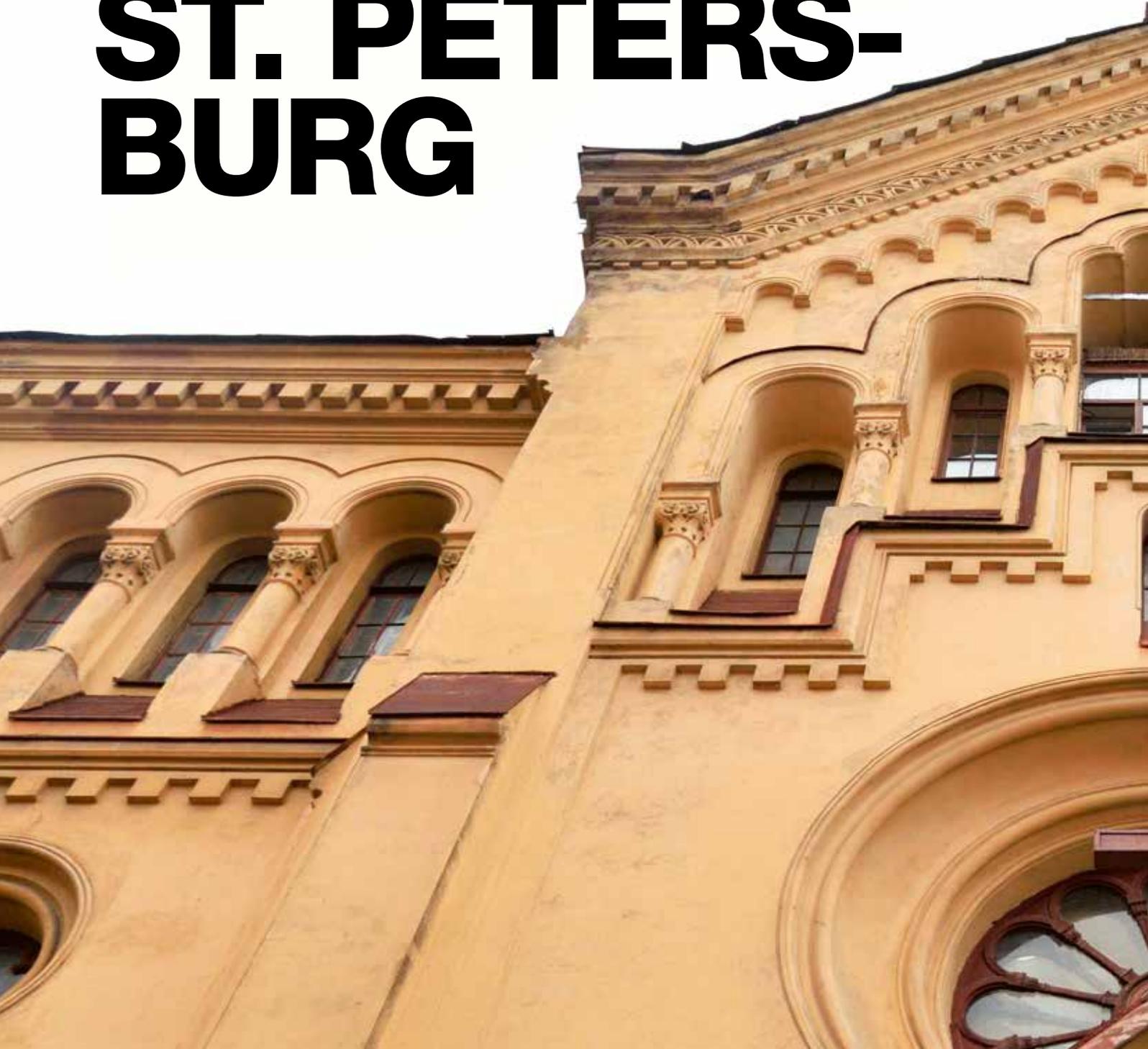


# A SWEDISH OUTPOST IN ST. PETERS- BURG



# THE CHURCH OF SWEDEN AND ST. CATHERINE'S LUTHERAN CHURCH IN ST. PETERSBURG. POST-SOVIET MEMORY POLITICS FROM A CHURCH HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

by **Gunilla Gunner &  
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## abstract

The formation of the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran congregation in St. Petersburg had consequences for the Church of Sweden and for Swedish foreign policy as the congregation made repeated attempts to be recognized as a Swedish outpost in St. Petersburg. It was hoped that the Church of Sweden would take an interest in the congregation and its church. The aim of this article is to problematize the actions of the Church of Sweden and the Swedish state in connection with the revival of the Lutheran congregations on Soviet territory toward the end of the Cold War. The article combines the study of cultural memories with theories derived from research that focuses on spatial location and materiality.

**KEYWORDS:** St. Petersburg, St. Catherine Church, Swedish Lutheran congregation



**A**long Nevsky Prospekt, St. Petersburg's most fashionable street, are churches of Reformed, Lutheran, Armenian-apostolic, Russian-Orthodox and Catholic origin. Whether or not the buildings are still used for religious purposes today, they bear witness to the religious and cultural diversity that has characterized the city ever since it was founded by Peter the Great in 1703. In order to realize his plans, he needed skilled labor that was simply unavailable in Russia at that time. The thousands of craftsmen, designers, architects and other experts drawn from different parts of Europe were guaranteed freedom of religion. The result of this can still be seen during a stroll through the city.<sup>1</sup>

St. Catherine's Swedish Evangelical Church can be found on the intersection of Nevsky Prospekt and Malaja Konjusjennaja; it is a building of great interest in relations between Sweden, Finland and Russia. The church was consecrated in 1865 and served as the meeting place for the Swedish-speaking Lutheran congregation in St. Petersburg until 1917. The congregation consisted of Swedish-speaking Finns and Swedish-speaking people with Swedish roots. The events that followed the revolution in 1917 entailed great difficulties for the congregation, but it managed to continue holding services on the premises until 1936, when the building was definitively transferred to the City of Leningrad. It was then used for non-religious purposes until the end of the Cold War.

The basis for this article is St. Catherine's Church and the developments that began in 1991. A new Swedish congregation applied for registration in November 1991. It regarded itself as the successor to the Swedish Lutheran congregation that had existed in the city since 1632, and thus also the rightful owner of the church building. The church building was relatively intact even though it was used for other purposes during the Cold War. The new congregation did its utmost to regain ownership of the building, but this was not possible without the prior removal of the sports school that had used the premises since the 1960s, a process that took 15 years.

**ON DECEMBER 6, 1991**, the reconstructed Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church celebrated its first service in St. Catherine's Church, the building that had been the center of one of St. Petersburg's oldest Lutheran churches. The congregation comprised a handful of elderly women and businessmen and a young woman with the formidable name of Olga von Schlippenbach. The name is well-known to anyone who is familiar with Pushkin's work.<sup>2</sup> This latter-day descendant of a German-Swedish-Russian general was elected as the congregation's first chairperson and she remained in this position for ten years.<sup>3</sup>

The congregation's claim to the building manifested, reawakened and filled memories with new content. One of the key elements in this article is the inability to revive the memory of the Swedish congregation's presence in St. Petersburg without the

material and spatial vestiges in the form of the church building.

In addition to the Swedish congregation, a German Lutheran, a Catholic and an Armenian congregation were also registered in the early 1990s. All of these congregations referred to their earlier activities in the city and to the church buildings which, despite their having been used for other purposes during the Soviet period, were still more or less intact. These buildings were located in a delimited area next to Nevsky Prospekt.

The formation of the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran congregation in St. Petersburg had consequences for the Church of Sweden and for Swedish foreign policy as the congregation made repeated attempts to be recognized as a Swedish outpost in St. Petersburg, and it was hoped that the Church of Sweden would take an interest in the congregation and its church. Many parties were involved in the negotiations that followed, namely the European Department of the Church of Sweden, the Swedish Archbishop's Chancery, the Swedish Foreign Service, the Swedish Parliament and the Government.

**THE AIM OF THIS ARTICLE** is to problematize the actions of the Church of Sweden and the Swedish state in connection with the revival of Lutheran congregations on Soviet territory toward the end of the Cold War. The development of events concerning

the Swedish congregation in St. Petersburg serve here as a starting point for the overarching discussion in the article. The process was an important phase in the growth of the congregation and reflected the Swedish state's actions in relation to the new Russia that was emerging following the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

The article begins with a historical background before focusing on the period from the end of the Cold War to the opening years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

It describes contacts between the Church of Sweden and the Lutheran minorities in the Soviet Union during the final phase of the Cold War and discusses the way in which the Church handled the newly established congregation in St. Petersburg. It also discusses the Swedish Government's actions in the matter of the congregation and its church buildings.<sup>4</sup>

Furthermore, the article examines the public use of history and memory. This involves focusing on the attitude the various parties take toward the past and relating it to the present. The public discussions about St. Petersburg and St. Catherine's congregation include different historical narratives and claims. One such example is the use of history expressed in the Swedish parliamentary debates. The article is also based on cultural memory research. This research also deals with the different ways in which societies, groups and individuals arouse the past, and it focuses on physical historical traces still visible today. Thus the article combines the study of cultural memories with theories derived from research that focuses on spatial location and materiality.<sup>5</sup>

**“AT THE END OF THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY THERE WERE AROUND 7,000 MEMBERS LISTED IN THE CHURCH RECORDS, THE HIGHEST NUMBER IN THE CONGREGATION'S HISTORY.”**



Nevsky Prospekt, St. Petersburg in 1799, water color painting by Benjamin Paterse. Hermitage Collection.

## The Swedish Lutheran presence in St. Petersburg

The origins of St. Catherine's congregation date back to the Swedish-Finnish congregation in Nyen 1632.<sup>6</sup> The city, with Nyenskans Fortress and surrounding Ingria, formed part of the Swedish possessions around the Baltic Sea, and was crucial for the control of trade on the River Neva. Construction of Nyen began in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century and the city's population, consisting of Ingrians, Russians, Finns, Swedes and Germans, grew to around 2,000 inhabitants. The constellations of political power also influenced relations and the meeting between Orthodox and Protestant Lutheran Christianity during this period.<sup>7</sup> During the Great Nordic War, Tsar Peter took Nyenskans Fortress in 1703 and then founded a new town on the Neva estuary. A German Lutheran congregation was established in 1704, but there is some uncertainty as to when the Swedish-Finnish Lutheran congregation began its activities, although this was most probably a few years later.<sup>8</sup> While the members of the congregation in Nyen had been subjects of the Swedish Crown, the Swedish-Finnish Lutheran congregation was part of the Consistory of St. Petersburg. The members consisted of immigrants from the Swedish kingdom. The priests were drawn mainly from the Finnish half of the kingdom. Over time, the language issue grew more problematic within the congregation. The two groups – the Swedish speakers and the Finnish speakers – lived side-by-side in the same congregation until 1745, when the Finnish group broke away and formed St. Mary's congregation. Despite the split, the two groups both used St. Anna's wooden church until the Swedish speaking group consecrated their own church in 1769. This church was christened St. Catherine's, a name which was transferred to the church building completed in 1865 and retained until the present day. In addition to the church building itself there was a rectory, and homes were built on both sides of

the church, and these formed an important source of income for the congregation's activities.

The Finnish speaking congregation remained in St. Anna's until 1803 or 1804, when the church was demolished and a new church called St. Mary's was built. The churches for the two congregations were located close to the German Lutheran Church, and the Dutch Reformed Church's quarter along Nevsky Prospekt. These protestant churches enjoyed an excellent location in the expanding city. The transformation of the eastern half of the kingdom, i.e. Finland, into an autonomous Grand Duchy in the Russian Empire in 1809 led to the division of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Sweden and the formation of a new church – the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland. St. Catherine's congregation in St. Petersburg, which had looked to the Lutheran Church of Sweden as its base outside the Russian Empire during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, turned instead towards the Lutheran Church of Finland after 1809.<sup>9</sup>

Many Swedes emigrated to St. Petersburg during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Their labor was in demand, and many of them made a name for themselves – and their fortunes – in the growing city. The Nobel family was among the most famous of them. The congregation's activities expanded during the 19<sup>th</sup> century to include school teaching, girls and boys' homes, and activities for the elderly and the less well-off. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century there were around 7,000 members listed in the church records, the highest number in the congregation's history. Herbert Kajanus, the pastor at that time, was a driving force, and the life of the congregation flourished. The trend was interrupted with the Russian Revolution of 1917.

## St. Catherine during the Cold War

Activities at St. Catherine's Church were drastically affected by events surrounding the 1917 revolution. Thus, the continued fate of the congregation provides an illustration of historian Kristian

Gerner's theory that the Cold War era actually began in 1917.<sup>10</sup> The most obvious expression of this was the departure from the city by the majority of the congregation's members. Most importantly, its Finnish members, who represented the majority, moved to Finland following the latter's independence in 1918. Conditions were made more difficult for the remaining members of the congregation. As the number of members fell, the lack of funds became severe, and the congregation was forced to borrow money to continue its activities.<sup>11</sup> The authorities confiscated the building and the church was then forced to rent its own premises. At the request of the authorities, a council of twenty persons was elected tasked with taking care of the buildings. The congregation also lost control of its schools following a decree in January 1918 which separated the church from the state, and schools from the church.<sup>12</sup>

The departure of members from the city was difficult enough, but when Artur Malin, congregation pastor at the time, left his post in 1918, it was perceived as a great betrayal. Malin became the last in the line of permanent pastors who served at St. Catherine's. The lack of a pastor became one of the most important issues of the 1920s.<sup>13</sup>

**THE FATE OF ST. CATHERINE'S** did not pass unnoticed by the leadership of the Church of Sweden. The congregation leadership in Petrograd was in contact with Archbishops Nathan Söderblom and Erling Eidem, who gave repeated support during their terms of office. After the revolution, the question of support for Lutheran congregations in the Soviet Union developed into a matter not only for the Church of Sweden, but also for a number of other Lutheran churches and charitable organizations. The support included both humanitarian aid and help with promoting the Lutheran Church's organization in the Soviet Union.<sup>14</sup>

Swedish engineer John Tuneld oversaw the dwindling activities of St. Catherine's congregation during the period 1920–1936. Tuneld moved to St. Petersburg in 1912 and founded a trading company and an engineering business. He was elected to St. Catherine's church council in 1920 and became its secretary.<sup>15</sup> The closure of the church in 1936 meant the end of what had been a Swedish-speaking outpost in the east for 300 years. The church archive was transferred to the Swedish consulate and shipped to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Stockholm in 1938. In 1951, the documents were transferred to the national archives and incorporated into its collections. While the congregation's written history, in the form of church records, was transferred to Sweden, the church building remained in its location.<sup>16</sup>

## A Swedish outpost in St. Petersburg

The events leading up to the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War also affected religious conditions in the country. The legislation that had restricted religious freedom

ever since 1929 was abolished in 1990 and replaced with a law that guaranteed citizens freedom of conscience and religion.<sup>17</sup> Conditions for established communities changed and religious communities from Europe and the United States sought their way to Russia.<sup>18</sup>

St. Catherine's Church comprises a number of large rooms and halls distributed on three floors plus a cellar. From 1991 to 2005, the newly formed congregation had to use a small room, the original organ loft. Cooperation with the sports school was not always the best. It was the congregation's ambition to gain access to the entire building, which was recognized by various actors in Sweden, both political and ecclesiastical. The following quotation from the Swedish Parliament provides an example of this commitment:

**In 1934, the Soviet Union confiscated the church, and turned it into a gymnasium and sports hall. I have been there many times, and it smells of sweat. Internally, the church is utterly ruined. The floor of the nave has been painted green and has had handball markings added. Joists have been added to the church and there is also a gymnasium etc. on the floor above. I was there as recently as March this year, and sports activities were still going on. /.../ There has been a Swedish church in St. Petersburg since the 18<sup>th</sup> century. This church was designed by a Swedish architect, and the Swedish consulate is almost right next door. While Finland and Estonia have managed to get their churches back, the Russians have desecrated the church building with a sports hall over a long period.**<sup>19</sup>

The quotation is taken from a speech by Erling Bager (lib) in a debate on a question raised in the Swedish Parliament on

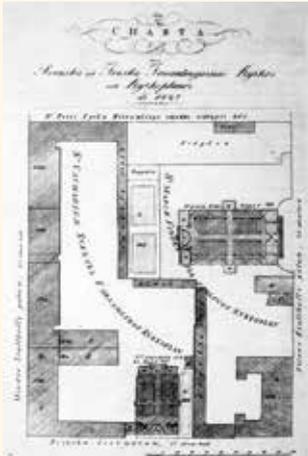
June 5, 2005. The address ends with a question asking how long Sweden will have to wait to get its church back. Foreign Minister Jan Eliasson replied by presenting the initiatives taken on the part of Sweden and reported that the matter had unfortunately been delayed due to technical reasons and bureaucracy.<sup>20</sup>

Erling Bager's statement ties in with the tradition of a Swedish presence in St. Petersburg. The political conditions

of the Soviet era have ruined a piece of Swedish property, which he feels to be humiliating. The Minister's optimism was not fulfilled even though the sports school moved out of the premises in 2005. As of 2008, the congregation has free right of disposition under a contract with a term of 49 years. Repairs to the roof and external walls are the responsibility of the city, while the congregation is responsible for internal maintenance. This is a major undertaking as most of the building is in need of renovation including electrical installations, windows, walls and ceilings. The interior of the church was altered when the sports school moved

**“THE CLOSURE OF THE CHURCH IN 1936 MEANT THE END OF WHAT HAD BEEN A SWEDISH-SPEAKING OUTPOST IN THE EAST FOR 300 YEARS.”**

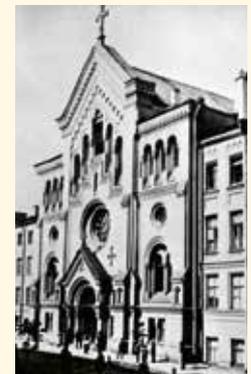
Empress decree by Anna Ioanovna, distinguishing Swedish-Finnish parishioners a site for building a church. Copy of 1762 (right). The congregation's first church was built in 1769, replaced by a new church in 1865.



Drawing of the planned church from 1827. The church was completed in 1865 by architect Carl Andersson.



The architect Carl Andersson was born in Sweden but lived in St. Petersburg from the age of 5.



Images of the church from the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

in. An internal floor split the nave in two, with the upper floor used as a basketball court. The lines marking out the court are still visible and discussions are being held as to whether or not they should be removed during a future renovation. Today (2020) the previous use of the premises remains clearly visible.

Mr. Bager MP was not alone in his actions for St. Catherine's Church. In a motion from 1996, MPs Chris Heister and Mikael Odenberg (con) describe the situation as follows: "Everywhere today in St. Petersburg there is feverish activity concerning the restoration of all church buildings. The swimming pool in the German church is being demolished; the wall paintings in the Armenian church are being cleaned and restored, church bells and crosses erected".<sup>21</sup> Heister and Odenberg consider it reasonable that the Church of Sweden, together with the government, contribute funds for the restoration of the church.

**The number of Swedes is increasing. A Swedish congregation, a Swedish church and growing congregation activities would be of great importance to many. From the state's point of view, it would be disgraceful if the church building were allowed to fall further into decay in full view of every visitor to the new 'Sweden House', the public face of our nation in St. Petersburg.**<sup>22</sup>

The motion reflects the hopes of the 1990s. St. Catherine's is regarded as a place for a growing Swedish colony in the city,

characterized by Swedishness, which naturally also includes a Swedish Lutheran presence. The presence is tied to the church building already on site, and for Heister and Odenberg this was a natural matter for both the Swedish state and the Church of Sweden. The motion was tabled, but was reintroduced the following year with a stronger emphasis on Sweden's responsibility for its 'Russian' history: "Nor is the issue a matter just for the Church of Sweden; Sweden has a history to safeguard in St. Petersburg."<sup>23</sup> The motion was rejected on the grounds that "... a decision on any efforts or initiatives to renovate the church building is not a matter for Parliament to decide".<sup>24</sup>

A further example of contacts between Sweden and Russia centered on St. Catherine's Church is the bilateral meeting that took place between the President of Russia, Vladimir Putin, and the then Prime Minister of Sweden, Göran Persson. The politicians met in May 2001 in connection with the EU Summit in Moscow, and the matter of St. Catherine's Church was broached. Mr. Persson expressed the wish that the legitimate owners of the Church – the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church in St. Petersburg – should regain title to the building. He emphasized a readiness on the part of Sweden to pay for a renovation, which could coincide with St. Petersburg's tricentennial celebrations as a concrete Swedish contribution to the beautification of the city. The proposal was well received by President Putin and in 2002, funds were set aside for a renovation.<sup>25</sup>

It is clear from the quotations above, that Swedish politicians



PHOTO: CAROLA NORDBÄCK

Exhibition in the church hall.

intertwine the Swedish national identity with the history of the church building. The condition of the building is described in terms such as ‘national shame’ and ‘humiliation’. The church project was aimed at promoting Swedish economic and political interests in Russia. St. Catherine’s Church became a symbolic space that the nation of Sweden could fill with cultural content and constitute a ‘Sweden House’ in ‘the Gateway to the New Russia’ – St. Petersburg.

The church building played a crucial symbolic role thanks to its geographical location in St. Petersburg. It was perceived as a Swedish outpost – a place and a space that the Swedish state could claim as its own. The arguments put forward were based on motives such as historical continuity and long religious tradition. These arguments can be described as constructed and activated aspects of cultural memories which were accentuated in the context of Sweden’s national narrative and that of the Church of Sweden. This process clarifies how cultural memories are constructed and activated, used and erased.

**ANOTHER INITIATIVE** was taken by the Swedish government in 2006. Sven Hirdman, ambassador in Moscow (1994 – 2004), was commissioned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to report on conditions for the preservation of St. Catherine’s.<sup>26</sup> In his report, Hirdman emphasized the importance of good trade and personal relations with Russia and the need for a Swedish institute in St. Petersburg. According to Hirdman, St. Catherine’s Church was the proper, physical location for such interpersonal meetings. The

location of the building could not be better, the Swedish consulate having been next door since 1997.<sup>27</sup> The neighborhood is referred to as the ‘Lutheran quarter’, thus consolidating and emphasizing the location’s religious and cultural significance.<sup>28</sup> Hirdman’s report included concrete proposals for allocations, necessary renovations and a cost calculation for a Swedish cultural center. But the attempt to create a Swedish cultural center in St. Catherine’s did not come to fruition. The stories differ as to why this did not take place. One concrete reason was that St. Catherine’s church council did not sign the agreement that would govern the use of the premises between the congregation and the cultural center. While the congregation was not opposed to the renovation, it did not want to give up its right of disposition over the premises.

### Protecting the ecclesiastical space

How should we understand the congregation’s position? First of all we should note that the members of the congregation were not all in agreement, and that actors other than the Swedish state also showed interest in the premises at an early stage. However, Olga von Schlippenbach, the first chairwoman of the newly formed congregation, supported the plans for a cultural center. During her years as chairwoman (1991–2001), she was in active contact with Swedish actors to safeguard St. Catherine’s future. Her endeavors to tie the church closer to Sweden and Swedish culture can be seen as a manifestation of the Swedish identity the shared historical narrative bore witness to.<sup>29</sup> In 1995, she was described in Sweden’s biggest daily newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* [Daily News], as “the Russian woman who flies Sweden’s national colors”.<sup>30</sup> There are Swedish roots in the history of her own family.<sup>31</sup> Though distant, these historical ties were significant. When the situation in the Soviet Union changed and approaches to the West in a concrete, physical sense were permitted, she was an advocate for Swedish culture and identity. Thus Olga von Schlippenbach contributed to the newly established church’s orientation toward Sweden rather than Finland, which, from a historical perspective, would have been the more natural alternative.

The majority of St. Catherine’s congregation members had their roots in Finland. The language issue was decisive in the split during the 1740s, resulting in a Finnish-speaking and a Swedish-speaking congregation. The number of Swedish speakers from the Swedish mainland were always a minority. The pastors recruited to serve at St. Catherine’s came, with very few exceptions, from Finland. Most were educated in Turku and maintained contacts with their home church in Finland. These Finnish ties were further strengthened when Finland became a Russian Grand Duchy in 1809. This tradition of recruiting pastors from Finland was resumed in 1991, when the pastor in the Swedish-speaking congregation of Turku, Eero Sepponen, was asked to support the newly formed congregation.<sup>32</sup> No one, not least Sepponen himself, could have imagined that engagement in 1991 would extend right up until the present day (2020).<sup>33</sup> In 1997, St. Catherine’s congregation was twinned with the Swedish-speaking congregation of Turku in conjunction with the former’s acceptance as an independent member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia and Other States (ELCROS).

In 2001, Olga von Schlippenbach left the congregation and St. Petersburg to start a family and settle in Sweden. In interviews, she has asked herself how things would have been had she instead remained and continued pushing plans for a cultural center.<sup>34</sup> While her question may seem justified, there is no definitive answer. Ms. von Schlippenbach saw a Swedish cultural center in the church premises as a guarantee for the continued existence of the building. Other members of the church council argued against the cultural center on religious grounds despite their active interest in contacts with Sweden. This was mainly based on a fear of losing control of the building. For his part, Sven Hirdman argued for the importance of safeguarding the building's future and preventing 'undesirable elements from moving in'<sup>35</sup>. His future scenario did not primarily concern religious activities but the 'Swedish character' of the church building, i.e. consequences arising from the eventual dissolution of the congregation<sup>36</sup>.

The church had good reason to fear handing over part of the right of use, since the floorspace on offer was far less than what the congregation had sought for fifteen years. The religious reasons for not giving up the right of use had their basis in wanting to protect the sacred character of the building as a place of worship. Furthermore, the cultural arrangements had to be drawn up in compliance with the congregation's own values.<sup>37</sup>

The fact that a Swedish cultural center in line with Hirdman's report were not realized raises interesting questions about the place where these plans were intended to bear fruit. The building was erected for ecclesiastical purposes during the 1860s. From having been a sacred space, it was transformed into one where secular, physical activities took place. Finally, as a result of the Cold War era's demise, the building returned to its original function as a place of religious worship. This building has raised many hopes among various actors about everything from the preservation, or restoration, of a lost Swedish identity and sense of belonging, to being an essential focal point for maintaining good Swedish-Russian relations. The first ambition is based on a Lutheran religious identity, while the other is an expression of Swedish (secular) diplomacy and politics.

### The Church of Sweden's relations with St. Catherine's congregation

What was the Church of Sweden's attitude to the development of St. Catherine's Church? A number of contacts were made during the 1990s with varied results. Olga von Schlippenbach contacted the Chancery of the Church of Sweden in Uppsala in December 1992. In a letter, she described the formation of the new congregation and the hopes of gaining access to the church building. However, the most urgent need was for a full-time pastor "who could become for them not only their confessor and tutor but a representative of culture of their historical motherland".<sup>38</sup> The

letter was received and talks and discussions were held over several years on how the Church of Sweden should act vis-à-vis the congregation in St. Petersburg. In particular, these discussions involved the ecumenical secretariat with the working group on European affairs and the Church of Sweden Abroad (SKUT). Also, individuals and official delegations visited St. Petersburg during the first part of the 1990s. They described their impressions of circumstances and the people they met in reports and letters.<sup>39</sup>

THE ABILITY TO RECORD the formation of new congregations introduced in 1990 opened the field for various actors, and there was initially some confusion about who represented which group.<sup>40</sup> One person who seems to have played an important part in formation of the congregation was Joseph Baronas. He was a pastor in the German Lutheran Church in the Soviet Union, but broke away and formed a United Lutheran Church. This church also laid claims to buildings with reference to a historical heritage. In November 1990, Baronas, together with a number of other Lutheran parishes, founded the *Vereinigte Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in Russland* [United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia]. A Swedish Lutheran group in the Leningrad region was reported to belong to this church formation. There are also indications that this group was associated with St. Catherine's Church.<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, there is alleged to have been a Swedish congregation formation in the city before St. Catherine's congregation was formed in December 1991.<sup>42</sup> Thus there were several groups who referred to an earlier religious heritage primarily in the form of the remaining building.

The events surrounding Joseph Baronas earned the attention of the Russian press, and the reactions of the Bishop of the German Church, Harald Kalnins, and the Baltic churches were not long in coming. They rejected Baronas and the formation of the new church. The Swedish Archbishop Werkström received letters from Baronas requesting financial support.<sup>43</sup> Irina Sundgren, a Russian resident in Sweden, made representations to the Archbishop in her capacity as the official representative for the new church formation.<sup>44</sup> After careful investigation using documentation from various parties, including the Lutheran World Federation, the Church of Sweden decided not to collaborate with Baronas's group. Because the matter concerned a schism, the Church of Sweden instead continued its collaboration with Kalnin's German Church and the Baltic Lutheran Churches.<sup>45</sup>

Uppsala resident Per Ström was one of the first to notify the Church of Sweden about the circumstances concerning St. Catherine's. In a letter penned in 1991 addressed to Archbishop Werkström and SKUT's director Erland Rexius<sup>46</sup>, he suggested that the possibility of pursuing activities in St. Petersburg should be looked into.<sup>47</sup> Ström not only referred to historical conditions but also to the fact that circumstances for new congregation

**“FINALLY, AS A RESULT OF THE COLD WAR ERA'S DEMISE, THE BUILDING RETURNED TO ITS ORIGINAL FUNCTION AS A PLACE OF RELIGIOUS WORSHIP.”**

formations were more favorable ‘today than 15 years ago, or even one year ago’.<sup>48</sup> The 15 years referred to the fact that it was already possible to register congregations during the Soviet era, and that several such congregation formations had been visited by Swedish groups.<sup>49</sup> Ström began his letter with ‘our ecclesiastical tradition’s historical right of domicile in this city ...’ and St. Petersburg as Russia’s ‘door to Europe’. The right of domicile was rooted in the narrative of Peter the Great’s conquest of the Swedish garrison city Nyen on the River Neva, and continued right up until John Tuneld’s departure from Leningrad in 1936. According to Ström, SKUT should establish activities in St. Petersburg. As several other church buildings had been renovated, it should be possible to convince the Russian authorities of the importance of renovating the Swedish church building. “You can refer to the ancient city traditions this church represents.”<sup>50</sup> This reference includes a mixture of Swedish history and a Swedish Lutheran presence. Ström also asked whether the Church of Sweden, possibly together with the Church of Finland, could lay claim to the properties regardless of ‘whether the congregation is assumed to have died out or not’.<sup>51</sup> When Per Ström wrote his letter in November 1991, he certainly had no knowledge that a group had gathered in St. Petersburg at the same time with the aim of reviving the congregation and gaining access to St. Catherine’s Church.<sup>52</sup>

The Church of Sweden followed the developments in the Baltics and St. Petersburg.<sup>53</sup> A meeting at the Stockholm Diocesan Chancery in April 1993 discussed the situation in Tallinn, St. Petersburg and the Old Swedish village in Ukraine. At this time, no request had been made for financial support for the renovation of St. Catherine’s Church. The church was served by the pastor from the Swedish-speaking congregation of Turku, Eero Sepponen, but as his trips to St. Petersburg were made entirely on a voluntary basis, they were considered untenable in the long term.<sup>54</sup> The group decided to continue discussions on financing, and the responsibilities of SKUT and the Church of Sweden as a whole to support all the relevant congregations.

**WHILE THERE WAS** no request for funds for renovation in the spring of 1993, the congregation of St. Petersburg had conveyed its wish to belong to the Church of Sweden.<sup>55</sup> SKUT’s director Jan Madestam and the Church of Sweden’s Europe Secretary, Birgitta Handog, traveled to St. Petersburg in October 1993 to investigate the matter further. They first met with representatives of the Ingrian Church, the ‘Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia’<sup>56</sup> and the Church of Finland’s foreign center. St Catherine’s was represented by Eero Sepponen.<sup>57</sup> It is not clear from the documents why members or the church council were not represented at the initial meeting.<sup>58</sup>

The discussions between the Swedish and the Russian Lutheran representatives were held in St. Petri, the German church, and St. Mary’s, the Finnish church, despite the meeting being about the wish of St. Catherine’s congregation to belong to the Church of Sweden. Madestam summarized the meeting in a report. In it he noted that, historically speaking, most of the contacts had not taken place between St. Catherine’s and Sweden but with Finland, in particular the Swedish diocese in Porvoo. According to Madestam, there was no existing Swedish congregation in St. Petersburg, in terms of membership. Some people could refer to distant family relationships, but there were only a handful of Swedish speakers, and with that the case was closed in the eyes of Madestam. St. Petersburg was not the place for SKUT activities, and the congregation should instead join the German or Ingrian church.<sup>59</sup>

In his report, Madestam also described a discussion with parish members which took place that same evening. The members were upset that they had not been invited to the earlier discussions. They felt they had been steamrollered and persisted with their wish to belong to the Church of Sweden. According to Madestam, this wish was rooted in emotional ties to earlier generations and to the building, but also in a fear of being ‘swallowed up’ by a larger church, and the group expressed the feeling that “it is ‘more distinguished’ to belong to the Swedish Church and have ties to Sweden”.<sup>60</sup> Madestam’s response to the parish mem-

bers’ wishes was to remind them that there were congregations that were closer to home. But logic was unable to prevail on the emotional arguments, according to Madestam. The members did not accept the arguments against their forming a Swedish foreign congregation – they intended to learn the language and participate in Swedish culture. In his report, Madestam also addressed the plans for a Swedish cultural center, but it is unclear if he discussed these plans with the parish members. The church renovation would be helped

along if the plans for a Swedish cultural center were realized. In conclusion, Madestam advised the Church of Sweden to exercise caution in its contacts with St. Catherine’s congregation. It should not be isolated in the Russian context, but at the same time, it was in need of Swedish support.

This conversation between the Church of Sweden’s envoy and St. Catherine’s congregation is interesting in many respects. It clearly shows, even when filtered through Madestam’s aides-memoires, that the primary motivation of the parish group was the connection with Sweden. They identified themselves as a Swedish congregation, and in the first instance they expected support from the Church of Sweden. As time passed and discussions about the plans for a Swedish cultural center began, expectations were widened to include Sweden as a nation.<sup>61</sup> However, SKUT had its own principles to follow, and of course one compel-

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PHOTO: CAROLA NORDBÄCK



The assembly hall on the first floor.

PHOTO: CAROLA NORDBÄCK



An angel on the wall down to the cellar.

ling aspect was that historically, the congregation had been subject to the Consistory of St. Petersburg and had closer contacts with Finland than Sweden. From the Church of Sweden's standpoint, there was no strong historical tradition that corresponded to, or could be associated with, the expressed desire to be tied to the Church of Sweden. The idea of St. Petersburg as a meeting place between all things Swedish and Russian, as put forth by Per Ström, was completely lacking in Madestam's conclusions.

**HOWEVER, THE APPROACH** from the Church of Sweden's side to the congregation's desire to be included in a Swedish Lutheran community was not entirely unsympathetic. Following the visit of Handog and Madestam, discussions concerning support to the congregation continued. Handog prepared a memo entitled 'Principles for the cooperation of the Church of Sweden with St. Catherine's Congregation in St Petersburg' for the meeting of the working party for European affairs in April 1994.<sup>62</sup> Following a review of the congregation's history and current situation, the text contained descriptions of various forms of support on the part of Sweden. For example, SKUT was willing to reconsider the question of a Swedish foreign congregation were there to be a marked increase in the number of Swedes in the city. Also, SKUT undertook to administer and financially support visits by Swedish-speaking pastors in collaboration with Eero Sepponen, and to communicate contacts with a Swedish twin parish. On the other hand, it advised against collections for the renovation of the church before investigations into legal issues concerning the building were concluded.

Note that St. Catherine's contacts with the Church of Sweden when it came to its affiliation with 'the Swedish heritage' turned out to be negative. The number of Swedes in St. Petersburg did not increase and therefore SKUT did not reconsider its decision. The congregation survived without joining the German or Ingrian churches. It has instead continued as an autonomous congregation and as such is linked to the Lutheran organization known as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia and Other States (ELCROS).<sup>63</sup> This organization was established in 1988 and replaced in 2011 by the Federation of Evangelical Lutheran

Churches in Russia and other States (ELC). The organization has been a Member of the Lutheran World Federation since 1989.<sup>64</sup> St. Catherine's autonomous status means that the congregation is directly subordinate to ELCROS's Archbishop and that it may use such things as the Swedish prayer book and hymnbook.<sup>65</sup>

Today, St. Catherine's congregation is not large in terms of membership numbers (2020). Exact figures are difficult to obtain, but there are no more than 50 members. These are mostly Russians with an interest in Scandinavian history and culture, some of whom have Swedish or Finnish roots. On the other hand, various events such as the congregation's musical concerts, St. Lucia's Festival of Lights and Christmas events attract many visitors. Its existence is still precarious, but the building – despite its poor condition – is the congregation's primary asset. By letting the building's spaces to 10–15 other Christian organizations and groups, the congregation receives funding to pay its day-to-day bills and for the most urgent maintenance. The building is a beehive of activity and can be described as a multi-purpose ecumenical building. Choirs rehearse there, youth groups meet and religious services are held simultaneously on several floors. Hymns of praise from one room blend with the sound of hard rock from another. It's an old, worn-down building, but full of life.

## Memory, identity and the politics of commemoration

This article is about the transition from one era to another and what such a change can bring about. The end of the Cold War presented the Church of Sweden with new challenges, some of an unexpected kind. Relationships with church communities that had either been cut off or maintained with great difficulty now changed. These churches suddenly became reachable and accessible. St. Catherine's congregation was but one of many challenges the Church of Sweden was faced with. But to bring the story of St. Catherine's full-circle we must say something about the importance of the use of history in anniversary celebrations. These anniversaries have clarified the relationship between history and the present day while also enabling various

forms of claims based on historical arguments. Anniversaries are an established way of bringing a sense of community into focus and confirming a historical narrative. Such commemorative celebrations arouse feelings and strengthen the relationship with what is celebrated – in this case a church – both as a building and as a community.

On November 29, 2015, the church building celebrated its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It was consecrated on November 28, 1865. This anniversary is an example of the use of history in which the church itself acts as a political memorial venue. But here church refers to both the congregation and the building itself – the two are intertwined – and the building is the place where the congregation *takes place*, so to speak. If the congregation were suddenly to lose its church, its very existence would be shaken to the core. The church building is thus the *sine qua non* of the congregation's ability to conduct services, while the church building itself symbolizes the congregation, representing and commemorating congregation history. Furthermore, through its history and its very strategic location in St. Petersburg, the building contributes cultural capital to the congregation.

**THE 150<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY** celebrations lasted for two days, with historical presentations, a banquet and musical entertainment, with guests invited from other churches, diplomats, researchers and people who had previously participated in the work of the church.

The 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of St. Catherine's Church was a means of consolidating a historical narrative. The celebrations brought the building's and the congregation's historical narrative up-to-date such that they consolidated the legitimacy of the congregation community by giving it a historical dimension, while directing its gaze toward the future. By celebrating an anniversary with their own history at the center, they also created shared identity formation narratives which in turn help establish a sense of community. The group exercised a kind of retrospection which results in a more profound understanding of its common heritage. This led to a stronger sense of belonging as those responsible for the congregation are tied to this history and see themselves as the bearers of a historical heritage.

What constitutes this heritage? The congregation emphasizes its ties to the Church of Sweden. For example, the congregation's founding document states that it considers itself to be the heir to the church founded in 1632 in Nyen, as is also evident from the congregation seal. The church celebrates Midsummer's Eve, St. Lucia's Festival of Lights and Sweden's National Day. There is a historical exhibition in the church entrance highlighting the congregation's Swedish history.

But in practice the congregation has few real links to the Church of Sweden. This formal tie was cut when Nyenskans Fortress fell. Since then, the congregation has formed part of the

Lutheran Church in Russia. All the while Finland was a Russian Grand Duchy, the Swedish congregation had a close collaboration with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Finland.

While the Church of Sweden was not represented at the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the diocese of Porvoo was. This diocese comprises the parishes in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Finland that have a Swedish speaking majority. The representation at the anniversary reflects the historical fact that the Swedish congregation in St. Petersburg has had – and still has – a close relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Finland.

**WHILE FORMAL LINKS** to the Church of Sweden have been minor, cultural relations have been extensive. Historically, the congregation has been a meeting point for Swedish-speaking Nordic citizens present in the city. St. Petersburg Swedes wishing to belong to a Lutheran congregation have either joined the Swedish St. Catherine's or the German Lutheran congregation. The congregation has, as it were, always simultaneously faced Finland, Sweden and Russia. It constitutes, and has done so since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a crossroads between different countries in a place where people, languages and traditions (religious as well as cultural) have met, merged, transformed and sometimes even collided.

Another example of this link was seen at the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of St. Catherine's congregation in December 2016. Once again the anniversary gave the congregation a reason to look forward, by looking to the past. But this anniversary was not as lavish as

the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. Only a regular Sunday service marked the passing of 25 years, while the upcoming St. Lucia celebrations constituted a greater manifestation of the Swedish heritage.<sup>66</sup>

Historical depictions of the Cold War from 1917 onwards were absent from the two anniversaries in 2015 and 2016. The retrospectives focused on the period before the Russian Revolution.

When claims were raised to regain possession of the church building, the congregation always came back to the time before the Cold War. The Cold War only constituted a parenthesis in the newly formed congregation's argumentation, almost a repression, but it was not so for the building. It remains in its original location and has survived, more or less intact. It was used for other activities until the new era made its entrance. Today, the building is once again used for its original purpose, as the spiritual home for people in St. Petersburg. 

**“WHILE FORMAL LINKS TO THE CHURCH OF SWEDEN HAVE BEEN MINOR, CULTURAL RELATIONS HAVE BEEN EXTENSIVE.”**

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- 2 Broberg, Rolf, "Ryskan som vårdar det blågula" [The Russian woman who flies Sweden's national colors] in *DN* 6/13/1995.
- 3 Interview with Olga von Schlippenbach, 3/20/2016.
- 4 The article is based on material from field studies in St. Petersburg together with archive and interview material from Sweden.
- 5 The article also relates to the interpretation models formulated by Eric Langenbacher & Yossi Shain in *Power and the Past Collective Memory and International Relations*, (Washington: Georgetown University Press 2010). They emphasize that memories originating from one group may be used by other groups, reconfigured to suit their needs. Historical traumas are described as powerful, mythopoetic tools that are constantly energized and used in political debates and conflicts. This method of analyzing how older narratives are reenergized and reshaped for use in new contexts is central to the article.
- 6 For a history of St. Catherine's congregation, see e.g. Bengt Jangfeldt, *Svenska vägar till S:t Peterburg*, [Swedish roads to St. Petersburg] (Stockholm: Wahlström & Widstrand 1998); Max Engman, *Petersburgska vägar*, (Esbo: Schildts 1995); Carola Nordbäck & Gunilla Gunner, "S:t Katarina svenska församling i S:t Petersburg" [Saint Catherine's Swedish congregation in St. Petersburg], *Kyrkohistorisk årsskrift* (2016), 41–55.
- 7 Erik Norberg, "Swedish Churches in Russia and their Historical Sources" i Holtrop & Slechte, *Foreign Churches in St. Petersburg and Their Archives 1703–1917*, (Leiden: Brill 2007), 41–45.
- 8 Jangfeldt (1998), 65.
- 9 Nordbäck & Gunner (2016), 44.
- 10 Kristian Gerner, "Sovjetunionen och kalla kriget: 1900-talets religionskrig" [The Soviet Union and the Cold War: the 20<sup>th</sup> century's religious war] in Sjöström; *Innan murarna föll. Svenska kyrkan under kalla kriget [Before the walls came down; the Church of Sweden during the Cold War]*, (Artos 2019), 28 ff.
- 11 Jangfeldt (1998), 309.
- 12 Alvin Isberg, *Svensk lutherdom i Österled*, [Swedish Lutheranism in the East] (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell 1982), 33.
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- 15 Bengt Jangfeldt, "John Tuneld och svenska kyrkan i Petersburg: en studie i filantropisk och industriell aktivism" [John Tuneld and the Swedish church in Petersburg: a study in philanthropic and industrial activism] in Anders Björnsson, *Det evigt mänskliga*, [The eternally human] (Stockholm: Ordfronts förlag 1996), 141–170; Jangfeldt (1998), 311 ff; Isberg (1982), 35–36, 51–56, 67–68, 83.
- 16 Jangfeldt (1998), 315–325.
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- 18 For research on this see e.g. Kimmo Kääriäinen, *Religion in Russia after the collapse of communism* (Lewiston, NY: E. Mellen Press 1998), Kotiranta (2000), Shterin 2000, Kääriäinen & Furman 2000, W. Cole Durham Jr. & Silvio Ferrari (eds.), *Laws on Religion and State in Post-Communist Europe*, (Leuven: Peeters 2004), Maija Turunen, *Faith in the heart of Russia*, (Helsinki: Kikimora 2005), Geraldine Fagan, *Believing in Russia - Religious Policy after Communism*, (London: Routledge 2013).
- 19 *Swedish Parliamentary minutes* 2005/06:135 (June 5, §15) 81 (Internet source).
- 20 *Ibid*, 80–83. The parliamentary debate was in response to a motion submitted by Erling Bager and Runar Patriksson (lib) with reference to St. Catherine's Church in St. Petersburg, "The Church of Sweden in St. Petersburg" *Motion* 2005/06: U242 by Erling Bager and Runar Patriksson, (internet source). The motion was rejected on 5 April 2006, "Human rights, the UN system, etc." *Report 2005/06 by the Committee on Foreign Affairs*: UU15 (internet source).
- 21 "Svenska kyrkan i S:t Peterburg" [The Church of Sweden in St. Petersburg] *Motion* 1996/97: U206 by Chris Heister and Mikael Odenberg, (internet source), "Svenska kyrkan i Sankt Petersburg" [The Church of Sweden in St. Petersburg] *Motion* 2005/06: U242 by Erling Bager and Runar Patriksson, (internet source).
- 22 *Ibid*. The motion was tabled 10/11/1996, "Svenska kyrkan i S:t Peterburg" [The Church of Sweden in St. Petersburg] *Motion* 1996/97: U206 by Chris Heister and Mikael Odenberg, (internet source).
- 23 "S:t Katarina kyrka i S:t Petersburg" [St. Catherine's Church in St. Petersburg] *Motion* 1997/98: U811 by Mikael Odenberg and Chris Hesiter, (internet source).
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- 25 "Svenska kyrkan i S:t Peterburg" [The Church of Sweden in St. Petersburg] *Motion* 2005/06: U242 by Erling Bager and Runar Patriksson, (internet source); Inquiry by Sven Hirdman "Ett Sverigeinstitut i S:t Petersburg" [A Swedish Institute in St. Petersburg], 6/15/2006. Copy of inquiry, G. Gunner private archive.
- 26 Swedish Foreign Office Decision 2006/10086/EC in Hirdman (2006), 4. Jan Eliasson referred to Sven Hirdman's assignment in a question put to minister Erling Bager in June 2006, *Swedish Parliamentary minutes* 2005/06:135 (June 5, 2006, §15), 81, (internet source).
- 27 Hirdman (2006), 5f, 9f.
- 28 The quarter is home to St. Petri the German Lutheran Church and parish hall, St. Mary's Finnish Lutheran Church and parish hall, the former German school and St. Catherine's other parish and residential buildings.
- 29 Interview with Olga von Schlippenbach, 3/30/2016.
- 30 Broberg, Rolf, "Ryskan som vårdar det blågula" [The Russian woman who flies Sweden's national colors] in *DN* 6/13/1995.
- 31 The von Schlippenbach family was originally German; they emigrated to the Baltics where one of the forefathers, Wolmar Anton von Schlippenbach (1653–1721), took part as a Swedish officer in the Battle of Poltava 1709, was captured and after a few years went over to the Russian side where he continued his military career and was later commended by Pushkin. Broberg in *DN* 6/13/1995; *Christoph Carl Schlippenbach, urn:sbl:6385, Svenskt biografiskt lexikon [Swedish biographical lexicon]* (article by Björn Asker), from 3/15/2018.
- 32 Interview with Eero Sepponen, 6/13/2015.
- 33 From 1991, Sepponen visited the congregation two or three times every month right up until his retirement in 2012; he made these trips during his free time. In addition to Sepponen, the church also receive fairly regular assistance with its services from emeritus Professor Gustav af Hellström, Helsinki and Johan Mullo, assistant Pastor in the Swedish-speaking congregation of Turku. Interview with Eero Sepponen, 6/03/2015. The trips were paid for by the Swedish-speaking congregation of Turku, the Church of Finland foreign aid, Turku and St. Karin's joint community relief and in some case by ELKRAS. Email from Eero Sepponen to Gunilla Gunner, 3/15/2018, G. Gunner Private Archive.

- 34 Interview with Olga von Schlippenbach, 3/30/2016.
- 35 Hirdman (2006), 22.
- 36 Ibid.
- 37 Ibid.
- 38 SvkAU, SFRV, Archive of the Board and Joint Functions, F10G:3, Telefaxed letter to the 'Secreteriat for international and ecumenical affairs' from Olga von Schlippenbach, Dec. 1992.
- 39 A visit to St. Petersburg, 8–11 October 1992: a delegation of eight people from the Ecumenical Secretariat of the Church of Sweden, SvkAU, SFRV, Archive of the Board and Joint Functions, F10G:3, 20–22 October 1993, Brigitta Handog, working group on European Affairs and Jan Madestam, SKUT. Pastor Oskar Björklund worked on behalf of Lutheran World Relief for 3 months in St. Petersburg during the winter of 1991–92 to analyze the needs of the city; Report written by Oskar Björklund and Lene Giel, SvkAU, SFRV, the Archives of the Board and Joint Functions, F10G:3.
- 40 Individual congregations saw the light of day even before the Russian 'Law of Freedom and Conscience and Religious Organizations' was passed in October 1990. But now the registration of new (old) churches was on the increase while various foreign missionary organizations began making their way to Russia; Geraldine Fagan, *Believing in Russia – religious policy after communism*, (New York: Routledge 2013), 55–58.
- 41 Barona's church was formed before St. Catherine's congregation started in December 1991. However, it is unclear which assembly is referred to. Alternatives could well include the Swedish Lutheran parish in Priozersk (Kexholm, Russian Karelia), which belonged to the province of Leningrad, or a group led by Valeria Oding.
- 42 See e.g. Sonja Hellsten 'Svenska församlingen lever igen i Petersburg' i Åbo Underrättelser, [Swedish congregation revival in Petersburg in *Turku Intelligence*] 12/18/1991. According to the article, two different groups took independent initiatives to reestablish the Swedish congregation in 1991. But the group led by Valeria Oding (which the Church of Sweden also made contact with) discovered that a congregation had already been established on December 6, 1991 under the leadership of Olga von Schlippenbach. The two groups subsequently shared space in St. Catherine's premises.
- 43 Baronas also contacted Archbishop Vikström in Finland on the same matter.
- 44 The visit took place on April 17, 1991 and Brigitta Handog from the Church of Sweden also attended.
- 45 Memo concerning the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia, 4/22/1991, Ref. 104/91 prepared by Birgitta Handog, Ecumenical Secretariat. This memo and other correspondence concerning contacts with Joseph Baronas and the Church of Sweden can be found in SA, SFRV, the Archives of the Board and the Joint Functions, F10G:3. Material concerning the case can also be found in SA, SFRV, Archdiocese office archive, 1985–1999, E2D:1 and in SA, SFRV, Archbishop's Office foreign correspondence, 1985–1994, E3:1. See also Kalle Kuusniemi, *The Voice of Confessionalism and Inter-Lutheran relations. The Influence of the Missouri Synod in the Baltic and Ingrian Lutheran Churches 1991–2001*, (Diss. Helsinki: University of Helsinki 2015), 49.
- 46 SKUT, The Church of Sweden Abroad (Svenska kyrkan i utlandet) is the organisation work among people with a Swedish-language identity such as tourists, living or working abroad. <https://www.svenskakyrkan.se/svenska-kyrkan-utomlands--igar-och-idag>.
- 47 At the time of his letter, Per Ström was studying for a bachelor's degree in theology; he wrote his thesis in 1997. He visited St. Petersburg in April 1991.
- 48 SvkAU, Archdiocese office archive, 1985–1999, E2d:1, Letter Per Ström 11/19/1991.
- 49 According to Ström, a group of teachers and students from Uppsala University, led by Jan-Arvid Hellström in 1986, visited St. Mary's, the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church in Pushkin (Tsarskoe-Selo). This congregation was registered under Estonian jurisdiction in 1977.
- 50 SvkAU, Archdiocese office archive, 1985–1999, E2d:1, Letter Per Ström 11/19/1991.
- 51 Ibid.
- 52 It has not been possible from archive material to determine whether Per Ström received a reply to his letter.
- 53 See e.g. letter from Archbishop Gunnar Weman to the Swedish St. Catherine's congregation, St. Petersburg, 5/27/1993. Letter copy G. Gunner private archive.
- 54 SvkAU, SKUT, Board of Directors/Council minutes 1993–1994, A1:26, Memo concerning the Swedish congregations in Tallinn and St. Petersburg, 1992-02-02; SvkAU, SFRV, Archives of the Board of Directors and the Common Councils, A7A4, Appendix 5 to Protocol 930510, Notes from the discussions of 02/04/1993 St. Michael's congregation in Tallinn and St. Catherine's congregation in St. Petersburg.
- 55 This is not only apparent from interviews with Olga von Schlippenbach and Eero Sepponen, but also from the aides-memoires written by Jan Madestam after his and Birgitta Handog's visit to St. Petersburg in October 1993.
- 56 This was the former German church in the Soviet Union, and not to be confused with Baronas's church.
- 57 Sepponen was invited to the consultation by Leino Hassinen, a bishop in the Church of Ingria. Letter from Hassinen to Sepponen, Tammela 9/14/1993. Letter copy G. Gunner private archive.
- 58 SvkAU, SKUT, A1:26, SKUT and SvkAU, SFRV, A7A5, Aides-memoires 10/24/1993, Jan Madestam, Appendix to the records of the working group for European affairs 12/14/1993.
- 59 Ibid.
- 60 Ibid.
- 61 According to Olga von Schlippenbach, she also wrote to the Swedish Royal Family.
- 62 SvkAU, SFRV, A7A5PM 4/25/1994, Appendix to protocol AEF 4/25/1994.
- 63 In historical terms, ELCROS dates back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the German Lutheran Churches in Russia, which were in the clear majority of protestant churches. For a background and history about ELCROS see Gottfried Spieth, "Das russische Luthertum in Überlieferung und Erneuerung, Ein Essay" [Russian Lutheranism in Tradition and Renewal, An Essay] *Lutherische Beitmode 2015*, (Volume: 20, Issue: 4), 231–264 and Gerd Stricker "Afterword" in Sabrina Petra Ramet, *Protestantism and Politics in Eastern Europe and Russia. The Communist and Postcommunist Eras*, (Durham: Duke University Press 1992), 330–350. ELCROS also refers to the German equivalent, Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in Russland und anderen Staten, whose acronym is ELKRAS.
- 64 *The Lutheran World Federation*, Churches in Russian Federation, (internet source).
- 65 Interview with Eero Sepponen, 9/24/2015.
- 66 The St. Lucia Festival of Light celebrations are extremely popular and the Lucia Procession is arranged by students reading Swedish at various universities in St. Petersburg.