marxist feminists Federici and Dalla Costa; the late 1970s also saw the critical analysis of the appropriation of affective labor by corporate marketing and sales in Arlie Hochschild's study from 1979. The tendency of the time, however, was for women to withdraw from male-dominated social movements and to form their own.

IF SOLIDARNOŚĆ is to be judged correctly, another comparison should also be drawn concerning the state apparatus in Poland. Women did not occupy important positions in the state institutions in 1980. They were decorative elements of ministerial salons. Female participation in the Parliament of the "2nd Republic", the communist state, varied from 4,14% in the late 1950s (!) to 25% after the elections in 1980, which could also be seen as inspired by the political mobilization of women in the opposition.

The fact that we still know and remember the names of the key women in the *Solidarność* movement is, in my opinion, due to the radical democratization of the public sphere in 1980. This is a moment which would serve as a great example of the "mésentente" (disagreement) described by Jacques Rancière. The appearance of the nurse, the female crane operator and the female tram driver was, as we might say according to Rancière, a "new division of the sensible". It was a sign and a declaration to the entire society that women do engage politically, and rightly so. The fact that more feminist writing has been devoted to the (in-)famous slogan on the wall of the Gdańsk Shipyard *Kobiety, nie przeszkadzajcie nam walczyć o Polskę* ("Women,



do not disturb our fight for Poland") than to the women actually involved in *Solidarność* is a shameful proof of the lack of recognition for these women rather than an indication of scientific and historical accuracy in Polish feminist studies of that period. The performative dimension of this sudden presence of women cannot be reduced to an "exception" and explained away as "accidental". It was a genuine element of the early days of *Solidarność* and should be analyzed as an example of the unprecedented political mobilization of working class women. Soon more women joined the unions, and – as Małgorzata Tarasiewicz estimates in an interview concerning the "Women's Section" of *Solidarność* – they constituted some 50% of the movement. Tarasiewicz and other feminist writers and activists seem to see *Solidarność* only through the lens of the activities of the leaders of the movement in the 1990s, when abortion was made illegal and the traditional role of women in society and gender inequality were strengthened. It could actually be true that the unwillingness to grasp the performative political importance of female leaders in the movement of 1980 derives from a more general reservation against the working class – a very unpopular topic in the 1990s in Poland. The female *Solidarność* leaders might still be waiting for their theorists.

THE "WOMEN'S SECTION" of *Solidarność* was only set up in 1990 and closed in 1991 by Marian Krzaklewski, Wałęsa's successor. It was undoubtedly an expression of the deeply conservative approach that he and other male members of *Solidarność* showed in regard to women and their issues. However, we should perhaps take into account how women function in contemporary social movements, including worker's unions, how their role has changed since 1980 and 1991, and also how the actual activity of actual women in actual labor unions has contributed to these changes. Otherwise we risk projecting contemporary norms and practices back onto movements that are already historic. We might also want to rethink new forms of invisibility of women in politics and social agency, far more influenced by economic inequalities and poverty than in the heyday of *Solidarność*. Today some women obtain important political positions. Does this mean that housework is more appreciated, that gender roles have changed or that we live in a more egalitarian society? I would not say so.

"WOMEN'S 'INVISIBLE LABOR' HAS BEEN THE MAJOR OBSTACLE TO THEIR POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND INVOLVEMENT, BOTH NOW AND IN THE PAST."

IT SEEMS IRONIC that the 2014 annual women's demonstration in Warsaw, the "Manifa", was held under the slogan "Equality at home, equality at work, equality in schools". Although the repetition in the slogan has often been criticized, one has to insist on the fact that equality still has not been attained. Since women in Poland today make up 96% of the victims of domestic violence and rape, as well as the majority of the 14% of the labor force who are unemployed, while their salaries are usually 20% lower than those of their masculine co-workers, the demand for equality seems justified. Women are denied access to abortion and to contraceptives; sexual education is fully dependent on cultural and economic capital and is fully privatized. Women's "invisible" labor (housework) earns the equivalent of 40% of the gross domestic product (GDP) according to the Polish Central Statistics Office (GUS); however women are neither rewarded nor respected for it. The "glass ceiling", "sticky floor", and "moving stairs" phenomena, reducing women's career opportunities, are especially widespread in business, academia, and medicine. The traditional cultural stereotype of "Matka Polka" (the Polish Mother) also forces the majority of women to comply with a heteronormative, strongly paternalistic and simply sexist conformity to the traditional roles of mother, care giver, and sex worker which, combined with the general precarity in the labor market, makes women particularly dependent on partners and friends and reduces the urge of most women to engage politically.

Women's invisible labor has been the major obstacle to their political participation and involvement, both now and in the past. Reducing this labor to a colonized zone where women are deprived of the value of their work dismisses an important part of the actual value of this work, which resides precisely in its affective character. It should neither be reduced to its material results, nor to the supposed "immateriality" of its affective practice, since affection, as contemporary studies rightly show, is neither immaterial nor independent of the social. This labor can, however, contain a strong emancipatory potential for those who decide to unlearn privilege, who not only claim but also practice equality. For these, the "love power" of the women of *Solidarność* and other female political activists will not just be the essential symbol of a monumentalized past, but above all a living example of political agency, strength and solidarity. From the perspective of the reduction of women's rights in the neoliberal transformation and its cutting of social services and support, the engagement of women in *Solidarność* might be seen as a version of cruel optimism, which – as Lauren Berlant explains in her recent book – consists in an attachment to the object that was supposed to lead to happiness, yet has become an obstacle to pursuing it. But on the other hand we might also claim that this involvement is a lesson we can learn from – a lesson about the necessity of establishing egalitarian, feminist theory and practice in every social movement aiming at political change.

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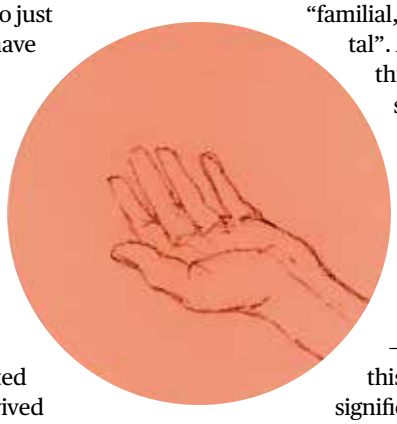
Dedicated to Ms. Henryka Krzywonos.

FRATERNITY

The French Republic is perhaps the only state in the world to have a motto in which the word "fraternity" (*fraternité*) occurs. Whether or not it actually is the only one, the fact is that its motto has enjoyed a fame closely linked to the fame of the Revolution of 1789, which has always been regarded – after the English and American revolutions, which were more strictly national in character – as the inaugural moment of democracy in the sense of an appeal to all nations and peoples. This was the background for the motto attached to the Republic, not from its very start but at least from the year 1793, and which didn't become fully functional – if that is the proper expression – or acquire all its force until the Second Republic in 1848. The historical facts are complex and unclear on this point, but it was certainly some time before the tripartite motto – that is, with Fraternity added to the other two words, and without the complement "or death", used in 1793 – was fully adopted. Even after this adoption, groups and persons proposing other mottos could still be found, in particular within the workers' movement. Thus the employment agency (*Bourse du Travail*) in the town of Saint-Étienne, established in 1888, carries the device: *Liberté Egalité Solidarité Justice* ("Freedom, Equality, Solidarity, Justice").

TO SOME EXTENT, the term "fraternity" has been clearly linked to a register that could be called romantic, in the wider sense, and to a way of thinking that goes beyond the strict limits of the laws and institutions of State in that it appeals to the sentiment and idea of a "community" rather than to principles of social organization. This explains the desire to distinguish the word from others like "solidarity" and "justice", which can be seen as developing the implications of the first two terms, in particular "equality".

Today, fraternity is not often considered benevolently – at least not in France – as it is felt to carry too much of a sentimental, not to say familial connotation, at a time when family is no longer a point of reference. When Maurice Blanchot used the word in a context where he wanted to emphasize the affective aspect of "community", he incurred the reproach (also directed at me) of Jacques Derrida, who more than once expressed his mistrust of a term that is simultaneously familial, masculine, sentimental and Christian-sounding. Moreover, no one – apart from the two just mentioned – seems to have laid claim to the expression in the political thought of the last forty years. On the contrary, the use of this term by a candidate in the French presidential election some years ago, and its repetition by the candidate who was then elected (President Sarkozy), revived all the mistrust towards a word considered to be moral rather than political, and sugary rather than responsible.



All these analyses might lead to this argument (which incidentally can be employed not only against the use of the word but also, by some, in its favor): whereas liberty and equality express our civil rights, fraternity is not a civil right. Is it then, perhaps, a duty? This issue is not often formulated, instead giving way to the idea of a wish, an aspiration, and hence to a reality that is of little substance, if not simply utopian and deceptive. Besides, it can be said that all the well-known debates concerning the idea of a "utopia" are implied by those concerning "fraternity". Here one can see the lasting influence of the anti-utopian tradition originating with Marx, for whom this word masked an illusion.

TO POSE THE QUESTION of fraternity anew, we must begin with two postulates: (1) It is not obvious that this notion ought to be defended, and we should not ignore the apprehensions raised by its familial, Christian and sentimental character; (2) If there are nevertheless reasons for according some credit to this word, we must start with a renewed examination of its signification and, going further back, of the signification of family.

The first postulate simply recommends a certain degree of caution. It is not advisable to adopt this notion without considering the possibility of finding oneself constrained by the predicates "familial, Christian, sentimental". As concerns family, this is something that the second postulate will lead us to scrutinize. As regards Christianity and sentiment – simultaneously separate from but undoubtedly also implicated in each other – it is appropriate to say this: each of these terms signifies a well-known reality, in one case the dominant religion of the non-Muslim Western world, in the other the uncertain, even disturbing and hazardous sphere of that which continues to elude the control of reason.

But these two characteristics might actually be in need of closer examination, even though it is certainly not impossible to attribute them to each of the ideas concerned. In fact, it might turn out that they have themselves been marked by certain habits of thought sedimented in the course of our history.

We will therefore return to them once we have clarified the notion of "family". To begin with, the patriarchal family, where the suspicion of masculine sexism in the idea of fraternity originates, is not the only possible structure of that which is called "family": It could be defined as the minimal social group for the purposes of reproduction and its consequences (raising children until they become independent). Perhaps one might even claim that it is the reflection or projection of strongly masculine and paternal social and political models onto the family that have accustomed us to emphasize the fa-

ther and the transmission to and through males.

Be that as it may, there is a more important point: "brothers" are not originally those united by the same blood. For "blood" is nothing but the symbol of filiation through the transmission of semen (of a natural identity or conformity), and filiation itself is represented according to an ancient scheme in which the mother lacked any generative power of her own (and was instead seen simply as an incubator). "Blood" is by no means a sufficient explanation of what comprises generation and filiation.

Sons and daughters are not so much those united by blood – *pater incertus*, said the Roman law – but rather those united by the community of maternal nursing – *mater certissima*: whether it be real or symbolic, nursing does not consist in the internal, continuous and immediate transmission of a vital principle, but in the external, discontinuous and mediated gift of a nourishing substance. Feeding is a process of incorporation of alien substances that the body metabolizes into its own substance. The bond with the mother is a paradoxical bond where incorporation (*certissima*) is opposed to identification (the child doesn't identify itself, it absorbs the maternal substance into its own, autonomous substance); the bond with the father is identification, not with a body or a substance (*incertus*), but with a figure or a sign.

IT IS HERE that we must start in order to reconsider family and fraternity. Brothers – and sisters, a point we will return to – are initially autonomous subjects whose coexistence is not founded upon anything but a commonality of feeding, of nourishment (*compagnon* signifies: someone who shares the bread), and on the absence of reasons for their communal life. The figure or the sign of the father, that which is often called "the law of the father" but would be better called "the father as law", is not determined from the start. On the contrary: the figure is an empty outline or sketch, a sign carrying a fleeting, indeterminate signification.

"'FRATERNITY' IS CERTAINLY AN INSUFFICIENT TERM, EVEN IF NOT NECESSARILY A DANGEROUS ONE."

It is of course possible for the father to function as a full figure, just as it is possible for the mother not to nourish, or to malnourish (all of which is of course to be understood on a symbolic level, just as "father" and "mother" are not necessarily the parents, biologically or legally). This is not the rule, however: the rule, if this word can be used here, would rather be that nothing guarantees the "community" of brothers beyond nourishment. The transition to independence, made possible by the nourishment, also signifies the recognition of being together by accident, in a community without origin or any given meaning. (In Freudian terms: the "murder of the father" precedes the "father", who is only erected as the figure of his own absence.)

IN THIS SENSE, "being siblings" is the model of "society", as an association without substantial (ontological, original) necessity. It is thus also the model of "having to adjust to living together", rather than of "being together". Finding or creating an equivalent or substitute for maternal nourishment is a task – or rather a desire – that is both more and less than social: what is at stake is "being" or "meaning" (which might pass through art, religion, love, celebration, thought – but not through the socio-political). But giving content to the figure or sign through which the instance of "the law" is indicated presents an inescapable and urgent enterprise, since their original lack of content poses a threat.

My intention here is not to continue the analyses from these premises, which would have to go in several directions. It is only to emphasize this: "fraternity" does not in itself carry the values of the masculine and the paternal as we ordinarily understand them. Fraternity speaks of coexistence not necessitated by either "nature", "destiny", "foundation", or "origin". Incidentally, this is why the motif of *enemy brothers* plays such a prominent role in mythologies of all kinds. Usually, such an enmity is understood as a kind of moral monstrosity, when in fact it states the simple truth of a relation that is in itself erratic, lost, and even senseless.

At the same time, fraternity also carries the shadow or the obscure memory and desire of communal nourishment. In this, it is no doubt rather a "sorority" (sisterhood), and in this regard it must be admitted that the fraternal privileges a masculine unilaterality. Sorority would be fraternity beyond or on this side of the law, in the sphere or spheres of nourishment, which is to say of "eating/rejecting", which are also the spheres of affect.

Fraternity and sorority cut across each other, they even interlace, just as masculine and feminine more generally do. The carriers of these roles are never strictly identical with the complex singularities of either persons or groups: no one is simply and completely either "man" or "woman", and a fraternity [*fratrie*] is not necessarily a confraternity [*confrérie*] of males. Perhaps these two terms might also serve to distinguish two tendencies in the semantics of "brothers": Confraternity unites subjects tending to be identical since they are identified by a function, an occupation, a role. Fraternity belongs to the family, which is only, as I said, the conjunction of chance (meeting) and an embrace (desire) – given that the meeting on the one hand is almost always subject to preliminary arrangements (social, local, etc.), and that the desire might also have been replaced beforehand, wholly or in part, by arrangements. The idea of "marriage", in so far as it falls under the law (that is to say, not under spirituality or a nuptial mystique), sums up the situation well: it is a question of mastering chance or – and at the same time – legitimizing the arrangements. Marriage, one might say, is the true birthplace and event of the law.

This might lead to the assumption that nothing remains of desire and that everything is subsumed under the dispositions of the socio-political. This is only a tendency, however. For one must not forget that the law – legality, the State – is always founded upon a withdrawal of every founding principle. The figure or the sign of the father, and consequently also that of fraternity, offers a vacancy that must be filled in one way or another. Brothers are originally orphans of a father and cannot be identified as belonging together by anything at all – except the absorption of the maternal nourishment, leading to their emancipation.

As soon as the paternal vacancy – the "vacancy of power", as it is called in the socio-political register – is manifested as such, one must confront this conspicuous truth, which no founding mythology can hide (a function always imperfectly fulfilled, whatever the mythologies might be). This is the destiny of democracy: it must assume this vacancy without appealing to a mythology.

The maternal or feminine side or register does not provide a mythology – at least not for the order of the law; at least not for supplementing the absent father. Desire does not allow itself to be captured in representations. It acts, it plays, it buries or throws itself into the sensible density of nourishment: hunger, saturation, hunger again – without end. Or also: life, death. And also: art, thinking, love, the trembling of being and, if one wishes to mention them, the gods. This is the constant lesson, from Antigone and Scheherazade on to Hester in *The Scarlet Letter* and then Vera Figner, passing through *The Bacchae* of Euripides.[1]

IT IS THEREFORE not surprising that democracy aspires to provide for itself, in itself – for that within itself that exceeds the strict register of the law – a dimension that provides access to desire or to affect: to that which I here name only hesitatingly, in order to designate this outside of law and of power, vacant or not, in which being-together exceeds its own sociality and governmentality. If "freedom" and "equality" represent – on the condition of always being rethought – the minimal conditions of a civil association without any given foundation, "fraternity" might indicate the horizon of this outside of the socio-political. Strictly speaking, it is not even a horizon: it is rather an open breach in every form of horizon and delimitation. This breach is that of meaning or sense: sense in so far as it always refers elsewhere, to an elsewhere, instead of attaching a final signification.

To remain consistent with the preceding statements, however, I must recognize that this fraternity should be understood as a sorority, or even as the dissolution of principle between brothers and the reference this implies on the one hand to the law as the fiction of a connection (and as the uttering of this fiction), and on the other hand to the reality of the transmission and sharing of nourishment, that is to say of the affect through which the substance of the world is ingested and rejected (impulsion/expulsion, impression/expulsion). The sharing of impulsion/expulsion, the communication of affect: this is, once again, sense (sensible, sensual, sentimental).

PERHAPS, THEN, one should say neither "fraternity" nor "sorority" – for exploiting this oversimplified inversion would make sisters the symmetrical counterpart of brothers. But the two sides are not symmetrical: if brothers no doubt are distinct from sisters, the sisters on their part might fraternize with the brothers, in a brotherly *and* sisterly way. There is no symmetry between the sexes, or if so, only when they are considered exclusively from the point of view of brothers (equality in political, social terms etc.).

"Fraternity" is certainly an insufficient term, even if not necessarily a dangerous one. Nevertheless it is a signal: it alerts us to the fact that the social, juridical and political order cannot assume the register of sense. It can only provide the framework of sense. But it is essential that it should do so, and that in order to do so, it is able by itself to indicate that it is beyond the law, in a place where sense emerges.

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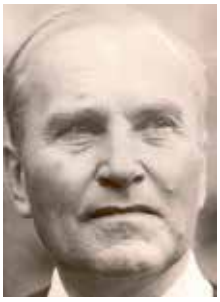
reference

1 Against the law of the Sultan, Scheherazade opposes her imagination, her spirit and her heart; she also acts with the support of her sister Dinarzade. Nathaniel Hawthorne's Hester eschews the social law of marriage, for which she is sentenced to the pillory and the "scarlet letter". The Russian anarchists, in particular the women (Vera Zasulich, Olga Lubatovich, etc.), originally conceived their action not so much in political as in human – thus "metaphysical" – terms, in the widest sense (in accordance with the very idea of "anarchism"). Vera Figner writes: "The doctrine that promises the equality, brotherhood, and happiness of all people would truly impress me" (*Mémoires d'une révolutionnaire*, Gallimard, 1939, 258). In *The Bacchae*, the women of Thebes leave the city for the wild forest upon hearing of the return of Dionysus. Needless to say, the list could be continued ... from Sarah laughing at God to Simone Weil, who was able to write, in 1940: "All of the changes that have occurred for the past three centuries bring humanity closer to a situation where there will be absolutely no other source of obedience in the world except the authority of the State" (*Œuvres*, Gallimard, 1999, 382), or the daughters of General Hammerstein, sisters whose story has been so well told by Hans-Magnus Enzensberger.

THE SOLIDARITY OF THE SHAKEN

Historically the concept of solidarity stems – like a number of our political concepts – from Roman law, in which the formulation *obligatio in solidum* designated joint liability for a financial debt. So the concept was initially a rather narrow term in financial law that stated the conditions of a specific form of debt, in which all the cosignatories were in a status of joint liability for a financial debt: if one of the debtors could not repay his debt the other cosignatories would, in other words, be forced to pay his or her part. This juridical, financial sense of solidarity would then continue to live on in legal discourse: we find it for example in the French Encyclopedia and in the famous *Code civil* of Napoleon from 1804.


Jan Patočka

Etymologically, the roots of the concept of solidarity stretch back to the Latin word *solidus*: a noun designating an entire sum or a solid body. In this sense, the concept of solidarity carries with it the meaning of a certain solidity. To be in solidarity with others is, at the same time, to be a part of a whole which constitutes a solid unity: that is, a unity in which the differences between its particulars have been leveled out into a more or less homogenous whole. In other words, the concept of solidarity seems to lead us towards an understanding of community that rests upon a common and solid foundation. We would thus be in solidarity with others because we have a solid and common ground under our feet: a common cause, a common debt or a common nature serving as the solidity of our solidarity.

IN DIFFERENT WAYS and in different forms we can observe how the concept of solidarity, throughout most of its history, has revolved around precisely this question, namely, what or who constitutes the common ground upon which the solidity of our solidarity can be construed.[1] But is this the only way to conceive of solidarity? Is solidarity forever bound to its solidity, to the question of a solid and common foundation for its unity? Can we in any way understand solidarity beyond these parameters?

ONE OF THE THINKERS who, perhaps most strikingly, tried to develop another conception of solidarity was the Czech philosopher and political dissident Jan Patočka. In his magnum opus, *Heretical Essays in the Philosophy of History* from 1976, Patočka developed what he called a "solidarity of the shaken".[2]

The starting point for his analysis is Martin Heidegger's insistence in *Being and Time* that human existence, *Dasein*, is always and a priori a being-with: a being-with the world and a being-with others. in other words, our existence is primordially an existence together with other people; we do *not* exist as singular individuals who try to make contact with others, in a second step or by way of some kind of Hobbesian need. But even though Heidegger's analyses serve as an important background to Patočka's understanding of human existence, he is nevertheless critical of Heidegger precisely in regard to his descriptions of the being-with of human existence. To a large extent, this critique revolves around Heidegger's inability to analyze the specifically political nature of this being-with, or rather, the form of this being-with that constitutes a *political community*.

Taking his bearings from Heidegger's analyses in *Being and Time*, Patočka sets out to trace the contours of a political community; not, however, by focusing on the paragraphs of *Being and Time* that explicitly deal with the question of the being-with of human existence, but rather on the passages in which Heidegger describes the fundamental attunement of human existence, namely, anxiety. For Heidegger, it is only through anxiety that we are brought before ourselves, that we are confronted with our own finitude and thus exposed to the abysmal nothingness that our existence rests upon without ever being able to come to rest – the ground without ground that un-grounds us perpetually.

In *Being and Time* the confrontation with our own finitude by and through anxiety is the precondition for a proper existence, the only way in which human existence can tear away the anonymous veil that clouds it in social life. However, the proper, the own, is nothing else than our own nothingness: to exist properly is to realize that the proper is far from any kind of property, that our most proper belonging is nothing but the weight of our own finitude. But even though the "proper" of human existence therefore cannot be equated with a property, a quality or an essence, Heidegger is explicit concerning the fact that this is an experience in and of the singular: "insofar as it 'is', death is always essentially my own".[3]

FOR PATOČKA, on the other hand, this experience is a collective and historical experience. And even though he retains the formal structure of Heidegger's analysis of anxiety, it is clear that what he is trying to capture can no longer be equated with the phenomenon of anxiety, at least not exclusively. Patočka will instead describe this as a "loss of meaning" or a "loss of the world"; the vertiginous experience of meaninglessness that we are faced with when each and every stable support in our life collapses.[4] In fact, for Patočka this meaninglessness is the origin of meaning – it is only by and through the experience of the complete absence of all meaning that the very question concerning meaning becomes meaningful. Meaning is, as he himself puts it, always "an activity which stems from a searching lack of meaning, as the vanishing point of being problematic, as an indirect epiphany".[5] Meaning can, in other words, only emerge through a radical destruction of all given meaning, and even then it only appears as something unapparent, as an "indirect epiphany" or as a sudden glimpse of that which withdraws from all given meaning:

Solidarity of the shaken. Change and chaos call for solid ground.

it appears as the unapparent gift of the given.

This experience of a loss of meaning is not only something that affects us as individuals, but must, as Patočka emphasizes, be understood as a rupture that has the potential to shake an entire community. According to Patočka, this is in fact precisely what occurred with the establishment of the Greek *polis*. It was only by and through a radical rupture with the earlier mythological order of the world that the Greek *polis* and its auto-legislative order could be born. The groundlessness of this event, that is, its complete rupture with any given meaning and the concomitant search for meaning that it implies, is something that, in Patočka's eyes, lies at the very heart of history, philosophy and politics.

This groundless event is thus what constitutes politics in a proper sense; it constitutes the moment when each and every foundation for the political order must spring from this order itself and not from some distant and mythological ἀρχή. However, this not only holds true for the historical constitution of a given political order; it is also the event from which, according to Patočka, a specific kind of community – a certain form of being-with – can evolve. This is the solidarity that Patočka terms the "solidarity of the shaken". This solidarity is not constituted, or grouped, around a certain foundation, idea, or ground. It is not constituted by any*thing* or anyone. In fact, the only unifying aspect of this solidarity is found within the abyss of meaning itself, in the fragile and fleeting nothingness of a common loss: in the common loss of a common ground. Consequently, there is nothing solid about this solidarity. On the contrary, it is the seismic shaking of this solidity that constitutes the epicenter of the solidarity in question. This seismic tremor does not however give off the loud rumblings of thunder, but trembles in silence:

> **The solidarity of the shaken is built up in persecution and uncertainty: that is its front line, quiet, without fanfare or sensation even where this aspect of the ruling Force seeks to seize it. It does not fear being unpopular but rather seeks it out and calls out quietly, wordlessly.**[6]

The call of this solidarity is quiet and wordless, but, in fact, it is not only silent: It is invisible and intangible as well, precisely because it remains beyond sense (it is neither sensible nor sensuous). The solidarity of the shaken transcends sense, it transcends meaning, since it is that which "makes sense": It stems from an event beyond any given meaning, an event that is the very opening of meaning as such.

To speak of a solidarity beyond sense or meaning does not however imply that the solidarity in question lies beyond the world, or beyond existence. What Patočka is trying to come to terms with is rather a solidarity at the limits of existence and at the limits of experience: the experiences of the limits of existence. As such, it can also be described in terms of a trans-immanence, as a transcendence *within* the immanence of human existence. It is a solidarity within existence, but a solidarity that touches upon and receives its form from the nothingness that is inherent in the human condition.

FOR PATOČKA THIS experience of the limit is – as it is for Heidegger – an experience of our own finitude. To be sure, in anxiety we are confronted with our imminent death, but the limits of human existence, the fragile and forever ungraspable border that demarcates and delineates our self, is something that we encounter not only in anxiety, but in love, art, and thought (this list can certainly be extended): a nothingness that permeates us, however well hidden and concealed it may be in our contemporary world. The solidarity of the shaken is, in other words, a solidarity in and for finitude. It is our shared loss of a stable foundation, our shared insufficiency, which will forever force us outside of ourselves in the direction of other people. Our co-existence with others is for this very reason, as Patočka writes, "entirely founded upon our *insufficiency*: I am not in myself, in my isolation, that which I am "in itself", in force…".[7] This insufficiency is not however a lack that can be overcome, it is not a void that other people can fill up or complete, but an insufficiency that we are bound to and that we share with others. Our insufficiency is therefore not the mere opposite of a sufficiency. It is rather an insufficiency that, as Maurice Blanchot beautifully puts it, "is not looking for what may put an end to it, but for the excess of a lack that grows ever deeper even as it fills itself up".[8]

TO CALL FOR A SOLIDARITY of the shaken is thus nothing short of a call for finitude, but a call for finitude in a world that has palliated and repressed death to its vanishing point. This is a call that will forever remain silent, a whisper barely audible in the technoscientific world of globalized capitalism. But in spite of this it remains, as Patočka phrases it, a "no" to the forces and powers that be: the same silent warning and prohibition that Socrates, *daimonion* once pronounced. It is in this rejection that its political potential is contained: it is the rejection that marked the dissidence of Patočka both as a thinker and as a political figure. It is, in short, the solidarity for all of us who lack solidity.

gustav strandberg

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references

1 We find it in Charles Fourier and his utopian understanding of the *Phalanx*; we find it in Mikhail Bakunin's humanistic conception of solidarity; and we find it in Kurt Eisner's "cold and steely" solidarity that is founded upo"n reason itself.
2 Jan Patočka, *Heretical Essays in the Philosophy of History*, trans. Erazim Kohák (Chicago: Open Court, 1996).
3 Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 223, § 47.
4 Patočka, *Heretical Essays*, 56.
5 Patočka, *Heretical Essays*, 60-61.
6 Patočka, *Heretical Essays*, 135.
7 Jan Patočka, "Leçons sur la corporeité", in *Papiers phénoménologiques*, trans. Erika Abrams, (Paris: Jerôme Millon, 1995), 85.
8 Maurice Blanchot, *The Unavowable Community*, trans. Pierre Joris (New York: Station Hill Press, 1988), 8.

SACRIFICE IS JUST ANOTHER WORD FOR SOLIDARITY IN UKRAINE TODAY

In Ukraine today, "solidarity" means self-dedication and sacrifice – and is more tangible than ever before.

Life in Ukraine today still seems unbelievable to me. This life, in its dramatic or rather tragic fullness, is much too fast to live. The countless Ukrainian lives cut short in the last six months make it especially unbearable. The spiral of violence in Maidan square in the winter of 2013/14 turned into a Russian roulette of war in spring, and then into a twister of terror in the summer. The first three deaths at Maidan were a national tragedy. The daily reports of deaths in the Donbas became a quiet routine, with names rarely mentioned; instead numbers were stated like "200" for the dead, "300" for the wounded.

These countless deaths – along with the spectacular photos of the protests – brought our country to the attention of international media, and guaranteed that this attention would not fade. But one must continuously refuel this interest with newer and more horrifying cases. Statements like "dying for one's beliefs" or "the Ukrainians paid a high price for their association with the European alliance" reveal the principles of post-Maidan politics between Ukraine and its neighbors Russia and the EU. Ukrainian lives were used as an alternative currency in the "Ukraine crisis" – this is a politics of dead bodies.

YANUKOVYCH'S FLIGHT has cost us hundreds of lives. Daily, dozens of lives are lost fighting the Putinist counter-revolution. The latest EU sanctions are rooted in that silent field somewhere in the Donbas –the crash site of the Malaysian aircraft. Such politics reveals the way the country perceives itself and the way it is perceived. Only a generous package of corpses provides a powerful argument for granting basic rights in a country and to a country the national sovereignty of which is not taken for granted and where the right to protest against police violence and dictatorship is not self-evident.

The true Ukraine of today is embodied by the soldier of our army. Under a relentless sun, he sits in the trenches with equipment bought by volunteers and awaits the aid that has long since been announced on TV. His corpulent general sits somewhere in his office, his deployment and his location have already been disclosed to pro-Russian squadrons, and the medication in his box was already all sold by corrupt colleagues in the Ministry of Defense in 2003. The only thing this soldier has is Hope and the solidary shoulders of his fellow combatants and helpers, who, like him, stand close to death. It is he who can best assess to what extent solidarity is a core principle of the European vision. He could have done this for some time now, as he probably raised the EU flag at the Maidan barricades in Kiev.

But the political body of the EU is itself in the trenches, trapped by economic interests. In a sense it is asking itself what the point of this Russian-Ukrainian war is, and is reluctant to believe in war against itself. What is actually being attacked here is precisely solidarity as the basis of the European structure. In this sense, solidarity after "Europe's last war" is more tangible today than ever before. The intention is not to eliminate but to radicalize it.

"YANUKOVYCH'S FLIGHT HAS COST US HUNDREDS OF LIVES. DAILY, DOZENS OF LIVES ARE LOST FIGHTING THE PUTINIST COUNTER-REVOLUTION."

The European Left – a utopian umbrella term that probably only holds true from the Ukrainian perspective–turned a blind eye to the uprising of the oppressed and, instead, preoccupies itself with idle mind games that oscillate between geopolitics and conspiracy theories. The leftist Subject, which in our minds should stand for "solidarity without borders", is cozying up with anti-imperialist and anti-American hallucinations. Ignorant of its colonizing mentality, it speculates about the Ukraine question merely as a topic in the daily paper. It thinks nothing of the countless demonstrations in European capitals against the dictatorship and war in the Ukraine, where the only participants are members of the Ukrainian diaspora.

IN THE IMAGINATION of post-heroic Europe, the daily Ukrainian sacrifice lies somewhere outside its sphere of reflection and action. The only thing that helps in the midst of this political isolation is passionate self-dedication and self-sacrifice as a substitute for solidarity. The weakest take on the most difficult task. Their wild sacrifice and self-dedication, to the point of self-destruction, prepares the ground for overcoming anonymous calculations and impulses. Yet this kind of self-sacrifice has to be mitigated. Otherwise, there is a risk that this wild savagery will become the trophy, a historical price that has to be paid in a conflict of globalized politics. My country, the Ukraine, would play the role of an unfortunate and exemplary case in this conflict – including the list of many nameless bodies of the dead.

kateryna mishchenko

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Note: This text was written from Ukraine in the fall of 2014.

FINAL REMARKS

"Solidarity is the tenderness of peoples (or nations)", a saying attributed to Che Guevara, is the best-known formulation of the leftist adoption of the concept of solidarity.[1] The statement was widely used in socialist countries. In the GDR it was often referred to in solidarity campaigns etc. Yet even the link to the iconic figure of "Comandante Che" can hardly obscure the fact that the romanticizing slogan is in tension with the revolutionary aims of Marxism. Despite its appeal to equality and the mitigation of injustice, solidarity is possible only within a structure of inequality – it presupposes inequality but also, in a sense, upholds it. The act of solidarity may indeed soften an all too flagrant hardship and suffering, yet it will not lead to a full equalization of chances and living conditions. Solidarity necessarily involves the rather condescending movement of those 'who have and give' towards those who have not (not only in terms of money and commodities, but also including the 'capital' of time, energy, resources). Karl Marx, therefore, attaches no great significance to the concept of solidarity.[2] It runs counter to his idea of revolution, which is meant to abolish and finally overcome all kinds of social inequality and injustice. Solidarity not only seems to presuppose inequality but, within the logic of revolution, it even to some extent prolongs the state of inequality by mitigating social contradictions and alleviating the worst hardships. Solidarity seems to have something in common with the idea of charity, with sympathy and support for those who are neglected. No wonder that Marx can do very little with it – his primary aim is not to better the conditions of people here and now, not some kind of compromise solution that will make harsh injustice a bit milder. His ultimate goal is revolution, and revolution is not concerned with the well-being of those involved in the process, but with the definite and sustainable change of societal conditions.

Yet it is not only his concern for the irreversible and permanent change of societal conditions that keeps Marx from advocating solidarity. The idea of solidarity also entails an appeal to individual human agency and the individual's freedom of choice. Marx however insists on historical progress as a necessity. Revolution will be brought about by the iron laws of historical development and by the change of social conditions. It is a process fully independent of morality and responsibility, whereas the appeals for solidarity address exactly these capacities for individual agency.[3]

NOT SURPRISINGLY, it is Marx's fierce antagonist, the anarchist Mikhail Bakunin, who was the most outspoken proponent of solidarity among the leftist thinkers of the 19th century. It is, in fact, one of the leading principles of his thought. For Bakunin, the initiator and the driving force for all revolutionary change is the human being, the individual, not the dependency on a gradual development of mankind in accordance with the objective historical conditions. This conviction is also the guideline for his understanding of solidarity as the basic principle of humanity. No human progress will come from a change of government; even Marx's dictatorship of the Proletariat will still resemble the old monarchy, because it will be the domination of the masses from the top, the domination by a privileged minority that allegedly knows the interests of the people better than they themselves do. His opposing model is therefore the emancipation from the bottom which will only be attained by the principle of mutual solidarity.

This humanistic approach of universal solidarity and mutual emancipation is somewhat tainted by the fact that Bakunin also built on the concept of race to explain the differences in the development of civilizations. Some of his writings also make heavy use of anti-Semitic clichés. One could feel tempted to overlook this as the expression of personal resentments that do not affect his theoretical approach. Yet these shortcomings in fact seem to hint at a deeper and more general problem. Bakunin is indeed a detractor of repression by the state and by religion, but his anarchism is itself not free of repressive elements and civilizational preconceptions. Bakunin's idea of solidarity builds heavily on *essentialist* views of humanity, humanism, morality, enlightenment, etc., all of which are abstract, thereby creating a model of what the individual human being has to be. His theory presupposes a human essence that is necessarily *good*, disregarding the inherent vices and evils of the human condition. Solidarity becomes a solidarity of the "good"; it thereby remains re-affirmative, self-affirmative, and circular in its logic of exclusion. Our discussion is driven back to the issue of overcoming the concept of *solidarity against*.

PERHAPS WE HAVE to concede that any solidarity deserving the name should be the fragile, temporary and uncertain 'solidity' of the moment. It should acknowledge that it does not give the answer to any eternal and essential concepts. Solidarity occurs only when insufficiency and finiteness are recognized and acknowledged. The very wound that can neither be negated nor healed is that which reunites us. Solidarity is not confined to reducing the suffering of others because I might find myself in their place at some point; nor is it a co-suffering that makes suffering more endurable because we can share it. Solidarity is something that responds to this wound, the shared experience. In looking for what still is the common bond, communitarianists often refer to a common good: they try to strengthen social responsibility and establish a model of bottom-up solidarity, that is, a solidarity of smaller groups (families, communities) on the level between individuals and the state. But whereas these supposed grass-roots initiatives in the communitarian view tend to operate within a certain political and economic order, driven by the attempt to reshape, rebuild this order according to what is seen as the "common good", perhaps we should look for some-

thing in solidarity that is beyond political and economic order, not aiming at a new shape but attempting to keep the ontological, political, existential space open. There is no common good, but there is perhaps a common experience, an experience of groundlessness and unrootedness. Counterintuitively, the phenomenon of political and existential groundlessness described is not something that isolates, but, paradoxically, that might enable a true understanding of community. Patočka's quoted "solidarity of the shaken" expresses precisely this: a solidarity of those who have lost their trust in all positive political values such as pacifism, socialism, democracy, etc. which might serve as common goods for reshaping the society. Perhaps the outcome of solidarity counts less than the atmosphere that it creates and in which it unfolds its explosive message.

ludger hagedorn

Note: All texts on solidarity were collected by Ludger Hagedorn in the realm of the research project *Loss of grounds as Common Ground* directed by Marcia Sá Cavalcante Schuback.

references

1 In 2010, Leonardo Boff characteristically held: "Without the solidarity of all towards all and also for Mother Earth, there will be no future for anyone. (...) Che Guevara put it well: *Solidarity is the tenderness of the people*. It is the tenderness that we must give to our suffering brothers and sisters..."

2 The word "solidarity" might show up a few times in his huge oeuvre, but it is not connected to any idea, nor does he even come close to developing any systematic approach to the topic.

3 The French political philosopher Chantal Millon-Delsol emphasizes precisely this personal involvement in the act of solidarity. She criticizes a widespread tendency, characteristic of the political left, to identify solidarity with equal distribution and to create what she calls "an improbable dream of solidarity free of all human additions" (cf. Chantal Millon-Delsol, "Solidarity and Barbarity", *Thinking in Values*, no. 1/2007, Craców, 79).

review

A missing air force plane.
The secret of the Cold War

Christer Lokind: DC-3:an. Kalla krigets hemlighet [The DC-3: the secret of the Cold War].

Stockholm: Medströms bokförlag, 2014.

On Friday June 13, 1952, the Swedish Defense Staff issued the following statement (here in translation):

> **An aircraft from the Air Force, ordered to carry out a navigation flight above the Baltic Sea in connection with radio operators training, has been missing since around 12 o'clock this Friday.**

This statement, partly false, marks the beginning of one of the most significant traumas resulting from Sweden's difficult geo-political position during the Cold War. It implied the loss of eight servicemen and two aircraft, and strained relations with the trans-Baltic neighbor, the Soviet Union.

For a long time, Sweden had maintained a foreign policy of non-alignment with explicit neutrality in the event of war. The Soviet occupation and annexation of the three Baltic states made the Soviet Union a territorial neighbor across the Baltic Sea. With the beginning of the Cold War, Sweden had an interest in being prepared for a possible attack from the East, whereas the possibility of Western intrusion seemed less likely and also less dangerous.

IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND the organization of the Soviet military in the Baltic area, different methods were used. One was signals intelligence collection (SIGINT) of radio and radar signals, both indicating communication from and to the location of installations. Given developments in technology, it was deemed necessary to use surveillance aircraft to patrol the Baltic Sea with equipment that could listen to and detect radio communication and radar signals. In 1948, the Air Force Materiel Administration purchased two Douglas DC-3s and had them converted into flying laboratories, one for research and development, the other one for signals intelligence collection. The operations started in 1951, usually one flight a week, suggesting a route in the south-north direction over international waters in the Baltic between the island of Gotland and the Baltic coast at an altitude of 4500 meters. The planes were slow and unarmed, with a staff of 8

Continued.
A missing air force plane

persons, 3 of whom were Air Force employees, the others belonging to the Swedish signals intelligence organization Radio Institute of the Armed Forces, FRA.

During the flight of June 13, the aircraft was attacked and shot down by a single Soviet MiG-15 jet fighter in international airspace, disappearing into the Baltic Sea with its eight men. For a long time, only one rubber lifeboat, unused but containing air-to-air munition fragments, was found. A rescue operation was started, involving two Catalina amphibious rescue aircraft. The search included areas much closer to Soviet territorial waters than the route of the DC-3, as estimated currents would have moved life boats in that direction. In the morning of June 16, one of the search planes was attacked by two Soviet jet fighters and had to make an emergency water landing; before it sank, the whole crew was saved by a West German merchant vessel.

While the "Catalina" affair was much publicized, the fate of the DC-3 was hidden for a long time for security reasons. Swedish notes to the USSR about the DC-3 were met with allegations of transgression of two foreign aircraft which had been chased away by Soviet airplanes.

Much of the reality was uncovered during the time of the Soviet Union and, after 1991, during the period of Russian openness in the early 1990s, and, finally, as a result of the localization of the wreck in 2003, and salvage in 2004.

THE HISTORY AND DETAILS of Swedish SIGINT operations and the DC-3 incident are portrayed and explained in the book by Christer Lokind, a retired Swedish lieutenant colonel and an expert on military intelligence. It is full of maps and photos of the situation and organization of the Cold War in the part of the Baltic Sea between Gotland and the Soviet mainland, Riga Bay, and the Estonian islands.

The book also gives an explanation of mistakes and faults on both sides that led to the disaster. On the Swedish side, the slow, unarmed aircraft equipped with surplus receivers and other material was perhaps seen as a peaceful "listener" to Soviet communications, shuttling over international waters. However, in order to improve its measurement of the characteristics to the Soviet radar stations, the aircraft had to make short, head-on "attacks" towards the

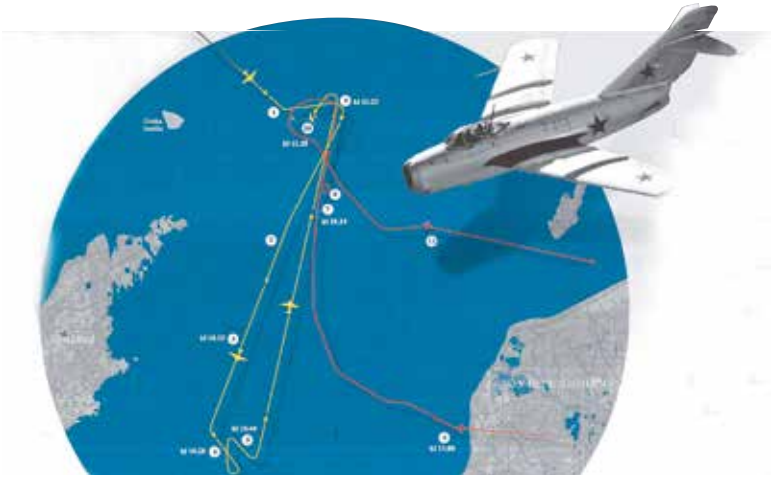

Illustration from the reviewed book by Christer Lokind.

"target" for a few minutes, then return to its northerly route. This was done twice, and intercepted by Soviet radar. In Soviet eyes, it was a provocation. Other facts indicate a certain naiveté on the Swedish side. At the time, there was no radar air surveillance coverage from Swedish mainland radars, and the aircraft only had occasional radio contact with its home base. A Morse call to the home base was made but suddenly interrupted when the plane was attacked.

THE SOVIET MILITARY was worried because of its obvious lack of a modern air defense. Just a few months before, a number of US/British "penetration flights" had entered deep into Soviet territory. They were seen on radar, but were not intercepted because Soviet air defense fighters did not have any air intercept radar and thus could not intercept any targets in low visibility or darkness. But the Soviet air surveillance radar was effective, which makes it strange that the DC-3, appearing regularly in daylight on the same route, would be labeled as "foreign" and not Swedish. The Soviet explanations were partly contradictory. When the Swedish investigative team for the case visited the Soviet Union in November 1991, the information given by Moscow was that the order to down the aircraft was made by the chief of the Baltic Air Defense Region and not authorized from above. The decision to conceal the downing was then made at the highest political and military level.

The DC-3 affair was a thorn in the Cold War history of Sweden and the surviving families were long bereft of information on the fate of those lost. Christer Lokind's book is a testimony of surveillance and its victims in the Baltic Sea area during the Cold War. Surveillance did not, however, end with the Cold War. It continues to this day, and lately there have been confrontations between Russian and "Western" aircraft.

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Jean-Luc Nancy

In 1973, he received his doctorate with a dissertation on Kant. Nancy was then promoted to Maître de conférences at the Université des Sciences Humaines de Strasbourg. In the 1970s and 1980s, Nancy was a guest professor at universities all over the world. In 1987, Nancy received his Docteur d'état which was published 1988 as *L'expérience de la liberté*.

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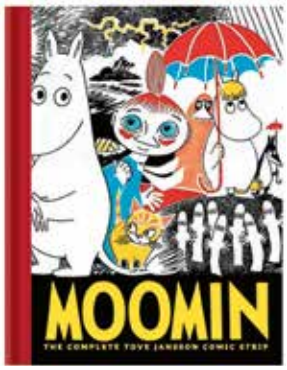
On the web you can find Baltic Worlds' Election Coverage as well as additional conference reports.

BALTIC WORLDS

THE MAGIC OF MOOMIN



Characters from the cartoon *The Moomins* (Muumit).

"Don't worry!" That was the repeated message from our Russian contact, Sergei, regarding the "International Scientific-Theoretical Conference" on the "Philosophical Experience of Children's Literature: The Moomins and the Others" to be held in St. Petersburg in October of 2014.

And, though everything about the conference seemed shaky at first–Would it happen at all? Where, exactly? Was it really one of those infamous Potemkin villages that we read about in school?– we needn't have worried, for this conference, more friendly and easygoing than its spectacular name promised, actually took place, to our great pleasure.

On the first day, all translation between Russian and English was given after the speeches, which meant that everything took longer than planned. When Sirke Happonen from Finland spoke of Tove's illustrations and put her in the context of art history – Doré, Beskow, Bauer, Arosenius, and Picasso – the language issue was no big problem, fortunately. The same went for Ekaterina Levko, a Russian speaking excellent English while using Russian for her video presentation! She also realized that coffee is as important for conference delegates as for the people of Moominvalley. She talked about Moominmamma's bag, the best survival kit in the world, and pointed out that the magic of Moominvalley is not separate, as in Lewis's Narnia books, but seamlessly part of our world.

Coffee breaks soon became an opportunity for interaction, despite our tight schedule. Agneta Rehal-Johansson was able to discuss the meaning of the red ruby in Finn Family Moomintroll with Kuisma Korhonen, who talked about interpretations of the Groke, of the Hemulen as a cross-dresser, and of Tofslan and Vifslan (he refused to say Thingummy and Bob) as a secretly lesbian couple.

FROM THE SECOND DAY ON, we were in a technically advanced room at the Institute of Philosophy, with simultaneous translation. There our host Sergei Troitskii talked about children as natural philosophers, wanting to find out the true nature of things. When he showed a sequence from an Andrzej Wajda film about a bearded man, surrounded by children, I wondered who that was. Later this was explained to me (and soon will be to you).

Elena Burovskaya discussed the relationship between children and adults in the Moomin tales and other books for children and appreciated the fact that Tove Jansson depicts a world where the generations are together. Lada Shipovalova also talked on the lines of quest and journey in an attempt to combine philosophy and children's literature. She also showed that the characters' relationship to time is a fruitful tool for analysis. And somebody asked: Is Snufkin an adult? Does he grow older?

On the last day of the conference I learned several new things. From Maria Majofis I understood that the film Sergei had shown us portrayed Janusz Korczak, who worked with children in the Warsaw ghetto and walked with them to the gas chamber in Treblinka, and is an icon of the Soviet educational system. His death has been treated on stage, but there is nothing about the Holocaust in Soviet children's literature, Majofis said.

KUISMA KORHONEN WAS MOVED to tell us that, as a child, his mother had been sent alone to Sweden during the war, a traumatic experience for many Finnish children. Maria Vorobjeva gave us interesting facts about Soviet-style Moomins (the USSR was known for "pinching" books without paying the authors). She talked about the first translation of Comet in Moominland (1977), where she found many "Sovietisms", words referring to politics and the military. There was an interesting discussion about this, since some delegates contended that this "biased" choice of terms is to be found in the original. Very obvious changes were made in Soviet animated films, where the Moomin characters were totally made over, infantilized, and humanized: the Hemulen looks more like a monk than a cross-dresser, and so on. Yaroslava Novikova spoke of a very popular children's book by Jansson's contemporary Yrjö Kokko, *Pessi ja Illusia*. When Jansson drew costumes for a stage production of the book, Kokko, typically, didn't find them "national" enough.

THIS IS JUST A TASTE of what happened in the main sessions. We in the Nordic group – Bengt Lundgren, of Södertörn University, and the well-known Moomin researcher Agneta Rehal-Johansson, formerly of Södertörn, now of the University of Gothenburg and I – also presented papers: on the transformation of the Moomin suite, on Moomin and Candide, and on the prevalence of Moomin in everyday life.

The conference on "Moomins and the Others" was held in honor of the 100th anniversary of Tove Jansson, the creator of the Moomin magic.

sara granath

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Note: A full report can be found on Baltic Worlds' web site.