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Review: Jan Grabowski's new book in Polish

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Traditional life vs nation building

Illustration: Karin Z Sunvisson

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Traditional life vs nation building

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ÖSTERSJÖSTIFTELSEN

editorial

Nation building seen from the periphery

The Bergholtz collection with over 200 hand painted images of the peoples of the Russian Empire, dating from the first half of the 18th century, has hitherto been largely unknown. In their essay Nathaniel Knight and Edward Kasinec describe the contents of the collection, particularly with regard to its depictions of Siberian peoples and Ukrainians. Images portraying life in the distant and nearly unexplored peripheries of the Empire were unusual at this time.

IN THIS RICH ISSUE there are several contributions that examine local cultures' struggle and resistance against being absorbed in modernization projects initiated by governments for nation building purposes.

A breakthrough for indigenous people happened last year in Sweden. The rights to fish and hund was by Supreme Court given to Girjas Sami village to decide upon, with references to their "prescription from time immemorial". *Baltic Worlds*' Påhl Ruin visited the village, talked about this victory with Sami people, local decision makers and hunters. The situation is far from calm. There have even been several symbolic killings of reindeer, presumably by angry local hunters. Southern Sweden's hunters, for their part, have been reporting the Sami village for discrimination against them, claiming that they prefer to sell the rights to hunt and fish to hunters living in the area....

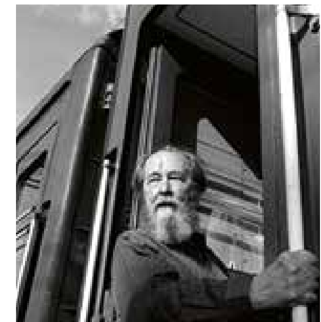
The clashes between traditional lifestyles and cultures and modernizing reforms are explored in a contribution from Kazakhstan by Didar Kassymova and Elmira Teleuova. The Kazakh dancer and artist Shara Zhienkulova's life and her written memoirs are analyzed in an attempt to describe the changes occurring during Stalinism on the fringes of the Soviet Union, and also its consequences for Shara Zhienkulova as an individual and an artist balancing her own ambitions, her love for the Kazakh culture and the dangerous but prosperous situation of being a role model for Kazakh women in Stalin's brutal modernization reform programs.

IN ANOTHER peer-reviewed article, by Ekaterina Kalinina, the discourses in modernization projects in today's Russia are discussed. She notes a growing heritage industry sector. Putin's version of modernization includes a strong ideological element and four state-sponsored programs of patriotic education have been launched with the aim to "instill patriotic sentiments for the purpose of mobilizing the population to support official policies".

Johan Hegardt, in an analysis of the Swedish Government's inquiries since 1922, presents how cultural heritage gradually became an issue for immigrants and different ethnic groups in the Swedish society. In this contect cultural heritage as a unifying mark of identity can play into the hands of nationalists. ■

Ninna Mörner

in this issue



Russian Nobel Prize winners

"Solzhenitsyn returned to Russia after nearly 20 years in exile. **Page 131**

Geopolitics, genetics and genocide

"The Russian geneticist Nikolai Ivanovich Vavilov starved to death in a Saratov prison in 1943. **Page 137**

The content expresses the views of the authors and does not necessarily reflect the views of *Baltic Worlds*.

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GIRJAS SAMI VILLAGE VS. THE SWEDISH STATE

BREAKTHROUGH FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

by **Påhl Ruin**

Reindeer herding Sami won huge success when the Supreme Court last year gave the Sami village Girjas the right to decide on hunting and fishing within the village boundaries. Now the Sami hope to have a greater influence over land use also in other areas, such as mining and construction of wind farms. But the prospects there are not as good.

Girjas Sami village is located in Norrbotten, some 200 kilometers from Sweden's northernmost border with Norway. The nearest airport is in Kiruna. In the arrival hall it is clear that you are in Sápmi, the land of the Sami. An advertising pillar column describing the region's attractions also includes a picture of a Sami and the English text: "Learn about the Sámi culture, the Sámi are one of the indigenous peoples of the world and for centuries they have lived close to nature".

When you get out of the airport, however, something completely different dominates your view: the mine. The low-lying sun has already set behind the mountain Kirunavaara, which towers a few kilometers away. Here, the state-owned company LKAB has mined ore for over a hundred years and today it is the world's largest underground mine for iron ore. About fifteen years ago, it was discovered that the cracks caused by the explosions were beginning to approach the city – with the result that parts of the city had to be demolished and rebuilt some distance away. The city of Kiruna exists because of the mine and thus has to move when the mine needs more space. The contrast could not be greater: When the mine needs to expand, then the city gives way – but when the reindeer trade loses pastures, the flexibility is not as great.

EVEN BEFORE INDUSTRIALIZATION, there was extensive discrimination against Sweden's indigenous people, but it was in the 20th century that the situation became acute. Reindeer-owning Sami who were used to letting their herds move long distances between pastures noticed how their way of life was made difficult by the development of society: by roads, train tracks, forestry, hydropower and of course also by mining. In more recent decades, the reindeer herding industry has also been challenged by the growing tourism industry and the construction of wind turbines.

It is against this background that one should see the Sami reindeer husbandry's perhaps greatest success to date, the ruling in the Supreme Court from January 2020. Girjas Sami village had for many years pointed out the problems for reindeer husbandry of the large number of recreational fishermen and hunters in sensitive areas. Reindeer are fugitive animals and are easily disturbed by noise and movement. When state authorities did not heed their concerns, they turned to the courts. And after ten years of litigation, the Sami village won "the right to lease small game hunting and fishing in the mountain areas". And it was the court's motivation that was the most surprising: That Sami land rights have been worked up through "prescription from time immemorial" and that a convention on indigenous peoples' rights (ILO 169) is binding even though Sweden has not ratified the convention.

PHOTO: E. KARLSSON, NORDISKA MUSEET/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

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PHOTO: GURLI LÖÖF/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Life in Girjas Sami Village, 1925; Anders Saitun, is fishing with net, J. Erikson Vennis, and Tomas Pittja beside a boat.

What further consequences does the judgment have? No one can say for sure. Several of the other 50 Sami villages in the country may now obtain a similar right to control fishing and hunting. What do local fishermen and hunters say about this? And what do those engaged in tourism say? And what does the Judgment mean for the Sami's influence when it comes to the construction of new mines and new wind turbines? I took these questions with me on my trip to northern Sweden and started by interviewing the mayor of Kiruna. With the help of GPS, I drive towards Kiruna town hall, with the mine as the dominant silhouette on the left. When I arrive at the place where the town hall is supposed to be, I find the spot empty – because the GPS took me to the old town hall which has already been demolished as a result of the town move! Around the newly built city hall a few kilometers away, the construction of a new district is underway. Inside the super-modern building, it echoes empty as a result of the on-going pandemic. The mayor Gunnar Selberg receives me with a fist bump. What does he think of the Girjas judgment?

"It was a good thing that Girjas got its case tried; I fully understand that they wanted to go to court. But I was surprised by the judgment. In particular, the wording about ancient traditions and "prescription from time immemorial". Reindeer herding Sami have never had a tradition or a custom of selling hunting and fishing licenses. They have never run tourism, they have hunted and fished as part of their self-sufficiency."

He agrees that Sami have been badly treated through generations:

"Of course they were robbed of their land, they did not know what kind of contracts they were signing. But should we go back 100 years in history and change this? No, it's not sustainable. I understand the Sami, absolutely, they have been through terrible things. But the claim that they were here first? No, that's not really true; before them there was a hunting and fishing culture here. But should it matter? I do not think so. I myself was born and raised here, does that mean I should have other rights than those who moved here later? No, we cannot have that."

Gunnar Selberg believes that Kiruna and the surrounding area has tourism potential that has not been fully developed, and that this potential will not be easier to develop if the Sami village is allowed to control fishing and hunting:

"I myself have been self-employed in the tourist trade; there have been times when we wanted to ride dog sleds and scooters where no reindeer graze, yet I was told that we should stay away. I get the feeling they do not want us anywhere at all. But these conflicts seem unnecessary. The Sami culture is extremely important for the tourist trade; I myself have been feeding reindeer together with tourists."

He has several acquaintances among the reindeer owners. Many of them have other jobs in addition to reindeer herding to make ends meet.

"I spoke very recently with an acquaintance whose business concept is, among other things, to gather tourists around a fire and *joik* for them (a traditional form of Sami song) in the light of the flames."

THE CHAIRMAN OF Girjas Sami village, Matti Blind Berg, still has some reindeer, but together with his wife he also runs a guide company with Icelandic horses. They offer tours around the village of Puoltsa in the valley next to Kebnekaise, Sweden's highest mountain. On the phone he argues that Gunnar Selberg doesn't understand what the judgment really means:

"It's not about any custom of selling fishing licenses, it's about protecting reindeer husbandry, which is part of the Sami culture. We wanted the right to control fishing and small game hunting to protect our culture. When the hunt starts in the autumn, the reindeer become frightened and flee, thus burning a lot of energy. And they are greatly disturbed by the hunters' dogs."

PHOTO: KIRUNA MUNICIPALITY

"OF COURSE THEY WERE ROBBED OF THEIR LAND, THEY DID NOT KNOW WHAT KIND OF CONTRACTS THEY WERE SIGNING. BUT SHOULD WE GO BACK 100 YEARS IN HISTORY AND CHANGE THIS?"

Gunnar Selberg, mayor of Kiruna

PHOTO: MARIE BIRKL/THE SAMI PARLIAMENT

"IT'S NOT ABOUT ANY CUSTOM OF SELLING FISHING LICENSES, IT'S ABOUT PROTECTING REINDEER HUSBANDRY, WHICH IS PART OF THE SAMI CULTURE."

Matti Blind Berg, chairman of Girjas Sami village

He is extremely relieved by the judgment. He feels that the Sami can finally put pressure on the state, that indigenous issues after all these years finally have ended up high on the agenda.

"For over a hundred years, various interests have come here to northern Sweden and claimed the riches that exist on the Sami lands: minerals, forests, hydropower, wind power. Colonization has taken place here and it is still taking place today."

He claims that protecting the land where the reindeer graze is a way of protecting the indigenous people of the Nordic countries, a way of developing their culture:

"We are not a museum specimen; we are a living culture."

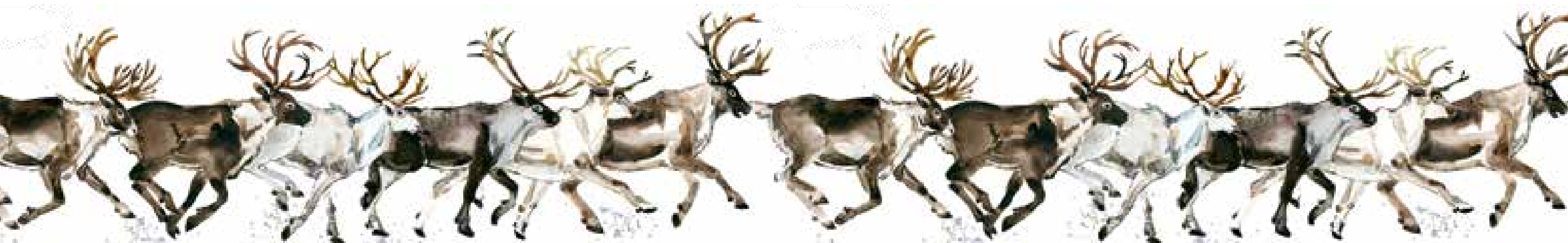
WHEN I AM IN KIRUNA, Matti Blind Berg has had to leave the municipality for a few days at short notice. But I still drive out to his farm in the village of Puoltsa which is a few miles from Nikkaluokta where the public road ends and where hikers usually begin the ascent of Kebnekaise. On the farm, the horses are out in the powder snow and one of the dogs happily follows me down to the Kalix river, which is frozen and whose surface sparkles in the morning sun. Matti Blind Berg has said in interviews that there were far-reaching plans to dam the river, but together with nature conservation forces, the reindeer herding trade managed to stop the project.

His own and his wife's guide company is called Ofelaš, which means guide in Sami. They want to show the visitors the beautiful landscape but also the Sami culture. In addition to horseback riding, visitors can look for wolverines and lynx together with knowledgeable reindeer herders or learn how to bake *gáhkku* (Sami bread) over an open fire.

This morning, the caretaker Henry Svonni is the only one on the farm. I come across him when he is on his way to the stable with hay for the horses. He is himself a Sami from a family of reindeer herders, but has no reindeer of his own these days.

"In early autumn, the *sarv* (the Sami word for male reindeer) must eat before slaughter, and that process is disrupted by both hunting and fishing because it involves a lot of movement in the area," he says when we settle down in the heated living room next to the stable. "Local hunters usually know the conditions, but the tourist hunters are worse. For example, they may think that it is ok to start hunting if they see a single reindeer in the distance; then they believe that the herd itself is far away. But that is not the case, reindeer are often scattered."

NOT FAR FROM WHERE we are sitting, wind turbines rise towards the sky. They are also a problem since the reindeer are disturbed by the noise and do not want to graze in the vicinity. Nowadays, many reindeer owners keep their herds together with the help of helicopters and then problems arise because there is a flight ban around the wind turbines. But perhaps the biggest challenge for the reindeer herding trade is the mines. For several years, a very sensitive issue has been on the agenda of a number of Swed-



ish governments: The British mining company Beowulf Mining wants to start a mine in Kallak, west of Jokkmokk, some 200 kilometers south of Kiruna. The mining company's promises of new jobs stand against environmental considerations and the reindeer trade's need for pastures. As I write this, at the end of November, Swedish Public Service Radio reports that the government has asked UNESCO to assess whether the mine in Kallak would threaten the mountain area Laponia's world heritage status and whether mining would infringe on Sami constitutional rights.

Henry Svonni, who is also politically involved in the new nationwide left-wing party Vändpunkt, is of course strongly opposed to the mine. His main point, however, is of a general kind. Whether it is the exploitation of minerals or the construction of wind turbines: Why not start an early dialogue with Sami interests?

"Here lies the intended mine in Kallak," he says, putting his finger on the rustic wooden table between us. "And here is an extremely important route for the grazing reindeer," he continues, pointing further down the table. "Once we Sami have a say in a matter, it has often already gone so far that all intended access roads are planned, and all surrounding buildings are budgeted. That's crazy! If they had asked us in time, we could have shown how the road can be drawn to avoid disturbing the reindeer's migration," he says and makes a wide half circle from one point to the other on the table.

THIS IS HOW IT HAS BEEN for many decades, he sighs, and voices strong criticism of a number of Swedish governments: "They have been hypocrites for over 100 years! They have talked about the injustices that have affected indigenous peoples in Canada, the United States, Australia and a number of other countries – but at the same time they have treated their own indigenous people in an unacceptable way."

It is not only Henry Svonni on the farm in Puoltsa who is of that opinion: Sweden has repeatedly received similar criticism from various UN bodies. This year, a scathing report was also issued by the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers, which states that "the Sami are not allowed to participate in a meaningful and effective way in the decision-making processes that affect them". It is Marie B Hagsgård who quotes from the conclusions in the report. She is Vice President of the Council of Europe Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

For reasons of challengeability, she did not herself participate in the compilation of the report on Sweden – but she was not particularly surprised by the result.

"It's not about banning all other activities on the land of an indigenous people, it's about how to proceed when conflicts of interest arise," she says in a telephone interview. "In Canada, for example, it is obligatory to obtain the views of an indigenous

MAP: SAMER.SE

There are 51 *samebyar* (Sami villages) in the north of Sweden. Girjas is highlighted in yellow on the map.

people. There was a case recently when a mining company that wanted to start an open-cast mine in a place sacred to the indigenous people was forced to shelve their plans – and instead just mine the mineral far underground."

MARIE B HAGSGÅRD welcomes Girjas' victory in the Supreme Court:

"The Judgment has finally given the Sami a trump card, something that made the other stakeholders adapt to the Sami and not the other way around. Of course, it is a defeat for society as a whole that this had to be decided in the courts, but I understand that the Sami felt compelled to choose the legal path. It is even stated in Sweden's constitution that the Sami culture should be protected."

She is convinced that the judgment will be important for the other 50 Sami villages that also want to control fishing and hunting. But she believes that the court's ruling will have even further consequences:

"The Judgment is very clear: special emphasis must be placed on Sami culture and Sami interests, whatever the area concerned. In this case, it is about hunting and fishing, but the interpretation should also apply to mining, forestry, wind power and all other activities where Sami interests are threatened."

Sweden has both a reindeer husbandry law and since 2009 a minority law, both of which contribute to giving the Sami a stronger legal position. But among officials who have to handle the interpretation of the laws, the level of knowledge is highly variable, says Marie B Hagsgård, who a few hours before our conversation had lectured to officials in Åre municipality, about 1,000 kilometers south of Girjas Sami village.

"The officials called for more information in order to comply with the law. For example, they asked for a map of exactly where in the region the most sensitive reindeer pastures are located, they wanted to know exactly which places were important for Sami culture, and they wanted to know which Sami they should consult with. Just the Sami village? Other Sami? They wanted to find agreements that the Sami could live with."

Aren't these questions that should have been answered a long time ago?

"You might think so, but I guess the questions illustrate how insufficient the knowledge is about what activities can affect the Sami culture and reindeer herding. I often hear about Sami villages being drowned in documents from various authorities who want to make sure that the Sami are informed about all conceivable matters. But this order is not sustainable; the authorities must become better at understanding when matters really have a bearing on the Sami culture."

Like Henry Svonni in Puoltsa, she is upset about the low quality of the consultation process:

"For decades, many have pointed out that the Sami interests must be included earlier in all decision-making processes, but so little has happened. It is of course a matter of economy: the company that has to change its plans to meet Sami interests risks losing a lot of money due to the delay. And the municipality eager for new employment opportunities is annoyed by the wait. In fact, the Sami found it easier to protect their reindeer pastures in the 19th century than today!"

About 20 years ago, Marie B Hagsgård was secretary of a parliamentary committee that tried to come up with new proposals on how the reindeer trade could coexist with other trades and industries and other interests in northern Sweden. But it was difficult to agree on any new concrete proposals.

"Several of the members of the committee were hunters themselves; they did not want to lose their opportunities for hunting. I suggested to all parties that they take more account of each other's interests, but that track led nowhere. In the next committee, I think that parliamentarians from southern Sweden should also be represented. If their views were given more weight, the interests of the indigenous people would have a stronger voice."

NOW A NEW PARLIAMENTARY investigation is under way; the directives are supposed to be ready in the spring. But they have already generated debate. Some want to make the investigation as broad as possible, bringing in all aspects of land use. Others want to make it narrower, trying not to encompass too much. The Secretariat of the investigation wants to collect as many views as possible at this stage, and Marie B Hagsgård has already contributed hers:

"The investigation must be based on the Sami's statutory rights as an indigenous people. The majority society must, through the state, introduce positive measures that guarantee this right. It must be clearer both for the Sami themselves and for the state and municipal officials what the Sami right to their land means."

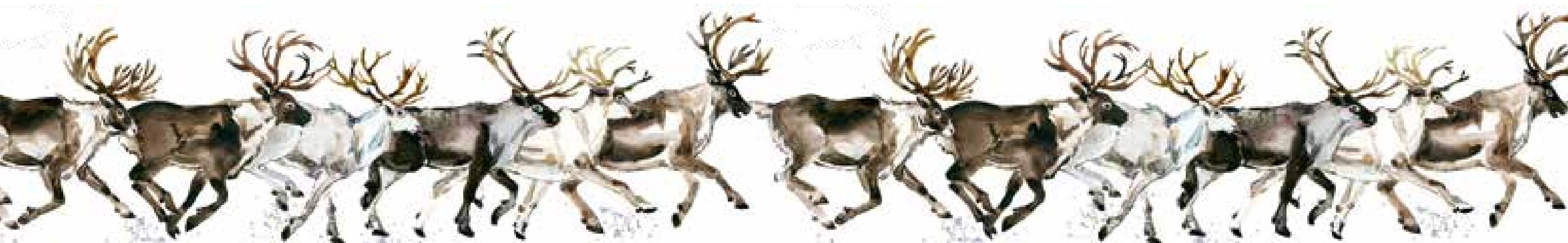
The Swedish Sami National Association (Svenska Samernas Riksförbund) appreciates that a new investigation is underway, but operations manager Jenny Wik Karlsson is worried that it will take too long before new decisions come into place:

"We helped Girjas Sami village to pursue the case all the way to the Supreme Court because we needed answers about what influence we can have in order to protect the reindeer herding trade. Of course, it is welcome if the investigation can give all

PHOTO: THE SWEDISH SAMI NATIONAL ASSOCIATION

"THE STATE HAD NOT ANTICIPATED THIS WORDING, AND NOW IT IS DIFFICULT TO FIND THE BALANCE. LARGE-SCALE ECONOMIC INTERESTS ARE AT STAKE."

Jenny Wik Karlsson, operations manager, The Swedish Sami National Association



parties a clearer picture of how a consensus can be reached between different interests regarding the issue of land use, but the specific question of an individual Sami village's possibility to control small game hunting and fishing must be answered more quickly. I know that several of the other 50 villages have been in contact with the government, but have not yet received any clear information. The legal effects of the judgment must be investigated quickly."

Her organization maintains that the other Sami villages can also argue for the tradition of "prescription from time immemorial" and thus obtain the same rights:

"But the state is clearly not prepared to go so far. So how does the government and parliament want to address the issue? We get very few answers since questions about land resources are sensitive. There are so many interested parties."

PHOTO: PATRICK TRÄGÅRDH/UMEBILD

Matti Blind Berg and Peter Danowsky in the Supreme court. The ruling in Girjas' favour is considered the Sami reindeer husbandry's perhaps greatest success to date.

WHEN SWEDISH PUBLIC RADIO, in one of its most prestigious in-depth programs, made a long feature on this theme a couple of months ago, they asked for an interview with the minister responsible, Ibrahim Baylan. He declined to participate, however, and only sent an email to the editors with the message that nothing has been decided and that the issue is rather in the hands of parliament. Jenny Wik Karlsson is disappointed that the government does not even show up for an interview to discuss the issue. But she is not surprised:

"It's depressing, but this is a very difficult field to navigate. Most parliamentarians from northern Sweden, not least from the governing party (the Social Democrats), do not like the Sami rights to the land to be highlighted. You do not win elections by defending the Sami."

But the question has been gone over again and again for so many years, shouldn't government representatives have talking points ready even in this difficult area?

"Before the Girjas judgment they probably had, but the situation is different now. The Supreme Court's reasoning about 'prescription from time immemorial' makes it more difficult. The state had not anticipated this wording, and now it is difficult to find the balance. Large-scale economic interests are at stake."

One thing that makes the issue so complicated is the painful history of relations between the Sami and the state. If the reindeer herding trade had only been one of many trades and industries that had to agree on land use, it would certainly have been possible to find a solution that everyone could live with. But reindeer trade is not like any other since it is a central part of a Sami culture that has been oppressed by the majority society for several hundred years. "The government and parliament are careful not to clash with us with regard to the history," as Jenny Wik Karlsson puts it.

Several other countries where indigenous peoples have been treated badly have carried out truth and reconciliation commissions. Preparations for such a commission are under way in Sweden as well, but the head of the Swedish Sami National Association is not convinced of the benefit:

"Of course I welcome another formal apology, but honestly I wonder what the purpose of the results is. We already know what wrongs have been committed and it is impossible to hold anyone accountable. We are dealing with a long history of oppression and land has been taken from us. But we cannot demand it back from people who have inhabited the land for four generations! Our wounds remain and I have a hard time seeing how they will heal by a truth commission."

Here, the chairman of the Sami village, Matti Blind Berg, has a slightly different opinion:

"I think the Commission could be useful if we use it properly. It can make more people realize what Sweden as a nation has done to the Sami people."

To complicate matters further, over the years the needs of the reindeer herding trade have also led to intra-Sami conflicts, conflicts that to some extent have escalated since the Girjas judgment. When the Sami village is now to decide who is allowed to hunt and fish, the Sami who do not own reindeer or who are not part of the village are also affected. One of the loudest Sami critics is Niklas Sarri, who runs wilderness tourism, partly on

the Sami village's land. He has long fought for Sami rights even though he does not belong to any Sami village:

"My family has lived in the area since time immemorial, yet it is not obvious that we will be allowed to hunt and fish here. The ruling protects a small group of reindeer-owning Sami, who can exclude the rest of us. It is pure discrimination!"

Niklas Sarri thinks that the reindeer owners in the Sami villages constitute a privileged elite who do not represent Sami interests but, on the contrary, sow division between different Sami groups. He has been active in party politics focusing on Sami issues and is today a controversial debater.

"Giving the Sami villages such a great influence over the land is deeply problematic. These villages came into being as state legal structures to regulate the reindeer herding trade, but now we have to review the whole system when the villages contribute to discrimination not only of us other Sami but also of other citizens who want to spend time in the mountains."

MATTI BLIND BERG DOES NOT agree with the description:

"It is not at all as difficult as he says to become a member of the Sami village. And we have said time and time again that local hunters and fishermen will be given priority when we issue permits. We do not discriminate against other Sami, absolutely not."

He still understands Niklas Sarris' outrage, which he believes is rooted in government decisions made several generations ago:

"The state has 'divided and ruled' among us Sami; we are all victims of this policy. The Swedish, Norwegian and Finnish states' decisions a hundred years ago all paved the way for the situation we have today. The policy of assimilation and forced relocations has had a great and lasting impact on the entire Sami community".

The question of whether Girjas Sami village might engage in discrimination has also led to a report to the Discrimination Ombudsman – in this case it concerns a hunter in southern Sweden (Nyköping) who thinks that the Sami village discriminates against everyone outside of the Norrbotten region when it is said that only people within the region should be given priority. Furthermore, the Sami village has encountered criticism from experts on EU legislation who believe that EU citizens would be unfairly discriminated against if they were prevented from competing on equal terms with others who want to hunt and fish in the area.

Matti Blind Berg sighs at the criticism:

"The Supreme Court has given us this right and we intend to exercise it. When it comes to fishing, guest cards can be a suitable solution which opens up opportunities for tourists from all over the EU. But hunting has a larger impact on reindeer husbandry, so this year we said no to all foreign hunters. For this we have been called xenophobes and racists. But I don't care."

There is no doubt that the Supreme Court ruling has stirred up a lot of emotions, especially among people in the immediate area who attach great importance to spending time in the mountains. Immediately after the verdict, a marked rise of hateful and threatening comments about reindeer-owning Sami could be seen in social media. "Selfish disgusting fucking asses is what you are, I hope you realize that you have started a war now", was one of many. In the weeks following the judgment, several incidents also occurred where reindeer were killed and mutilated. Reindeer owner Sara Skum in the village of Puoltikasvaara, 70 kilometers southeast of Kiruna, found severed reindeer heads strategically placed so that she could see them, as a warning. She spoke in various Swedish media outlets, but when I call and ask if we can meet, she becomes hesitant and eventually says no: "I have already been in the media and it leads nowhere; the hunters do not seem to understand that we have a judgment and thus the right on our side".

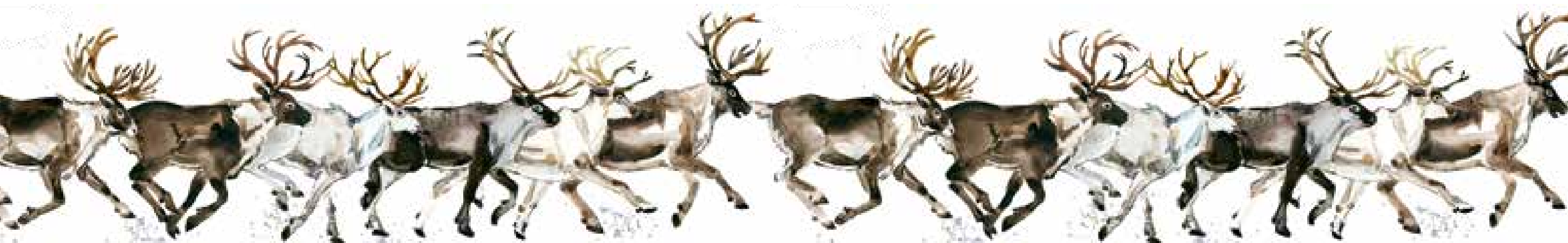
The bloody attacks on animals decreased as months went by, but they did not stop and in late autumn another incident occurred. It is difficult to find people who would openly defend the attacks, but it is quite obvious that opinions about the newly acquired rights of the Sami village vary greatly when you walk around and ask people in Kiruna. At a hamburger restaurant in the city center, a mother with a small child answers that, "it was good that the Sami village got these rights; it is their land that was taken from them. I myself would also like to have control over who stays on my plot!" A few tables away sits a man of retirement age who thinks that, "the Sami cannot just decide who has access to the land". He thinks that the Sami village "creates conflicts and in the long run hatred". In addition, he is afraid that the Sami villages' protests against other trades and industries gaining access to the land could lead to reduced growth and increased unemployment.

Opinions are divided and sometimes there are conflicting views even within the same person, as the young woman I met at the hotel reception:

"On the one hand, I appreciate the court's decision. I have friends whose parents are reindeer owners and I know how problematic it is for them when scooters drive near the reindeer. On the other hand, my family and I have been worried. We have a cabin by the Kalix River; at certain times of year we may not even be allowed to drive a scooter to our plot."

BUT THE GREATEST CONCERN is felt among local hunters. One of them is Tomas Hedqvist who lives right next to the Torne River in the village of Paksuniemi, a few kilometers from Jukkasjärvi's world-famous ice hotel. The Torne river thunders when we go down to the water and sit on the sauna's landing to carry out the interview in a corona-safe way. The view of the river is breathtaking with Mount Etnuloitin on the other side of the water. The sun barely manages to stay above the edge of the mountain when it is at its highest, in the middle of the day, during my visit on November 10.

"Tomorrow the sun will disappear behind the mountain and



will not return until spring," he says, squinting a little at the sun. "Etnuloitin means 'the mountain that follows the water' in Sami. My acquaintances from Texas, who worked with us at the space company Esrange, were quite excited; they thought it sounded just like something from their own indigenous people."

Tomas Hedqvist is retired after 33 years at Esrange. Being close to nature is one of the most important things in his life. That is why he is so upset when the Sami villages now talk about restricting that right on the pretext of protecting the reindeer herding trade.

"They seem to want to control everything! They deny us the right to be here, even when we are careful not to disturb the reindeer. We local hunters know the conditions of the reindeer trade; as locals we take reindeer husbandry into account."

The first decision that Girjas Sami village took after the court gave them power was to move the grouse hunt forward a few weeks, so that the reindeer would not be disturbed during the most sensitive time. For Tomas Hedqvist, the grouse hunt is among the most precious things of the year, but he understands why they wanted the hunt to be postponed; some hunters have not always taken the sensitive weeks around 1 September into account. "But I still thought it was a little strange that they also banned hunting in areas where they have no reindeer."

So far he thinks that Girjas Sami village has made balanced statements about the future, that local hunters and fishermen will be given priority. He is more worried about a couple of other Sami villages on his favorite lands which even before the Girjas judgment were reluctant to permit the presence of others in their lands. Due to the judgment he fears that they will become even more anxious to keep others away.

"The Sami villages are angry that the mountain hunt became free after 1993. But that is not true! Even after that, there have been regulations for where in the Sami village you can hunt and at what times, all to protect the reindeer. Some villages have been stingy in letting us in, and now it could get even worse."

He is afraid that an even clearer division between "us and them" will be formed now, that those who are within the Sami villages get rights that others outside of the villages are denied. This in turn risks leading to further conflicts.

"I am worried about cohesion in society. The members of the Sami villages work in the mine and in the hospital, they buy food from their neighbors, they are simply dependent on everyone else here. We have to find a way to live together."

He disapproves of the "black and white image of the Sami" that is spread in the rest of Sweden and in the rest of the world, that they are supposed to be so oppressed.

"My foreign visitors to Esrange have asked me where the huts are where our indigenous people live! I then tell them that I had several classmates at Luleå University of Technology who were Sami, that several of my managers at Esrange were Sami. They do not live in huts; they are integrated into our society."

PHOTO: PÅHL RUIN

"THEY SEEM TO WANT TO CONTROL EVERYTHING! THEY DENY US THE RIGHT TO BE HERE, EVEN WHEN WE ARE CAREFUL NOT TO DISTURB THE REINDEER."
Tomas Hedqvist, local hunter

He dislikes the talk about Sami on the one hand, and other citizens on the other hand. It's more mixed than that:

"My grandmother was Sami, she and her brothers were forcibly relocated from Karesuando (by the Finnish border, some 200 kilometers from Kiruna). And my son's mother was half Sami. We are many who protect our Sami roots."

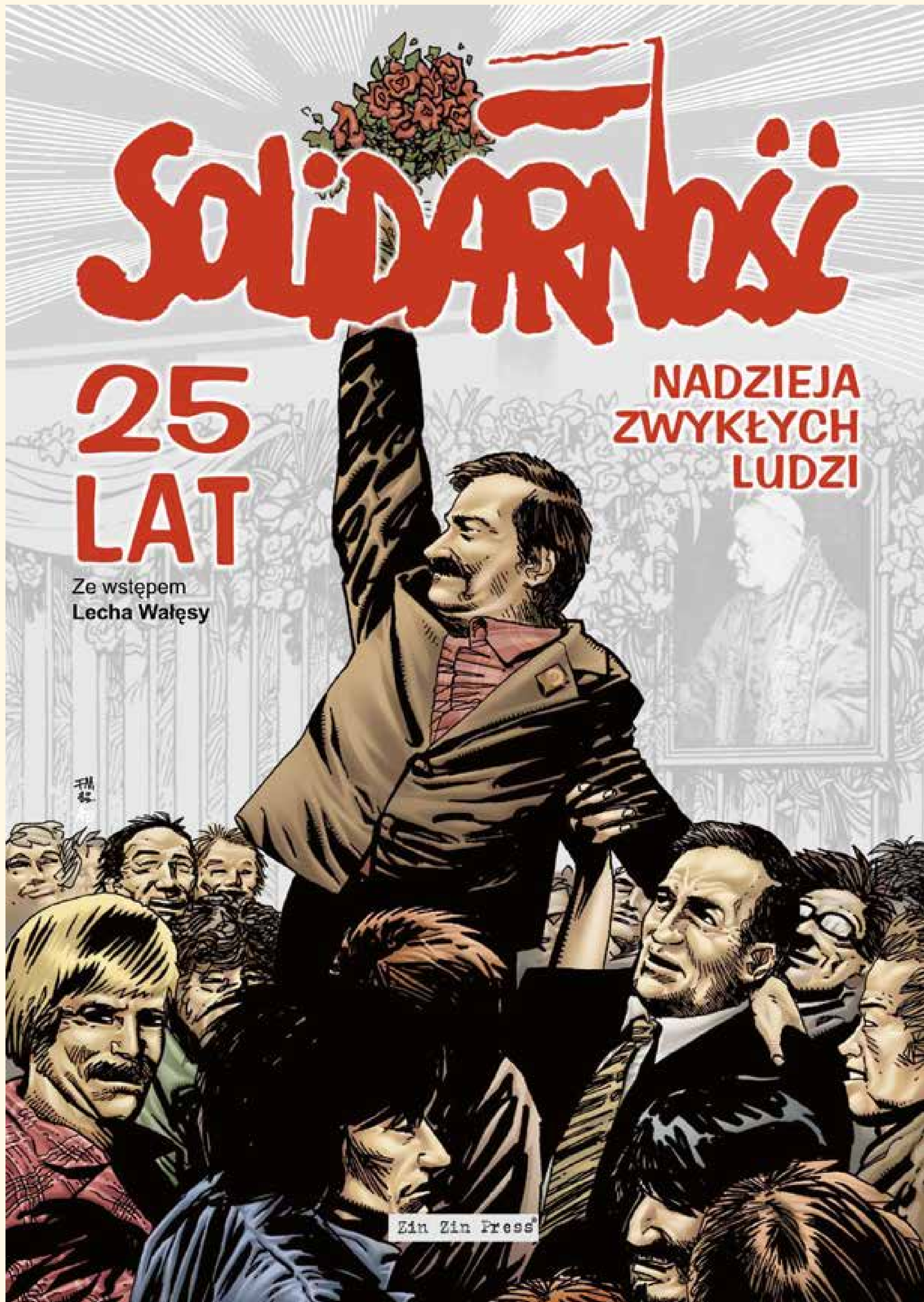
TOMAS HEDQVIST SAYS that he often sees reindeer in his yard when they come down from the mountain. He usually gives them food.

"I remember how my grandmother's brothers told me about their reindeer, how they could stay for a while with the Johansson family over there," he says, pointing up the hill, "when the reindeer needed to rest and eat during the migration down from the mountains. But these contacts between reindeer owners and the rest of the population are less common today. I think that is unfortunate."

On the phone, I ask chairman Matti Blind Berg about the conflicts that the Sami village's newly acquired rights have given rise to. Is he worried about them?

"No, not really. Maybe the conflicts are, after all, necessary. Maybe we need the conflicts to find new solutions; they might lead to more people realizing the threats facing reindeer husbandry and the Sami culture."

Påhl Ruin, freelance writer and journalist based in Sweden.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THE LEGACY OF 1989 IN POLAND

CONFLICTS AND COMMEMORATION 30 YEARS AFTER THE END OF COMMUNISM

by **Barbara Törnquist-Plewa**

abstract
I have analyzed the coverage of the 30th anniversary of the Roundtable Agreement and June elections in Polish newspapers of all political hues. Additionally, I scrutinized several official speeches held in connection with the commemorations. The goal of my inquiry has been to examine the uses of memory of 1989 in Polish politics of 2019 and highlight the strategic choices and constraints faced by mnemonic actors in this context. Thus, the study presented may be seen as a follow-up to Bernhard's and Kubik's investigation conducted ten years ago. However, this analysis expands the focus of Bernhard's and Kubik's work by paying special attention to cultural constraints on politics of memory. Thus, the aim is both to give insight into contemporary politics of memory in Poland in relation to the recent past and contribute to the more general understanding of how culture works in politics of memory.
KEYWORDS: Commemoration 2019, 30th Anniversary, 1989, Polish Newspapers, Bernhard & Kubik.

The fall of the Berlin Wall in the autumn of 1989 is, for most people, the symbol of the collapse of communism in Europe. But those who are more familiar with European history are well aware that the decline began much earlier, and that events in Poland had considerable significance for this development. Poland was the country in the Soviet bloc that had the most active and best organized anti-communist opposition, as evidenced by the creation in 1980 of the Solidarity movement with membership peaking around ten million. It was also the first country in 1989 to venture into the peaceful overthrow of the communist system, thereby inspiring and influencing people in other countries of the communist bloc. The dismantling of the regime started in the spring of 1989 with the Roundtable talks between the communist rulers and the opposition. These led to semi-free elections to the Polish Parliament on June 4, 1989, which in turn yielded a non-communist government, the first in the Eastern Bloc since the communist takeover in the region after World War II. The Soviet Union, which had always been ready to intervene militarily when the communist regime was threatened in one of its satellite states, this time refrained from acting.

The effect of this turn of events cannot be underestimated. Poland was the first country to enter the minefield and it survived! Poland's "spring" in 1989 opened the way for the "autumn" of other nations the same year – a series of largely

PHOTO: TADEUSZ KŁAPYTA

Strike at the Vladimir Lenin Shipyard in August 1980. Lech Wałęsa (front row, third from right) with dismissed crane operator, Anna Walentynowicz (left of Wałęsa), leading a crowd in prayer during the August Strike.

peaceful revolutions in the Eastern bloc that swept away the communist regimes.

In view of Poland's role in this historical development, one would expect that the memory of the Roundtable Agreement of April 4, 1989, as well as the victory of the opposition in the elections of June the same year, would be cherished in Poland, celebrated with state support, and become a cohesive element in Polish society. This, however, is not the case. While there is a consensus that the fall of communism was beneficial for Poland and brought the country independence and freedom, there is no similar consensus on how to interpret the events of 1989–1991 and how to remember them. Most of the studies dealing with this issue focus on the historical roots of this disagreement[1] or present the results of opinion polls on the topic,[2] while there is a lack of analyses from the point of view of memory politics. The seminal text "Roundtable Discord. The Contested Legacy of 1989 in Poland" by Michael Bernhard and Jan Kubik constitutes one of the few exceptions.[3] The study appeared as a chapter in the volume that analyzed how the 1989 breakthrough was commemorated in a number of post-communist countries in 2009, i.e. twenty years after the events.[4] In their work, Bernhard and Kubik propose some new and useful analytical concepts, such as "mnemonic warriors" (those who fight for their own non-negotiable version of the past), "mnemonic abnegators" (who practice purposive forgetting) and "mnemonic pluralists" (who accept that the others are entitled to their own vision of the past).[5] Moreover, in their case study on Poland they demonstrate how and by whom the memory of 1989 was used in the political struggles in the country around 2009. Ten years have passed since Bernhard's and Kubik's groundbreaking study and in 2019 it was time for the 30th anniversary of the Roundtable Agreement and the June elections: in a radically changed political context, however. This calls for a return to the question of the Polish memory of 1989. Has it undergone any transformation? Is it still deployed in political games and if so, by whom, how, and why?

"THE SITUATION WAS STILL UNCERTAIN IN THE SUMMER OF 1989. THE REST OF EASTERN EUROPE WAS STILL UNDER COMMUNIST RULE."

IN ORDER TO ANSWER these questions, I have conducted a content analysis of texts in Polish newspapers and on internet portals dealing with the 30th anniversary of the Roundtable Agreement and June elections. I focused on newspapers with national coverage and selected texts representing the whole ideological spectrum in Polish politics: starting with *Krytyka Polityczna* on the left via the liberal *Gazeta Wyborcza*, *Polityka*, *Kultura Liberalna*, *Wprost*, *Dziennik*, *Newsweek*, the center-conservative *Rzeczpospolita*, the right-wing *Gazeta Polska*, *Sieci*, *Do Rzeczy*, portal *Niezależna* and the far-right internet weekly *Polska Niepodległa*. Additionally I scrutinized several official speeches held in connection with the commemorations by current and former Polish political leaders.[6]

The goal of my inquiry has been to examine the uses of the memory of 1989 and its legacy in Polish politics of 2019 and highlight the strategic choices and constraints faced by mnemonic actors in this context. Thus, the analysis presented below is to some extent a follow-up to Bernhard's and Kubik's investigation conducted ten years ago. The study begins, therefore, with a recapitulation of their main findings that are subsequently used to capture the changes between 2009 and 2019. Moreover,

Lech Wałęsa during the pre-election rally in front of the church of St. Brygida in Gdańsk in May 1989 (left). Wałęsa casting his vote in the Wybory Election of 1989, which gave the Solidarity-led coalition a majority in the Polish Parliament. A year later, Wałęsa would become President of Poland.

to make this comparative approach more consistent, I employ Bernhard's and Kubik's theoretical concepts of mnemonic actors mentioned above and, like these researchers, I also home in on the so-called "official memory" i.e. representations of the past propagated in public space, mostly from positions of power.

However, my study aims to expand the focus of Bernhard's and Kubik's work by paying special attention to cultural constraints on the politics of memory. I will approach this question in the final part of this study by employing the concept of "schematic narrative templates" as formulated by James V. Wertsch.[7] Memory narratives in general are understood as ordered stories that structure and bind together selective past events linked to memories. "Schematic narrative templates" however, represent specific kind of narratives – the generic ones. They are used to structure and generate multiple narratives about the past by anchoring them in the same basic plot.[8] These "schematic narrative templates" are cultural-symbolic tools that mnemonic communities produce and use to interpret a variety of the past events in order to give them meaning. They are part and parcel of a group's collective memory, i.e. the representations of the past shared within a group and used to enact the group's identity.[9] I will argue that the concept of "narrative templates" is both helpful in grasping the constraints to mnemonic manipulations of the events of 1989 in Poland and contributes to the more general understanding of how culture works in politics of memory.

Revisiting Bernhard's and Kubik's *Twenty Years After Communism*

In their discussion of the conflict over the meaning of the 1989 breakthrough in Poland, Bernhard and Kubik point out that the discord was rooted in the deep division inside the Solidarity movement between "revolutionaries" and "reformists". The division already emerged under communism, during Solidarity's underground activities, but it came fully to the surface after the semi-democratic elections of June 4, 1989. The revolutionaries demanded that the electoral victory of Solidarity in June 1989 should be used to depart from the Roundtable Agreement and launch the "acceleration", a rapid transformation of the political system and "decommunization", i.e. a radical settlement with communism, its crimes and its remains in social life. However, the reformists within Solidarity, with Prime Minister Mazowiecki at the forefront, refuted these ideas due to both pragmatic and also moral reasons. The situation was still uncertain in the summer of 1989. The rest of Eastern Europe was still under communist rule at that point, and although Mikhail Gorbachev had signaled that the Poles were allowed to resolve their crisis by themselves, Soviet military forces were still posted in northern and western Poland. Besides, the reformists within the Solidarity movement were supporters of reconciliation in society and Mazowiecki spoke about the need to "draw a line" under the past and focus on the future.

Solidarity leader Lech Wałęsa was allied with the reformists at the outset, but after the fall of the communist regimes in other East-Central European countries he began to change his mind, and during his presidential campaign in 1990 he sided with the revolutionaries, led by the brothers Jarosław and Lech Kaczyński. This coalition, however, did not last long. About a year later, in 1991, Wałęsa came into conflict with the Kaczyński brothers and left their camp. This happened when he, as president of Poland at that time, supported a vote of no-confidence against the government, led by Jan Olszewski, a representative of the "revolutionaries". There were many reasons behind the termination of this weak government, created after the first fully democratic elections in 1991, but a direct cause of its fall was its threats to expose prominent political figures, (including Wałęsa) as allegedly former agents of the communist secret po-

PHOTO: POLISH HISTORY MUSEUM

The Roundtable talks took place at the Namiestnikowski Palace, Warsaw, from February 6 to April 5, 1989.

PHOTO: PRESZYDENT.PL

President Andrzej Duda talking with students at the 30th anniversary of the commencement of the Roundtable talks.

lice. Wałęsa's opposition to these plans created an opportunity for the radicals to construct a narrative about him as a traitor[10] and it was grist to the mill for all those who wanted to vindicate a conspiracy theory about the Roundtable Agreement. According to the radicals in the post-Solidarity camp, the Roundtable talks had resulted in a secret agreement between the elite of the Communist Party and part of the Solidarity elite. The Communist Party had accepted giving up its formal political power in return for promises of impunity and being allowed to exchange its political privileges for economic ones in the planned privatization process. In the extreme version of this strongly negative interpretation of 1989, the Solidarity elite betrayed the Polish people during the Roundtable talks.[11] This view was expressed by a range of the radical right-wing, clerical and nationalist forces, including a minor, but visible and outspoken group within the national conservative party Law and Justice (henceforth in this text called by its Polish acronym – PiS), created in 2001 by the Kaczyński brothers.

BEFORE THE 2005 parliamentary elections, PiS formulated a powerful slogan about the need to create a "Fourth Republic". It referred to the party's goal to come to power and transform Poland through radical reforms. The Fourth Republic would replace the Third Polish Republic[12] that was founded in December 1990 after the fall of communism and, according to PiS interpretation, was corrupt and rotten, not least because of the collaboration between the post-communist elite and the liberals and the left from post-Solidarity groups.[13] PiS' idea of the Fourth Republic was supported by the aforementioned right-wing theory of the elites' conspiracy at the Roundtable. The theory legitimized the need to "start over again" by implementing reforms of a nearly revolutionary nature. However, the reforms planned by PiS had to wait. Indeed, after the parliamentary elections in 2005 PiS sat in government together with two smaller conservative, populist parties – The League of Polish Families and The Self-Defense, but this coalition was able to rule only until 2007, when new, early elections brought to power the center-liberal party Civic Platform (henceforth in this text called PO, its Polish acronym).

Thus in 2009, at the time for the 20th anniversary of the 1989 events, PiS was in political opposition. In this context, as demonstrated in Bernhard's and Kubik's study, PiS choose to promote a negative interpretation of the 1989 history and employed it in the political and ideological struggle for its Fourth Republic. To use Bernhard's and Kubik's terms, the right-wing camp became "mnemonic warriors".

Bernhard and Kubik identify four main positions towards the memory of 1989 as displayed in Poland in 2009. Next to the negative one mentioned above, they refer to the celebratory position, the mixed one and the silent one.[14]

The celebratory position was, hardly surprisingly, first and foremost strongly represented by the reformists from Solidarity scattered in 2009 among different parties but congregating around prominent former Solidarity figures such as Mazowiecki, Geremek, Michnik and Frasyniuk. They organized the commemoration ceremonies in the Sejm and the Senate. It is noteworthy that they were joined by the post-communists represented by the Social-Democratic party, SLD.

While the negative and the celebratory visions of the events of 1989 dominated the commemorations in 2009, the mixed position was also visible since it was articulated by two prominent figures: Lech Wałęsa – the former Solidarity leader and president in the years 1990–95, and Lech Kaczyński, president in 2009. Both stated in relation to the commemoration of the Roundtable that it had been a necessary but morally troubled compromise.[15] However, as political enemies, they did not participate in any joint commemorations. President Kaczyński organized his own commemorative events of 1989 and withdrew from other official celebrations. The 20th anniversary of the Roundtable was marked by the organization of a historians' debate in the presidential palace, which became an arena for voicing some strongly critical views on the Roundtable. However, the president distanced himself in his declaration from statements

implying that during the negotiations, Solidarity had promised economic privileges to the communist nomenklatura in exchange for power. This standpoint can be explained by the fact that Lech Kaczyński was an active participant at the Roundtable and one of Wałęsa's close advisors at this time. Thus, he was one of those responsible for its outcome.

Last but not least, Bernhard and Kubik point to "silence" as the fourth position regarding the memory of 1989. It was visible on the part of the Civic Platform (PO), the ruling party at that time. "Silence" did not concern the semi-democratic elections of June 1989 that were indeed solemnly celebrated by the PO government, but it was clearly observable in the commemorations of the Roundtable. The PO avoided the issue and did not take any initiative for its commemoration. In this way it wanted to prevent PiS' accusations of collaboration with ex-communists and present itself as a moderate party, remaining beyond the clashes over the past. Thus, according to Bernhard and Kubik, in this context the PO played the role of "mnemonic abnegators".

The conclusion of the study of the 20th anniversary commemorations of the 1989 breakthrough in Poland was that in relation to this topic the memory regime, i.e. the organized way of remembering a specific issue, was fractured and moving from being multipolar to fractured and bipolar,[16] that is, towards a fierce confrontation between representatives of the negative and celebratory positions. Bernhard and Kubik noted at the same time that the propagation of the negative view of 1989 seemed not to help the cause of the right-wing, since they lost both the presidential and the parliamentary elections in 2010 and 2011, respectively.

The 30th anniversary of the 1989 events – clashes over commemorations

The 30th anniversary of the events of 1989 took place in a very different political context from the anniversary ten years earlier. In 2019 the center-liberal PO was no longer in power. It had lost the parliamentary elections in 2015 when PiS received enough votes to form a government. Thus, in 2019 Poland had for four years been ruled by the national conservatives (the kernel of the former post-Solidarity revolutionary camp) who consequently began to implement their ideas about the Fourth Republic. The leitmotifs in their politics became de-communization and nationalism and they took a firm grip on the judiciary, public media, culture and education.[17] Their criticism of liberalism and total disregard of all opposition may justify describing them as "illiberal democrats" or majoritarian authoritarians.[18] The opposition parties including PO and other liberal groups as well as the fragmented left have constantly and vigorously fought against these politics both in parliament and in street demonstrations.[19] 2019 was the time for the showdown between the opposing political sides due to the two important elections scheduled for that year: elections to the European Parliament in May 2019 and the Polish parliamentary elections in October the same year. Thus, the 30th anniversary of the 1989 events took place in the middle of a fierce electoral campaign that influenced the politics of memory, as will be argued below.

Commemoration of the 1989 Roundtable

In general, the commemorations of the 30th anniversaries of the Roundtable Agreement and the 1989 June elections differed significantly. The Roundtable anniversary received rather moderate attention. The public TV and radio controlled by PiS barely mentioned it and the conservative nationalist press more or less ignored it. Neither of the two main right-wing journals, *Sieci* and *Do Rzeczy*, or the popular conservative Catholic *Gość Niedzielny*, wrote a word about the 30th anniversary of the Roundtable. The weekly *Gazeta Polska*, the mouthpiece of the PiS party, published just one article whose author, its editor-in-chief, presented a concise interpretation of the Roundtable, wholly following the line of the late president Lech Kaczyński, one of PiS' founders. According to it the Roundtable had been a necessary compromise, but its provisions should have been totally abandoned as soon as the communist party lost the semi-democratic elections in June 1989 or after the first democratic elections in 1991 at the latest. A continuation of the Roundtable arrangements in any form after that moment should be described as a collusion (*zmowa* in Polish) against democracy.[20] Besides this semi-official statement on behalf of the party ruling in Poland in 2019, *Gazeta Polska* issued two texts in connection with the Roundtable anniversary that did not attack the Roundtable Agreement itself, only the Solidarity leaders behind it. The first article was a kind of posthumous panegyric written by Antoni Macierewicz, deputy leader of PiS, to commemorate the recently deceased Jan Olszewski. Macierewicz praised Olszewski as an uncompromising fighter for independence and contrasted him with, in his view, the treacherous Lech Wałęsa together with reformist camp within Solidarity that voted to bring down Olszewski's government on June 4, 1991. Macierewicz called this historical incident "a night-time coup d'état"[21].

"THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE 1989 EVENTS TOOK PLACE IN THE MIDDLE OF A FIERCE ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN THAT INFLUENCED THE POLITICS OF MEMORY."

The second article that appeared in this context had the title "*Gazeta Wyborcza* – the rotten foundation of the Third Republic". It fiercely attacked that liberal daily and its founder Adam Michnik, a renowned former dissident and one of the main figures at the Roundtable. The author of the article groundlessly accused Michnik of being a former communist agent.[22]

In contrast to the commemorations in 2009 there were no official celebrations of the Roundtable by the government or in Parliament. The only representative of the central authorities who officially marked this anniversary was the president of Po-

land and PiS-member Andrzej Duda. However, it passed largely unnoticed since his contribution was limited to official speeches at the opening of two rather poorly publicized conferences. The first of them, organized on February 4, (the formal date of the beginning of the Roundtable) took place in the presidential residence and had the character of an Oxford debate, i.e. a debate on a predetermined motion where the two sides argue against each other "for" or "against" a proposed thesis. In this case it was a competition between high school pupils who debated for and against the statement: "the negotiations between the communist authorities and the opposition were the only way to a peaceful overthrow of communism in Poland".[23] Thus on this occasion, the Roundtable was presented as a highly controversial historical event.

The second conference held on April 4, (the date of the signing of the Roundtable Agreement) under the heading "How Communism collapsed. 1989 in Central and Eastern Europe", was an international scholarly event. In the opening speech the president was keen to point out that the Roundtable should be an object for debate and further investigations, but at the same time he targeted the international public by emphasizing the leading role of Poland in bringing down the communist system. It is worth noting that when Duda in his speech enumerated the names of those who, in his opinion, had played a particularly important role in this historical development, he mentioned John Paul II, Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher, Mikhail Gorbachev and Lech Kaczyński but never Lech Wałęsa.[24] In general, Duda's speech followed the above-mentioned narrative about 1989, developed by Lech Kaczyński ten years earlier, presenting the Roundtable as a necessary but troubling compromise. According to this view, the semi-democratic parliamentary elections were a much more important moment in 1989 than the Roundtable, because they demonstrated the Polish people's rejection of the communist system. In line with Lech Kaczyński, Duda saw the June elections of 1989 as a great victory that the Polish people should be proud of, although a number of mistakes were made afterwards, and the fruits of the victory were not properly exploited.

IT COULD BE EXPECTED that the silence around the 30th anniversary of the Roundtable on the part of the right-wing political circles would be counteracted by the opposition. This indeed happened, but the coverage of this event in the liberal and leftist media was rather modest. Most of the articles that appeared around the anniversary dates contained just brief historical information reminding the readers of what had happened thirty years earlier and pointing to the conflicting interpretations of the Roundtable as either a big success of the opposition or "a rotten compromise between elites".[25]

Not surprisingly, the liberal *Gazeta Wyborcza* paid more attention to the anniversary. It published, among other things, an extensive interview with Adam Michnik, one of Solidarity's main negotiators in 1989. He gave a detailed account of the proceedings in 1989 and emphasized the pragmatism and wisdom of the decisions made at that time. Referring to the current divisive politics of PiS, he pointed out that the Solidarity negotiators behind the Roundtable Agreement had wanted to include the whole of Polish society in the work for democracy.[26]

For the liberal media, the commemoration of the Roundtable was in general an occasion to discuss the ongoing sharp political polarization in Polish society and express the need for dialogue.[27] They wondered if the current political enemies would be able to compromise as it had been the case in 1989.[28] A similar concern was expressed in *Krytyka Polityczna*, representing the new (non post-communist) left in Poland. The journal appealed for the overcoming of the polarization and saw the Roundtable as a useful lesson of pragmatism for all Poles. Interestingly, it postulated that it was time to stop the quarrels around the interpretations of the Roundtable, since its significance for the further course of events seemed exaggerated. The mistakes made during the post-communist transformation were, according to this view, not a result of the Roundtable Agreement, as claimed by the right, but of the short-sightedness of all Polish political elites as well as their corruption and egoism.[29]

In general, the analysis of the writings about the Roundtable in the press connected with the opposition shows that its commemoration was not disregarded, but the real focus of the celebrations of the 1989 events became June 4, i.e. Solidarity's victory in the semi-democratic elections.

"THE REAL FOCUS OF THE CELEBRATIONS OF THE 1989 EVENTS BECAME JUNE 4, I.E. SOLIDARITY'S VICTORY IN THE SEMI-DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS."

Commemorations of the 1989 June elections

Given the ruling party's negative view of the Third Republic, the opposition parties expected that the central authorities would hesitate to celebrate the anniversary of the 1989 June elections. This evoked the need among the opposition to mobilize behind the celebration of the anniversary to counteract the negative interpretations of the role of Solidarity reformists in the historical development in Poland, but also to protest against the current politics of PiS. Since the presidential and governmental power in 2019 was in the hands of PiS, the opposition had no influence on state decisions regarding the commemoration. Nevertheless, MPs belonging to the liberal and leftist opposition made an attempt by proposing that Parliament should declare June 4,, the day of the semi-democratic elections, an official holiday. However, the MPs from the right ostentatiously ignored the initiative by not showing up at the parliamentary session scheduled to discuss this matter.[30] Thus, since they constituted the parliamentary majority, the project had to be abandoned.

The initiative to celebrate the anniversary was instead taken over by local self-governments around the country in which the

The main celebration of the 1989 event took place in Gdańsk on June 4, 2019. PHOTO: ALAMY

opposition had their say. As early as in January 2019, a number of mayors of Polish cities formed an organizational committee for the celebrations of the 1989 events. The leading role was played by Aleksandra Dulkiewicz, mayor of the city of Gdańsk (the cradle of the Solidarity movement in 1980). Dulkiewicz followed the wish of her predecessor Paweł Adamowicz, a well-known liberal, assassinated by a mentally ill man in January 2019. A few days before his death, Adamowicz had written an open letter to the self-governing municipalities in Poland inviting their representatives to come to Gdańsk on June 4, for a joint grand celebration. The letter also included an appeal to give the commemoration a nationwide dimension by organizing commemorative events in localities around the country. Adamowicz wanted the celebration to become a manifestation against the PiS government's attempts to undermine the rule of law and to limit the prerogatives of the territorial self-government.[31] In his letter Adamowicz pointed to the European Solidarity Centre in Gdańsk (archive and museum of the Solidarity movement) as the main venue and co-organizer of the celebration. His successor as mayor, Alexandra Dulkiewicz, accompanied by the mayors of the seven largest Polish cities, presented the letter at the press conference on January 18, 2019 as Adamowicz's last wish to be fulfilled.

The seven largest cities and a significant number of smaller ones (congregated in the Union of Polish Towns) did in fact organize a series of celebrations and commemorative events under the common heading "Festivity of Freedom and Solidarity" from June 1–11, 2019".[32] They included open conferences, lectures and public debates about 1989, outdoor exhibitions, screenings of documentary films, meetings with Solidarity leaders of that time, and plays and concerts for different age groups. The main celebration took place in Gdańsk on June 4. A big Roundtable was set up in front of the European Solidarity Center to remind the public that the road both to the June elections 1989 and finally to freedom and democracy had been paved through the Roundtable negotiations. The original plan had been to place the symbolic Roundtable at the Monument to the Fallen Shipyard Workers at Solidarity Square. However, the vice chairman of the trade union Solidarity that has its headquarters there did not agree. He argued that in view of the sharp conflict between the ruling party and the opposition, also regarding the memory of 1989, he did not want Solidarity Square to become the scene of any political manifestation.[33] Consequently, there was no celebration at the monument except wreath-laying ceremonies, held separately by the prime minister on the one hand and the representatives of the opposition on the other.

THE CELEBRATIONS in Gdańsk culminated in a big political manifestation on June 4, with the participation of about 220,000 people, the main representatives of the liberal and leftist opposition (including some post-communists), representatives of many municipalities from around the country and, last but not least, veterans of the Solidarity reformist camp such as Frasyniuk, Michnik and Wałęsa. The latter was in the center of attention, celebrated as a hero and the creator of the Third Polish Republic. He and Donald Tusk, former chairman of the liberal party PO and at this time president of the European Council, were the main speakers at the event. In their speeches both praised the achievements of the Solidarity movement in 1989 as well as the accomplishments of the Polish post-communist transformation. At the same time, they expressed their worries about the fate of Polish democracy since the nationalist conservative PiS came to power in 2015. Both called on all the opposition parties to unite

in order to defeat PiS in the upcoming parliamentary elections in the autumn of 2019. Tusk was especially sharp in his statements. He described, for example, the upcoming elections to the Polish parliament as a moment of choice for the Poles, between the Chinese political model and Western democracy.[34]

The peak moment of the celebrations in Gdańsk was the solemn reading (by a famous Polish actress) and signing of the Declaration on Freedom and Solidarity, specially prepared for this occasion.[35] Symbolically, the declaration was signed at noon, alluding to the famous election poster used by Solidarity in June 1989, depicting Gary Cooper as the main hero of the American western "High Noon" with the Solidarity badge. The text of the declaration expressed the main values of the opposition and highlighted the main lines of conflict and disagreement between liberals and leftists on the one hand and the nationalist conservatives on the other. Thus, it mentioned the importance of Poland's anchoring to the European Union and the necessity to stand for democratic traditions, free from national and religious fanaticism. The declaration referred specifically to Lech Wałęsa as the leader of Solidarity, clearly in response to PiS' campaign to discredit him. Moreover, it is noteworthy that the declaration foregrounded the role of self-governance and civil society for the future of democracy in Poland. The text was signed by all the guests at the ceremony (including all Polish former presidents) and thousands of Gdańsk inhabitants.

THE LIBERAL AND LEFTIST media, both nation-wide and local, covered the celebrations in Gdańsk and in other cities and published several articles presenting and discussing the historical parliamentary elections of 1989. Most of them had a rather eulogizing tone with the exception of the left-wing *Krytyka Polityczna*, that criticized all post-Solidarity elites in the Third Republic for their disparagement of civil society and the needs of those disadvantaged in the neo-liberal economy.[36]

The right-wing press on the other hand did not show much interest in the commemoration of the June elections. Instead it focused on marking the fortieth anniversary of Pope John Paul the II's first visit to Poland in 1979. Thus, the right-wing media in May and June 2019 were filled to the brim with articles about John Paul II, while at the same time they neglected to report about the celebrations of the June elections taking place locally around the country.

The center-right newspaper *Rzeczpospolita* constituted an exception to that rule as it covered the commemorative events properly, although without enthusiasm.[37] On this occasion *Gazeta Polska*, the PiS organ, published just one article,[38] whose author emphasized that June 4, 1989 was not worthy of celebration since it had given rise to a state that was only partially democratic. It was only with the electoral victory of PiS in 2015 that a new properly democratic order could be introduced. A similar message, although formulated in a milder tone, was to be found in the conservative magazine *Sieci* in an article written by Marta Kaczyńska, daughter of the late Lech Kaczyński. She referred to her father's words, pronounced in connection with the 20th anniversary of the June elections, but in her opinion still valid: It was important to remember June 4, 1989 but the date should not be overestimated or idealized since the elections had not been really democratic and their results not used in a proper way.[39]

The same view was articulated by President Duda and Prime Minister Morawiecki in speeches[40] delivered during the official celebrations at the special commemorative session of the Senate, preceded by a mass in the cathedral and followed by an evening concert in the National Theater. It is noteworthy that while in 2009 the official celebrations had included both Parliament houses, in 2019 there was a celebration only in the Senate. In this way the PiS government wanted to emphasize that it was only the Senate that had been freely elected in 1989, while the composition of the main house – the Sejm – was to a large extent the result of the contract signed at the Roundtable between the communist party and the opposition. The president's and the prime minister's involvement in the commemoration of the June elections ended in principle with this commemorative ceremony in Warsaw. Actually, the prime minister went to Gdańsk at the same time as the Festivity of Freedom and Solidarity took place there, but the purpose of his visit was to open a conference commemorating the 40th anniversary of Pope John Paul II's first visit to Poland in 1979. Yet Gdańsk was not one of the places visited by the pope at that time. Thus, the choice of place and time for this commemorative conference clearly indicated that it was arranged by the right as a rival event to the opposition's commemorative festivities in Gdańsk. The government's and PiS attitude to this celebration was hostile from the beginning. A clear sign of this hostility was the decision by Piotr Gliński, Minister of Culture, to reduce the budget of the European Centre for Solidarity in Gdańsk as soon it became known that the Centre would actively participate in the grand celebrations of 1989, planned by the opposition. The governmental contribution to the Centre was cut from seven to four million zloty with the motivation that the institution was involved in political activities and took sides instead of staying neutral.[41] To compensate this serious loss the mayor of Gdańsk organized nation-wide fundraising that turned out to be successful.[42]

Changes in the standpoints on 1989 between 2009 and 2019

The analysis of the commemoration of the 30th anniversaries of the Roundtable and the 1989 June elections demonstrates the continuous lack of a coherent narrative about these events and the disagreement as to how they should be remembered. The four positions in relation to the memory of 1989, identified in Bernhard's and Kubik's study of the 20th anniversary commemorations in 2009, can still be discerned, that is: celebratory, negative, mixed and silent. However, in comparison to 2009, significant changes have occurred as to which groups and political actors hold the respective positions.

While in 2009 the celebratory position was first and foremost advocated by the remnants of the reformist Solidarity faction as well as the representatives of the Post-communist SLD party, in 2019 this stance was articulated by much wider circles. The members of the liberal party PO, who in 2009 had preferred to stay silent in relation to the Roundtable, gave their full support

ten years later to the clearly positive and celebratory interpretation of the 1989 events. Indeed, they remained more reserved in their acclamations of the Roundtable, but in the face of PiS' sharp criticism of the whole period of the Third Republic that had its roots in the Roundtable Agreement, they took up a stance in favor of a positive holistic interpretation of both 1989 events. This was signaled by making the roundtable an important symbol during the June celebration of 1989 in Gdańsk. A specially designed, white-and-red, 168 square meter Roundtable was constructed for the occasion and used as the central point for the main commemorative events, including the signing of the Declaration on Freedom and Solidarity.

It is noteworthy that the initiative to organize the impressive celebration of 1989 in Gdańsk came from a PO member, namely Paweł Adamowicz. After all, the Third Republic included eight years of PO rule and the members of this party were involved in building the new post-communist Poland that PiS did everything in their power to delegitimize. Moreover, in 2019 the liberal PO was no longer in government but in opposition, and engaged in a parliamentary election campaign that seemed difficult to win due to the glaring fragmentation of the opposition parties. In order to have a chance to challenge the power of PiS, the opposition needed all kinds of symbols they could unite around and the memory of the struggle in 1989 for a democratic and independent Poland could serve this purpose. Indeed, the Festivity of Freedom and Solidarity became a big manifestation of unity of the opposition, offsetting existing disagreements. The former president and legendary Solidarity leader Lech Wałęsa, who ten years earlier had voiced a mixed stance towards the Roundtable, joined the celebration. He was treated with veneration although in previous years he had been marginalized and often criticized by both the liberals and the left. Both Wałęsa and the PO former leader Donald Tusk used the commemorations of 1989 in Gdańsk to call for a fight against PiS and the radical right and for the unity of the liberal and the leftist opposition in the face of the upcoming elections. Consequently, in 2019 the opposition played the role of mnemonic warrior. They defended the achievements of Solidarity in 1989 and indirectly also the Third Republic, despite the internal dissent in form of the new left's critical evaluation of the neoliberal system adopted in post-communist Poland.

In 2009 and in the years that followed PiS and the far-right parties had been the mnemonic warriors and propagated a negative interpretation of this past. Thus, in 2019 one could expect direct clashes between the right and the opposition over the commemoration of the anniversaries. However, as demonstrated above, PiS chose instead to avoid direct confrontations. Negative provocative statements were not encouraged. Antoni Macierewicz, a prominent PiS politician well-known for his radical views on the Roundtable as an act of betrayal, was quite invisible in connection with the commemorative events and debates. To make his opinion heard he had to circumvent the issue in the way he did in the article about Olszewski in *Gazeta Polska* mentioned above, or use less visible fora such as the right-wing online media portal *Niezależna* to vent his radical views.[43] Another evidence of PiS' attempts to downplay the negative narratives was the case of Andrzej Zybertowicz, advisor to President Duda. Zybertowicz participated as a panelist in the Oxford Debate on the Roundtable in the presidential palace, and concluded the meeting by stating that the Roundtable had been a bargain between the Communist Party and their agents".[44] This evoked strong reactions from all sides, forcing Zybertowicz to apologize.[45] Clearly, PiS set here the limits for the negative interpretations of the Roundtable and Zybertowicz's declaration did not represent the government's official view. Since the chairman of PiS Jaroslaw Kaczyński as well his twin brother the late Lech Kaczyński had participated in the Roundtable, the latter even as one of the main advisors to Lech Wałęsa, this kind of interpretation discredited them. Thus, this extreme negative position was officially discarded[46] and could be found almost exclusively in the extreme right's internet fora.[47] Instead the right adopted a hybrid approach, a combination of the mixed position and silence.

"BOTH WAŁĘSA AND THE PO FORMER LEADER DONALD TUSK USED THE COMMEMORATIONS OF 1989 IN GDAŃSK TO CALL FOR A FIGHT AGAINST PIS AND THE RADICAL RIGHT."

AS POINTED OUT by Bernhard and Kubik, the mixed position was advocated in 2009 by Lech Kaczyński. The analysis above indicates that ten years later, at the 30th anniversary of 1989, it was embraced as the official stance expressed by the PiS government and the president in relation to the commemorations. The anniversaries of both the Roundtable and the June 4 elections were officially celebrated, although in a much more modest way than by previous liberal governments. In the official speeches given on these occasions, both Morawiecki and Duda acknowledged the Roundtable as a necessary, although troubling, step towards the democratization of Poland. They also praised the June 1989 elections as a manifestation of the will of the Polish people. At the same time they expressed their reservations, propounding the theory of a lost opportunity in the aftermath of these events.[48] They did not use words such as "betrayal" or "collusion" in reference to the Roundtable, as had been the case previously in the rhetoric of the right. Instead both Duda and Morawiecki pointed to the fall of Jan Olszewski's government on June 4, 1991 as a crucial moment that had derailed the development of Polish democracy. The decommunization proposed by Olszewski that might have overcome, in their view, the negative effects of the Roundtable, was halted, allowing the former communist nomenklatura to nest in the new economic and political structures. Consequently, the alleged betrayal on the part of the Solidarity elites did not take place in connection with the 1989 events, when the Kaczyński brothers played an active role, but

in 1991 when Wałęsa broke with the Kaczyńskis' political fraction and voted for Olszewski's dismissal together with many MPs from the post-Solidarity parties.[49] This version of events allowed the right to celebrate the anniversary of 1989 and at the same time keep a distance from its political enemy by blaming the liberals and the left for upholding the supposedly "rotten" order created in the Third Republic after June 4, 1991.

The mixed position was accompanied by silence on the part of the right. One of the best examples is the right-wing MPs' reaction to the opposition's initiative to declare June 4 a public holiday. Instead of debating this question and declining the proposal using their parliamentary majority, they just did not turn up at the scheduled session. The silence was also noticeable in the right-wing media. The number of articles dealing with the historical dates of 1989 was very limited and the coverage of the celebrations organized by the municipalities around the country almost non-existent. The right-wing press preferred to mark the 40th anniversary of John Paul II's first visit to Poland in 1979, which was used to diminish the visibility of the opposition's celebration of the 30th anniversary of the 1989 events. It is noteworthy that instead of taking up an open fight over the signification of those events, the right adopted the strategy of ambiguity, marginalization, purposive forgetting and silence aiming at blurring their positive meaning in Polish collective memory. A clear demonstration of this was the PiS politicians' avoidance of mentioning Wałęsa's name in the context of the commemorations. Instead of launching their usual fierce attacks on him they just tried to erase him from their version of the history of 1989.

"THE RIGHT-WING PRESS PREFERRED TO MARK THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF JOHN PAUL II'S FIRST VISIT TO POLAND IN 1979."

The right tried at the same time to prevent the opposition's use of the commemorations in the political struggle. Evidence of this was the already mentioned reduction of the budget of the European Centre for Solidarity in Gdańsk as well as attempts to block the celebrations at the Monument to the Fallen Shipyard Workers. Thus, it can be concluded that the right changed its politics of memory in regard to the events of 1989 from playing the role of mnemonic warriors in 2009 to become mnemonic abnegators in 2019.

Constraints to PiS politics of memory in regard to 1989

As Bernhard and Kubik have demonstrated, it was PiS that in 2009 had used the 20th anniversary of 1989 in the political game in order to compromise the Third Republic and legitimize their own idea of rebuilding the Polish state under PiS leadership. This kind of politics of memory mobilized the political right which at that time was in opposition. However, the same study pointed out that this strategy of being mnemonic warriors and promoting the negative assessment of 1989 did not pay off in the form of increased popular support. PiS lost both the presidential elections in 2010 and the parliamentary elections in 2011 to the center-liberal PO.

My analysis of the anniversary of 1989 conducted ten years later than Bernhard's and Kubik's clearly shows that PiS still did not succeed in establishing the negative memory narrative of 1989 as hegemonic, despite its continuous efforts to do so and its five years in government since 2015.

This failure can be confirmed by two large opinion polls: the first, conducted in 2018 by Kantar Public (commissioned by the governmental Pilecki Institute) and the second – the 2019 survey by CBOS (an independent polling institute). Both showed that the Poles' opinion of the events of 1989 is decisively more positive than negative. The majority (54%) pronounced some critical views about the extent of the compromise with the Communists at the Roundtable, but at the same time a majority (70%) judged it positively and 51% saw it even as good model for other countries aiming at democratic transformation.[50] Additionally, the respondents considered Lech Wałęsa to be one of the most important figures in Polish history (in the second position, just after Pope John Paul II). They also pointed out the history of the overthrow of Communism in Poland as one of the most important events in Polish history and a source of national pride.[51]

It is noteworthy that both surveys compared the results from 2019 with similar investigations from 2009 and 2014 (made in connection with the 20th and twenty-fifth anniversaries) and found that the changes in opinions were generally small.[52]

In order to explain the resilience of the memory of the 1989 events against PiS criticism, I would like to point to two main constraints against imposing a negative interpretation. First, the historical events of 1989 are part of the personal experience of numerous Poles. Many people still recollect their life under communism, the tense and insecure atmosphere around the Roundtable talks, the confrontations between Solidarity and the communist government, as well as the euphoria of the electoral victory in June 1989. They also remember that the Kaczyński brothers and a significant part of PiS' members actively participated in these events. Thus, refuting the important historical achievements of 1989 as a bargain of elites or "rotten roots" of the Third Republic collides with personal, "living memories" in Polish society and undermines the credibility of a radically negative assessment.

The second reason for the resistance to a negative interpretation lies in schematic narrative templates imbedded in Polish culture. As mentioned in the introduction with reference to James V. Wertsch, the members of mnemonic communities produce and are (via socialization) exposed to narrative templates which they often use to interpret various events according to the same plot line. These general, schematic patterns of interpretation[53] are instrumental for the social construction of groups. They are often part of their identity claims. They become mnemonic habits, are emotionally loaded and used for making judgments about narrative truths.[54] For these reasons they are difficult to change. Invoking this theoretical conceptualization, I want to argue that

the Solidarity movement and events of 1989 fit well into the Polish narrative template that can be summarized as "a history of Poland as leader of the nations in their fight for freedom". It originates in 19th century Polish Romantic culture and since then it is encapsulated in the frequent ly quoted Polish catchword "For your freedom and ours". As shown by previous research, this generic narrative has been employed to make sense of numerous historical events in Polish history, including the activities of the Solidarity movement in 1980–1981.[55] The interpretation of the semi-democratic elections of 1989 as a great victory of the Polish people over communist rulers that opened up the road to democracy for Poland and for other nations in the communist bloc is very much in line with that narrative template. It puts Poland in the position of leader in the struggle against the communist system, resonates with the national self-image and boosts national pride.

MOREOVER, THE MEMORY of the electoral victory of 1989 can be interpreted along the lines of yet another Polish generic narrative that can be described as "a story about national miracles taking place in Polish history as a divine reward for the Polish peoples' tribulations and fidelity to God and the Virgin Mary". It is epitomized in the popular motto of Polish Catholics: "Polonia semper fidelis". This narrative template is built on a popular Polish, Catholic myth, originating as early as in the 17th century in Poland, about the miraculous interventions by Virgin Mary from Częstochowa (called the Black Madonna) in Polish history. As I have demonstrated in my previous research on Polish national myths and their use by the Solidarity movement, a number of unexpected, positive turning points in Polish history have been inscribed in this mythological narrative template, including the emergence of Solidarity in 1980.[56] In connection with the 30th anniversary of the June 1989 elections, *Gazeta Wyborcza* published two articles that referred explicitly to that narrative. In the first, historian Tomasz Nałęcz compared the results of the June elections with one of the events, interpreted in popular memory as a national miracle, the so-called "Vistula Miracle"[57] – the victorious battle near Warsaw of the Polish army against the Red Army in 1920.[58] In the second, Adam Michnik, editor-in-chief of *Gazeta Wyborcza*, returned to this idea. In an effort to include the Roundtable in the same narrative template he called the whole year 1989 "the year of miracles".[59] Michnik and many others within the opposition knew that the Roundtable, as a non-revolutionary moment, fitted less well than the June elections with the established patterns of meaning-making of the past in Polish culture. Therefore, in order to protect the positive memory of the Roundtable they framed it together with the June elections in one big celebration of "national miracles" and referred to it as "annus mirabilis 1989".

Conclusions

For more than two decades the representatives of the post-Solidarity revolutionary group as well as their followers among the Polish right have argued for a negative interpretation of the Roundtable in particular, but also the 1989 June elections, as a "collusion of elites" and a "derailed revolution" respectively. The effect of these memory politics has been that the Poles have not forged a coherent memory narrative of 1989. The memory of 1989 has been used to polarize Polish society. This diagnosis made by Bernhard and Kubik in their study of the commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the fall of communism in Poland still applies, as shown in the analysis above. In 2019, thirty years after the events of 1989, Polish collective memory is still fractured. These findings might not be surprising. Much more interesting is the discovery that the positive memory of 1989 has proved resistant to the revaluations proposed by the Polish right, and that PiS restructured its politics of memory in response to this fact.

Since coming to power in 2015, PiS has used the public media to hammer out its negative message about 1989, but in 2019 a vast number of Poles around the country still wanted to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Roundtable and the June elections. Grassroot initiatives emerged in many municipalities to organize commemorations. As has been argued above, an important explanation for that should be sought in the high congruence of this memory with other mnemonic narratives shaped in Polish culture according to two existing narrative templates: "Poland as a nation leading in the fight for freedom" and "national miracles as rewards for suffering and the fidelity to God and the Virgin Mary". The embeddedness of the memory of 1989 in these national generic narratives made it difficult to challenge. This finding points to the limits on the freedom of memory actors who want to construct new versions of the past and make them broadly accepted by conducting specific memory politics. Memories are dynamic but not freely molded. The case of the Polish memory of 1989 gives evidence of an inertia built into the collective memories. Memory narratives, once deeply embedded in a group's culture, attached to the narrative templates and thus central to a group's identity, are easy to revive and hard to replace.

THE ABOVE ANALYSIS of the 30th anniversary of 1989 indicates that PiS have learnt the lesson that politics of memory have constraints that should not be neglected. This might have made the leadership of PiS realize that propagating a totally negative interpretation of 1989 in order to delegitimize political opponents and legitimize the idea of the Fourth Republic could be a risky gambit. Since the 30th anniversary of 1989 occurred the same year as parliamentary elections, PiS saw engaging in battles over this memory at this point in time as a disadvantage and adopted a more cautious, less confrontational strategy.

Since its coming to power in 2015 PiS has been involved in divisive politics of memory provoking immense controversies: for example about the contents of the exhibition at the Museum of the Second World War in Gdańsk,[60] the commemoration of the "cursed soldiers"[61] and the "memory laws",[62] to name but a few. Before the 2019 elections, PiS wanted to show a society exhausted by continuous political quarrels that the party was capable of a more moderate approach to mnemonic issues. The commemoration of 1989 could serve this purpose since PiS' previous warfare against the positive evaluations of 1989 had not

been to the advantage of the party. Thus, the strategy embraced was to avoid open conflict over the issue and take a position of mnemonic abnegators, hiding in this way an essentially negative standpoint. The strategy included practices of active forgetting (silence in the right-wing media), marginalization (i.e. modest celebrations or commemoration of other events to overshadow the anniversary) and production of the ambiguous interpretations of 1989. A special variant of the latter was PiS' modification of its original version of the history of the Third Republic by moving its critical turning point (moment of "betrayal") from 1989 to the circumstances around the fall of Olszewski's government in 1991 and the whole period thereafter. This might indicate that PiS began to accept its failure to impose the negative interpretation of 1989 on the Poles at large.

The above analysis shows at the same time that the liberal-leftist opposition was aware of the positive, emotional connotations of the year 1989 in Polish collective memory and that it was determined to protect it against the assaults on the part of PiS by anchoring it more strongly in Polish narrative templates. In the context of the upcoming electoral parliamentary campaigns in 2019 the oppositional parties used the 30th anniversary of 1989 as an asset in the political struggle. This is why they became memory warriors in relation to this memory and displayed a unified position, while in fact marginalizing dissenting voices on the left, critical to the outcomes of the transformation 1989–1991.

IN SUM, COMPARING the studies of the commemorations of 1989 in connection with the 20th and 30th anniversaries it can be stated that the political groups changed their positions in the mnemonic discursive field. PiS, that in 2009 had acted as a memory warrior, adopted in 2019 a position of memory abnegator, while the liberal party PO (the Citizens' Platform) moved in the opposite direction – from being a memory abnegator and memory pluralist to taking a position of memory warrior. This analysis shows that the memory of 1989 in Poland remains a hot and contentious issue in Polish politics. This is regrettable, since through its embeddedness in the Polish cultural patterns that memory has great potential to be a cohesive element for Polish society. A strong, public assertion of the positive meaning of 1989 as a foundation of Polish modern democracy could become an invitation to a respectful dialogue in the country that is at present sharply politically divided. ✖

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50 CBOS "Trzydziesta rocznica obrad Okrągłego Stołu", Komunikat z badań", nr 16 (February 2019).

51 The project "Totalitaryzm. Solidarność. Męstwo" April 2018, conducted by Kantar Public and Pilecki Institute. The results were made accessible to the author by courtesy of the sociologist Piotr Kwiatkowski.

52 The most striking change was the growing indifference to the events of 1989 among the youngest respondents, CBOS (2019), op.cit.,6.

53 Wertsch (2008), op.cit.,140.

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58 For a more information about how this military achievement became established in the Polish mass imagination as national miracle see Törnquist-Plewa (1992), op.cit., 49–51 and 79.

59 Michnik Ada "To był rok Okrągłego Stołu i pierwszych wyborów. Rok cudów", *Gazeta Wyborcza*, June 4, 2019.

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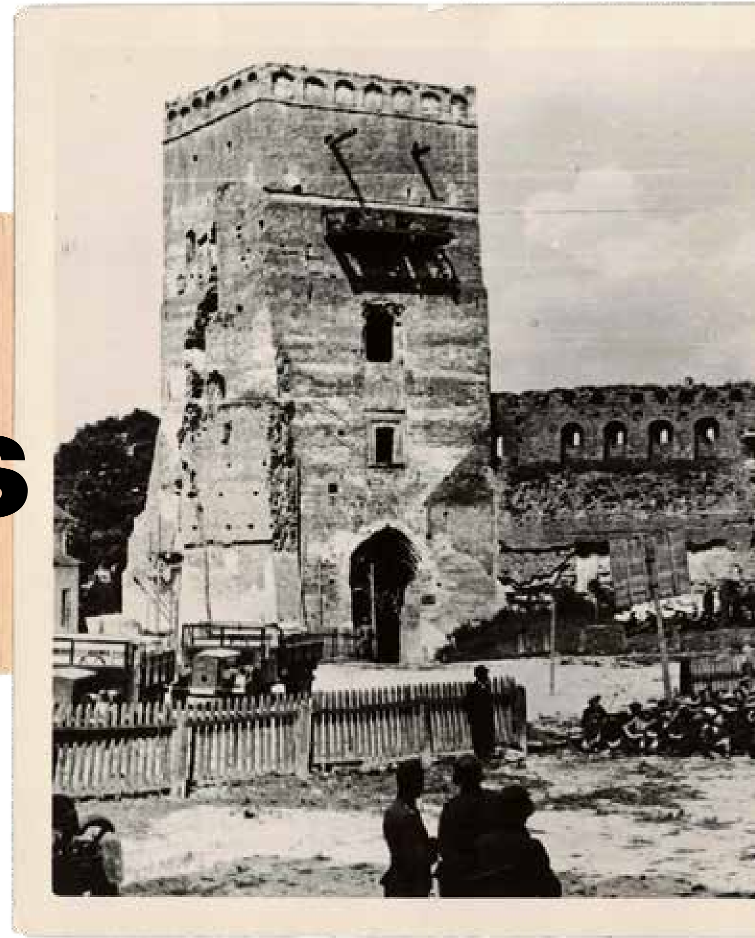
62 This refers to laws criminalizing claims of Polish responsibility or co-responsibility in genocidal actions. See Gliszczyńska-Grabias Aleksandra (2019), "Deployments of Memory with the Tools of Law. The Case of Poland", *Review of Central and East European Law*, (December 4, 2019), vol.44, no. 4, 464–492. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1163/15730352-04404002

Traces of Jewish life. In the eyes of the German soldiers



by **Peter Handberg**

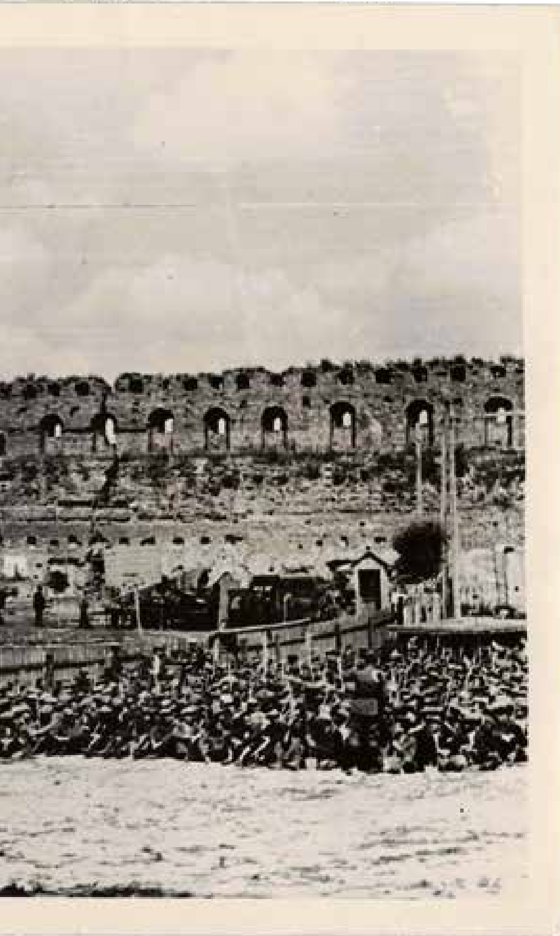
The photo albums from German soldiers during WW II have, 75 years after the war's ending, increasingly been auctioned off at internet auctions. Several photo albums contain traces of Eastern Europe's Jewish life and how this is suddenly set against the rapidly emerging terror. Throughout many of the images, the photographer's gaze is on something that is seen as inferior, laughable, exotic, war tourists' motives worth documenting to show them at home: Eastern European Jews.

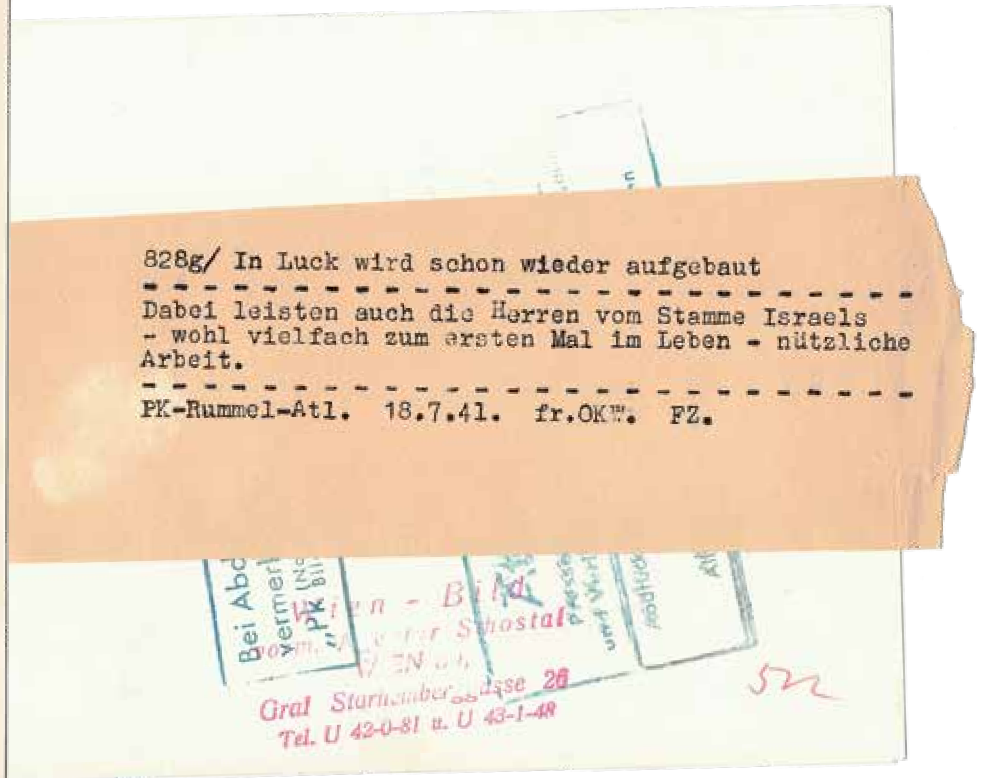
During the bad weather, I continued my journey on the Web. I paid virtual visits to German and Austrian homes and second-hand photo dealers selling artefacts passed down from soldiers, civil servants and others who served, in various capacities, as cogs in the machinery of the "German order block", as travel guide writer Oskar Steinheil described the Germans' brutal reorganization of Poland in his Baedeker guide *Generalgouvernement* from 1943. "Judaica" is a specific category in the online auctions. Photographs from World War II represent a significant part of this category.

A photograph that I purchased in an online auction was sold with a typewritten label affixed to the back:

> **Rebuilding work in progress in Lutsk**
> **Here Jewish men can be seen doing useful work – many of them no doubt for the first time in their lives.**

The photograph shows hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Jewish men sitting in front of Lubart's Castle in Lutsk in north-west Ukraine, many of them holding tools, guarded by German soldiers. The picture was taken on June 18, 1941 by a photographer





“Rebuilding work in progress in Lutsk”, photo taken by the propagande company 1941.

from a so-called propaganda company. “Rummel”, is written also on the label. Possible a name on a company, the photographer or another person at the company? “Rummel” also has the meaning “rubbish” or “debris” or even “leftover from the war" – could this refer to the Jewish men and be a subheading? In addition one can read “OKW” standing for *Oberkommande der Wehrmacht,* or the High Command of the Wehrmacht (armed forces), under whose authority the propaganda companies worked, as did the Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda which was headed by Joseph Goebbels from 1933.

SEVERAL MASSACRES had occurred on this exact spot just a few weeks before the photograph was taken. On July 2, 1,160 Jews were shot inside the castle walls. On July 4, 3,000 were shot in the same place. Prior to this, the Ukrainian people’s militia had instigated a pogrom. Such pogroms took place in several places in Ukraine, purportedly in retaliation for the NKVD’s massacre of Ukrainians, which the Jews were blamed for even though many Jews were among the victims of the massacre. The year before, thousands of Jewish refugees fleeing from German-occupied Poland had been deported to Siberia. In a macabre twist of fate, this proved the salvation of many of them.

Lutsk, the largest city in the district of Volhynia (known as Lodomeria under the Austro-Hungarian monarchy), was almost half Jewish in population. The city quickly became overrun with brutality, mass murders and violence after the arrival of the Germans on June 26, 1941. More than 25,000 Jewish men, women and children were shot on Górka Połonka hill alone. The ghetto was gradually emptied of inhabitants. When the ghetto, which had effectively been transformed into a labor camp, was to be finally closed in December 1942, the Jews barricaded themselves inside armed with axes, pickaxes and spades. The Germans responded with artillery fire and burned down the buildings; anyone escaping from the burning buildings were mowed down with machine gun fire.

WHEN THE RED ARMY rolled into Lutsk on February 2, 1944, roughly 150 Jews were found who had survived by hiding in cellars and underground holes. One of them was 14-year-old Shmuel Shilo, who miraculously managed to survive by hiding during three separate raids. On the first of these occasions, he hid in the

basement of a Jewish pharmacy for three weeks together with his own and other Jewish families. Every evening, he recounts, Germans and Ukrainian police would come down and shine their flashlights around the cellar. The beams passed above their heads while they held their breath: "It was like the angel of death was touching you," he says. They breathed with their mouths wide open to avoid making any noise, while the guards' voices seemed as loud as thunder. Then one day they heard people speaking Yiddish. Jewish prisoners had come to gather the murdered Jews' property and load it onto trucks. The square, which used to be full of people on market days, was deserted: "Broken windows were flapping in the wind. We knew they were all dead. To this day I can't stand hearing a window flapping in the wind. The ground was littered with doors, feathers, blankets, clothes … Our whole Jewish world was gone."

SHMUEL'S FATHER Avraham, who had owned a small brewery that served a popular kvass, was among those who were shot dead at Lubart's Castle on July 2. His older brothers Bereley and Mickey were deported to a work camp, while his sister Necha was given refuge by a Polish family. Shmuel and his mother Devorah were relocated to a smaller ghetto, which after ten days was surrounded by German and Polish police and military. They were marched to the castle by guards in a long column. Then the Jews were taken in groups to Górka Połonka hill to be shot. There, at the castle, Shmuel saw his mother for the last time. He managed to hide under a floor plank for four days. The floor was torn up but he wasn't discovered. Then he crawled out and escaped through a window. He wandered for a long time in the outskirts of the city and the forests, not knowing where to go. He sought out one of his father's friends, who offered him refuge for a few days. For a long time he hid in a hole in the ground. When he eventually walked back to Lutsk to search for his sister Necha, he was captured and transported to a work camp where he was reunited with one of his brothers. They began planning to escape. But soon this camp was also dissolved by Ukrainian police and German military and police. His brother was killed during the uprising that ensued, but Shmuel hid under a pile of peat. He jumped out through the window during the night and eventually joined the partisans. And he found his sister Necha. After many twists and turns, they eventually emigrated to Israel after the war. Shmuel Shilo would go on to found a *kolkhoz* and a theater, and became a highly popular actor.

IN 2011 HE RETURNED to Lutsk with his son Avi, and their journey was filmed.

The time is high summer. At the market, the stalls are brimming with colorful fruits and succulent vegetables in long rows. This is the place where the ghetto was once located, where clothes and blankets littered the ground, feathers eddied through the air and one of his brothers told him:

"This is a sight you must never forget."

And he never did. Now he buys tomatoes and apples, stopping to chat with Ukrainian pensioners.

The old pharmacy where they hid is still a pharmacy today. They go down into the cellar. They walk over to the castle and into the building where he hid under the floor. Then, amid tearful moments, they continue up to Górka Połonka hill where his mother and all his relatives, friends and schoolmates were shot.

"What do you miss the most?" Avi asks quietly.

"What I miss most is my friends. Boys and girls. I still see them in my dreams, and in my daydreams too. And I miss the Jewish atmosphere." He cries: "There's no God! The children were shouting: 'We want to live!'"

They visit the classroom where he was in fourth grade when the Germans occupied the city. After the liberation by the Red Army, Shmuel searched the city for relatives and friends. He found none, except his sister. He went to the school, to his classroom, where nothing had changed except that all the students were gone:

"Of the whole class of thirty children, not one survived. I was the only one. And I asked myself: 'Why?'"

"OF THE WHOLE CLASS OF THIRTY CHILDREN, NOT ONE SURVIVED. I WAS THE ONLY ONE. AND I ASKED MYSELF: 'WHY?'"

He sat down at the desks, one by one, and lifted up the desktops: "This is where Bozian sat, this is where Sheindele sat, this is where Musiel sat… I didn't want to go on living. I rushed down to the river and wanted to throw myself in. But then I ran away from there like a demon, in order to defeat death."

Six weeks after revisiting his beloved childhood city of Lutsk and a brutally crushed Jewish world where all his relatives were exterminated along with most of their fellow Jews, Shmuel fell ill back home in Israel. He passed away at the beginning of Yom Kippur in late September. At the end of the film, he is seen in a photograph sitting with his wife, four children and nine grandchildren. The film has ended, just like his life: "May his memory be a blessing."

TWO PHOTOGRAPHS. *One* photo is full of love, showing a united family that wouldn't have existed if a young boy hadn't miraculously survived. The film of Shmuel's journey to his childhood Lutsk conveys the enormous love and respect his son feels for him, and there is every reason to believe that his other three children and nine grandchildren feel the same way.

The *Other* photo is full of hate, taken by a photographer from a propaganda company whose task was to portray the Jewish people as the Germans' deadly enemy, as "snipers" waiting in the shadows for the Germans, as enemies who could be treated in any way you wanted: as labor or slaves under unspeakable conditions; as exotic figures to be taunted, heckled, photographed and be photographed with; or ultimately as vermin to be exterminated.

Another photograph from a propaganda company, taken on September 18, 1939 somewhere in Poland, depicts Jewish men

carrying brooms and being led away by German guards. On the typewritten label affixed to the back, the propaganda company's short caption reads:

> **Genuine Polish kaftan Jews, whose activity so far has consisted in inciting violence against ethnic Germans in the most detestable and conniving manner. The time for behaving in this typically Jewish way is over. Now they are being put to work, which may seem unusual but is considerably more useful than their activities up till now.**

The propaganda companies were established and trained beginning of 1938. At their peak they employed 15,000 soldiers, equipped with guns, cameras, typewriters, pens, and megaphones and loudspeakers installed on car roofs or at town squares. The propaganda was particularly active in the final weeks before the start of the war, when propaganda against Poland was blasted out in daily newspapers and on the radio. Poles, especially Jews, were blamed for "duping ethnic Germans"; Jews were accused of participating in "acts of violence against ethnic Germans". In late August, dramatic headlines appeared daily: "Pregnant ethnic German woman tortured to death!"; "...ethnic German child beaten to death with rifle butt"; "Incitement against the German nation and ethnic Germans in Poland"; "The terror in Poland continues"; "Ethnic German woman trampled to death"; "Plague will decimate the Germans"; "Ethnic German refugees shot down at river Warthe [on the German border]".

9444d/BDM hilft Polen - Flüchtlingen.
Auf den Berliner Fernbahnhöfen ist jetzt der NS-Bahnhofsdienst durch Mädel des BDM-Obergaues Berlin verstärkt worden, die sich der durchreisenden Flüchtlinge aus Polen liebevoll annehmen.
Atlantic, 30.8.39./Ba.

"League of German girls helps refugees from Poland", photo taken by the propagande company 1939.

A PHOTOGRAPH FROM the same photo agency mentioned above, Atlantic, which became a propaganda company during the war, shows a young girl from the *Bund Deutscher Mädel,* the Nazi organization for girls aged between 14 and 18. Her arm encircles the shoulders of a little girl while an even younger girl sits on her lap. The picture was taken at the Anhalter Bahnhof railway terminus in Berlin on 31 August 1939, the day before the Germans began the invasion of Poland and Hitler gave the famous radio address in which he said "Since 5.45 a.m. we have been returning the fire". The railway terminus was later severely bombed, and was demolished after the war.

The customary typewritten label on the back of the photograph says:

> **9444d / League of German Girls helps refugees from Poland**
> **Girls from the BDM Obergau Berlin are assisting the National Socialist railway staff at Berlin's long-distance railway stations by affectionately caring for the Polish refugees as they pass through.**
> **Atlantic, 30.8.39 / Ba.**

According to German estimates, more than a million ethnic Germans (*Volksdeutsche*) lived in Poland. In addition, many inhabitants in Poland and Ukraine who were considered suitable candidates were requested, or ordered, to apply for ethnic German status, subject passing an examination for racial suitability. These ethnic Germans played an important role in implementing the new German order, including the Holocaust. Ethnic Germans in Poland were organized in "self-defense militias" (*Selbstschutz*) which persecuted Jews either with or without superior orders. They were idealized and celebrated by the propaganda companies and in Nazi propaganda.

The photographs bear the stamps "Atlantic" and "Wien-Bild, formerly Agentur Schostal". The latter was one of the foremost photo agencies during the 1930s, supplying photographic material to magazines around the world. Many of the agency's photographers were Jews, such as Else Neuländer, who was murdered in Majdanek in 1942, Madame d'Ora, who managed to remain in hiding in France during the occupation, and Lotte Jacobi, who fled to the United States where she became known for

Jewish inhabitants leaving the city of Malyn.

her portraits of, among others, Marc Chagall, the English poet W.H. Auden, Polish-Jewish philosopher Martin Buber, Thomas Mann, scientist Max Planck and author J.D. Salinger. Her most famous portrait, however, is that of Albert Einstein.

When Austria was annexed, the owner of the photo agency, Robert Schosthal, escaped from the country and eventually emigrated to the United States, where the Schosthal family was reunited. The agency was "arianized" and its name changed from "Agentur Schosthal" to "Wien-Bild, photography for press and propaganda". It would gain an important role in the propaganda companies.

And their role in the Holocaust cannot be underestimated. They actively worked with negative reports and images from Jewish environments and ghettos, with the aim of convincing readers that "the Jews got exactly what they deserved", namely marginalization, exploitation and death. They actively instigated pogroms, including the one in Lviv in Ukraine where 3,000 people died. They distributed anti-Semitic material to the local population and drove around in cars with loudspeakers disseminating anti-Jewish propaganda and celebrating German victories. Even the SS had a propaganda company, SS-Standarte Kurt Eggers, in which five Swedes worked as volunteers. The head of the company, Gunter d'Alquen, was the only person from a propaganda company to receive any punishment after the war: a ten-year prison sentence.

Many culture and media figures who later rose to prominence in the Federal Republic of Germany had served in propaganda companies. Some examples are the publisher Ernst Rowohlt of the eponymous publishing house; Lothar-Günther Buchheim, author of *The Boat,* which later became a famous film; Henri Nannen, publisher of *Stern* magazine; Kurt Blauhorn, editor of *Der Spiegel,* and diplomat and CDU politician Rudolf Vogel, also a former member of the SS.

And the list goes on. The GDR also has a long list of such figures, including well-known film director Heinz Thiel (also a Nazi Party member), and writer Horst Mönnich, who served in Eastern Europe. After the war, Mönnich was a member of the renowned writers' organization "Gruppe 47", which counted Günther Grass and Peter Handke among its members. According to their motto, "genuine artistry was always the same as the opposition to Nazism".

SOMETIMES THE AUCTIONEER provides misleading information. The caption on one photograph says "Jewish refugees, women, children, Malin, Poland". The photograph shows around a dozen people carrying young children and claimed to be refugees. The caption on the back is partially obscured by scraps of paper from the album in which the photograph was pasted, rendering only part of the caption legible: "Outside Malin 31/7 194… | … ish refug…". Judging by the light, the photo was taken early in the morning, or possibly late in the evening. My guess is that the year is 1941 and that the caption says "Jewish refugees".

But something is not right. Malin, now located in Poland about 10 km north of Wrocław, was then called Breslau and located in Germany. The German name for Malin was Mahlen, and it is unlikely that the German infantryman who took the

photo would have written the town's name in Polish. Moreover, other photographs are on sale from the same album and from the same period, late July 1941; all of them show battles, vehicles destroyed by gunfire, burning houses and exploded bridges: "Malin near Breslau", "Ruins, battle, attack, Malin, Poland" are given as descriptions for some of the photographs by the seller. But no violent battles occurred in the areas around Breslau in July of either 1941, '42, '43 or '44. Soviet forces did not reach the area until the winter of 1945.

The seller, a woman living in France, seemed puzzled by my questions and objections. She had sorted through the album, removed the photographs and put them up for auction; that was all the information she gave me. Her knowledge of World War II history seemed limited. Instead, I embarked on my own research.

There was a place called Malyn in western Ukraine: the village of Český Malín 20 km southeast of Lutsk. On 13 July 1943, the village was surrounded by German forces following the murder of ethnic Germans in neighboring villages. It was claimed that the perpetrators were to be found here, something that has never been proven. The villagers, mostly of Czech origin, were locked inside houses and outbuildings, and the buildings were then set on fire. Hundreds of people died, as well as all their livestock.

Is it from this village that the people in the photograph are fleeing in July 1941? No, since the Germans had already occupied the area by that time and the fighting was over, as shown by the propaganda company's photograph from Lutsk on July 18 of that year. Furthermore, the people in the photograph do not look like rural farmers, but more like bourgeois or upper middle class Jews from a large or medium-sized city. The city in question is undoubtedly Malyn (Мáлин) about 100 kilometers northwest of Kiev. It had a sizeable Jewish population, 4,000 people or a third of the city, or perhaps even more and an even larger proportion; the figures vary. Violent battles took place here in late July before Kiev was finally defeated in September. By then, almost all of Malyn's Jews had been shot in a number of massacres outside the city. There are also mass graves in the city's Jewish cemetery. An auctioned photograph with the caption "German graveyard for fallen heroes near Malin" shows rows of simple wooden crosses with the characteristic German steel helmet laid in front of them, with each soldier's rank and name written on the vertical wooden panels.

"THEY ARE ALL WALKING DETERMINEDLY TOWARDS THEIR UNKNOWN FATE."

PROBABLY, NO ONE KNOWS the individual fates of the people in the photograph. But the infantryman who took the photo was wielding a camera instead of a rifle, at least for that brief moment. A small girl walks first in the line. She clasps a bag in her hand. Only two of the people in the picture are men. The refugees carry little with them except a few household goods. It is not clear whether others are following behind them in the bushes, nor whether anyone is in front of them. The girl at the front would be around ninety years old today. The young children being carried would be in their early eighties. There is a possibility that they lived to tell their grandchildren about how they fled from Málym and hid in the forest. They may have built underground holes in the forest, as many did, and they may have survived in this way. Or they might have been offered a hiding place by some courageous and compassionate acquaintance. However, it would be more than two years before the Germans were driven out of the city following new violent battles ...

It is difficult to draw any conclusions on the basis of their interaction with the German soldier behind the camera. The mother walking third in the line carrying a child in her arms could be looking worried, and the older women behind her could be smiling. The two girls behind them seem to have an expressionless or perhaps listless gaze. But the armed photographer, who is probably accompanied by other soldiers, has not made them stop or change direction. He (or they) has not made them turn around. They are all walking determinedly towards their unknown fate.

A SOLDIER FROM the 125th Infantry Division has also pasted images of battles into his album. But among them is a photo with the following caption written on the card underneath the photo: "Jews in Zloczow", which is the city's Polish name; today it is called Zolochiv and is located 60 kilometers east of Lviv in western Ukraine.

A large group of soldiers stand at the edge of a mass grave, along with civilians and children. They appear carefree as they watch the workers digging what will probably be their own grave. Many of the onlookers have their hands in their pockets. Some appear to be conversing. What more information is available about the picture? I write and ask the seller. He replies that the photo was part of an album page and sends me a photo of the whole page. Now, looking at the album page together with the other severed pictures by the same photographer, a clearer context emerges. The page contains several photos from the "Battle of Zloczow", which took place on June 30, 1941. The photograph of the digging Jews is surrounded by photographs of massacred bodies, with the caption "Murdered Ukrainians" underneath.

As in Lviv and Ternopil and a number of other Polish and Ukrainian cities, violent pogroms erupted shortly after the Germans took the city. The NKVD had murdered numerous Ukrainians, for which the Jews were blamed.

A Dutch volunteer infantryman from the SS Regiment Westland wrote in his diary on July 2, 1941, from Zloczow:

> **The sun was shining and we were strolling around in shorts. The First Company made use of their free time by shooting Jews who had fought as partisans. There is no other solution for these animals. ... The sharpshooters joined in and [the Jews] were shot in pairs. They fell down into the graves they had dug themselves.**

Infantryman Jan Olij from the same company also kept a diary.

A German solider's photo album.

On July 3 he wrote:

> **Hundreds of Jews are being killed. They were forced to dig out the murdered victims [Ukrainians] with their bare hands and were then immediately shot in the same graves. Everything is blood, blood, gunfire.**

Jewish Doctor Solomon Altmann, who survived the pogroms and massacres in Zolochiv, wrote after the war:

> **The first German patrols arrived in Zloczow on July 1. Local Ukrainians and others from surrounding towns flocked to the city to welcome the Germans. [...] Within 24 hours, the crowd began looting Jewish property. Rumors started circulating that Jewish women were being raped and Jewish men brutally beaten. Soon there were dead bodies lying in the city center. [...] Many German officers witnessed the pogrom with cold cynicism while clicking incessantly on their cameras."**

Finnish historian Lars Westerlund writes in a book about Finnish SS volunteers:

> **at least 25 Finnish SS volunteers ... observed the massacre [in Zolochiv] of the local Jews. SS soldiers captured Jews, forced them to dig graves, and then shot them or threw them into the river.**

But according to Westerlund and several other sources, the Finnish volunteers also actively participated in the massacres and pogroms in Zolochiv. Like the volunteers from neighboring Norway and Sweden, they were members of the SS Panzer Division Wiking, who reportedly took part in their first massacre in Zolochiv.

The same frenzied violence prevailed everywhere, and the most cynical contempt conceivable was shown by occupying Germans and civilians alike. The first pogrom took the lives of 2,500 Jews. Perhaps even more. And the photography, the documentation, the curious observation of these events – as if they were unforgettable moments, which of course they were, although they would soon become commonplace – which nobody wanted to remember after the war except as atrocious army tales.

AND NOW, 78 YEARS LATER, a distant relative can make a killing from their grandfather's cold gaze and obedient trigger finger by selling the entire album to a collector, who will subsequently plunder the album and sell its contents individually for an even greater profit.

The outcome of the auction? The winning bid brought in almost 23,000 Swedish kronor, or 2,200 euro.

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THE END OF "EAST CENTRAL EUROPE" AND THE RETURN OF "EUROPE IN-BETWEEN"?

The changing political implications of two geo-historical concepts, 1915–2020

by **Jörg Hackmann**

Political and scholarly debates on European (meso-) regions have returned time and again over the past 100 years. The conceptualizations of Central and Eastern Europe plays a major role in the debates, which affects the Baltic Sea region and Northern Europe as well. These issues have already been addressed many times,[1] but recently, a new development deserves our attention: the launch of the "Three Seas Initiative" in the summer of 2015 by the presidents of Poland and Croatia, comprising 12 EU member states between the Baltic, Adriatic and Black Seas. The idea received international attention during President Trump's visit to Warsaw in July 2017, when he addressed the members of the initiative's second summit. Whereas the term "Three Seas" may sound rather unfamiliar to most people in Western and Northern Europe, the Polish term *Trójmorze* resembles a name that had already made its fortune in the short period between the World Wars as *Międzymorze* or *Intermarium*. This notion encompassed the policy of Józef Piłsudski, the state founder of the Second Polish Republic, to establish a Polish state as a leading power in the territories that had previously constituted the western fringes of Tsarist Russia and the eastern parts of the German and Habsburg Empires.

The construction of such a larger region between Germany and Russia, however, is neither new nor exclusively a Polish project. In Germany, this region "in-between" is being called "Ostmitteleuropa" and in Anglo-Saxon debates "East Central Europe" and "Central and Eastern Europe" are also used. In Poland, Austria and also in the Czech Republic or Czechoslovakia respectively, the attribute "Central" dominates in public and scholarly discourses, omitting the "Eastern" component, which often has a negative connotation, as we know from Larry Wolff's seminal book.[2] Against this background, a discussion about such diverging or contradicting spatial notions does not contribute to academic hair-splitting but can reveal fundamental differences in the perception of Europe – spatially, politically and ideologically – and thereby contributing to a reflection on recent European challenges.

BEFORE DELVING INTO a transnational *Begriffsgeschichte*[3], I should point out that the notion of "Trójmorze" not only refers to technical issues of supranational infrastructure, as one might read from the Initiative's documents; it also refers to a political debate on Europe. The launching of this idea originally came from a report by a "Central European" energy lobby group and the Atlantic Council on "Completing Europe".[4] The reference to "Central Europe" – understood as "a geographic area encompassing the

EU Member States from the Visegrad Four countries (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia), the Baltic countries (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania) and Slovenia and Croatia,"[5] places the geopolitical notion of *Trójmorze* in a broader historical and conceptual context. Against this background, the first sections of this essay intend to outline the rise and fall of the concept of East Central Europe, and then turn towards the development of the geohistorical and geopolitical concepts of a Europe "in-between". Finally, these historical observations will then be related to ongoing political and scholarly debates.

East Central Europe as a (retrospective) utopia

Since the first cracks appeared in the socialist systems in the Soviet sphere of hegemony in the 1970s, East Central Europe stood for the utopia of a free, peaceful and solidary world. East of the Iron Curtain, mindful observers uncovered relics of a pluricultural world that seemed to have disappeared in the last World War. Against these historical remnants, the national homogeneity and everyday socialist life of the postwar decades seemed grey and gloomy. The utopia that sprang off of the idea of the "center lying eastwards" – the renowned phrase by Karl Schlögel[6] – emerged, on the one hand, from a nostalgic history before modern nationalism and totalitarianism on the territories of the former Habsburg Empire and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and a description of the region's 20th-century "tragedy" (Milan Kundera).[7] On the other hand, the dissent against the state socialist regimes paved the way for the return of "Mitteleuropa"/"Central Europe". Such a Central Europe embodied the ideas of socialism with a human face, and of an independent, self-governed and solidary society, which should conclude a new social contract with the "actually existing" Central Committees of the communist parties.[8] After the crushing of the Prague Spring of 1968 and the revolt in Poland's coastal cities around the "Black Thursday", on December 17, 1970, Polish and Czechoslovak intellectuals drew the conclusion that the Central Committees could not be removed from power by democratic means under the conditions of Soviet hegemony. The equilibrium between a leadership that could not control all public life and the society that "gave up any attempt [...] to abolish the leadership", however, did not last long.[9] In Václav Havel's dictum of the "power of the powerless", intellectuals in Western Europe, like Jacques Rupník and John Keane, saw the birth of a new civil society – an idea that was also adopted by their Polish fellow intellectuals.[10] All in all, (East) Central Europe seemed to have returned as a region in the making, in which the impediments of the Cold War would not last forever. These reflections on (East) Central Europe were not based on geopolitical thinking. On the contrary, the geopolitical dimension – the Soviet domination, in this case – was perceived as an obstacle that was to be overcome by politics from below.[11]

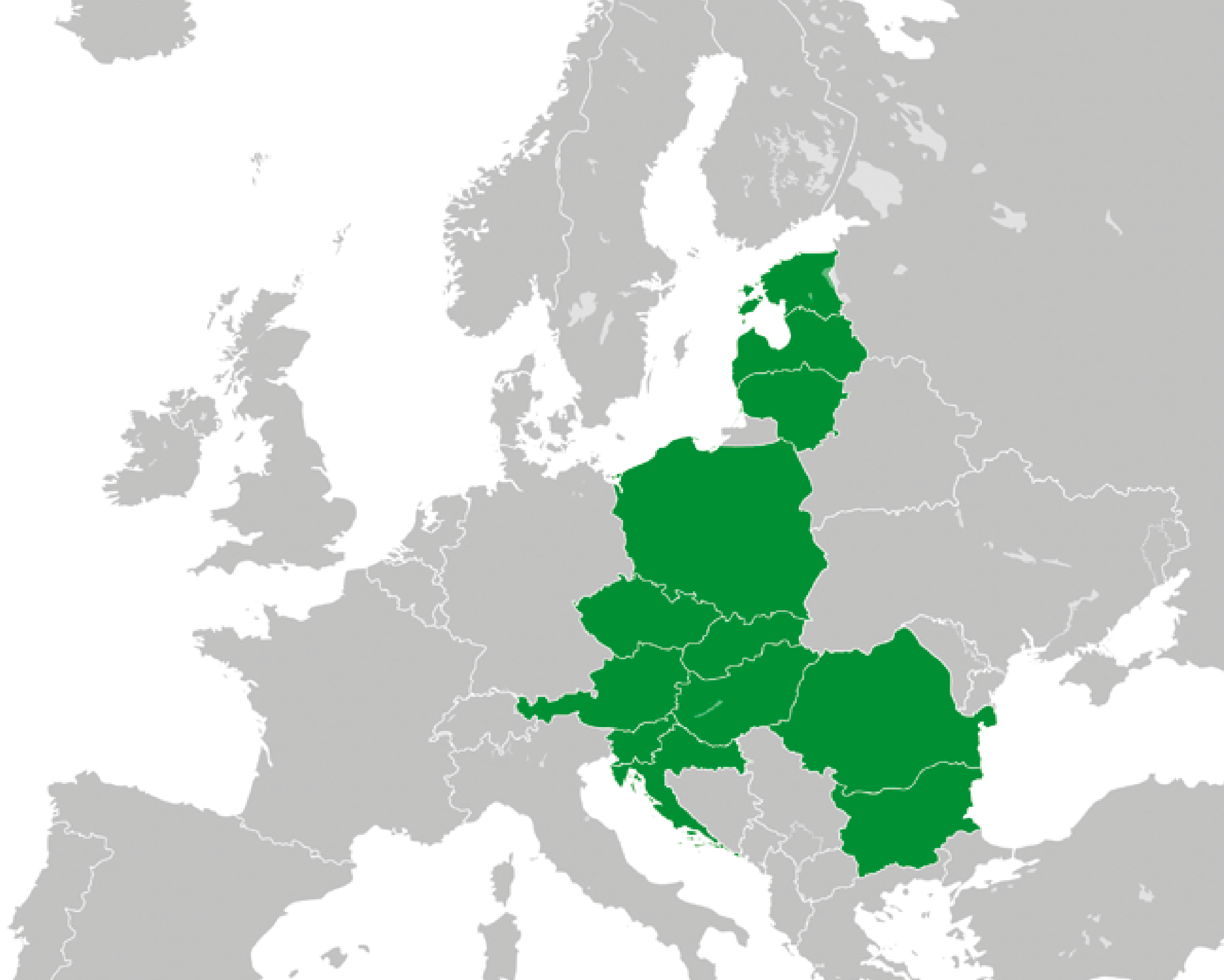
The *annus mirabilis* of 1989 seemingly eliminated the problem of Soviet hegemonic claims: During the carnival of widely peaceful, velvet and singing revolutions, the old regimes showed little resistance or collapsed. Even Moscow's attempt to stop the revolutions by violence in Lithuania and Latvia finally failed with the defeat of the putschists and the triumph of Boris Yeltsin in August 1991. The image of East Central Europe was now shining in the light from the victorious civil societies. Euphoria was in the air.[12] "Central and Eastern Europe" became a successful example of modernization, democratization and economic transformation, far exceeding the limits of the region. In a sloppy translation, the acronym CEE in German repeatedly became *Mittelosteuropa*,[13] what might be read as a hint of missing focal depth in the historical and cultural perception of the region or as an (un)conscious attempt to push the "east" in the spatial denomination into the background.

"'CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE' BECAME A SUCCESSFUL EXAMPLE OF MODERNIZATION, DEMOCRATIZATION AND ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION, FAR EXCEEDING THE LIMITS OF THE REGION."

The rise of East Central Europe

At first glance the genesis of the notion of "East Central Europe", seems to be quite simple: It refers to the eastern parts of Central Europe. A closer look, however, reveals a more complex situation, which has its roots in World War I. Before and also during this war, as shown by Friedrich Naumann's well-known book, *Mitteleuropa* was the leading notion for describing the space between the West and the East, France and Russia.[14] The term was mainly applied on the political space of Germany and the Habsburg Monarchy, but, due to the German visions during the war, a special and more dynamic focus was placed on the regions to the east of Germany that were, or should, come under the control of the Central Powers. However, these debates, which shall be discussed below, came to an end with the collapse of the Habsburg Monarchy and the *Kaiserreich* in the fall of 1918.

The term *östliches Mitteleuropa* or, since the 1930s, *Ostmitteleuropa*, respectively, which emerged in the German discourse after the war, reflected the postwar situation, as it comprised those regions of *Mitteleuropa* that had become territories of Poland, CSR and Hungary, where – in the German perspective – the traditional German hegemony was now being politically endangered. Against this background, the German influence on East Central Europe was underlined as being fundamental.[15] Besides this German political notion, an international scholarly discourse on Eastern Europe unfolded at the International Historians' Conventions between 1923 and 1933, not least with contributions by the Polish historian Oskar Halecki.[16] The main outcome was the establishing of a "new" or



Member states of the Three Seas Initiative.
PHOTO: JAYCOOP / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Slavic Europe, as a distinct historical region of Europe that was not identical to Russia.

This debate initially centered around the term *Eastern Europe*, but during the Second World War, "East Central Europe" gained relevance as an international political notion also in the United States. There, East Central Europe (and the Baltic region) were presented as regions that were distinct from Russia, not least due to the writings of the German Jewish exile historian Hans Rothfels, who was an ardent supporter of Deutschtum in the region before 1938.[17] The perspective, shaped by Oskar Halecki in American exile, became most influential – he explicitly referred to East Central Europe, which he conceived as the *Borderlands of Western Civilization*.[18] In the spirit of the 1950s, the title was translated into German as *Grenzraum des Abendlandes*.[19] Halecki, however, did not so much present a scenario of the endangered West; his idea was initially to explain to his American (student) readers that the regions east of the Iron Curtain were no *terra incognita* but "shaped all the many peoples who live between Germany and Russia" which, in their cultural and ethnic diversity, are integral parts of the Europe influenced by Roman-Catholic Christianity. Such a perspective was intrinsically connected to a criticism of the empires that suppressed the freedom of the nations of East Central Europe. Following this path, as early as 1946[20] the Hungarian historians István Bibó and then Jenő Szűcs[21] discussed the reasons and consequences of imperial rule in East Central Europe. According to Szűcs' diagnosis, East Central Europe emerged out of a dilemma as a distinct historical region of Europe: Under the rule of the great Eastern powers, Tsarist Russia, the Ottoman Empire and the Hohenzollern and Habsburg monarchies, the political and social ties with the West that had existed since the Middle Ages were cut and it was only against this background that East Central Europe emerged as a distinct historical region. Consequently, Szűcs spoke of three regions of Europe – Western, Eastern and East Central, whereas Halecki – more logically – conceived of a dualism in Central Europe and also suggested a "West Central Europe" in his *Limits and Divisions of European History*.[22]

THE PARALLEL WEST GERMAN focus on East Central Europe was an elaboration of Halecki's view, first with the attempt to show that Poland was still and has always been a part of Europe. Second, the historian Klaus Zernack argued that East Central Europe can be identified as a historical region *sui generis*, from the early Middle Ages to the 20th century – an idea that had also been developed by Werner Conze.[23]

The Polish debate on East Central Europe also goes back to Halecki's perspectives. Actually, the Polish term *Europa Środkowo-Wschodnia* appeared in underground and exile writings during the Second World War,[24] and occasionally also earlier (see the map on page 36). The term itself has repeatedly raised a critique among Western historians as semantically inaccurate, because it follows the logic of *Mittelosteuropa*, i.e. Central Eastern Europe. However, the term *Wschodnio-środkowa Europa* barely appears in Polish debates. After 1989 it was initially the

Map showing the Polish term *Europa Środkowo-Wschodnia* in 1902.

historian Jerzy Kłoczowski with his Instytut Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej in Lublin who introduced and maintained the term *Europa Środkowo-Wschodnia* in Polish debates.[25] Kłoczowski basically followed Halecki's notion: In spatial terms, *Europa Środkowo-Wschodnia* covered the territory of the *Rzeczpospolita Szlachecka*, which he also called "younger Europe". According to Kłoczowski, this term "marks what we today like to call East Central Europe. The core of this Europe is the historical areas connected to Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary."[26] In a survey among Polish historians *Europa Środkowo-Wschodnia* has also been understood as an object of historiographical and methodological reflections.[27]

Additionally, in Polish and in particular in Czech debates, another difference to the German discourse appears: There, the opinion prevails that they are being part of Central Europe, without its Eastern specification. Thus, one may also notice a use of "Central Europe" that is not equivalent to *Mitteleuropa*.[28] In any case, in the debates on Czech history, one may observe an attempt to revive Halecki's notion of "West Central Europe", although apparently without much resonance.[29]

The return of Europe

The political lesson of these debates was that at no point in time could East Central Europe in its social and cultural structures be separated from Europe and, thus, the "return to Europe" was, if not an undisputed aim, at least the predominant one of the societies. Politically, this meant that the concerned countries, after 1989, first of all wanted membership in the EU and NATO. Some voices were quick to prognos that an EU accession will be the end of (East) Central Europe. Iver B. Neumann argued that with the integration of Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary into the EU and NATO, the notion of "Central Europe" had lost its political relevance and could now be transferred to those states like Ukraine or the Baltic States, whose European integration was not yet completed.[30] In a similar way, from a historian's perspective, Wolfgang Schmale stated: "Actually, I consider a term like East Central Europe, which suggests the existence of a particular historical region, to be dispensable", following a previous argument raised by Hugh Seton Watson that there is no such region behind the Iron Curtain.[31]

IF THE CONDITIONS for a separate development were no longer there, then a fast adaptation to the West should occur – to its democratic values and its liberal economic order. This "new" Europe indeed seemed to become more Western than the "old" Europe which, with its protagonists Jacques Chirac and Gerhard Schröder, declined to participate in the Second Iraq War in 2003, despite the demands of the Bush Jr. administration. When there was no longer an East Central Europe, then regional expertise was no longer required. German experts on Eastern Europe were confronted with the political consequences of this scholarly attitude, when they had to battle with the reproach – like

their Anglo-Saxon colleagues – that they had not foreseen the end of Soviet hegemony. However, one could also understand the integration of those states, in direct neighborhood with Russia, as political added value: The new Eastern member states of the EU, as the assumption goes, would have greater expertise and higher sensibility in their dealings with Russia and the CIS. Initiatives launched by Finland and Poland on a "Northern Dimension" or "Eastern Partnership" within the foreign policy of the EU were based on such a premise. In general, the opinions about the contributions of the new member states to the EU, as well as the impact of the EU on the intellectual climate in those societies, were highly positive. To give two examples: In the anthology *Poland imagines Europe* of 2004, the editor emphatically wrote about Poland:

> **The modernization of the country since the 18th century and its territorial shift towards the West after the Second World War and, finally, the opening that became possible with the gradual ending of the Cold War anchored Poland in the West: the 'return to Europe' stopped being only a dream of the elites. It has become a reality, sealed by an unprecedented intensification of contacts at almost all levels and by Poland's accession to the European Union in May 2004.**[32]

And in a similar way, the first democratically legitimized Prime Minister of Poland after the war, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, explained Poland's membership application to the Council of Europe in 1990 as follows:

> **Back to Europe! This expression is gaining currency these days in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Politicians and economists are speaking of a return. The same applies to members of the cultural world, although it was easier for them to feel they still belonged to Europe: Europe was felt to be their spiritual home, a community of values and traditions. Perhaps the expression 'back to Europe' is too feeble to describe the process we are experiencing. One should speak rather of a European renaissance, the rebirth of the Europe which virtually ceased to exist after Yalta.**[33]

The narrative of the "return" followed the logic of Halecki's, Bibó's, Szűcs' and Zernack's notion of East Central Europe, whose societies were only prevented by force from joining their neighbors in the North, West and South and keeping up with European unification.

The fall of East Central Europe

This well-designed picture of a new European normalcy received severe cracks during the last decade: The authoritarian appearance of Viktor Orbán in Hungary, the xenophobic reactions to the immigration of refugees from the Middle East and Northern Africa and the coup-style interventions of the Polish government, directed by Jarosław Kaczyński, into the judicial system and media, which led to the – obviously not correct – reproach of a "Putinisation" of Poland,[34] have given rise to a deep frustration and concern in both politicians and the public among its Western and Northern neighbors. The new Europeans are no longer eager to be guided by the idea, to become quickly and smoothly adapted to the West in political and economic terms.

Actually, the first cracks were already visible right at the start of Poland's EU membership, with the heavy battles about voting weights in the EU Council, when Jan Maria Rokita proclaimed like a revenant of Tadeusz Reytan *Nice or death* (in 2003).[35] On a general note it could also be added that the enthusiasm for ideas of European unity was much more limited in Poland than among its Western neighbors after the Second World War. It would be worth discussing in more detail the extent to which a critical attitude is based on historical experiences and path dependencies. The overview by Włodzimierz Borodziej and others on Polish concepts of Europe highlights similar, albeit short-lived trends of support first for the pan-European ideas of Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi in the interwar period, and then for federative plans of East Central Europe within the Anders Army formed in the midst of the Second World War.[36]

> **"THIS WELL-DESIGNED PICTURE OF A NEW EUROPEAN NORMALCY HAS SEVERE CRACKS SINCE 2015."**

Zwischeneuropa and *Intermarium*

The distance towards the "return to Europe" among parts of the Polish political and intellectual elites brings us back to alternative notions for the region that have been discussed as (East) Central Europe, thus far. Here, we once again have to go back to World War I. Besides Naumann's *Mitteleuropa*, which remained bound to traditional political geography, another term comprising a more dynamic concept of German space was coined by the German geographer Albrecht Penck: "Zwischeneuropa" or "Europe in-between".[37] According to Penck, who had a particular impact on shaping German scholarly perceptions of Eastern Europe, *Zwischeneuropa* was the space between *Vordereuropa* and *Hintereuropa* and "the theatre of actual European history".[38] *Zwischeneuropa* implied a larger but blurred zone situated between two clearly accentuated regions, i.e. the Atlantic and continental Europe.[39] In the words of the economist and settlement expert Max Sering, "Zwischeneuropa" denoted "the long strip between Central and Eastern Europe" from Finland to Greece,[40] which clearly reveals the conceptual distinction between Central Europe and Europe in-between.

Against this idea of a German dominated space, in the Polish debate, the initially addressed *Międzymorze* / *Intermarium* emerged. At the end of the First World War, it had been defined historically by Halecki and politically by Piłsudski. Halecki spoke in 1918 of a "bridge between the Baltic and the Black Sea".[41] This

Polish notion first referred to the extension of the plurinational *Rzeczpospolita* of the Jagiellonians and was in clear contrast to Russian-Panslavist ideas and German claims of hegemony over Central Europe. Halecki's historical notion also followed geographer Eugeniusz Romer's depiction of Polish territory which, according to him, was defined by the river systems of Wisła, Niemen / Nemunas, Dżwina / Daugava, Dniestr / Dnister and Dniepr / Dnipro.[42]

WITH THE RISE of national-democratic ideas and the authoritarian rule by Józef Piłsudski and his successors after the coup of May 1926, the notion of *Intermarium* did not so much comprise the historical vison of federatively organized national diversity, but of competing claims for hegemony over the small nations which, by the same token, tried to secure their national sovereignty. These ideas were continued by Foreign Minister Józef Beck, who tried to set up an alliance system from Estonia to Turkey which, in addition to "Intermarium", was also promoted as the "Third Europe".[43] Needless to say that the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of August 1939 led to another "solution" for political order in East Central Europe, i.e. the "classical" dominance by Germany and Russia with catastrophic consequences for the peoples of the region in-between. Against this background, plans for a federation were once again discussed, following the same line as after 1918. They were continued by the government in exile and the national wing of the Polish dissent movement in socialist Poland with Leszek Moczulski and Janusz Korwin-Mikke.[44] In his voluminous study on "the beginning of Międzymorze", Moczulski followed the path of classical geopolitics (as well as Braudel's *geohistoire*) and tried to present Poland as a "megaregion" since the Early Middle Ages, with explicit distinction from the German discourse on *Mitteleuropa*.[45] After 1989, this geopolitical discourse broadened significantly in both scholarly publications[46] and political debates, particularly since the presidency of the late Lech Kaczynski, who supported the idea of a revived *Intermarium*.[47]

"THIS 'EUROPE IN-BETWEEN' IS NOT DEFINED BY A COMMON POLITICAL CULTURE WITH THE WEST, BUT BY NATIONAL NAVEL-GAZING AND GEOPOLITICS BASED ON THAT ATTITUDE."

IF, FROM A CLASSICAL national-historical perspective, the German *Zwischeneuropa* and the Polish *Intermarium* seem to be completely different notions at first sight, one might also come across entanglements between them. When the German geopolitical discourse during World War I referred to an expanded Central Europe from the White Sea to the Bosporus as a potential German sphere of influence, the focus of *Zwischeneuropa* after the war slightly changed to the new states, which were also called *Randstaaten*, i.e. "states on the fringe" of the Russian or Soviet Empire.[48] A prominent example of the German debate is the socio-economic study on *Europe in-between and the German future*, by Giselher Wirsing.[49] However, I'm not totally convinced that many people have read it. Despite the fact that Wirsing became a propagator of NS ideology and a member of the SS (and then an influential journalist after World War Two in West Germany),[50] the book does not simply follow a völkisch argumentation. Wirsing focuses not so much on the *Deutschtum* as a cultural and social ferment of the region, as had been the case within the "Deutsche Ostforschung", but rather launches the idea of an "anti-imperial" federation of the small nations together with Germany, because "Europe in-between" constitutes a sociologically, politically and culturally defined spatial entity with Germany. Wirsing overtly separates this *Zwischeneuropa* from Naumann's *Mitteleuropa*.[51] In his analysis of the nation-building processes shaped by peasants and intellectuals, he observed major social processes in the region. This partially sounded like the Czechoslovak president's Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk's notion of a "New Europe",[52] but with the decisive distinction that Wirsing looked for a strategy to connect these nations to Germany in order to create a political space between the West and the Soviet Union.[53] In that perspective, on the one hand, his concept was an adaptation of geopolitical ideas like Rudolf Kjellén's.[54] On the other hand, Wirsing's spatial focus and his political vision of a federation of the states between the Soviet Union and the West have parallels to the geostrategic ideas of *Intermarium*. The book on *Zwischeneuropa* by the Austrian-Polish writer Otto Forst de Battaglia may serve as a connecting link: The book's subtitle defines the space "from the Baltic to the Adriatic Sea".[55]

Current debates

At this point, we shall turn from historical debates to current political discourses connected to East Central Europe, *Intermarium* and *Zwischeneuropa*. Here, my thesis is that the turn away from East Central Europe and the turn towards terms of Europe in-between goes along with a turn towards national history before 1939 and, by the same token, away from the framework of Europe. There are, of course, good reasons why the newly acquired or restored statehood after 1918 plays a major place in the collective memory of the East Central European nations. In this context, however, the authoritarian politicians of the interwar period are largely regarded as persons warranting the political order internally as well as externally. In 2017, the political scientist Jan Werner Müller observed a return to the authoritarianisms of the interwar period in Polish and Hungarian politics of history.[56] This point has been frequently repeated and has received a new interpretation linked to the notion of "Caesarism".[57] The consequences of these interwar nationalisms for the national minorities, not least for Jewish citizens, were only of minor relevance and have been largely left out in the notion of an "affirmative patriotism", as Anna Wolff-Powęska has observed.[58]

The problem, however, reaches further, not least in the ques-

ILLUSTRATION: RAGNI SVENSSON

tion of a co-responsibility for the Holocaust. National strategies for defending the nation's reputation against such accusations were formed at the turn of the millennium. These strategies attempted to implement national discourses that combined heroism with victimization. In Poland, this discourse provoked macabre debates about the victims of the Smolensk catastrophe who, according to some people, cannot just have died by accident but must have served the fatherland. Regarding the nation state, the sovereignty of the interwar period is not only nostalgia for the national protagonists, but also a phenomenon of post-socialist mentalities. Some of the politicians who made their careers during the years of socialism apparently refer to authoritarian techniques of power, including making use of "kompromat", which was left behind by socialist security.

This approach towards national history also reveals a decisive distinction in the visions of Europe that contributes to misunderstandings between Poland and Western Europe: The political debate in Poland on Europe has no attributes and lacks a positive image of the idea of a "Europe of regions" or of transnational values and aims, which has been requested by Ulrike Guérot and Robert Menasse.[59] If the semantical layer of Europe as an appellative notion[60] is not perceived, it rather appears as a specter of a new occupation. This conflict is furtherer deepened, as Guérot and Menasse in their fight against nationalism in Europe and for a European democracy also refer to an invented foundational myth of Europe, which should support their fight, thus worsening the intellectual climate of debates about Europe.[61]

AT THIS POINT, it becomes clear that the notion of "Intermarium" or "Zwischeneuropa" has received a new dynamic that leads away from the notion of the East Central Europe of the postwar years. After the German and Soviet occupations and the expulsions and forced migrations of the 1940s, the new "Europe in-between" now forms a region of sovereign and ethnically homogenous nation states, which try to take a stand against real or alleged hegemonic claims from the West and the East and their representatives within society – just like after World War I. This "Europe in-between" is not defined by a common political culture with the West, but by national navel-gazing and geopolitics based on that attitude.

A closer analysis of the many publications on "Międzymorze"[62] would easily provide many illustrations.

Against this background it is not astonishing, but nevertheless remarkable that the term *East Central Europe* no longer plays a

major role in the Polish political vocabulary. Its disappearance goes along with turning away from the civil society discourse of the 1980s. In fact, any nostalgia for the civil society discourse seems to be inappropriate, as Jürgen Habermas has already warned: the concept, as a means in the fight against socialist regimes cannot contribute to the formation of political objectives in a democratic society.[63] Thus, the evocation of the self-defense of society, echoing back to the famous Workers' Defense Committee (KOR) of the 1970s with the Committee for the Defense of Democracy (KOD), is hardly more than a historical reminiscence.

A major pattern of the perceptions in the societies west of "Europe in-between", goes in a similar way back to the pre-1989 years: The Eastern Bloc has apparently returned as a loose alliance of states centered around the Visegrád Group, which share a common perspective on the EU, on human rights and parliamentary democracy defined by national interests, although the initial understanding of this group in 1991 went in the opposite direction then striving for a rapid and "full integration with Europe".[64] At an economic forum in Krynica in the summer of 2016, Jarosław Kaczyński and Viktor Orbán demanded a cultural "counter-revolution" against Brussels based on nationality and religion.[65] There were arguments implying that the European Union was a successor of the Soviet Union: there were voices, for example, from Daniel Cohn-Bendit, stating that Brexit may serve as a model for those Eastern members states that are unwilling to cooperate with Brussels.[66] The consequences are clearly visible: There is a significant political discourse in East Central European states that focuses first of all on distancing itself from the political system of the European Union. Vice versa the Eastern member states are no longer seen as part of a Western or Central Europe, but an Eastern Europe that contains the notion of othering, already described as a historical phenomenon by Hans Lemberg and Larry Wolff.[67]

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Representatives of countries at the 2017 Three Seas Initiative summit.

Conclusions

No matter how the picture is turned, neither the departure from East Central Europe nor the renewed turn towards *Międzymorze* in the "Three Seas Initiative" has led to rosy perspectives. Whereas the interaction between NS Germany and Stalinism ravaged the center of Europe, the reconstruction of the European space "in-between" among parts of the political elites today follows less an appreciation of the cultural diversity of the region before the destruction but aims at a restitution of alleged national strength, which crystallizes itself as the heroes of the interwar period and the resistance during World War II. In the opposite direction, German and Western politicians again tend to map Poland or Hungary, not to mention Ukraine, in the East and regard them as part of a Europe of minor political relevance. In addition, some German scholars – unintendedly, as I would assume – have recently taken a similar direction in dismissing the term and the notion of Ostmitteleuropa.[68]

Thus, "East Central Europe" no longer appears as a region in which the future structures of a peaceful and solidary European Union will be negotiated. "Europe in-between", in replacing it, again denotes the space in which old and new conflicts between the interests of bigger and smaller nations collide. Such a foreign policy has already been harshly criticized by Olaf Osica, former director of Ośrodek Studiów Wschodnich, in early 2015:

> **Today – after more than 25 years of Polish political and intellectual struggle with Eastern Europe – it is worth asking oneself: How do you avoid a situation in which the crisis of the East, in all its possible dimensions, begins to spill over to us across the border? Or even worse: When will our current distance from what is happening in the European West cause our gradual slipping to the East?**[69]

Here, one may only hope that Karl Marx[70] was right when he stated that historical events recur again, but the second time as farce, not tragedy. ■

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All of the state's official inquiries (SOU) between 1922 and 1999 are digitalized and to be found at the National Library of Sweden.

HERITAGE, DEMOCRACY, AMBIGUITY

SWEDISH HERITAGE AND THE POLITICS OF IDENTITY

by **Johan Hegardt**

abstract

This essay examines Swedish heritage politics from the 1920s up to the present by studying official inquiries during this period. Through a critical, historical and empirical discussion, it reveals how the meaning of the word *kulturarv* (heritage) has been adjusted to correspond to wider changes in Swedish politics. It shows how a relatively neutral understanding of the word *kulturarv* has been turned into an ambiguity. In this essay I suggest from the material at hand that this trajectory of change results from the development of global capitalism, which turned identity into a commodity. This essay concludes that in a post-heritage future we therefore need a new understanding of identity, an open identity, and that we need to take existential responsibility for our lives.

KEYWORDS: Heritage, identity, nationalism, democracy.

In 2001, David Harvey concluded that we need "to go beyond treating heritage simply as a set of problems to be solved". Instead, he writes, we should "engage with debates about the production of identity, power and authority throughout society". There are three keywords here: identity, power and authority. But Harvey also uses a fourth important word that should be in focus as well: "heritagization".[1]

My impression is that Harvey's text has had a huge impact on heritage politics and heritage studies, though perhaps more implicitly than explicitly. Many of us appear to have followed Harvey's perspective without knowing where it came from. But there is a conceptual prehistory here too. The questions of identity, power and authority, and the issue of heritagization, had already come into focus in Sweden in the 1970s. This created a huge shift in Swedish heritage politics, opening up space for a discussion on democracy. From there, Swedish heritage politics again turned to heritagization, identity, power and authority, producing total political ambiguity and the collapse of political responsibility in the 21st century. That in turn opened the door for the Swedish neo-nationalistic right-wing party *Sverigedemokraterna* (Sweden Democrats). That is, as I view it, the causal order of Swedish heritage politics.

Harvey does not distinguish between the word ”heritage” and what it describes, i.e. the distinction between the signified and the signifier, or between meaning and physical form. From my perspective, though, this distinction is crucial if we want to understand why the political meaning in *kulturarv* changed over the decades.

In 2017, the Swedish government published a heritage proposition called *Proposition 2016/17:116: Kulturarvspolitik* (heritage politics), in a last desperate effort to hinder *Sverigedemokraterna* from appropriating Swedish *kulturarv*. Almost a hundred years earlier, the word *kulturarv* was used officially for the first time in Sweden. By following the historical trajectory between these two events it is possible to define four stages in Swedish heritage politics:

1. Heritage and nation narration. Inquiries between 1920 and 1960.
2. The split, immigration and inquiries in the 1970s.
3. Heritage and democracy. Inquiries in the 1980s and 1990s.
4. The “Heritage Agenda” and the politics of ambiguity.

HERITAGE AND IDENTITY POLITICS are not the future, but rather the cause of today’s neo-nationalism, strong-men, closed borders and so on. Why? Because these groups make use of identity politics and heritage in their politics. There is no return to a previous and older understanding of heritage. Instead, we need to approach the future with a new and different understanding of identity if we are to avoid the appropriation of heritage by the extremist right. While I focus here on a close reading on the history of Swedish heritage politics, I think that there are similarities hidden in other archives of the Global North that should be critically explored to illuminate how the conceptualization and associated nomenclature of heritage has evolved in relation to wider socio-political developments.

Counting words

The National Library of Sweden has scanned a series of important inquiries produced for Swedish governments between 1920 and 1999.[2] From 1999, all inquiries have been published digitally.[3] I am referring here to the *Statens Offentliga Utredningar* (SOU) or, in English, Official Reports of the Swedish Government. Before a government suggests some new legislation, for example, a committee investigates the matter. The outcome is published as an SOU. I have found that among many hundreds of SOUs since the 1920s, at least 40 are related to heritage issues.

Curiosity made me look more closely at three words in the inquiries: *kulturarv, kulturminne,* and *kulturmiljö*. What I have found is that to begin with the words have a clear definition. Even though *kulturarv* is used in a similar way in Swedish as heritage is in English, it is not an accurate translation. A better translation would be “cultural inheritance”.

Kulturminne cannot be translated literally as ”cultural memory” because it is not concerned with memory proper. Instead, the word points to old objects and structures whose meaning no one can remember in the present. The word *kulturminne* is therefore more a question of an appeal or an insistence not to neglect such structures and objects, to remember what is actually not rememberable, and to care for the objects and structures because of this. We must hold in mind that this definition is, in this case, based on late 19th and early 20th century Swedish archaeology, for example expressed by Oscar Montelius in his work *Minnen från vår forntid* (Memories from our past), published 1917.[4] Montelius is very clear that he is not talking about real memories, but that we should remember to care for objects and structures with a meaning that is not memorable.

The word *kulturmiljö* is based on *kultur* and *miljö*. In everyday Swedish, *miljö* means ”environment”. But in this case *miljö* has a specific significance. Here it means in the middle, deriving from one connotation of the French word *milieu*. In this case and according to this definition *kulturmiljö* is something that exists in the middle of society. It is the historical essence of the society. Again, we need to remember that this is not my interpretation but an explanation how the word once was defined, in the SOU and by researchers in the early 20th century.

The term *kultur* has an exact definition in all three words. It refers to an old definition understood as “cultivation” or perhaps even *Bildung*, the German word for personal education, but connected with the historical, intellectual and even transcendent – divine, if you prefer – development of Swedish society.

“THERE IS NO RETURN TO A PREVIOUS AND OLDER UNDERSTANDING OF HERITAGE.”

With this in mind, I counted how many times the three words are used in the SOUs related to heritage and uncovered an interesting statistic. I found that the word *kulturminne* is gradually replaced by the word *kulturarv*, while the word *kulturmiljö* retains a more stable position in the SOU throughout the decades.

INSPIRED BY THIS finding, I turned to digital documents published by the Swedish Parliament from the 1970s to today. A similar picture arose. I moved my attention to the Danish and Norwegian parliaments and counted digital documents. I only focused on the word *kulturarv* and found a similar picture there too. In the 1980s only a few documents included the word *kulturarv*. During the first decades of the 21st century, documents including the word *kulturarv* existed in the hundreds. Most interesting is that there is a peak in the Danish Parliament in the years around 2004. The reason for this is that the Danish Parliament was discussing a heritage canon at the time.

In the early 20th century there was a connection in the Swedish narrative between the signified and the signifier, that is between *kulturminne* (physical form) and *kulturarv* (meaning). From the 1970s and onwards, a narrative has developed that only focused on *kulturarv* (meaning), with explicit political and democratic problems, which I will explain more closely below, turning into the political situation of total ambiguity that we see today, where the word *kulturminne* has been almost totally replaced by the word *kulturarv*.

BETÄNKANDE MED FÖRSLAG
LAG ANGÅENDE KULTURMINNESVÅRD
ORGANISATION AV KULTURMINNESVÅRDEN
EN DÄRTILL FÖRORDNAD KOMMITTÉ
I
HISTORIK, MEMORIAL ANG. MINNES-
VÅRDENS NUVARANDE STÅNDPUNKT,
UTLÄNDSK LAGSTIFTNING SAMT BILAGOR
STOCKHOLM
1922

Fig 1. SOU 1922.

When going through the SOUs there is also a correspondence between the shift from *kulturminne* to *kulturarv* and the liberalization and globalization of the Swedish and international economies. The logic here is that liberalization and globalization of the economies is followed by a stronger need for personal identification. This is at least what follows from the SOU. Hence, as we shall see below, there has been a semantic shift in the meaning of the word *kulturarv*. All translations in the following text are mine.

Stage 1. **Heritage and nation narration. Inquiries between 1920 and 1960**

I have not been able to clarify the etymology of the Swedish word *kulturarv*. A hypothesis is that it has its background in the German word "*kulturelles Erbe*".

The first SOU was published in 1922. Out of just over fifty inquiries that year, two are about Swedish *kulturminne*.[5] These two inquiries deal with new legislation regarding *kulturminne*. Swedish heritage legislation is among the oldest in the world, dating back to at least 1666.[6]

The words *kulturarv* and *kulturmiljö* are not used in the first volume.[7] Instead the Commissioners frequently used the word *kulturminne*. In the second volume, *kulturarv* is used three times and on three different pages. The word *kulturminne* is used 77 times on 45 pages.[8]

When the word *kulturarv* was used in the second volume, it was with the specific purpose of underlining that *kulturarv* is something that belongs to the nation and all its inhabitants. *Kulturarv* also includes the whole range of *kulturminne*. Furthermore, it is concluded that *kulturarv* is something that belongs to civilized nations (*kulturnationer*).

Hence in this case, inheritance is a question of bringing into the future a whole variety of *kulturminne*, and an appeal or an insistence to remember what is not rememberable, to care for these alien items from the past and give them an eternal life. Science, it was stated in the inquiries, is the key issue, because science has the capacity to understand, serve and care for the nation's historical inheritance.

Even though Sweden has an indigenous population and other minorities, they are not mentioned, but nor are they explicitly excluded. There is nothing in the word *kulturminne* or *kulturarv* in the SOU from this time that suggests any form of exclusion or inclusion. Instead, *kulturarv* belongs to all inhabitants of the nation, or rather all future generations, regardless of who they might be.

The Commissioners even wrote that Swedish *kulturarv* is a part of all civilized countries' heritage, indicating that there was no intention to exclude or include at a nation-to-nation level either. Plainly, the Commissioners were in search of a "neutral" perspective on the past that would help citizens to remember what is not rememberable and to care for these objects and structures.

Eight years later we again come across an SOU that deals with *kulturarv*.[9] This time the word *kulturarv* is used nine times on seven pages, but *kulturminne* is still in the majority. It was once more a question of the nation and its inhabitants. But something important had happened. The nation had changed. In 1928, the leader of the Social Democratic Party and later the Swedish Prime Minister, Per Albin Hansson (1885–1946), gave a famous speech to the nation, the *folkhemstalet* (people's-home speech). His point was that Sweden should become a social and economic welfare society. One would think that an older definition of *kulturarv* with its focus on the nation would have then shifted to a more socialistic approach to the country's heritage, but this was not the case. Instead, we find the same focus on the nation and its heritage as we found in the SOU from 1922. The Commissioners did however use the word *allmoge* (country folk). From a Social Democratic point of view, *allmoge* means country people or families with few if any resources.

THE COMMISSIONERS WROTE that there was a risk that rural districts might lose the *allmoge kulturarv* owing to a radical modernization of society. The industrialization and modernization of Swedish society began in the late 19th century and in the 1930s more and more people were moving to the industries in the cities.[10]

Despite this, *kulturarv* was defined in a similar way to the two earlier SOUs, namely as a national "we". This is not strange because it is in line with the rhetoric of the *folkhem* politics of the time, declaring one nation, one people, one religion, one history and even sometimes one race, and of course one heritage.[11]

Hansson argued for a homogenous society with a place for everyone. What this suggests is that the Commissioners and the politicians in the 1930s used an older definition of *kulturarv* in a new political setting, *underlining its nationalistic importance instead of its national importance*. Having national importance is

KULTURARV

KULTURMINNE

KULTURMILJÖ

KULTURARV

KULTURMINNE

KULTURMINNE

understood by the Commissioners as objective scientific importance for the nation. Having nationalistic importance is instead a question of political importance, rather than objective scientific importance. Today we would not draw that sort of line, but that was the argument earlier. What we also find here is a focus on a specific form of *kulturarv* (i.e. *allmoge*), which we did not find in the two previous inquiries. Thus, there was a small but important change in how *kulturarv* was understood between the first two inquiries and the one from the 1930s.

In 1956, an inquiry dealing with historical buildings was published in two volumes.[12] *Kulturarv* is only mentioned once and it is stated that buildings with traces of past construction techniques, or related to specific historical events, or to persons that are important for Swedish history, belong to the nation's *kulturarv.*[13] In 1956, *kulturarv* was thus still understood as a "neutral" national inheritance from the past.

The next SOU to deal with *kulturarv* was published in the mid-1960s.[14] The Swedish welfare society was just emerging. The economy was strong, and many social reforms were delivered. There was also an influx of migrant workers.

The word *kulturminne* is not mentioned at all in the first of the two volumes, but *kulturarv* occurs nine times.[15] Most of the time it refers to the nation's *kulturarv*. On one occasion, the Commissioners discuss *Franska kulturarvet* (French heritage) and one another occasion they mention *allmogens kulturarv*.

Between 1922 and 1965, the word *kulturminne* played a central role in Swedish heritage management. The word is, again, an appeal to remember what is not rememberable, and to care for such items. *Kulturarv*, on the other hand, is a form of umbrella concept that includes all *kulturminne*. This inheritance belongs to the nation, its inhabitants, and its future generations, but it is the state's responsibility to care for its *kulturarv* in a neutral, scientific manner. This can be questioned, of course, because what are neutrality and science? It seems to me that the Commissioners understood this and were therefore careful when they use the word *kulturarv*.

Stage 2. **The split, immigration and inquiries in the 1970s**

As we have seen, the word *kulturarv* was used sparingly in the inquiries discussed so far. The Commissioners used the word *kulturminne* instead. Minorities and indigenous groups were not mentioned, but that does not mean that they were excluded. The only group that is mentioned is the *allmoge*, but not as an exclusive group. The Commissioners suspect that the *allmoge* might disappear owing to changes in the society, which meant that their tools, buildings, landscapes and traditions could vanish.

In the 1960s, Sweden was in need of workers for its expanding industries. People from Finland and Italy, but also from Greece and Turkey arrived.[16] In 1972, an inquiry with the title *New Cultural Politics* was published, [17] it concerned the question of rethinking cultural politics, but no shift in the use of the three words is evident. *Kulturminne* is still more common than *kulturarv*. The issue instead was: "The *Immigrant inquiry* (from 1969) investigates immigrants' problems with adaptation and so forth. The inquiry shall address the degree to which society should provide immigrants with the possibility to keep their traditions and other heritage".[18]

The Commissioners stressed that *Centerpartiet* and *Moderata samlingspartiet*, two center or center-right parties, underlined the need to emphasize heritage from older times, but also Christian values.[19] The question of immigration and the intervention from the two political parties are perspectives not seen in earlier SOUs. If all the previous SOUs were free from conflicts of interest, this one was not. The issue is that if immigrants were to be allowed to nourish their heritage, then there was a need to promote Swedish heritage, traditions and religion too.

According to the inquiry, immigrants do not carry with them any *kulturminne*. Only Sweden has such items. Immigrants carry with them *kulturarv*, things, or rather traditions, that are movable, which *kulturminne* obviously are not. This does not suggest

that immigrants cannot respond to the appeal, or the insistence, to remember what is not rememberable in Swedish *kulturminne*, but it is not a part of them when they arrive in Sweden, nor of course is Swedish *kulturarv*, because, the thinking went, if immigrants were to keep their own heritage, they could not at the same time turn to Swedish heritage, something clearly underscored in the quotation: "... The inquiry shall address the degree to which the society should provide immigrants with the possibility to keep their traditions and other heritage".[20]

It was, in other words, possible for immigrants to remember what is not rememberable and at the same time keep their heritage, but it was not possible for them to have two heritages. Nor was this possible for Swedes. That's the issue, according to the Commissioners.

IN THE CASE OF the immigrants, *kulturarv* is separated from *kulturminne*. *Kulturminne* became a historical entity, which *kulturarv* is not. *Kulturarv* was turned into an ahistorical social phenomenon and immigrants' *kulturminne* was stuck in the country they had left behind. Immigrants thus became ahistorical. The difference between heritage and history, and the ahistorical dimension of heritage, has been discussed by David Lowenthal, who concludes that heritage has nothing to do with history. Heritage, according to Lowenthal, is not a historical investigation but a tribute to the past, not a wish to understand anything about the past, but a profession with a deep trust and belief in the past, however redefined for present purposes.[21] As Lowenthal underlines, heritage is an ahistorical project with political and economic ambitions.[22] Lowenthal concludes: "...confining possession to some while excluding others is the raison d'être of heritage".[23]

Lowenthal's discussion is crucial for what I'm trying to capture in this essay and for our understanding of why heritage is such a problematic issue today. This is underscored in the inquiry under discussion, because strangely, and only after some time, immigrants' ahistorical and social *kulturarv* slowly took on *kulturminne,* because as we have seen, *kulturarv* cannot exist without historical entities. Immigrant *kulturarv* slowly filled with *kulturminne*, but it was a new form of *kulturminne*, a *kulturminne* that can be translated into cultural memory, because it is remembered rather than actually present in the same place and time as those doing the remembering. What we have here is a new definition of *kulturminne* adapted to a new situation.

What we are tracing here is the beginning of a discourse that will become more ambiguous during the following decades. In 1972, the Commissioners were aware for the first time that *kulturarv* is not an easy issue, but they believed in its possibilities in a multicultural Swedish society.

Encouraged by this possibility, a new SOU was published only three years later with the title *The Sami in Sweden: Support for language and culture*.[24] The Sami, an indigenous population, were not mentioned in earlier enquiries. I must again stress that this is not a consequence of explicit exclusion, but because of broad older definitions of *kulturarv* and *kulturminne*.

That the Sami came into explicit focus in the 1970s is a consequence of a new definition of *kulturarv* and to some extent *kulturminne*. The Commissioners wrote: "Immigrants' and the linguistic minorities' capacity to bring with them their own cultural traditions has in many cases been limited. This is a pity because the preservation of their heritage has proved important for their self-identification." A prospective policy on minority and immigrant issues should be based on this conclusion, the Commissioners argued.[25]

I have translated "*föra de egna kulturtraditionerna vidare*" as "bring with them their own cultural traditions". This "bringing with" is important because that is what an inheritance is about. But "bringing with" is not an easy issue. It can be extremely problematic. To "bring with" is to conserve. An inheritance ceases to be an inheritance if we do not bring it with us and hand it on to future generations.

The older definition of *kulturarv* included what needed to be remembered as something that was not rememberable. In this meaning, *kulturarv* was not something static, but a part of a developing and changing society. In the new definition it instead became conservative, which this "bringing with" underscores. It even excludes history because it has nothing to do with history. Instead "bringing with" is to bring the whole inheritance that is important for self-identification in the present.

THE SAMI, AND OTHER minorities and immigrants, are deprived of their history by this new definition and turned into an ahistorical and eternal anachronism. The temporality of their history was smashed into a static cube with no doors to let life in. Eric Wolf famously described those condemned to this condition as being "people without history", not because such communities literally had no histories, but because Eurocentric views characterized them in this disparaging way.[26]

"AN INHERITANCE CEASES TO BE AN INHERITANCE IF WE DO NOT BRING IT WITH US AND HAND IT ON TO FUTURE GENERATIONS."

However, what these authors and other critics of Western discourse have missed is that not having an explicitly defined history and an historical discourse can have its advantages.

If, for example, minorities and indigenous groups are given a history they are also historicized. History is something that has been but is no longer. If indigenous groups and minorities have a history, they are historical and thus changeable over time like society in general. As we have seen Lowenthal conclude, the whole point with heritage is that it is static and deals with the political and economic present. It would therefore be a catastrophe for minorities and indigenous groups if they are historicized, because they would be able to change, adapt and be integrated like society in general, and not static with their present heritage. Instead, their heritage would be historicized and place within the

Fig 2. SOU 1972.

Fig 3. SOU 1978.

walls of a museum in a similar way as mainstream society deals with its history. This would contradict recent decades of liberal heritage politics favoring the heritage of indigenous groups, minorities and immigrants.

At the same time and in this definition of *kulturarv*, there is an overwhelming risk of social, political and legal suffocation, penalization, and disadvantage. Another crucial issue is that "self-identification" and the aspect of "bringing with" turns inwards and is defined against other identities, i.e. identity is static and locked up inside itself, creating a risk of polarization and conflict between immigrant groups, minorities and a national majority. Interestingly, the Commissioners understood this, but could not find ways to transcend their own discourse. As an example, the Commissioners wrote that it could be very difficult to be a Sami among the Samis themselves, because *kulturarvet* risked locking people up inside a more or less static community.[27]

In 1978, the inquiry *Culture and information across borders. Swedish cultural and information exchange abroad* was published.[28] The purpose was to explore Sweden's international contacts in culture, science and information and Sweden's impact on the international community, and to understand how Sweden was viewed abroad.

The Commissioners wrote: "In their endeavor to free themselves from a colonial inheritance, countries in the Third World have in recent years focused on the preservation of their own cultural heritage and the strengthening of national identity through different cultural political measures."[29] After concluding this, the Commissioners underscored that it was a perspective that had been expressed at different international and regional minister conferences organized by UNESCO during the 1970s. Culture, they stressed, was also a part of the United Nation's basic needs strategy that was signed by the International Labor Organization (ILO) at the World Employment Conference in 1976, as a part of a new economic world order.

They also questioned how such issues were understood during the 1960s. Back then, support for cultural projects was mostly directed towards the conservation of large historical monuments. They mention UNESCO's campaign to save the Abu Simbel temple in Egypt as one example. In the 1970s, developments were characterized by educational and scientific efforts aimed at strengthening national identity. International organizations such as the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), UNESCO and ILO developed projects to aid developing countries in their efforts to preserve and develop their own cultures.[30]

The state-funded Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency was engaged, and its 1976–77 budget included economic support of cultural issues for the first time, with the purpose of strengthening and developing a national character in postcolonial 'Third World' nations. The Commissioners wrote: "National identity is the fundament for a dialog between other nations, something that has been advocated by representatives from different developing countries."[31]

But the Commissioners also addressed Swedish issues such as repatriation and emphasized that ethnographic museums in Sweden must allow researchers from Africa, Asian and the Pacific to work with *their own* heritage stored in Swedish museums.[32] The Commissioners also repeated what was stated in earlier SOUs about immigrants keeping their identity by defending and developing their own heritage.

IN SOUS FROM THE 1920S and onwards, the Commissioners argued that Swedish *kulturarv* is a part of a broader set of heritage including all civilized nations (*kulturnationer*). *Kulturarv* was understood as something neutral that belongs to everyone and at the same time to no one. Scientists, state bureaucrats, museum staff and other authorities handled it. *Kulturarv* could not be split up amongst different interest groups. Throughout the 1970s, *kulturarv* gradually became an issue for immigrants and different ethnic groups in Swedish society.

If we view the SOU from 1978 more closely, we find a contradiction in the definition of the word *kulturarv*. If *kulturarv* was a question of self-identification in Sweden during the 1970s and therefore important for minorities and immigrants, it was not so for the postcolonial nations with which Sweden then engaged. Instead *kulturarv* in this case was seen as important for postcolonial countries' *national* self-identification.

What this implies is that Sweden did not want to encourage a heritage split in this case, in the same manner as had been done in Sweden. Instead, it was argued that such postcolonial nation states needed educational and scientific efforts to strengthen their national identity. This was in line with the definition used in Sweden from the 1920s and until the 1960s when it was argued that *kulturarv* was important for the nation and all its inhabitants and future citizens. What we view now is another form of heritage definition only applicable for Sweden's engagement with the postcolonial Global South. In other words, it is important to promote national and even nationalistic heritage politics in postcolonial countries, but at the same time to oppose such perspectives in Sweden. Here heritage – *kulturarv* – is, on the contrary, a

question of plurality, multi-ethnicity, immigrants, minorities and indigenous groups.

Swedish engagement in the postcolonial Global South might not be imperialistic, which might be a too strong word, but there is a clear difference between how *kulturarv* is evaluated and used in the Swedish context and how Swedish Commissioners and politicians want it to be used in a postcolonial context.

The argument is, according to the SOU, that these nations have not advanced to the level where they could accept a diversity of *kulturarv*. Instead they needed scientific knowledge and education to be able to deal with the country's national *kulturarv* and to shape a national identity. Such notions were in line with UNESCO's politics at the time, and indeed still are.[33]

It seems to me that the Commissioners returned to Swedish *folkhem* politics, trying to create a social, economic and equal welfare society characterized, as I noted earlier, by one nation, one people, one religion, one history and sometimes even one race, and of course one heritage.[34]

THIS APPROACH WAS of course doomed to fail. Instead, it can be hypothesized that Swedish heritage politics have implicitly and probably also explicitly helped to create some of the problems that we have today, with heritage polarization and conflicts, heritage destruction, terrorism and so on, but with such a slow shift that it is almost impossible to trace it back to Sweden's international engagement decades ago. During the 1970s Sweden was deeply influential in India, for example, and today a Hindu nationalistic party governs India with a strong focus on Hindu heritage. Yet Sweden alone is not to blame. The Western world shares the blame. We can see this today with hindsight, but of course, that was not possible in the 1970s. They thought that a nationalistic heritage politics was a splendid idea. Today we know that the "state nationalism" that was advocated was not a good idea, and, as we shall see below, it was already questioned in inquiries from the 1980s and 1990s, because Sweden then began to emphasize democratic issues, domestically and abroad. *Kulturarv* had become a democratic problem.

"THROUGHOUT THE 1970S, *KULTURARV* GRADUALLY BECAME AN ISSUE FOR IMMIGRANTS AND DIFFERENT ETHNIC GROUPS IN SWEDISH SOCIETY."

Stage 3. **Heritage and democracy. Inquiries in the 1980s and 1990s**

As far as I have been able to determine, the word democracy was used for the first time in an inquiry from 1956. There it was stated that a democratic society must care for its *kulturarv*.[35] The second time the word was used was in an inquiry from 1972. By then the situation had changed and access to the nation's *kulturarv* was seen as a universal democratic right.[36]

In SOU 1983:57, *Different origin – Community in Sweden. Education for linguistic plurality,* the word 'democracy' was given a more prominent position. The word was used 32 times on 16 pages. Something had happened, otherwise why would the Commissioners discuss democracy so many times?

In this inquiry the word *kulturarv* was mentioned 60 times on 49 pages. *Kulturminne* was not mentioned. The discourse had completely shifted from *kulturminne* to *kulturarv*.

The Commissioners wrote that it was complicated to use '*kulturarv*' in education when pupils at the same time should be included in *our fundamental democratic principles*. The Commissioners thought this was difficult enough to achieve in a school with only Swedish pupils. In a school with different nationalities, they wrote, it becomes problematic to distinguish between what might be ordinary conflicts between people and conflicts that are a consequence of some children belonging to a minority ethnic group or who are immigrants.[37]

The issue is *our fundamental democratic principles* ("*våra viktigaste demokratiska traditioner*"). It is even a question of fostering (*fostran*) democracy, which gives everyone a possibility to influence society, but only through democratic means.[38]

The Commissioners stressed that principles and opinions can always be reconsidered. At the same time, it is clear that they believed our democracy should rank some principles above others. Such principles must always, they underlined, be taken into consideration when personal and cultural freedom is discussed.[39]

Underlining *the fundamental principles of Swedish democracy* is something not seen before in the inquiries. What the Commissioners underscored was that *kulturarv* might have its advantages in a multicultural society, but it should never be allowed to challenge the fundamentals of Swedish democracy.

Immigrants, according to the Commissioners, bring with them principles and traditions that are not consistent with the Swedish principles and traditions inherent in Swedish democracy.[40] *Kulturarv* not consistent with these principles is thus not real *kulturarv*, but something else that cannot be accepted in the Swedish context. They did not point to any examples, but this is irrelevant because what we see here is the underlying belief that *kulturarv* must always be evaluated in relationship to the principles of democracy.

This realization completely shatters the old idea that *kulturarv* was important for self-identification. In this later definition it is the principles of democracy that must furnish the fundamentals for self-identification. The point that the Commissioners underscore here is that *kulturarv* no longer can be the fundament fort self-identification because some, not least immigrant *kulturarv*, the Commissioners argue, holds perspectives and traditions that are not consistent with Swedish principles and traditions inherent in Swedish democracy.

YET THIS IS NOT the end of the discussion. Eight years later in 1991 the issue was emphasized again in an SOU called *Different but similar. Immigrant children in multi-cultural Sweden.*[41] There

it was stated that free choice (*valfrihet*) comes with respect for the integrity of the other and the possibility to make use of one's own *kulturarv* within the framework of Swedish society's basic norms for social coexistence.[42] According to Ian Lilley, an Australian professor in archaeology who has been working with heritage issues for decades, Canada and Australia had similar politics at the time.[43] This is not irrelevant because Sweden, Canada and Australia have had very similar liberal and social democratic politics for decades.

No one – Swede or immigrant – has a totally free choice. Instead the Commissioners declared that it was important that a nuanced discussion take place, to make Sweden a more generous multicultural society with a new understanding of cultural pluralism.[44] It is not clear, however, what the Commissioners meant by a new understanding of cultural pluralism.

IN 1991, THE NATIONALISTIC and anti-immigrant party *Ny demokrati* (New Democracy) entered the Swedish parliament. In response to a new proposition for primary schooling (*grundskolan*) brought forward by the Social Democratic government,[45] the nationalistic party wrote that there were conflicting objectives in the proposition because on the one hand it welcomed a multicultural society and on the other hand defended Christian ethics and a humanistic Western world heritage. It was important, the party argued, that there should be no ambiguities in national policy documents such as a new plan for primary schooling. Even though UNESCO is not mentioned in the inquiry, the perspective mirrors UNESCO's thoughts about "the right kind of culture", according to Bjarne Nielsen. UNESCO, Nielsen argues, "promotes an all-inclusive culture perspective for 'We the Peoples of the United Nations', but there are limits to tolerance in this culture ideology."[46]

Limits to tolerance are, as we have seen so far, not only an outspoken demand from *Ny demokrati,* but the main discourse throughout the inquiries from the "Heritage split" in the 1970s, discussed above. The right kind of heritage culture was democratic. However, the dilemma will worsen.

In the inquiries discussed so far, words such as "anti-democratic" or "racism" were not mentioned. However, exactly those two words were used in an inquiry from 1995. The Commissioners wrote that technology should be used to tackle the information and knowledge gap in the society. But if such technology were used to spread racist and anti-democratic tendencies, it had to be addressed.[47]

Even though *Ny demokrati* evaporated in the 1994 election, the party had changed the political map. From that time onwards, right-wing groups and parties became aware that *kulturarv* was important for self-identification and therefore could be positively used in nationalistic politics and national ethnic identity.[48]

Stage 4. **The "Heritage Agenda" and the politics of ambiguity**

In 1998, David Lowenthal wrote that "confining possession to some while excluding others is the raison d'être of heritage".[49] In the same year, Edward Said claimed that "Identity as such is as boring a subject as one can imagine. Nothing seems less interesting than the narcissistic self-study that today passes in many places for identity politics, or ethnic studies, or affirmations of roots, cultural pride, drum-beating nationalism, and so on". But in the same sentence he also underscored that "We have to defend peoples and identities threatened with extinction or subordinated because they are considered inferior, but that is very different from aggrandizing a past invented for present reasons".[50]

There is an important word in the Said citation that is repeated in another quotation from Lowenthal: "Rival claimants seem hell-bent on aggrandizing their own heritage goods and virtues, to the exclusion or detriment of all others".[51] The word "aggrandizing" means to increase the power, status, wealth or reputation of someone or something. Our world is obsessed by aggrandizing and identity politics; cultural pride and drum-beating nationalism lie at the core of social expression. Why? Because of heritage. Heritage is the only word that has the international power, at every level from governmental to individual, to activate this political situation. We find this polarized conflict everywhere around the globe.

Swedish inquiries during the 1980s and the early 1990s touched on this problem but did not have the intellectual insight to develop a more comprehensive critique of the looming situation, or maybe they felt a need to be politically correct, which is probably more true. Nevertheless they turned in another direction, which started a new orientation in Swedish heritage politics.

"IT WAS POLITICALLY DECLARED THAT PEOPLE EMPLOYED IN THE HERITAGE SECTOR MUST UNDERSTAND THAT THERE IS A PLURALITY OF HERITAGE."

IN 2004, A GOVERNMENT-FUNDED three-year project came to an end. The project was labelled "Agenda kulturarv" (The Heritage Agenda). Its purpose was to increase the democratic impact of state-governed heritage management by collaborating with wider society.[52]

Agenda kulturarv describes a peak in a discourse that was introduced during the 1970s. Since then, heritage has been connected with Swedish democracy in one way or another. The point of *Agenda kulturarv* was to take people rather than objects as its starting point. This strategy related to the questions of whose history it was that was exposed. A central word was "participation" (*delaktighet*). Another important word was "diversity" (*mångfald*). It was politically declared that people employed in the heritage sector must understand that there is a plurality of heritage representing something fundamental for many different groups and that heritage is a question of diversity and heterogeneity.

The outcome of the project was: "When young people are asked to point at something that they themselves want to save for the future, they point at local places that are charged with personal meaning, for example the bench where they received their first kiss or the best local sledding hill".[53] For the four Commissioners, this should have been understood as an eye-opener, emphasizing that knowledge of important heritage places can only be received through a dialog with those who use such places.

The Commissioners were on a naive and dangerous path when they promoted a bench or local sledding hill. Did they really mean that a place where we received our first kiss or a place where we played as kids should be turned into something that is exclusively mine and only mine for all coming generations? Nevertheless, the four Commissioners behind the report received high positions in the state-funded heritage sector for their efforts, which is not without importance, because they would hereby implement the outcome of *Agenda Kulturarv,* to begin with at least.

IF WE RETURN TO the inquiries from the 1970s onward, there is one central word that is explicitly or implicitly repeated throughout the decades, and that is "self-identification". Another repeated term is "democracy". But combining self-identification with democracy has proven complicated. There is a fundamental risk that self-identification leads to the "narcissistic self-study that today passes in many places for identity politics, or ethnic studies, or affirmations of roots, cultural pride, drum-beating nationalism", to repeat the earlier quote from Said. Please note that there exists a huge discourse on the relationship between nationalism and identity,[54] but my point here is to underline what Edward Said has expressed, because of his intellectual importance for such issues.[55]

This is not to say that a "self-identification" based on heritage is anti-democratic *per se,* but it holds a very forceful seed that can develop into anti-democratic perspectives, and that is what the Commissioners in the 1980s and 1990s were starting to understand. It seems to me to be impossible to combine "heritage as self-identification" with democracy. It leads to the paradox where the Commissioners needed to balance between the two: on the one hand heritage as self-identification and on the other hand the principles of democracy. In other words, heritage as self-identification, and as it is defined in the SOU inquiries, cannot be combined with democracy because heritage as self-identification holds the risk of many non-democratic perspectives, whether in immigrant culture or in a relationship between heritage and new right-wing groups or neo-nationalistic politics. This is what the Commissioners were starting to understand. Here again we find an idea of the right sort of culture or the right sort of heritage.

As we have seen, in 1995 the Commissioners wrote that technology should be used to tackle information and knowledge gaps in society. But they clarified that if such technology were used to spread racist and anti-democratic tendencies, this must be addressed.[56] But there was no suggestion as to how such "drum-beating nationalism" should be dealt with.

In 2017, the Swedish government published a heritage proposition called Proposition 2016/17:116, "*Kulturarvspolitik*" (heritage politics), in a last desperate effort to tackle a growing right-wing movement that had expanded well beyond the Sweden Democrats.

THE FIRST SOU dealing with *kulturarv* was published in 1922 and in two volumes.

The inquiry filled 677 pages. The word *kulturminne* was used 131 times and the word *kulturarv* just three times. Almost 100 years later, the picture was the opposite. The 2017 proposition comprised 240 pages. The word *kulturminne* was used 28 times, but the word *kulturarv* was used more than 800 times! This means that on average, the word *kulturarv* was repeated three times on every page. On one page it was repeated 21 times.[57]

This tells us that the 2017 Commissioners were very anxious, and it is almost impossible to understand what they actually wanted to express. The whole proposition is based on ambiguity. I would describe it as a text that moves continually from one hand to the other. If they have concluded something, they shortly thereafter conclude if not the total opposite, then something not far from it. *Kulturarv* can be almost anything – something very dynamic, democratic, individualistic, collectivistic, negotiable, ahistorical, yet at the same time something solid, scientific, undemocratic, not negotiable, historical and so on.

Said wrote, "We have to defend peoples and identities threatened with extinction or subordinated because they are considered inferior." But the question is, what were the Commissioners behind the 2017 proposition defending? Perhaps it is nothing more than a certain political rhetoric that is becoming more and more common, that is to say the politics of ambiguity. It is in this maelstrom of vague information and disinformation that we find today's "drum-beating nationalism" and other forms of "identity politics", with its own disinformation and ambiguity and vagueness.

With all our fine thoughts on heritage, we have together, myself included, played right into the hands of the extreme right, as the 2017 proposition so unfortunately shows, because there is no clear line between multi-ethnic heritage politics and the extreme right, neo-nationalistic heritage politics. Neo-nationalists can argue for nationalistic heritage politics on exactly the same grounds as any other can in the course of identity politics and political polarization. That's where we are in 2020.

Identity in a post-heritage future

I began this essay by quoting David Harvey and his focus on heritagization and the production of identity, power and authority. What we have seen so far is that these factors have become stronger and stronger in Sweden over the decades, culminating in total ambiguity in the 2017 Proposition. That inquiry confused identity, power, authority and heritagization, and so became a mishmash of everything and nothing. Still, as we have seen, the complicated term identity, or self-identification, is the most crucial of these three pivotal words. "Identity" is far more problematic than power or authority, because when identity is

connected with power and authority we risk getting a politically extremely dangerous identity politics and with that drum-beating nationalism, because drum-beating nationalism is based on exactly the same arguments as any other self-identification in a time polarized by identity-politics.

It was also mentioned at the beginning of the essay that there is parallel history between the shift in the meaning of the word *kulturarv* between the 1920s and today, the neo-liberalization and globalization of the economy, and the advance of right-wing politics. I need to give a definition of neo-liberalism. According to my computer's New Oxford American Dictionary, neo-liberalism is: "a political approach that favors free-market capitalism, deregulation, and reduction in government spending."

One of many reasons for this is that heritage is a question for the present and in our global economization of everything, heritage has become an economic resource to exploit, but heritage is also politicized and, as we have seen, important in self-identification (both economical and as identity), and it is in this context that right-wing politics have advanced. For them, heritage is an ethnic and national marker for national self-identification. Bolsonaro and Trump, both with close ties neo-nationalistic politics, are fixated with free-market capitalism and at the same time with national ethnic heritage. Neo-nationalist, right-wing groups and other extreme right groups are propagating for deregulation and reduction of the government and government spending. They are also against the self-identification of minorities, immigrants and indigenous populations.

During the 1990s, Swedish Commissioners saw it coming and Edward Said and David Lowenthal warned us, but the siren song of heritage has blinded us and so today we are stuck with a situation from which we cannot readily free ourselves: heritage underpins the identity politics of drum-beating nationalism, a huge threat to classical liberal democracy, owing to the raison d'être of heritage.

IF THIS IS THE CASE, which is my argument, we need to re-think.[58]

Neo-liberal politics of ambiguity has a tendency to turn everything into a commodity and level everything into something ahistorical.[59] This is not only true for contemporary politics, but also in the heritage sector. I have discussed Sweden, but for a broader discussion on the commodification of heritage, see Britt Baillie et al. and for a discussion regarding transnational cultural commodities, see Belén Martín-Lucas and Andrea Ruthven.[60]

An inheritance proper is always related to some sort of possession. But when we talk about *kulturarv* (and heritage) we are talking about a quasi-inheritance. *Kulturarv* lacks a testament, a narrative, a memory and especially a person-to-person transfer. Instead *kulturarv* becomes a political issue and a question of bureaucratic administration, as we have seen. The reason for this is that an inheritance without a testament is an inheritance without an owner, i.e. an ownerless property, a *boni vacanti*.

Kulturarv is not an inheritance proper but is used as if it were such an inheritance, something to carry with us into the future, like a lifeline to hold on to when the world becomes more and more incomprehensible. It is here that the question of self-identification asserts itself. But the question of self-identification does not mitigate the incomprehensibility of the world. Instead, it makes the world even more polarized, fragmented and therefore, one might argue, almost uninhabitable.

The problem sharpens when we ask what identity might be. This "who" – identity – cannot be defined in advance, because identity is a question with an open dynamic. The question of an open identity transgresses our understanding of identity. When we talk about identity, we usually refer to complex processes of identification, but we have a tendency to freeze this open dynamic into images and figures (*kulturarv*). We have problems tackling the insecurity inherent in an open identity, because such an identity always questions our self-image. But we are never a finished "us". Instead we are continually in a process of becoming this "us". This can however imply that we are continually living with only a partial identity. Such a partial identity is a constitutive cause of our need for an unambiguous identification process.

"NEO-LIBERAL POLITICS OF AMBIGUITY HAS A TENDENCY TO TURN EVERYTHING INTO A COMMODITY AND LEVEL EVERYTHING INTO SOMETHING AHISTORICAL."

THESE QUESTIONS cannot be discussed in more detail if we do not include globalization and its existential consequences. Neo-liberalism and global capitalism's commodification of everything brings with it ideological and socio-political consequences that are important for our understanding of today's political situation.

Today we are not only negotiating who should be the owner of a specific heritage, we are also negotiating images strong enough to define an "I", who can claim ownership over a specific cultural identity, in any situation, i.e. indigenous, minority, immigrant, ethnic, race, majority, nationalistic, etc., which today shapes and is shaped by the politics of ambiguity, vagueness, which is in turn, I would like to argue, a consequence of the neo-liberal economization of everything, its deregulation, and even the reduction in government spending.

What we need therefore are new forms of co-existence that go beyond identity-politics and *kulturarv*, which should make it possible for us to exist as an open identity with existential responsibility for our own lives, i.e. the insight that we are never finished with our becoming and that we cannot allow our identity to be locked up inside itself, inside any *kulturarv*. If we do so, as we have seen, we risk becoming an exotic, nostalgic and anachronistic commodity on the global market of images, signs and logos. Or, perhaps even worse, we might end up believing in an unachievable stability defined by drum-beating nationalists.

Conclusion

Almost 100 hundred years of Swedish heritage politics not only mirror the development of global neo-liberal capitalism and its focus on identity as a commodity, a political issue and a question of emancipation, they also mirror national and international heritage politics, both as something "defending peoples and identities threatened with extinction or subordinated because they are considered inferior" and at the same time, something "hell-bent on aggrandizing their own heritage goods and virtues, to the exclusion or detriment of all others". This is the paradox that *kulturarv* creates in our world today. There is no return. The "neutral" tone in the early SOU's is not a way forward. Rather, a way forward might be to take as our point of departure a post-heritage future with open identities and existential responsibilities for our own lives in coexistence with others, and with the fundamental principles of classical Western liberal democracy.[61]

What I also have found is that democracy has fundamental problems with *kulturarv,* because *kulturarv* always focuses on a stable and inherent, but ahistorical, identity, which makes the world polarized, fragmented and in the end almost uninhabitable. It is not only far-right nationalists who are responsible for this polarization but all of us, including myself, inspired as we are by a wide and lively – sometimes critical – discourse that has been going on for some time now, emphasizing the importance of heritage.

But if we look back through the 100 years of Swedish heritage politics we may ask when it was ever motivated to talk about *kulturarv,* even in its most "neutral" meaning. *Kulturminne* and even *kulturmiljö* I can understand. *Kulturminne* is a poetic word and *kulturmiljö* has, for instance, an important legal meaning, but *kulturarv* – heritage – cannot, as I see it and against my discussion above, be motivated beyond a narcissistic aggrandizing self-identity, be it a person, a nation, the European Union, a community, a group of people, a continent, or the whole world. We need, I would like to suggest, to move away from self-identification and identity-politics generated by heritage politics into a post-heritage future with an open, dynamic and democratic understanding of identity.[62] ■

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THE JANUS OF RUSSIAN MODERNIZATION

Discussions at the 3rd Cultural Forum of the Regions of Russia

by **Ekaterina Kalinina**

abstract

The growing sector of heritage industry and creative uses of the past in Russia illustrate that, besides the undeniable existence of restorative nostalgia, there are other, more progressive forms of nostalgia that address social change and the protection of heritage sites. To analyse these forms of nostalgia, I visited the Third Cultural Forum of the Regions of Russia, which opened on September 22, 2017, at the Public Chamber of Russian Federation in Moscow, and analysed discussions that took place. I have chosen to focus on the panels *Sviaz' Pokoleniy* (The Link between the Generations) and *Delovoy Klub Nasledie i Ekonomika* (Business Club Heritage and Economics), as they best represent distinct attitudes towards past and the use of nostalgic sentiments as an impetus for change, and conducted discourse analysis of the discussions that took place at these panels.

KEYWORDS: Modernization, nostalgia, heritage, Russia.

The interaction between the ideas of great power, traditionalism and democratization makes it difficult not to notice the hybrid nature of Russian modernization that simultaneously combines global and local elements, strategies for sustainable development, authoritarianism and traditionalist ideology.[1] Recent empirical studies that specifically focused on Russian foreign policy,[2] welfare regimes,[3] political regimes,[4] economy, technology,[5] and religion[6] show a complex picture of Russian society. Scholars concluded that "a conservative turn and a modernization effort at the same time seems to be a typical Russian paradox".[7] Given the amount of space that culture, heritage and values occupy in Russian public and political discourse,[8] the study of their role in the process of modernization seems to be important. In order to understand how discourses on culture, values and heritage are articulated and operationalized, it is necessary to study specific practices and the appropriation of these discourses at local levels and question their role in Russian modernization. How are values and cultural heritage articulated on the level of public institutions? Which actors are given agency in the sphere of culture and what do they do with this agency? How is heritage understood and operationalized? In order to answer these questions this article will analyze the discourses at the plenary and panel sessions organized by cultural actors and representatives of regional governments at the 3rd Cultural Forum of the Regions of Russia that took place

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK

Zarnitsa was a compulsary children's war game organized within the Young Pioneers organization all over the Soviet union. The game, which was an imitation of military actions, was aimed at school children between 10 and 13 years. Today Zarnitsa has made a comeback thanks to the pro-Kremlin movements and the state programmes of partiotic upbringing.

on September 22, 2017 at the Public Chamber of the Russian Federation in Moscow.[9]

The article will start with a brief overview of the modernization projects that were launched after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The following chapter will describe the 3rd Cultural Forum of the Regions of Russia and will explain why it is important to study the forum. The subsequent chapters will focus on communication and more notably on themes of discussions, imaginaries, interpretative schemes and, to a lesser extent, on the legislative framework used by the participants to legitimize their actions. The article will conclude with some final remarks that summarize the main findings.

The Janus of Russian modernization

By the time of the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 it became evident that the centrally managed and planned economy and the rule of a single party have reached their limits. Reforms that would modernize the economy, social infrastructure and political institutions to enable the country to become competitive in a globalized world were urgently needed.[10] Despite Gorbachev's attempts to modernize the Soviet Union by democratizing the political system and introducing perestroika reforms aimed at transforming the planned economy into a market-driven economy, the results were quite the opposite. Political, social and economic tensions led to the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

The first president of independent Russia, Boris Yeltsin, attempted to introduce a capitalist market and democratic values. However, shortly after securing his position, he opted for the revision of a system based on personal power.[11] His successor, Vladimir Putin, in his efforts to consolidate power, has turned to conservative-liberal ideology that "has partly replaced and partly built on Soviet and traditional models".[12] This synthesis of the imitation of liberal politics and traditionalism was also directed towards "a positive reconfiguration of nostalgia for the Soviet past into new Russian patriotism".[13] However, even if Putin's *nostalgic modernization*, as Il'ya Kalinin has called it, was based on the positive channeling of nostalgia and the "transformation of initially politically charged language of the Soviet symbols to politically neutral language of common cultural heritage [...]",[14] the character of this nostalgic modernization project appeared to inhabit many elements that the opponents of nostalgic sentiments feared all along.

Compared to President Dmitry Medvedev's modernization project that focused on decreasing Russia's dependency on gas and oil revenues and creating a diversified economy based on innovation and technology,[15] Putin's version of modernization appeared to not only include claims about technological innovations and competitiveness in the global market economy, but also a strong ideological element that was supposed to be the driving force behind the proclaimed transformations. Already in 2001, the Russian state launched a series of four state-sponsored programs of patriotic education in which the latter was understood to be a "system of centralized government-approved and sponsored activities aimed at instilling patriotic sentiments for the purpose of mobilizing the population to support official policies".[16] This campaign came into being because of the gov-

> **"MEMORY POLITICS IN RUSSIA WERE TAKING A DANGEROUS TURN, FORCING COMMUNIST CRIMES INTO OBLIVION AND LEGITIMIZING AUTHORITARIANISM."**

PHOTO: GOVERNMENT.RU

Prime Minister Vladimir Putin presented awards to the winners of the "Battle for Respect: Start Today" rap competition on Muz-TV, 2009.

ernment's need to "bring the population together in a common bond of support for the current regime"[17] and to increase the number of men willing to serve in the military[18] which, in turn, shaped the content of the programs with stark military focus. Some scholars believed that such a model of education was a vivid sign of a re-Sovietization.[19]

Putin's third presidential term, marked by a gradual but persistent assault on political and civic freedoms in Russia, confirmed the fears of the liberal elites and intellectuals. Political tensions between the liberal opposition and the regime have become more severe, while the debates about the legacy of the Soviet past and the instrumentalization of nostalgic discourses and practices have intensified. The attempts to neutralize the Soviet past failed with the restructuring and closing down of the Museum of the History of Political Repression Perm-36 in 2012–2016 and the subsequent assaults on the human rights organization, Memorial, and its activists.[20] It suddenly became clear that memory politics in Russia were taking a dangerous turn, forcing Communist crimes into oblivion and legitimizing authoritarianism.

MEANWHILE, THE QUEST had started for the new ideology that would become the basis of the country's development and Putin's rule. Starting from the early 2010s, Vladimir Putin[21] promoted culture as an essential element of state building, paying specific attention to the values that would define Russia as a unique civilization. In 2013, in his national address, Putin[22] raised a discussion about so-called traditional values as the very basis of Russian civilization, emphasizing the country's unique position and mission in the world. These traditional values were solidified two years later in the *National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation* (2015),[23] determining the direction of the ideological and cultural transformation.

Two years later, Vladimir Putin further elaborated on the elements of Russian cultural development by announcing that patriotism was a national idea, stressing its key role for national security and the economic renaissance. This new patriotic ideology was supposed to secure Russia's economic growth and technological modernization by also capturing aspects of a global agenda for sustainable development, as announced in Putin's presidential address to the Federal Assembly in 2016.[24]

It quickly became obvious that military games such as *Pobeda* and *Zarnitsa* supported by federal funds and presidential grants were hardly enough to mobilize young people who, despite anti-Western propaganda, enjoyed the popular culture imported from the West.[25] In an attempt to win young people, the state started supporting various street culture projects with Mr. Putin leading the way: in November 2009 he congratulated the winner of the rap battle *Bitva za Respect – 3* (*Battle for Respect – 3*) organized by the music channel MUZ-TV and almost ten years later in 2018 even suggested that instead of prohibiting rap concerts in Russia, the state should reach out to rap singers by "leading" popular musicians "in the necessary direction".[26]

The 3rd Cultural Forum of the Regions of Russia

The 1st Cultural Forum of the Regions of Russia was organized in 2014 and was meant to function as a communicative platform between federal and regional governments, public organizations and cultural actors. As can be read form the title of the Forum, *Education and Culture: The Potential for Cooperation and the Resources of NGOs in the Socio-Cultural Development of the Regions*, its work was to be specifically focused on the potential of non-governmental organizations to participate in the socio-cultural development of Russia's regions. Ideally, the NGOs should help local administration develop and provide social, economic and

cultural infrastructures in the provinces, thereby assuming some of the responsibilities of the state.

The delegates from regional public chambers and regional ministries of culture were supposed to discuss the know-how of collaboration with public organizations, investors and NGOs in order to identify solutions to the various problems faced by the Russian regions. These problems were complex – economic and social decay, the destruction of heritage sites, the collapse of communication infrastructures, lack of funding – and demanded immediate and long-term solutions. The discussions focused on a broader set of suggestions ranging from the use of volunteer brigades in clearing garbage from local parks to the role of cultural heritage in the economic and social regeneration and transformation of the provinces into profit-generating tourist attractions. These discussions signaled that material and immaterial cultural heritage was regarded as important sociopolitical and economic capital that could foster collective identities and agencies.

The 3rd Cultural Forum of the Regions of Russia was attended by representatives of the Ministry of Culture and members of the regional public chambers, regional administrators, local museum workers, business people, scholars and cultural heritage activists. Compared to the St. Petersburg International Cultural Forum, which usually includes a number of renowned international guests and speakers, there were no representatives of international or foreign organizations among the delegates. The plenary session was opened by the (then) head of the Public Chamber, Valerij Fadeev, who declared the importance of culture in economic and social development and the urgent need for cooperation with non-governmental and non-commercial organizations in the regions, in which "culture can develop as a branch of industry".[27] Meanwhile, the panels at the forum focused on a wide range of issues from the ideological functions of libraries to the strategies of cooperation between investors, creative clusters and local administrations.

"THESE DISCUSSIONS SIGNALED THAT MATERIAL AND IMMATERIAL CULTURAL HERITAGE WAS REGARDED AS IMPORTANT SOCIOPOLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CAPITAL."

The Forum is an interesting subject of research from the perspective of the articulation and routinization of discourses[28], power struggles, agency and resilience. Many delegates and organizers are from regional public chambers and their role is to accommodate the needs and demands of the public, promote the interests of citizens and convert their interests into laws and regulations. Despite this proclaimed aim, the Public Chamber could be criticized for controlling and directing the work of public organizations and active citizens instead of controlling political institutions and the actions of politicians. A further subject of criticism is the systematic difficulties faced by the representatives of independent organizations to become members of the Public Chamber, which makes the Public Chamber more of a decorative institution that imitates democratic procedures.

However, even if independent organizations have little access to this communicative platform and political debate is rather limited, it is still important to study how these organisations routinize the dominant discourses of modernization and culture, which organizations are allowed to voice their position, and what they can do in such compromised situation to achieve social change. In the context of a shrinking public sphere activists, public organizations, NGOs and private foundations do not get to choose which communication channels they could use to reach out to lawmakers and public executives. Instead, they adopt a pragmatic approach, using any public platform that gives them the opportunity to communicate their ideas and needs to the federal and regional administrations.

FOLLOWING MARKKU KIVINEN'S and Terry Cox's[29] advice about using Anthony Giddens' theory of structuration [30], based on the observation that actors not only reproduce the structures but also produce and change them, this article will provide analyses of the discussions that took place in the Public Chamber during the 3rd Cultural Forum as both a constraining and an enabling structure. Adopting Giddens' perspective will allow an analysis of the discussions as an active constituting process, accomplished by active subjects. The analysis will particularly focus on the rules and resources, i.e. legislative acts that the actors raised as disabling/enabling practices: funding schemes, official and alternative discourses – which will be seen as properties that make it possible for similar and different social practices to co-exist and, as a consequence, create somewhat overlapping and contradictory social structures.

An analysis of agency, albeit limited due to the nature of the material (observations at the forum) will be made. According to Giddens'[31] there are three characteristic forms of agency: communication, the exercise of power and sanction. The main focus of this article will be on the first form – communication and therefore more specifically on signification and discursive and symbolic order (predominant imaginaries, themes of discussions). Attention will then be paid to legitimization, i.e. legal documents that enable/disable specific cultures, and the dimension of domination, which concerns material and allocative resources, such as institutions and the financial support that enables various activities. Finally, the focus will be on modalities, the means by which structural dimensions are expressed in action (the interpretative schemes linked to structures of signification, organizational positions, and norms of appropriate behavior embedded in structures of legitimization).

Data used as the empirical basis for this article were collected in 2017 during ethnographic fieldwork in Moscow, which included participant observations, recorded presentations and discussions at the Forum. In order to better understand the context of the Forum and the actors who took part in it, participant

observations were also made during lectures given by the *School Khraniteli Nasledia* (*School Keepers of Heritage* in English), a partner organization of the *Business Club Nasledie i Ekonomika* (*Business Club Heritage and Economics* in English).

From many parallel sessions, two panel discussions attracted the most attention, the first being a roundtable discussion: *Sviaz' Pokoleniy* (The Link Between the Generations in English). Most of the delegates at the roundtable discussion were female cultural workers employed at regional and municipal museums and municipal libraries, as well as several representatives of the regional branches of the Public Chamber. The second panel – a meeting of a *Business Club Nasledie i Ekonomika*, comprised a number of presentations by the leaders of various creative clusters, architects and scholars, investors and activists who focused on the know-how of urban and rural regeneration, the attraction of investments and the protection of cultural heritage in Russia's regions. Both sessions were recorded and then transcribed by the author of this article.

Conspiracies and nostalgia for the good old days

The delegates started the roundtable discussion *Sviaz' Pokoleniy* by articulating a widespread popular belief "about the complete and irrevocable loss of moral norms" by Russian society and its citizens. In her opening speech, a member of Ryazan's Public Chamber and professor at Ryazan State University, Olga Voronova, described the collapse of the Soviet Union – using the words of President Putin – as the "major geopolitical catastrophe of the 20th century",[32] and by doing so integrated her talk into popular official discourses voiced at the Forum and in its publications: [33]

> **It is no secret that in the 1990s, our country ended up under *colonial rule (kolonial'naia zavisimost')* of the United States of America, of the West (*kollektivnyi zapad*), and this has already been proved on a serious scientific level […]. When our country is forced to survive in conditions of international isolation, when there was a *declared economic, psychological, information and diplomatic war*, the existence of *a fifth column in the creative environment was the same as during the Great Patriotic War in the country when the enemy was present* [on our territory].** [34]

Voronova's words suggest that she mourned the collapse of the Soviet Union: she talked about the devastating outcomes of the economic reforms of perestroika and the difficult transition from a planned to a market economy. Her views echoed common nostalgic discourses highlighting the negative effects of market changes, the persistent assault of the capitalist economy and the detrimental effects of Western values of liberal democracy.[35] Being unable to convincingly explain the individual or collective losses, she described the economic and social hardships of the Russian people as being the meddling of external enemies in the country's affairs and the presence of an internal enemy – the liberal intelligentsia. She also juxtaposed the collapse of the Soviet Union with the economic crisis of 2014, and the US [36] and EU sanctions [37] against the Russian Federation.

A kinless cosmopolite [bezrodnye kosmopolity] appeared on the cover of Crocodile magazine in 1949. Illustration by Konstantin Eliseev.

In Voronova's argumentation, historical narratives about the Great Patriotic War (1941–1945) and the current economic hardship merged, forming a conspiracy theory about the long-planned colonization of Russia by the Western democracies and "evil outsiders".[38] Her remarks suggest that this discursive construction of material and ideological dispossession also feeds into and is a result of conspiracy theories about the existence of internal enemies (the liberal intelligentsia, *the fifth column*, as she called it), echoing Soviet anti-Western propaganda and the Stalinist campaign against "kinless cosmopolites" (*bezrodnye kosmopolity* in Russian). As an example of such enemies within, Voronova named Moscow-based stage and film director Kirill Serebrennikov [39] and writer Anna Kozlova, whose novel *F20* was nominated for the national book award *Natsionalniy Bestseller 2017*.[40] By describing Serebrennikov's Seventh Studio productions as demoralizing, Voronova anticipated the final ruling of the Moscow District Court, which declared the members of the Seventh Studio guilty, and therefore forever banished independent contemporary theatre. Voronova used a similar rhetoric when describing the novel as being devoid of meaning and morals. Firmly juxtaposing immorality, pervasiveness and abnormality (i.e. mental illness), Voronova shaped the perception of the existing capitalist order, its moral economy and modern culture as a system of demoralization and degradation. While doing so, she nostalgically reminisced about the Soviet Union which, in her opinion: "raised a whole generation of heroes (*pobeditelei* in Russian) by setting high ideals for its citizens as the norm", compared to "modern Russian literature that demoralizes people by making psychological anomaly the new norm!"[41] By using a similar rhetoric for war and conspiracy, she announced that

PHOTO: KOLOMNAONLINE.RU

Entrance to the cluster Kolomenskiy Posad.

"the lack of artist-patriots was a result of the creative elites being united on *the barricades* of the fifth column".[42]

As it can be read from the quote, Voronova shifted the discussion from an analysis of internal political reasons for the collapse of the planned economy to imported ideological reasons and concluded that culture and morality (*kultura i nravstvennost'*) are the key instruments of Russian modernization, capable of "protecting Russian society from external ideological expansion, destructive information and psychological influence". [43] Instead of looking for economic and political solutions for modernization she saw the only option in a change of the legislative framework in order to safeguard the cultural sovereignty of the Russian Federation:

> **It is often said that our society lacks a national idea. There are many discussions about this. The President was clear that the national idea is indeed patriotism. But, until now, the 13th Article of our Constitution states that any official state ideology in Russia is forbidden. You see that the Strategy of National Security that formulates what should be our ideological foundation breaches the article of our Constitution, which some call a 'colonial article', as it was written in the 1990s with the help of American consultants. We proposed the following formulation: to consider amending the 13th article of the Constitution of the Russian Federation prohibiting any state ideology and instead suggest that the basis of national ideology is the idea of Russian patriotism. (Voronova, Transcription, 16: 49)**

A similar rhetoric and the intention to influence the attitudes of young adults and children towards the state, culture and education can be found in the presentation of another delegate at the roundtable discussion. Agreeing with Voronova that young people show little interest in national culture and its past, the delegate suggested introducing patriotic values from an early age by enrolling children in various kinds of military and patriotic organizations, such as *Yunarmy*. [44] Echoing the military mood of the state program of patriotic education,[45] the delegate called for the reintroduction of recruitment education in schools (*prizyvnaia podgotovka* in Russian), with military specialization for boys and medical specialization for girls. By arguing for the need of such military-patriotic education, the delegate highlighted young people's neglect of national culture and their growing fascination with Western popular culture.

This discursive transfer to morality in the discussions of both delegates is hardly surprising, given that economic transformations "inevitably involve a comprehensive reorganization of the moral presumptions necessary for justifying new choices and alternatives".[46] Such a discursive transfer to morality resonated with the perception of globalization processes as leading to cultural homogenization. In Russia in particular, it is common to talk of so-called *Americanization*, understood as a global influence of American culture, and the necessity of sustaining and defending own unique identity in response to globalization.[47]

IN THIS PARTICULAR CASE, nostalgia for the past and values was revealed in the rhetoric; the transformation of Russian society appeared to be articulated in the language of traditional (patriarchal) values, family, homeland and borders, which resonated in the presidential speeches. This restorative nostalgia of the delegates was an affective resource in stimulating their active participation in cultural production and youth mobilization in the support of the Russian state. The essential premise of their nostalgic longing was in place, as the delegates mourned the loss of the Soviet Union in the face of Western capitalism, as well as the impossibility of using the same ideological and administrative resources that had been employed during the Soviet period.

The issue of available resources as an essential element of agency was raised by the delegates several times during the roundtable discussions. Being fully aware that their positions as members of public chambers and educational workers were not sufficient to drive their agenda, they discussed the need to be in control of financial and administrative resources and were bewildered by the sudden closure of some state-sponsored programs. Being sure about the importance of events such as a regional festival of poetry for the cultural education of young people, Voronova explained the sudden cut in funding as the president's lack of awareness of the situation, echoing a popular refrain of the Soviet period about the lack of awareness of the country's leaders in the current state of affairs.

From a Giddensian perspective, the social and hierarchical position of this member of the Public Chamber is a reliable predictor of her actions. Agency is enhanced by the control of resources and is exercised by the complying with or the rejecting of rules. Being aware of the particpants' political position, Voronova felt comfortable criticizing political opposition and cultural workers who did not fit her picture of the world. At the same time, she was careful about criticising the state and, instead of holding the Ministry of Culture accountable, she justified the budget cuts by the presence of internal forces destabiliz-

ing the cultural politics of the state. Voronova's explanation of the budget cuts can be seen as an example of the enduring structural properties of governance in Russia. Justifying the economic and social hardships using moral degradation and conspiracy theories is part of a social convention about which the cultural and educational workers at this roundtable discussion agreed. Access to resources, be it allocative (involving command of objects and material phenomena), or authoritative (involving command of people), was also explained by the moral right of organisations to promote the right kind of patriotism and the dominance of a patriotic ideology.

Youth and modernization

Nevertheless, not all the proposed measures had a strong nostalgic and militaristic rhetoric. One of the representatives of the Federal Public Chamber and the head of the Association of Volunteer Centers,[48] Artem Metelev, appealed for a change of heart towards young people in Russia. Instead of endorsing his colleague's loathing of popular culture, young people and the West, he emphasized the need to create opportunities for activism, which would be distanced from formal political institutions such as party membership, or openly support specific politicians (as was the case of *Nashi*, an open pro-Kremlin youth organizations – author's comment). Instead, these activities should be bottom-up and embody alternative forms of participation that had gained prominence throughout the world with regard to young people's disenchantment with formal politics.[49] Metelev pointed out that volunteer movements play a significant role in social development at an international level and are often seen as an attempt to positively change the surrounding environment through socially useful actions.[50]

Metelev illustrated his opinion with PowerPoint images of book swaps, literature quests, and volunteer brigades organized in the republics of Tatarstan and Crimea (the Crimean peninsula was annexed by the Russian Federation in 2014 as a consequence of the Maidan Revolution in Ukraine – comment of the author) and called these actions *examples of civic participation (primery grazhdanskogo uchastiia* in Russian), arguing for young people's need for "self-actualization" and the realization of their potential for society at large. [51] Echoing the words of sociologist Daria Krivonos,[52] who wrote about the "affective and emotional ties" that young people enact "through embodied and sensory practices of *obschenie* ('communication') and *dvizhuha* ('moving around' or 'hanging out')", he highlighted young people's need for self-actualization through participation in volunteer activities because "it is fun and gives them something". Describing such projects as practices of "doing good" and "self-realization", Metelev presented them as part of a global trend of personalized engagement through lifestyles, consumption and leisure, in other words, *self-actualizing citizenship*, which is based on the phenomenon of *affective solidarity*, i.e. solidarity embodied though practices of communication and the pleasure derived from group activities.[53]

Having said that, Metelev saw the modernization of the cultural sector as a two-fold process: 1) reorganization of the cultural sector through the creation of an international platform for self-actualizing and lifestyle citizenship;[54] 2) introduction of technological innovations and social media to recruit young people and provide them with the necessary tools to take action.

The understanding of modernization as a technological innovation was later echoed in another presentation. Speakers from the Victory Museum in Moscow[55] talked about the need to use computer technologies to attract a younger audience. New technologies, the internet, immersive and interactive expositions with the application of virtual reality were seen as a panacea for the low number of visitors to war museums. Arguing for the need for increased interactivity in exhibitions, the presenters proposed several solutions with "picturesque spots for taking selfies and photos in costumes" to inspire a sense of patriotism.[56] Meanwhile, hashtags such as #nashvyborpobeda (*#our choice is victory* in English) were seen as another interactive element that could attract a young audience. Interestingly, the delegates barely reflected on the ideological content of these narratives. Even though they stressed the importance of the communication of universal values, they predominantly focused on the need to translate ideas of the pride and heroism of the Soviet people, not of the tragedies of war.

"IT IS COMMON TO TALK OF AMERICANIZATION, THE GLOBAL INFLUENCE OF AMERICAN CULTURE, AND THE NECESSITY OF SUSTAINING AND DEFENDING YOUR OWN UNIQUE IDENTITY IN RESPONSE."

Capitalist modernization and creative industries

The discussants at the panel of the *Club Nasledie i Ekonomika* had a somewhat different understanding of Russian modernization than their counterparts from the roundtable discussion *Sviaz' pokolenii*. Firstly, they saw the potential in developing creative industries in Russia and therefore had a broad understanding of culture and heritage not limiting it, as their colleagues did, to commemorations of the Great Patriotic War. Instead, they appeared to understand culture in Raymond William's[57] terms as a *whole way of life*, including various forms of crafts, traditions and attitudes, popular culture and technology. Secondly, they argued for the positive effects of cultural industries on regional economies. According to this line of thought, creative clusters, which merge traditional crafts and arts, modern technologies and the bottom-up organization of creative citizens, could become the nodal points of socio-cultural development and be the very solution to the challenges outlined in the *Strategy of Economic Security*.[58] Thirdly, the delegates had a somewhat different

attitude towards young people than some of the delegates at the roundtable discussions and shared Artem Metelev's view of lifestyle citizenship as a potential driver for change. While also believing in youth as a driving force behind economic and cultural modernization, they saw young people not as passive receivers of information who must be shielded from negative influences, but rather as active participants of economic, social and cultural life with their own agency. They conceptualized young people as a creative class of "socially engaged individuals", "the basis of cultural development" and "an investment in the future, which will give dividends later".[59] According to this logic, investments in the cultural sector could provide an infrastructure that would enhance human capital already present in the country and also cultivate new forms of creativity that would contribute to Russia's competitiveness in the international market of creative products. The presence of many young entrepreneurs and activists in the panel also proved this point.

Having said that, the modernization was understood as the process of overcoming a number of constraints that existed on three levels of societal structure: governance, society and business. According to Nikolay Prianishnikov, a scholar from the Moscow School of Social and Economic Sciences and an expert in urbanism, on the level of governance modernization of creative processes was primarily countered by the lack of democratic culture in Russian society: "The creative approach is hindered by a lack of freedom [....] which has a long history in Russia".[60] The centralization of decision-making process and a low degree of freedom given to the regional governments and initiative-taking businesses, he conceptualized as a problem for sustainable development: "For sustainable development to take roots, it is necessary to surrender initiatives <to local governments> instead of trying to control everything by force <from the center>".[61]

"THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF CULTURE LIES IN THE PROCESS OF TRANSITION FROM A RESOURCE TO AN INNOVATION ECONOMY."

ON A SOCIETAL LEVEL, according to Prianishnikov, the repercussions of the Soviet mentality – manifested in the incompetence of legislators and the inadequacy of spent resources and produced outcomes – became another constraint of modernization. "The lack of experts who could act as mediators of the best practices and scientific knowledge about creative industries" was paired with "persistent stereotypes about the impossibility of merging culture and heritage with the economy, industrial production and trade".[62] In other words, the inability of cultural institutions to reconsider their attitudes towards the market economy and the monetization of cultural heritage, the interactions between the state, citizens and businesses, in order to revise funding schemes that would enable the long-term development of a creative capital and cultural heritage, was a considerate constraint of the present system. For Prianishnikov, it was clearly impossible to follow *The Strategy for Economic Security*, the main goal of which was to transform Russia into a competitive and highly technological country if "the state was afraid of businesses and NGOs and saw enemies everywhere".[63] Moreover, the inability and unwillingness to extend the understanding of patriotic action to include self-actualizing citizenship and small-scale entrepreneurship allowed little room for innovation and cooperation with non-governmental organizations and businesses. One of the delegates emphasized that, for the state-run organizations, culture was still regarded as being more of an ideological tool of propaganda than as a resource for economic development and a form of civic action.

On the level of business and economic development, the main constraint was a resource economy that was no longer sustainable in a world driven by information technologies, creative economies and alternative energy resources. The heavy focus on a resource economy was a reason for the dominant *modus operandi*, which included a focus on short-term solutions instead of long-term planning. This kind of attitude towards planning and problem solving also prevented state officials from entering into public discussions with citizens, which are more time consuming but essential if there is a determination to identify sustainable solutions to existing problems. Similarly, investor and head of the Club, Dmitry Oinas, believed that "orientation to a resource economy required a specific mentality, expectations of support from the state as the only option for development, as well as focus on large-scale businesses, rather than supporting small- and medium-sized businesses. In the meantime, the backbone of the creative industries was small- and medium-sized businesses".[64]

PRIANISHNIKOV SUGGESTED that cultural heritage could indeed allow the formation of alternative paths, stating that: "The important role of culture lies in the process of transition from a resource to an innovation economy".[65] Hence, in order to overcome the above-mentioned constraints and follow an alternative path, as Prianishnikov proposed, internationalization should become part of the modernization process. Learning from the experience of other countries such as Great Britain and Germany, who successfully profited from the development of creative industries, was seen as essential. The delegates admitted that Russia could not and should not be excluded from global developments, and instead of trying to isolate itself from the rest of the world, should accept globalization as a *fait accompli* and try to maximize its benefits, while simultaneously trying to minimize its drawbacks: "Creative markets are first and foremost global markets. Thus, it is very important to support Russian creative industries in global markets".[66] Having said that, sustainable social, economic and cultural development, which are types of development that meet the needs of present societies without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, was presented as the best way of counteracting the negative aspects of globalization. By referring to the Sustain-

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Kolomna Marshmallow Museum and The House with Lion in Popovka are examples of cultural heritage projects in local communities.

able Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030 (UNDP), the speakers specifically included Russia in the global community.

Being open to globalization and international experiences, the delegates also believed that the free movement of people across regional and national borders not only encouraged creativity and the acquisition of skills and knowledge, it also led to a new understanding of the home and practices of belonging, adhering to the proposition that *place attachment* is no longer possible or even necessary.[67] What mattered most was a comfortable socio-economic and cultural infrastructure, which was supposed to be jointly created by the state, businesses and citizens.

The heritage industry

Similar to the panelists in the roundtable discussion, the delegates in the second panel emphasized the inadequacy of current legislation in the cultural sphere. They highlighted the absence of a detailed description of support mechanisms and articles regulating the work of professional associations that represented the interests of investors, non-governmental organizations and activists. Regarding the instruments of support, the delegates also complained about the absence of grants and subsidies for non-commercial organizations working with urban and rural regeneration projects, which have multiplied in recent years.

As an illustration of the current state of affairs in the use of cultural heritage for sustainable regional development, the panelists presented several projects, two of which are shown below: Kolomna Marshmallow Museum (*Musei Kolomenskaia Pastila* in Russian), a part of a larger creative cluster, *Kolomenskii Pasad*; and House with Lion (*Dom so L'vom* in Russian) (Popovka village, Saratov province). The museum and cluster are examples of social entrepreneurship, individual investments and extensive negotiations with local authorities. The *House with Lion* project is a result of the efforts of a young art historian, Yulia Terekhova, who discovered a decaying timber house decorated from floor to ceiling with wall paintings. Over the last ten years, Terekhova has invested her own money, as well as successfully applied for several grants, started a crowdfunding campaign and restored the house .[68]

BOTH THESE PROJECTS are good examples of the bottom-up actions of private individuals who pursued multiple goals including: the preservation of both material and immaterial heritage (buildings, industrial heritage); encouragement of local citizens to re-discover local industrial and rural heritage sites; and, finally, making the enterprises commercially viable in order to create jobs and contribute to economic development in otherwise economically distressed regions. Beyond being a sign of growing interest in the past, these acts of volunteerism and social entrepreneurship are also a response to the withdrawal of the state from heritage protection and its inability to address the alarming issue of decay as a result of short-sighted investment and development projects, as well as corruption.

While some urban and rural cultural centres became museums through sufficient financial funding from the state and sponsors, as well as profited from tourism and corresponding commercial activities, other heritage sites were not as lucky. Alarming news coming from the members of the Club and heritage activists about illegal demolitions of historical buildings confirm that private development interests win over the intentions to safeguard historical sites. As the result heritage sites all across Russia disappear leaving little hope for the remaining one to be turned into profitable art clusters where memory and culture is preserved.[69]

Three visions of modernization

The analysis of the discussions of the two panels arranged at the 3rd Cultural Forum of Regions showed that there are three distinct visions of modernization.

The first vision, a vision of conservative modernization, is

based on conservative ideology, restorative nostalgia for the Soviet Union[70] and is dependent on the creation of a technological infrastructure that would ease the one-way communication between the state and young people. The proponents of this vision of modernization expressed a sense of nostalgia for lost values – collectiveness, heroism, altruism and active civic positions, as well as a sense of nostalgia for the *modus operandi* of the communist regime, its rigidness regarding the oppression of opposing opinions. Henceforth, culture was discursively constructed vis-à-vis the commemoration of the Great Patriotic War with the help of references to heroism and sacrifice, memory of the war victory, while everything that fell outside this framework, i.e. modern art and popular culture, was described as unworthy. Having said that, culture was given the role of indoctrinating and raising young people as *heroes capable of sacrifice*, as well as providing an ideological basis to support the state and existing political structure.

The second vision of modernization is based on ideas of lifestyle citizenship and an information society, in which young people can produce content and communicate with each other. According to this vision, the state should nurture the creative and altruistic potential of young people in order to solve the ongoing socio-economic problems with minimum investment. A strong focus on volunteer movements, some internationalization and the use of global experience in solving important societal issues, as well as little remaining scope for criticizing the state, suggest that this type of modernization might be narrowed down to neoliberal modernization, which would not solve deeply entrenched problems but would create a kind of façade.

The third vision of modernization means introducing political democratization first of all, a change in the relationship between state, businesses and activists in order to create a new *modus operandi* based on trust, transparency, equality and respect between partners, i.e. the state, businesses and society. Sustainable development goals are seen as a call for action, while creative clusters are understood and presented as a potential form of management, which allows a number of issues to be simultaneously resolved: the protection of historical sites, the regeneration of depressed areas through activism and socially responsible businesses.

HAVING SAID THAT, these three different visions of modernization provide different discursive constructions of heritage and culture. In the first vision, heritage is narrowed down to the monuments that commemorate the Great Patriotic War and culture that is traditionally understood as highbrow: literature, theatre and classical dance, and includes forms of communication that imply a respect of authority. In the second vision, heritage and culture become instrumental and understood in much broader terms, including popular culture. In the third vision, the term heritage includes all forms of material and immaterial culture that could help people understand the history of their region or country.

The proponents of the first vision are school and university teachers, employees of state war museums, as well as members of public chambers. They legitimize their actions and choice of rhetoric by referring to the Strategy of National Security, state programs of patriotic upbringing, and Vladimir Putin's national address. University lecturers can be also found among the proponents of the third vision, alongside activists and businessmen. The proponents of the third vision build their arguments by referring to the Strategy of Economic Security and the Global Development Goals set by the UN. The second vision is mainly presented by the members of public chambers and the leaders of volunteer organizations that have been sanctioned by the V. Putin's initiative and therefore refer to his official statements.

When it comes to the question of resources, all actors agreed that more resources are needed, but disagreed on the issue of state-private partnership and the role of businesses and activists in the modernization process. While the first group supported the state and the legitimacy of its actions, but was firmly against businesses and activists, the third group insisted on an open dialogue between all actors and the merging of resources to achieve a common goal. The second group, which is largely funded by the state and received generous funding in recent years through the system of direct support and president grants, found itself in a privileged position having obtained full support of the President and funding. ✖

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48 Founded upon an initiative of Vladimir Putin in 2014. The association’s experts participated, a concept for the development of volunteering in Russia. In 2016, on the initiative of the association, the Federal Expert Council for the Development of Volunteerism was created, later transformed into the Coordinating Council under the Public Chamber of the Russian Federation (For further information see: https://avcrf.ru/about).

49 Lance, W. Bennett, “The Personalization of Politics: Political Identity, Social Media, and Changing Patterns of Participation”, *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 644(1), (2012), 20–39, accessed on November, 3, 2020. DOI: 10.1177/0002716212451428.

50 K. Poluyanova, K. Belousov and I. Kudryakov, “The Status of the Volunteer Movement in St. Petersburg (According to Data from a Study Conducted by the “Kontakt” City Center for Social Programs and the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency),” *Russian Education & Society*, 60(7), (2018), 623–642, accessed November 3, 2020, doi:10.1080/10609393.2018.1527166.

51 Metelev, Transcription, 25:15.

52 Daria Krivonos, “And After That We All became Like Brothers,” *Young*, 24(2), (2016), 102–117, accessed November 3, 2020, doi:10.1177/1103308815611324.

53 Bennett, 2012; Micheletti and Stolle, 2008; See Krivonos, 2016; Jeffrey S. Juris, “Performing Politics: Image, Embodiment, and Affective Solidarity during Anti-Corporate Globalization Protests,’” Ethnography 9(1), (2008), 61–97; Hilary Pilkington and Elena Omelchenko, “Regrounding Youth Cultural Theory (in Post-Socialist Youth Cultural Practice)”, *Sociology Compass* 7(3), (2013), 208–24; At the same time, taking into consideration previous pro-Kremlin movements such as *Nashi* (Julie Hemment, “Nashi, Youth Voluntarism, and Potemkin NGOs: Making Sense of Civil Society in Post-Soviet Russia”, *Slavic Review* 71(2), (2012), 234–60; Jussi Lassila,”Making Sense of Nashi’s Political Style: The Bronze Soldier and the Counter-Orange Community”, *Demokratizatsiia* 19(3), (2011), 253–76; Jussi Lassila, *The Quest for an Ideal Youth in Putin’s Russia II: The search for Distinctive Conformism in the Political Communication of Nashi, 2005–2009,* (Stuttgart: ibidem Verlag, 2012)), such volunteer activities could be used to recruit young people for pro-Kremlin activities without providing a real platform for political debate and civic engagement. For example, during the national constitutional plebiscite in 2020, volunteers were tasked to collect information about potential voters among pensioners (see: Vladislav Chirin, “Peterburgskikh Biudzhetnikov Massovo Prinuzhdaiut Idti na Golosovanie o Konstitutsii, a Volonterov Prosiat Rasskazyvat’o Popravkakh”, *Bumaga*, June 16, 2020, accessed November 1, 2020 https://paperpaper.ru/peterburgskih-byudzhetnikov-massovo-p/). Some news media even wrote that state employees were forced to “volunteer” (Alexandra Korilova, “V Petersburge Obiazyvaiut Pensionerov Nakanune Golosovaniia po Popravkam v Konstitutsiiu. Voloneteram Dali Dostup k ikh Personalnym Dannym, June 23, 2020, accessed November 1, 2020 https://paperpaper.ru/v-peterburge-obzvanivayut-pensionero/).

54 Worth mentioning is that in 2017 the association became the only Russian organization to sign a collaboration agreement with UN VolunteersVolunteers. Two years later the association together with UNDP UNV started to develop a volunteer movement to promote dialogue and civic engagement in the Commonwealth of Independent States.

55 See the official website of the Victory Museum in Moscow https://victorymuseum.ru/projects/territory-of-victory/, last accessed November 5, 2020.

56 See the official website at https://victorymuseum.ru/for-visitors/selfiemap/selfiemap.php. Last accessed November 5, 2020.

57 Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society 1780–1950* (London: Penguin Books, 1963).

58 Decree of the President of the Russian Federation from 13.05.2017 n 208 “About Strategy of Economic Security of the Russian Federation for the period until 2030”. Moscow, May, 13, 2017, accessed November 5, 2020. Available at http://kremlin.ru/acts/bank/41921.

59 Delegate L, Transcription, 07:56.

60 Prianishnikov, 23:48.

61 Prianishnikov, 26:50.

62 Oinas, Transcription, 02:09.

63 Prianishnikov, 27:30.

64 Oinas, Transcription, 03:38.

65 Prianishnikov, 08:16.

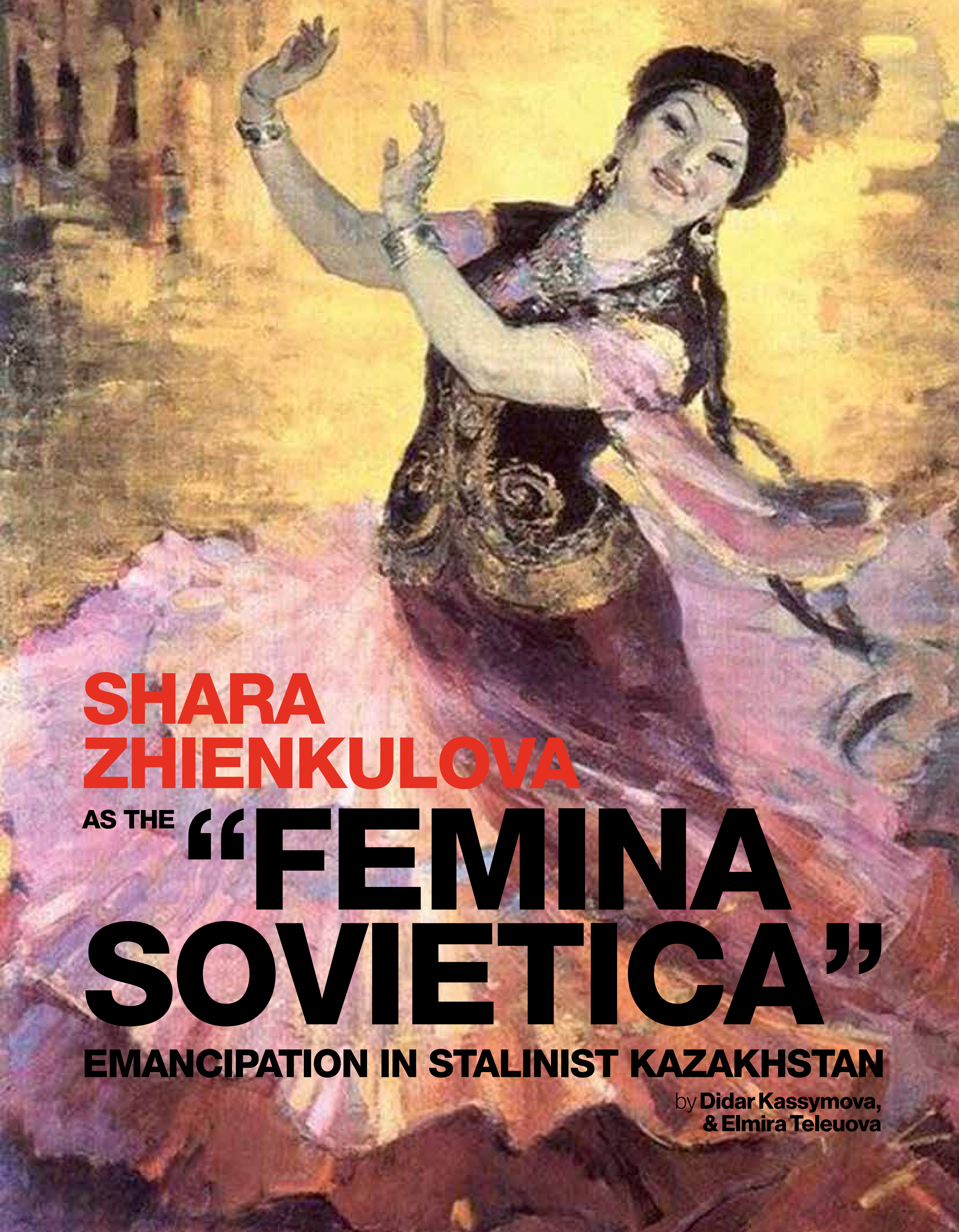
66 Delegate K 13:00.

67 Jan Duyvendak, *Politics of Home: Belonging and Nostalgia in Western Europe and the United States* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

68 Nadezhda Andreeva, “L’vinaia Dol’ia. Kak Narisovannii Sto Let Nazad Tzar Zverei Meniaet Sud’bu Derevni” *Novaia Gazeta*. 91, August, 22, 2018, accessed 1 September, 2020 https://novayagazeta.ru/articles/2018/08/22/77567-lvinaya-dolya. “Bizness-Tzentr i Obeschepit Vmesto Istorii i Tvorcheskogo Kvartala”, *City4People,* August 8, 2020, accessed November 3, 2020: https://city4people.ru/post/biznes-centr-i-obshchepit-vmesto-istorii-i-tvorcheskogo-kvartala.html.

69 Roman Chernianskii, “Badaevskii Zachischaiut Radi Elitnogo Doma na Nozhkakh. Arendatory i Moskvichi Protiv,” *The Village,* November 8, 2019, accessed September 1, 2020 https://www.the-village.ru/village/city/situation/365031-badaevskiy.

70 Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic books, 2001).



SHARA ZHIENKULOVA AS THE "FEMINA SOVIETICA"

EMANCIPATION IN STALINIST KAZAKHSTAN

by **Didar Kassymova, & Elmira Teleuova**

abstract

This article explores the potential of the Kazakh "model woman" narrative in the context of the socio-cultural perspectives of Stalinism in traditional oriental societies. In her well-written memoirs, Shara Zhienkulova, founder of the Kazakh dance school, reconstructs personal accounts of the Bolshevik cultural modernization project, through the introduction of new cultural practices and her own hard-won battle for a place in the new Soviet culture. We argue here that while her body served the regime as a kinesthetic mediator for the projected ideological imperatives to be oriented on European style – in the Soviet manner – her soul and mind remained (as containers of personal and ethnic memory) ethnic Kazakh in nature. Through her memoirs Shara Zhienkulova intended to leave not only a name but also a voice in the Kazakh culture, recounting the inner world and thoughts of subaltern women.

KEYWORDS: Shara Zhienkulova, Kazakhstan, Stalinism, new Soviet women, cultural revolution.

Women's issues were an integral part of basic criticism of the capitalist system in Bolshevik political programs. Women as objects of exploitation were to be emancipated from religious, familial, societal, cultural and outdated moral constraints and bonds, granted equal status with males, empowered by gaining civic, political and economic rights, driven to active participation in political, economic, social and cultural processes to become builders of the new society, and to develop all the necessary skills during the process. Discussions of modalities and taboos were to be left for literature and pamphlets of pre-revolutionary times. The emancipation of women in traditional societies was however in practice quite problematic for the regime to handle, as gender issues were entangled in a sophisticated net of property, clan, status, moral, inter-clan and intra-clan relations, all sanctioned by religion and clan politics. Kazakh women's status in society and family was generally regarded as low in those traditional societies.[1] Externally, the position of Kazakh women seemed to be less restricted in comparison to more rigid Islamic societies of the region, as the Kazakh women were not veiled and enjoyed relatively more freedom in some family issues; however, their destinies heavily depended likewise on males (father, husband, son, relatives of a deceased husband). The emancipation of Kazakh women thus needed to be handled in a delicate way. This emancipation of Kazakh women also came to involve the exposure of their bodies and feelings in public. The former invisibility of women, physical, verbal and visual due to taboos, were replaced by placing the Kazakh women's bodies and voices in the public domain. Art forms such as opera, ballet and dances were used to emancipate women in the socialist meaning of modern.

"EMANCIPATED KAZAKH WOMEN WERE EXPECTED TO EMBRACE NEW CULTURAL NORMS AND CELEBRATE REGIME-CREATED HOLIDAYS."

Shara (full name: Gulshara) Zhienkulova (1912–1991), the first Kazakh professional dancer, rose to fame in the early 1930s, and was the founder of the Kazakh dance school. Zhienkulova's written memoirs shed light on the process of creating the new Kazakh woman in Stalinist times via European cultural forms. This article elucidates how she as a model Kazakh woman, constructed her life course in the Stalinist era and justified it in the post-Stalinist period. It is worth reflecting on how the hidden, unconscious pressure of the past influenced the memoirs that she wrote down later in more secure times. What is silenced and not spoken, and why? For instance, she shares no analysis or closer description of the tragic episodes of the 1930s.

This article is based first and foremost on the analysis of Shara Zhienkulova's autobiography , but also those of her husband, Kurmanbek Zhandarbekov,[2] and the family friend and famous actor Kanabek Baiseitov,[3] and further on archival materials, works about Shara Zhienkulova, and interdisciplinary research on the Soviet 'new woman' creation program.

SHARA ZHIENKULOVA did not keep a diary (materials were verified in the State Archive of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Almaty city), but reconstructed events from notes made on the professional schedule – performances, trips, meetings, and articles in the Soviet mass media glorifying her. She was very disciplined and hard-working: she could reconstruct every element in a choreography and recall moment of how she managed to perform some gesture. She remembered and could in detail describe the technique of inventing new dances, and the emotional and psychological costs behind. Why then did she write her memoires, she never herself answered this. Her memoirs were published after those of K. Baiseitov, who gave his interpretation of the Zhandarbekovs' family life, and the reasons for their painful separation. Contemporary portrait colored her as the materialized shining star, a myth that Shara Zhienkulova maybe wanted to deconstruct? We argue that the motivation behind her memoirs was both personal, to give her own account of her life course in arts and the public mission, and socio-cultural, to shed light on the costs of becoming a model woman for all epochs.

The general issue under consideration in this article is "How Soviet was Shara Zhienkulova in her memories of Stalinism?" That issue can be divided into a number of supportive questions: How did she react to the regime? Did she grasp the ideology to follow it consciously, and especially its major normative, instrumental, operational components? How was the Stalinist era embedded in her family life? Descriptions of and attitudes to the leadership established in the 1920s dominate her narrative in the 1980s. But how did it happen that a woman born into a rich family accepted the lifestyle of the poor actor, unsta-

ble in terms of position and income? How confident was she in regime's longevity to correlate with the revolutionary changes?

The theoretical approach employed in this study of the woman in Stalinist cultural processes in Kazakhstan is the subaltern concept.[4]

Emancipation in Kazakhstan

From the early 20th century on, liberal-minded Kazakh intellectuals proposed several reforms and programs to upgrade women's status, without introducing radical changes to the existing social order. The imposed Soviet reforms aimed to provide a complete solution to the very system of traditional ethnosocial system maintenance, as women's status and property rights were singled out as the key element of the economic and political basis of Kazakh society. Through legal and institutional reforms during the 1920s, Kazakh women were granted equality and relative freedom in economic and civic aspects and further encouraged to get education and information on sanitary and hygienic norms. The success of the changes, however, depended on men's readiness to liberate women, and the women's preparedness to take up the freedom granted as an opportunity to start up a new but risky life without male and clan support, thus taking on the responsibility and burden of being an unsupported female.

The Soviet reforms resulted in the setting up in 1921 of *zhenotdels* (departments for women's work) in Kazakhstan, backed by so called *delegatskie sobraniya* (female delegates' meetings) to reinforce state decisions. The idea was to encourage women to take part and join in activities to fight illiteracy, polygamy, child marriage, bride purchase, and domestic violence, and instead to introduce sanitary and hygienic norms and promote the mastering of various skills for women and involve them in economic activities. Further, emancipated Kazakh women were expected to embrace new cultural norms and celebrate regime-created holidays.[5] Women were allowed and encouraged to speak out through oral and written complaints to Soviet bodies on the problems they encountered. Many representatives, both men and women, of Kazakh and other ethnicities, were invited to share views on women's issues in the strive for progress and modernization. A newspaper that discussed gender issues in the Kazakh language was launched in 1925. It had the symbolic title *Tendik* [Equality], and soon grew in popularity; it was promptly renamed *Äiyel tendigi* [Female Equality] and was active until 1934. Originally the main readers were literate urban Kazakh women, but in time it became oriented to rural women as well, especially when more of the latter become literate. The question arises as to what extent the strongly ideological texts really mirrored or represented the life of Kazakh women.

ALL THE PROCESSES in Soviet Kazakhstan were state-initiated, including the imposed transformation of traditional culture. The debates on what kind of culture the traditional nomadic society needed were launched in Soviet Kazakhstan in the early 1920s and abruptly ended by the 1930s, which were marked by

Soviet poster, 1920s.

Women in the Adaevsky district, 1926.

Women and children in east Kazakhstan, early 20th century.

the persecution and eventual purges of the nationalist-minded (pan-Turkic, pan-Islamic, pan-Turanist) representatives of political and cultural elites. By the early 1930s the major components of socialist realism were developed and coined by M. Gorky. From the early 1920s, some cultural innovations, like drama, became the symbols of liberation, new life and potential creative realization for Kazakhs. The Kazakh Drama Theater operated in Kyzyl-Orda until 1927, moving in 1928 to the new capital Alma-Ata that became the center for cultural experiments and the shop window for the achievements of Soviet Kazakh culture. Few people in the arts left memoirs (if they survived the Stalinist times) to reconstruct the history of the Cultural Revolution. The personalities involved in the arts are not symbolic per se but represent the escape from harsh reality provided by the arts, as they generated the art of survival, navigation, conformism/avoidance, or public activities of a new type – to be in line with the official course.

In accordance with a 1933 decree of the Kazakh ASSR Central Committee, "On development of national art", a musical theater and ballet studio were set up to answer the need to create local national cadres of cultural workers. The Soviet regime constructed a "new woman" via public representation and exposure of the female body, establishing criteria for her exterior – clothes, body posture and its parameters, cosmetics, manners, and fertility control.[6] Shara Zhienkulova was to embody physically the male ideals of female beauty, erotic and sexual, and to gain the admiration of young healthy woman, but still to remain inaccessible. Her dances were designed to produce a stimulating effect on men – *look, that is a new woman*. The Stalinist project also envisioned the creation of a new woman's inner world – feelings, dreams, beliefs, mannerisms, and conduct. Shara Zhienkulova was to transmit to the public not "Kazakh-ness", although some exoticism was accentuated ("Eastern-ness"/*vostochny colorit*), but to emphasize emancipation, hidden sexuality, bodily health, physical endurance, and beauty variation as her face and some parts of her body were visible. Her image provided a chain of discontinuous messages, not linear, but cyclical, generating one thought after another. Stereotypical perceptions of Kazakh women through photos and images of Western travelers and Russian photographers showed the Kazakh women as rigid, shy or hiding their faces behind scarves, looking asquint.

"SHARA ZHIENKULOVA WAS TO EMBODY PHYSICALLY THE MALE IDEALS OF FEMALE BEAUTY, EROTIC AND SEXUAL."

Shara Zhienkulova's memories

Although Shara Zhienkulova's memories are titled *My life is art*, she tells us about the invisible division between right and wrong that lay behind life in the country. Her memoirs deserve careful reading, as female self-narration was a novelty for Kazakh literature and history studies. The social aspect of the memoirs is limited to descriptions of her origins, and one can guess how she followed the channels of social mobility opened by the regime to people in the arts. Shara describes her life as a cycle of scenic performances with mystical/divine intervention:

> **My life entered a new stage – I am in a boat on the big river moving forward. That is the first step on the ladder of arts, given and opened to me by God.[7]**

In the second part of her memoirs, Shara primarily describes her love of Kurmanbek and meetings with some celebrities of the time. Ordinary people in Kazakhstan respected them and perceived them as saints; therefore, her stories addressed the general public: "Look, we must be grateful to them that they were part of us", and also refer to herself: "I am one of them!" She provides selective statements, declarations and remarks that evaluate only her actions and achievements.

THE MEMOIRS ARE WRITTEN in the literary Kazakh language, enriched with numerous beautiful and smart folk expressions that have mostly fallen out of use in the modern language, but that precisely and vividly relay certain moments and the author's emotional state. Fragments of articles from the central mass media support her text, highlighting her role in the Soviet culture. But she did not report on meetings with the public (unlike Roza Baglanova,[8] who gave a lot of pictures with her fans) which supports the notion of her self-awareness of her status that she took for granted. The actress communicated face-to-face with prominent people in the arts and politics in the Soviet Kazakhstan; moreover, she represented all the women of new Kazakhstan before the top Soviet leadership. She was aware of the vulnerability of the politicians who could be doomed by actors' wrong words and gestures if misinterpreted by the top leadership or critics. Various signs of conformism, fear, suspicion, and disloyalty are given between the lines in intonations, descriptions of actions, and mysterious disappearances. Events in her memoirs are not given as a personal account of class conflict manifestation and gradual implementation. Shara tried to come to terms with a series of upsetting incidents. She however writes almost nothing about ordinary people.

Shara Zhienkulova passed away in 1991, the same year as the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Her dance, once at the forefront of women's emancipation, had been superseded. By now, the female body sent far more individual messages, and the coordination of dance, costumes, morale, and training had developed further to become more flexible, sexier, liberated, and inventive.

Shara Zhienkulova's memoirs are today a source for decoding the discourse or to be used as a window into the Stalinist era. As R. Bart stated, an author's language speaks even after their death.[9] The experience of surviving Stalinism became part of the collective memory, as new generations accepted survivors' positions on key events as an integral part of the social capital resource for navigation in extreme political conditions.

The embodiment of "femina Sovietica"

Shara Zhienkulova was born in a prosperous family, but her father lost his property and was arrested as a socially alien element by the Soviet regime in the late 1920s.[10] Shara, the eldest of the children, became a breadwinner in the late 1920s when the state opened social mobility channels for Kazakh women via education, and access to public entertainment (concerts, cinema, parks, new fashion, dances, social career, theater, gender code and conduct, etc.). She and her sisters often visited public places, where she was charmed by theatrical performances and by a talented actor, Kurmanbek Zhandarbekov. They fell in love, and as the Soviet regime allowed free choice marriages, they married, although she was only sixteen. Her husband introduced her to an artistic life; she performed as an actor and then as a dancer, mainly by order of the Minister of Culture and Enlightenment of the Kazakh ASSR, T. Zhurgenev. As her dances were amateur, a group of professional trainers arrived from Moscow and Leningrad, and she went through arduous work to become the first professional Kazakh ballerina. Shara was committed to contribute via dance to a gender code and a new tripartite gender contract agreement – state-men-women. The Soviet regime intended to construct a new woman out of the ideas and representations of the best qualities suited to the purpose of building a new society. The real new women differed from the ideal, that varied across the cultural, geographical, gender and temporal realms in the USSR, and at the top, middle and bottom levels of society. Shara Zhienkulova was designated to become a type of a new woman formed out of the Kazakh woman, Islamic and Oriental by nature. Shara Zhienkulova framed the narrative of her life in a feminine way – telling first about her youth and then marriage as a route. In fact, her memoirs are about her life with Kurmanbek Zhandarbekov and without him, as if she realized that her life in arts would never have happened or been so bright and successful, if not for her meeting and family life with Kurmanbek Zhandarbekov.

T. Zhurgenev[11] designated Shara Zhienkulova to be a ballerina, and Kulyash Baiseitova to be an opera diva:

> **You are the dancer, Shara, but you have to train in classical ballet. You will become the founder of Kazakh professional dance, and in that way, even if you fail to master the art of international classical ballet, then do whatever is in your powers – learn. To that end I invited Alexandrov, a dancer and ballet master from the Moscow Bolshoi Theater. He will lead the ballet studio, and train ballet students; he will design your dances. You will also learn classical dance, inclinations and the rest from him. Do you mind?**[12]

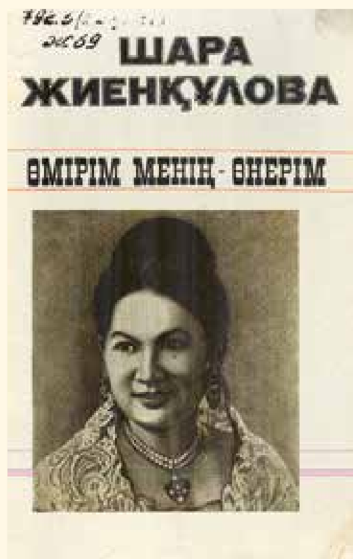
Zhurgenev referred to the example of famous Uzbek dancer Tamara-khanum[13] and said: "Kazakhstan also needs its own dancer". No objections were tolerated. Shara Zhienkulova described Temirbek Zhurgenev as an ardent proponent of the regime, strongly committed to the idea of the practical transformation of Kazakh society by communist ideological schemes.

Natural diligence, endurance, flexibility, and an innate sense of rhythm helped her to cover the strict ballet studio program in five years. She was twenty-two, mother of two sons. Normally, girls start ballet studies at the age eight or nine and it takes on average about ten years to master the classical elements. Through pain and moral-psychological tests, she formed not only her professional career but also an identity for many Kazakh girls, to become an icon of grace and style. Zhienkulova spent six hours a day at the ballet studio, worked for the theater, and performed family duties as a mother and wife. She remembers that she used to cry, being exhausted not from pain but from the desire to eat, and she rapidly lost weight, so that even her husband protested in vain to the ballet master. Artemy Alexandrov[14] and Shara Zhienkulova made numerous trips to rural areas to collect material for inventing dances. They meticulously noted nuances of female movements, both natural and those connected with physical activities, and coded women's symbolic and actual roles in dances to provide insight into the nature of gender labor, and that women perform well-over eighty percent of housework in a nomadic household. Shara Zhienkulova also embodied the ethnic flavor in dance and paid close attention to clothing styles to match the historical and socio-cultural context. Through her, the regime transmitted the idea of a new way of life. She was initially included in that process unconsciously, being obsessed with her professional acting career, but later she deliberately created new ideas and meanings. However, she resisted radical modernization through her artistic activities and preserved ethnic identity by using scenic costumes and ornaments.

SHARA ZHIENKULOVA'S career peaked in the 1930s. This was also when the Stalinist regime introduced the cultural revolution, aiming to eradicate outdated cultural patterns and implant what they regarded as civilized forms of cultural development such as ballet and opera. In her autobiography, published in early 1980s,[15] Shara Zhienkulova voices no criticism of the Stalinist transformations, although her family was persecuted (as socially and politically alien to the regime). On the contrary, she seems to be grateful for the chance of becoming one of the creators of the Kazakh dancing school. She became a role model for modern emancipated Kazakh women, cherished by the regime, but more than that, she became a mediator and a messenger from the regime to all Kazakh women. Shara Zhienkulova's body was used by the Soviet regime to encourage or rather push millions of Oriental women to embrace development. Was she fully aware of this role, and did she have the opportunity to agree to carry out this mission placed upon her: to be the embodiment of "femina Sovietica" in Kazakhstan?

Shara Zhienkulova lived under Stalinism for twenty years, which meant that she had to face many challenges and gained experiences on how to not only survive but also do so being part of the system. Her own personal development and changes impacted her perceptions of the contemporary political situation, but also her memories of the processes in the post-Stalinist period (she died in 1991). This article argues that memories as interpretations of the past are by nature social phenomena, including

Shara Zhienkulova on the cover of the magazine Театральная декада [Theatrical Decade] in 1936.



Cover of the memoirs *My life is art*.

typified verbal and symbolic representations, that provide a field for interdisciplinary studies: How past externally imposed schemata could live for a long time in a new era, formatting the vision of the past and creating a perception of the Stalinist past for future generations.

Despite the Soviet regime's expectations that whatever was ethnic should be cast away, Shara Zhienkulova remained deeply Kazakh, which is shown in the memoirs. She was the *Queen of Kazakh dance/Kazak biinin padishasy*. Female dance was tabooed in the traditional Kazakh cultural complex, being an entertainment only for little girls. Shara Zhienkulova created *ex nihilo* the forms for her dance, driven by her genuine intuition and sense of rhythm, under the guidance of Russian classical ballet teachers. Shara Zhienkulova writes nostalgically in her memoirs about her life in Soviet Kazakhstan, how she contributed to its development and established lower and upper limits of what was happiness for some people in Soviet times: to live and die for the Leader. Shara Zhienkulova, like Kulyash Baiseitova, the Kazakh Soviet opera diva, ascended to the top of the political Olympus during Stalinist times. They both performed for the leadership but managed to avoid closer contacts. In doing so they escaped the tragic fates of other famous people in the arts, who were purged and disappeared in the Gulag camps and NKVD prisons.

The memoirs' contextual background covers the late 1920s and 1930s, coinciding with the social transformation of Kazakh society following the Minor October Revolution (a second colonial revolution), followed by the start of the Cultural Revolution, the establishment of the Stalinist regime, the elimination of opposition to modernization, collectivization, political reprisals, culminating in the Thermodorian in 1937, and the formation processes of the new culture and new man through ideological propaganda, socio-cultural engineering, and surviving cultural practices. The Great Patriotic War (1941–1945) and the subsequent post-war era followed in the 1940s. Some of her family members joined the Bolsheviks, but no information is provided about what motivated them – true belief in the ideals of Bolshevism, or mere survival strategy?

THE MEMORIES PROVIDE an exciting insight into the mental mapping of the cultural changes in Stalinist Kazakhstan as a complex cultural transformation in the context of social-economic transition, when all subsystems of the habitus were turned upside down, the habitual was prohibited, while the unthinkable came to power. Shara Zhienkulova was not only an object of influence but also an active subject herself, demonstrating the potential to read reality in order to survive. Conventional wisdom and social background were her major capital.

After Stalin established his personal power regime in 1927, the processes of constructing the socialist economic basis and relative superstructure (*nadstroika*) were launched in the USSR. The idea was declared an absolute, was promoted at all levels, and in culture in particular. To be in the cultural sphere meant to embody the idea of the state, to polish and present it to the public, urging them to follow it. It was very problematic for the

people in the arts to retain their personal identity, not to dissolve in the service of the *idea*. But the *idea* could be portioned into constructive blocks, be differentiated into main and supportive parts, and the performer could find the right methods to express it, while keeping moral and physical distance. In the *hierarchy of ideas*, *one* was declared predominant – *the idea of the Leader who embodied Absolute Truth and Wisdom*.

Family-life in Kazakhstan

Shara Zhienkulova appeared on the Kazakh cultural scene as a girl with a strong educational background, a world outlook, skills, ideas and physical appearance as her main assets. Her childhood was happy – she was born to her father's second wife as his fifteenth daughter. The family was big (two wives, with nineteen children) and was guarded by the careful support of numerous relatives and servants. Her father, Baimolda Zhienkul, was a rich cattle owner and merchant. The revolution did not substantially change the family's economic position; the property was confiscated only in the late 1920s. She grew up as lively, smart and cute girl; her successes made father happy, and she was educated in traditional Islamic and Russian/Soviet styles. By the age of fifteen she was able to enter Alma-Atinsky Kazakh-Kyrgyz pedagogical institute but could not complete her studies because of the abrupt downgrade of the family status after her father's arrest and the urgent need to support the family. She does not dwell on her understanding of the radical political transformations of the Kazakh colonial periphery of the empire – revolutions, civil war, and how her family survived the events of 1916. The political and economic changes are given in a sketchy way as her family, especially the senior generation, was acquainted with the figures of new Kazakhstan in the 1920s – Tokash Bokin, Zhubanysh Boribayev, Magazy Masanchi, Gani Muratbayev and others.[16]

Shara Zhienkulova devotes more space to idealized descriptions of her family's lifecycle:

> **We spent time in the city (Verny) and moved with the first spring days, following the cattle across the Alatau Mountains to the place named Kokqairyk, at the crossing of Kazakh and Kyrgyz lands. As soon as Kazakh and Kyrgyz people arrived at the pasturelands and set up their accommodation, they used to host guests; we called that "seri". It includes the arrangement of horse races of various types, wrestling of strong young men, and musical-poetical contests. Feasts, weddings, and marriage activities were initiated. Kazakh singers used to sing songs and accompany them on the dombra and qobyz, while Kyrgyz epic reciters and poets narrate to the accompaniment of the qomyz or silver komei.** [17]

From the mid-1920s, a new cultural space emerged that also provided opportunities for Shara Zhienkulova to attend public performances in the city parks that she describes with little reference to the historical context and socio-cultural realities. Public parks in Verny, as well in other urban centers of colonial Turkestan, were created by the Russians as symbols of European-style cultural life for Russian city dwellers. The imperial policy on urban development stipulated that the aboriginal population was to be kept away from the cities, especially from the administrative and military objects, as Fort Verny used to be. The majority of urban settlers were Russians, while Tatars, Uighur and Dungan people were merchants and traders. Urban parks opened as cultural innovations for non-Russians and the socially disadvantaged only after the Bolshevik revolution of 1917, changing the lifestyle of the people in Soviet Kazakhstan and breeding a new sense of civic identity. Shara Zhienkulova lists instruments for cultural development and modernization: parks, gardens, cinema, theater, dances, and festivals. But she does not mention that before the relocation of the capital, the majority of the urban population was not Kazakh.

SHARA ZHIENKULOVA does not describe how subsystems of her life collapsed after the confiscation of her father's property in 1927 and his arrest, triggering a sudden drop in material status.[18] Her discourse reflects her regrets about this unexpected and unfair treatment, supposedly initiated by someone:

> **My studies at the institute abruptly ended. My father got into trouble and was persecuted. Due to somebody's complaint, he was under investigation and was in custody for some time. I remember quite well that it was summer. We are in light dresses and light footwear, my mother is carrying her baby and I am leading the kids who can walk; we are bringing some food to father in prison. We are short of resources, and do not know how to survive the next day. Then I went to the Labor Exchange and registered as job-seeking. Soon I was employed as interpreter-secretary to that office.**[19]

Shara Zhienkulova could easily find work, changing her position within one year in search of better-paid positions, and was even put in charge of the forest, fields and warehouse. She was aware of her beauty and charm, conscious of the impression she made on influential men, but wrote about getting so tired by nighttime that she fell asleep instantly. She writes that she enjoyed exposing her beauty in public places, although it was risky, as her father was under arrest and could not protect her. Alma-Ata in the later 1920s was not safe, but her father's reputation might have kept her safe from any accidents.

"SHARA ZHIENKULOVA WAS NOT ONLY AN OBJECT OF INFLUENCE BUT ALSO AN ACTIVE SUBJECT HERSELF, DEMONSTRATING THE POTENTIAL TO READ REALITY IN ORDER TO SURVIVE."

> **My self-esteem was high, but thoughts of the unfair treatment of my father worried me constantly. And at that time, I met Kurmanbek Zhandarbekov.[20]**

Her family survived hardships; the family had to move from the palace to modest premises. She had to take responsible decisions for the family and her own life too, even concerning marriage plans. But she emphasizes her self-confidence at that time, stressing not material interests but love and the desire to be in the arts with her husband:

> **My salary was high, I could afford nice clothes, and visit public places for dancing and entertainment. The theater moved to Alma-Ata; life was interesting. Actors of the Kazakh drama theater staged performances in the park. And we, twelve adult girls, sisters, occupied the front rows at the performances.[20]**

In the new social conditions, she had to learn how to earn a living despite her aristocratic origins, while her parents' dreams of arranging her marriage to a rich nobleman failed forever. When she married Zhandarbekov, her father could see in the poor actor "a man with strong heart and dignity", but her mother didn't easily accept her choice of husband.[21]

The second period of her life was marriage and the start of her professional career. She underwent personal re-formation and life took a critical turn as she became a married woman, lost her father, and gave birth to three sons, two of whom died soon after birth. She had to provide moral and psychological support to her husband and was also a breadwinner with ambitions as an actor. Shara Zhienkulova undertook severe efforts to adapt to the new realities and cope with material problems; she did not enjoy the support of her mother and other relatives. Kurmanbek's world became hers, and she developed into a strong personality and actor with talents in drama, dance, and later choreography.

Galatea and her Pygmalion or the model Soviet family

The gender roles in Sovietized Kazakhstan were dictated from above; Kazakh women actors, as bearers of new type of culture and heralds of new gender roles in the 1920s, were taken into an already organized environment. By the 1930s, a number of couples emerged in on the Kazakh culture scenes, that embodied the new family with relations based on love, shared interests and friendship, and yet upholding manhood and femininity. Kurmanbek and Shara Zhandarbekov definitely ranked among the most popular of them. Their family life, achievements, way of life and interests were the focus of public attention, arousing not only admiration but jealousy as well, and rumors, gossip, and intrigues surrounded them.

She was well prepared for systemic, hierarchical family relations, having been brought up in a polygamous family with strong central paternalistic authority and patronage. Her marriage began as a western-style thriller with an exotic oriental flavor. When Kurmanbek Zhandarbekov fell in love with her he sent his people to talk to her parents about possible marriage but was turned down, because of his poor social and material standing. Even the mullah's mediation failed. His friends therefore suggested bride kidnapping, as she was willing to marry him despite the family's protests. A kidnapping was organized in the middle of the night,[22] giving a new twist to her biography. It was a marriage founded on love, as every word of Shara Zhienkulova's memoirs proves. In the words of their family friend, talented Kazakh Soviet actor and singer Kanabek Baiseitov:

> **When they were dancing (Shara and Kurmanbek), it was so gorgeous and elegant that the public admired them. How perfectly they matched each other! One is a sultan among the young men [*jigits*], and she is the most beautiful fairy among the girls. Most people in the hall were novices to the miraculous art of dancing, but for that couple it was natural, as if habitual since early childhood.[23]**

"KURMANBEK FASCINATED THE YOUNG GIRL WITH HIS TALENT AND ATTITUDE TO LIFE, BEING INDEPENDENT IN MIND AND ACTIONS."

Kurmanbek fascinated the young girl with his talent and attitude to life, being independent in mind and actions, but as she notes in her memoires responsible and very hard working. Kurmanbek became everything to her; she relied on his professional intuition and experience, and his praise meant more than the opinion of other critics. But Kurmanbek's behavior worried Shara, as he lost his temper easily, got into conflicts over theatrical problems with colleagues, and could hurt people, although a strange force saved him every time; most of those with whom he was in conflict easily pardoned him, otherwise he could have lost not only his job, but also his life.

Shara fitted the ideological machinery in her behavior, successes, and image of a stylish, soft and pleasant woman. Harmonious family relations depended on wife's proper understanding of her role, as family comes first; only where professional duties clash with her wifely duties does Shara surrender before the professional. However, Shara was much concerned with materials aspects of life, she avoids describing her first house after marriage (hen house, in her words), as it was too miserable: They slept, ate, and rested on the floor. She could not find words enough to express her admiration of the interior of Moscow theaters and hotels. Shara was formed by her time and the main Pygmalion was her husband, but the chief designer was Stalin, whose great project modernized Kazakh life. Her loyalty to the traditional code of gender roles was reflected overtly in language: She uses only polite forms of address to her husband, highlighting his

status, not only his role in Kazakh Soviet culture. Pages of memories about him are full of love and deep respect; even when he was angry, she finds the words to apologize on his behalf for such improper conduct:

> **He was pure by nature, easy-going, never remembered what and who hurt him, and was not vengeful. No matter how upset he was, he never attacked physically or verbally, and tried to turn his anger into peaceful words.**[24]

Kurmanbek was Shara's mentor: she liked being praised and when she didn't hear positive words about her acting, burst into tears. A relative remembers Kurmanbek initiating conflicts with Shara because of his jealousy – she was too attractive, drawing the attention of other men. He often resorted to the threat of Islamic divorce: "I will *talaq* you!/I will divorce you by pronouncing triple *talaq*!" (the Islamic formula of divorce initiated by the man). Shara's attitude to Kurmanbek's line of behavior was typical for most Soviet women – they perceived drinking as a compensatory remedy for stresses in reality and work. In her memoires she writes that she was aware under what type of psychological and even physical pressure and stress Kurmanbek was as the head of the theater – responsible for the repertoire, the performances of every single member of the collective, and the interpretation of text, music and gestures. Much in Shara's treatment of her husband was typical for women in Soviet Kazakh – most women worked hard to make their family life normal in conditions of abnormality – got married, bore children, maintained inter-generational and other social networks, received guests and visited others, arranged holidays, and through occasional shopping trips to bazaars settled what was regarded as the eternal women's questions: what to wear and how to look to make all around them die of jealousy. They forgave or did not notice their husbands' adulteries, their deviations – alcoholism, rudeness, disrespect, demonstration of their higher standing by shouting, violence, verbal and physical assaults, and direct instructions. Moreover, male status was backed by the regime, which acted as the "Main Man". Women had to stick time and existence back together when these were torn apart and sought to give existential meaning to the chaotic fragments of ongoing events. Voice, grace, common sense, and beauty saved the Kazakh world from finally slipping into the Soviet foundation ditch (*kotlovan*). But tby this the women's activities supported the Stalinist thesis: *Life is getting better and jollier*.

KURMANBEK WAS THE CHIEF person in the family; no decision could be taken without his approval. When T. Zhurgenev awarded the Zhandarbekovs a money prize after the success at the Kazakh SSR Cultural Decade in Moscow, they went to a large store and Kurmanbek bought twenty-three pairs of shoes for all the members of the family including all the children (Shara's nephews).[25] In her memoires Shara often is preoccupate with her appearance – clothes, haircuts, decorations of various types, as well as the impressions she makes on people, namely men; she remarks on how men were charmed by her dances and could not resist the desire to get her under their patronage, even in presence of her husband. In her world, her body could be a mean for her to gain power over men and her appearance was the resource, or investment for her.

The Zhandarbekovs' belongings in 1933 however were modest:

> **One wooden sack, where we packed our clothes, two red blankets to put on floor, some pillows, one blanket to cover us, wooden spoons, two-three china cups.** [26]

The living conditions at this time were poor: an old two-room house, shared with the Baiseitovs. Food was cooked on a primus kerosene stove, and their diet was traditional – meat with flour (*beshbarmak*). The baby was kept in the *besik*, the traditional Kazakh cradle.[27] They lived in a small room in the two-room barrack, provided for them by the theater. All conveniences (cold water, toilet) were outside the house; there was no heating or stove. They had no furniture and used to sleep on the floor, as was quite typical for all Kazakh families, except for the few rich ones. The description of *byt* (material conditions of life) is mentioned by Shara only to emphasize her emotional and psychological state. The menu was quite plain – meat and tea, though they often did not have one of these, as food supplies in urban areas were poor in the early 1930s. But she provides a picture of rich feasts full of food in the Alma-Ata parks and public places – even in the harsh times of famine, to comply with the official silence over the tragedy.

Artistic career, or becoming like the Other

Shara stated in her memoirs:

> **It is important to get achievements in any type of work. But for the arts it is necessary, as an actor must be talented. And without talent, neither writer nor scholar should exist at all! I cannot understand when it is said that he is a good actor, poor actor, or an actor with medium skills.**[28]

This statement proves her mission and deflects possible accusations that her career was due to the status of the famous and talented actor – her husband. Shara's coming to the theater was fortuitous (due to her marriage to Kurmanbek Zhandarbekov), but the events that followed in her private life and professional career were in line with the course of cultural transformation in Soviet Kazakhstan. European cultural models were alien to most of the Kazakh populace, and the Soviet regime forced people to accept the translated cultural forms into their mental map and normative value scale via education, music, and the visual arts. But the correct interpretation of gestures and movements to express certain meanings had to be coded in the right way to convey them to the public. Shara's body was subjected to manifest ideas and messages emanating from the political leadership

to the public. Shara staged and performed dances approved by the theatrical administration. The ideas of social progress dominated the minds of Kazakh intellectuals, and Shara, as the wife of the man who was an integral part of the cultural and ideological process, easily captured the spirit of cultural innovation that dominated the cultural centers at that time.

For the largely illiterate Kazakh women, visual images were most illustrative, as well as mythologized stories of female successes in overcoming the everyday routine and building their lives on new paths. Shara's external appearance (clothes, facial changes with cosmetics and hairstyle, body) and career trends were intended to exhibit the Soviet-oriented move to progress. The parameters of a *new woman* were never fixed but changed over time from idealistic descriptions and contradictory realistic manifestations of Bolshevik female leaders to male-oriented schemes of exterior (bodies, faces, clothes, matrix of conduct, interests and emotional taxonomy) and interior (hidden, therefore, women were not trusted) representations of an ideal new women. Oriental women (of the eastern Muslim colonial areas of the Russian empire) were an enigma for the western-minded Bolshevik leaders, whose opinion of how to emancipate such woman meant not only to open up their faces, dress them in new garments, and liberate them from various forms of enclosure, but also to transform their mindset by erasing old clichés of what was proper and decent. As a ballet dancer, actor and performer of folk dances, Shara embodied the physical characteristics of the ideal (desired, meeting the established parameters) body of a Kazakh (or more broadly, Oriental – *vostochnaya*) woman. But Shara's dances were Kazakh, although there had been no Kazakh female dances. She created a dance coined as traditional that also transmitted the regime's ideas and messages, but most of the typified movements were purely Shara's products. Shara does not tell us whether she resisted interference in her creative work and the inner laboratory of the dances' inception.

"SHE CREATED A DANCE COINED AS TRADITIONAL THAT ALSO TRANSMITTED THE REGIME'S IDEAS AND MESSAGES, BUT MOST OF THE TYPIFIED MOVEMENTS WERE PURELY SHARA'S PRODUCTS."

WHEN SHARA ZHIENKULOVA performed in Moscow for the first time in 1935, the public was astonished as nobody knew what to expect from Oriental women, but her performance surpassed all expectations. Shara surprised the audience and critics by maelstroms achieved by powerful spins and pelvic movements; it was shocking as the movements demonstrated innate female energy and desire expressed in a rather uncontrollable way; a release of hidden and suppressed potential. The evaluation of newborn Kazakh dances was Eurocentric, an attitude that used to perceive indigenous performances as shamanic and uncivilized, a spontaneous release of huge energy that contains untamed destructive force. The European criticism of dances rests on the proposition that they are an interaction of body and instinct. If European dances (ballroom or folk) were interpreted as two levels of cultural and intellectual expression the dances of the indigenous populace were labeled as uncivilized, close to nature and displaying deep instincts. But Shara invented Kazakh dances under the careful guidance of Russian classical ballet makers, and therefore, little was left of uncivilized moments, but if some ethnic specifics existed, they were carefully polished and put into canonical classical forms. Alexandrov, as Shara highlights, learnt the Kazakh language to talk to women and figure out what was behind the internal mechanics of gestures they used in daily activities and in communicating with each other. Therefore, Shara decided what was typical for Kazakh women and converted that in ideologically suitable ways. The dances were Shara's corporeal interpretation of female Kazakh-ness in the Soviet cultural framing. Her body exemplified how Russian and European dance forms produced the Soviet-ness of Kazakh ethnic dance. But Shara was truly Kazakh; she never imagined herself being a version of a Russian heroine, or bearer of other ethnic and cultural components in her behavior, although her lifestyle (fashion, etc.) was an attempt to reach higher status and cultural level in the Soviet Kazakh society in creation – but not by a change of ethnocultural code. Through her dances, Shara visualized the ongoing transformations of Kazakh women, changing their level of consciousness and understanding of themselves.

The Other is present invisibly in Shara's memoirs and her discourse, embodied mostly in the ideal she has to imitate and create in herself via her new lifestyle, clothes, manners, tastes and visual representation. The One is presented in her text in terms as small as a hairstyle or perfume, and the Big as materialized greatness of the Soviet power – the Lenin Mausoleum, the Kremlin, the Bolshoi Theater and people in power – the political leadership. The only example of the "new Ones", portrayed is her influential ballet master A. Alexandrov, while the "Other Ones" are mentioned in a sketchy way, simply listing their roles.

Sacrifices on the altar of success: Antigone

Shara offered a compromise line for women – the public and professional should not prevail over family duties; she sacrificed her professional career opportunities many times for the sake of the family balance and her role as mother and wife, although her records of the 1930s can be condensed in one feeling – tiredness. Training, rehearsals, performances, self-control almost killed her so that she had no time to contemplate external processes, and perhaps that saved her from the need to make accounts, analyze and come to certain conclusions, to get "mad" as things went in their own way. Her career developed but she lost two sons, being extremely busy with rehearsals, performances, and

a tough touring regime under the close supervision of external and internal invigilators demanding that she follow the schedules strictly.[29] Shara made tremendous efforts to accommodate herself to the new way of life with Kurmanbek.[30] She writes in a calm manner about the material conditions the young family had to endure, how her husband carried her to the maternity hospital in his arms in the middle of the night as no transportation was available, but nothing is said about how their living conditions improved. The government allocated the Zhandarbekov family a separate comfortable apartment in an elite area of Alma-Ata for their service to the regime. She on the other hand dedicated several pages to the episode of her father's hiding in their small closet when they lived in the "hen house".

Shara's father shared the fate of numerous innocent victims of that time – groundless accusations based on an unreliable social origin, and a chain of social and material losses. In Shara's memoirs all those events are given in a regular order but repeated in a circular form – she keeps returning to the father's fate, each time adding more details of a psychological-emotional character. She makes no effort to find any excuses to justify her father as an innocent victim of the regime; on the contrary, she was greatly concerned with the lack of confidence and loyalty among her colleagues and friends of the family, who several times attempted to get rid of her and her husband from the theatre when the campaigns to purge unreliable elements were initiated. The tragedy in the family (her father's persecution and eventual loss, and colleagues' intrigues) are described as "hard events" explained by enemies' plots (that emulates the regime's grounds for reprisals): "Everyone has enemies".[31]

SHARA REPEATEDLY wrote about the break in her trust of people around her – when one of her superior colleagues refused to support her in her father's transportation in the train, and again when she realized that her friends were not on her side during the campaigns against hidden enemies in the theatre collective, and when the colleagues were on her husband's side after they separated. In Shara's memoirs, the reasons for reprisals are human mindset and jealousy. These were also given as the major reasons for persecution of her father and Kurmanbek Zhandarbekov.

She described her father's first salvation as a miracle:

> **In 1932 our theater was on tour in Semey, Kyzylzhar, and Aqmola. Once a militiaman approached Kurmanbek after the concert, asking: "Excuse me, but are you familiar with an old man named Baimolda Zhienkululy?[32]**

The militiaman kept him in his house. Baimolda, her father, was ill and in rags. Kurmanbek and Shara washed the old man, dressed him in clean clothes, fed him, expressed their gratitude to the militiaman's family, bought some flour, sugar, tea, bread, and presents, left some money, and took the old man to Alma-Ata. But their colleague, an actor famous at that time, did not allow Shara's father to go by the train designated for the theater

Shara Zhienkulova and her husband Kurmanbek Zhandarbekov worked togheter in the Kazhak film *Amangeldy*, 1938.

Kurmanbek Zhandarbekov in the Soviet film *Dzhambul*, 1952.

staff on the pretext that were no vacant seats, although many relatives of other artists followed them. Kurmanbek had to give Baimolda his seat and took another train. Shara was with her baby during the tour, her second son Zhanibek, but other actors had occupied her and Kurmanbek's seats, and she and her son had to sleep on the train floor during the ten-day trip back. The baby got sick on the way and died soon after they returned to Alma-Ata. Shara describes in detail how upset she was by her colleague's aversion. She writes bitterly that for a long time, she was a partner of that man in the theater. Much time passed by, but she did not forget the unpleasant episode that was typical for that time.

After 1927, arrests were launched against former political opponents of the Bolsheviks (Alash-Orda members), sympathizers to sectarians within the communist party, and social "aliens" (the bais and moderately prosperous people). Her father was persecuted,[33] but his family members luckily escaped serious charges for their origin, or relations with the political aliens.

"SHARA'S PARTICIPATION IN THE 1936 MOSCOW DECADE MADE HER A SUPERSTAR OF SOVIET SCOPE."

Writing about her father, Shara uses some myths; some of them was unmasked in 1930s, but most remained as the coded untold stories about the life of Soviet celebrities in the common folk imagination. The real problems over her father would start later on, when Kurmanbek was seriously criticized at meetings in the theater for his social-political misalliance – his wife was the daughter of a rich de-classified *bai*, who served a sentence for his origin and crimes against the Soviet regime. Shara even had to change her name – shortened from Gulshara and registered by her husband's family name, Zhandarbekova (after she divorced him in the 1940s, she once more took her maiden name Zhienkulova).

IN HER MEMOIRS, Shara displays to the public the topic of her father's non-burial and in that way reminded society that millions were not buried. It was her last tribute to him – *Father was a victim* in her memoirs. Many episodes express Shara's gratitude to him – for her unique natural talent, and investments in her education and upbringing, but she could not find the right place for him in the new Soviet realities; he had to hide in the closet of her small apartment when he returned from exile, and he finally left the scene to nowhere. Upon her father's sudden (but predictable) disappearance, Shara had no information on him, but probably guessed that he had tragically died. He might have told her not to seek him for their own safety. She reconciled with her father's death in public only when she was allowed to cry in the film "Amangeldy". "The dead must be buried, making the past public as on the theatrical stage". In the revealing interview on the "Amangeldy" film shooting, Shara writes: "I remember the episode when I had to cry. I was told: "Shara, burst out crying!" But on the contrary I was about to burst out laughing. The producer explained that Amangeldy was arrested in that scene, and it might be the farewell meeting of the heroes. But I was alone at the site and could not make myself cry! Then Moisei Zelikovich Levin, (producer of the film) asked: "Was there anything tragic in your life recently?" I responded: "My father died not long ago." Tears come from my eyes of remembering that story. "All right", the producer encouraged me, "imagine that you are saying farewell to your father!".[34]

Shara could not mourn her father but transferred her perception of fatherhood onto the Soviet leaders – Lenin and Stalin. In the Lenin Mausoleum in Moscow, she talks to Lenin, but Stalin is more feared, although respected, and we cannot find any attempts to establish a dialogue between Shara and Stalin, or any other great Soviet leaders. She gives no description of close contact with the Soviet leadership, using only common phrases or metaphors: Great leader, Baba, etc., as if distancing herself from them even in time.

The Soviet leaders in the 1930s were associated with death; it was somehow close to Shara's state of mind – her father's death, purges of Kazakhstani leaders and people of culture, fear for her husband and family members.

In 1935 Shara emotionally describes her visit to the Lenin's Mausoleum:

> **We all went to the Mausoleum. My blood rushed to my head from the very thought that I would see the Great Old Man. The daughter of Kazakhs, who yesterday were just nomads, is dancing today in the golden center of arts; her star is shining as an equal among equals! All that became possible only due to you, Great Old Man! Thanks to Great Lenin and the wise policy of the Bolshevik Party, people who love the arts got an opportunity to fulfill their dreams, and many others would follow them. The talents of young men and girls from the sister nations surprised not only the capital's inhabitants, but the English people as well. Among them, the Kazakh arts were displayed in the Bolshoi Theater for first time by the first swallow of Kazakh dance, me, daughter of Zhienkul, and now I come to bow my head before you, oh, Great Lenin Baba! [35] When pronouncing those words I looked at the image of the Great Man who was sleeping for eternity, and tears poured from my eyes when I told him "Good-bye" ...** [35]

Shara's appeal to Lenin is symbolically eclectic; in addressing him as "Great Old Man", "Great Lenin", she reveals ideological stereotypes incorporated into deeply rooted religiosity. Tumarkin states that the cult of Lenin has folkloric and religious roots.[36] After the loss of her biological father, Shara transferred her love to the political leadership.

Shara draws a personal intimate line between herself and Lenin, but she does not ask him what her father's fault was in the eyes of the Soviet regime. She did not pray, or beg the regime and its leaders to save her father, as she knew that it was impos-

sible, and they (she and Kurmanbek) would perish forever, if they dared to start their own investigation or even simply ask: "Why?" The visit to the Lenin Mausoleum was a test of her "Soviet-ness", while attendance at the Bolshoi Theater showed the level of her "culturedness" (*kulturnost*), an assessment of the Kremlin-approved political loyalty. The episode of 1935 was vividly recorded in 1980s, as a proof – by that time, the "femina Sovietica" had been formed. Ideological frames were deeply rooted in her mindset, as in retrospect she draws on Soviet codified cliché formulas to write about the Stalinist times. Shara's dialogue with the audience and time made her immortal, in a sense. She realized this quite clearly when she starred in the legendary film-myth about Amangeldy Imanov, the hero of the 1916 events and civil war in Kazakhstan, where she had the role of the hero's girlfriend and then wife. Her friend, Tamara-khanum, a professional dancer from Uzbekistan, wrote: "How happy you are, Shara! Your face, dances and image are immortalized forever!". But in her memoirs, Shara immortalized her love to three men in her life – her father, her husband and her son – in time's perspective; in that way she contributed to the establishment of a certain perception or blueprint for seeing time for the generations to come.

The happiest time in the Reign of Terror

The main events in the memoirs indicate Shara's social and personal vision of *happiness,* in two locations – Alma-Ata since the late 1920s and Moscow during two of Shara's visits. Pages dedicated to Shara's husband and son are very sentimental, especially when telling of the happiest time in the 1930s when they collectively worked under Zhurgenev's guidance for the Kazakh SSR Culture Decade in Moscow in 1936 and then visited Moscow with a grand performance. Shara was to dance in the opera "Qyz-Zhibek/Silk Maiden" and perform a solo. During the preparation she could not pay proper attention to her newborn son, who eventually got pneumonia and died. From time to time, her mother brought the baby to the cold theater for feeds, where he might have got sick. Shara dedicates only few lines to the death of her son, as the external pressure not to mourn but to concentrate on work prevented her from expressing her true feelings.[37] She only describes her husband's emotions in one sentence. However, she describes in detail the rest of the time spent in the Medeu resort with Baiseitov family before the artists departed for Moscow, and how warm relations were between the two families sharing the house.

In her description of her participation in the Kazakh SSR Arts Decade in Moscow (1936), Shara portrays herself primarily not as an ethnic culture representative but as a woman. In retrospect, she explains that so many events of that time were imprinted in her memory in a certain way due to her young age. She was in Moscow on tour with her husband and son, and their wellbeing, and her representation of a new Kazakh female body image, were more important than any other events around the Decade. The most revealing is Shara's distancing herself from the top Soviet politicians, or even fear of them, given at the description of the banquet arranged in honor of the Kazakh delegation in the Bolshoi Theater, attended by Stalin and his close officials. Even forty years after that remarkable incident Shara is afraid to disclose her real feelings, although emotionally that meeting deeply impressed her. But she tells the reader more about troubles with her husband at the performance; his singing was technically not perfect as he spoilt his voice by drinking the day before the concert (in Shara's version). Shara says that she was more worried about their naughty son left alone in the hotel alone. Between the lines on her husband and son, she tells us that she earned applause and pleasant words for her performance.[38]

SHARA'S LIFE COULD HAVE suddenly taken a new trajectory if she had accepted the invitation and patronage of P. Kerzhentsev[39] to stay on for an internship in the Bolshoi Theater. When the Decade was coming to an end, he suggested Shara should try casting for the role of Zarema in the B. Asafiev ballet "Bakhchisaraiskii fountain":

> **In appearance you are like Zarema as if the role were made for you. Two goals would be reached – you would perform Zarema and learn from famous ballet dancers." Shara recalls that her heart was beating happily, she started dreaming, but all depended on her husband's decision. Kerzhentsev was getting more persuasive: "Why don't you want to move to Moscow? Three or four years would pass like a day. Over that period you will master all the secrets of classical ballet, become a top ballerina, and bring so much help to your people.**[40]

Shara was faced with a dilemma: Art or Family, but Kurmanbek was categorical:

> **If you stay in Moscow, you will never see your son again, and never set foot in Alma-Ata!"**
> **Shara surrendered and had to beg her husband to forgive her for selfish vanity, bursting into tears:**
> **"Pardon me, Kurmanbek, that I put you and myself into that hard situation. I would never leave you and will stick to you forever. How can I forget all the goodness you have shown towards my parents and brothers! My late father blessed me for this marriage.** [41]

Although the couple reconciled, the memory of the lost chance of joining the cohort of famous Soviet ballerinas was aching in her heart for a long time. But she did not mention that Kerzhentsev fell out of Stalin's favor and barely survived the purges.

Shara's participation in the 1936 Moscow Decade made her a superstar of Soviet scope – she performed in the Bolshoi theatre, became familiar with the most talented and renown artists of the USSR, was recognized by them as an outstanding performer of folk dances with huge potential, and as the most beautiful woman of the Soviet Orient, performing at the reception before the Soviet leadership – Stalin and others.[42] She was admitted into the integration channels of grand Soviet art and culture. Her

Two Kazakh legends: Shara Zhienkulova and opera singer Kulyash Baiseitova.

Shara Zhienkulova at a Kazakh stamp from 2012.

Image of Shara Zhienkulova dancing.

charming dance with its strong exotic and erotic components confused even Stalin. Shara danced "Bylqyldaq" with music by Tattimbet.

Along with many other people of culture in Soviet Kazakhstan, Shara was awarded the state order for preparation and participation in the Kazakh ASSR Decade in Moscow. That series of cultural performances was to prove the degree of Soviet-ness of Kazakh culture. At the same time, it was the test for the readiness of the republican leadership to comprehend the nature and specifics of Socialist Realism in building Soviet culture out of the traditional arts.

During this Moscow visit, Shara was introduced to the high style of arts, as well as the art of being beautiful. She made contact with renowned Soviet celebrities of the time who taught the techniques of beauty – opera diva Maria Maksakova, legendary actor Zinaida Raikh, muse of the talented people of Soviet arts, graceful ballerinas Olga Lepeshinskaya and Galina Ulanova, etc. But Shara was given a valuable lesson in how to be charming from Saken Seifullin[43] in the Bolshoi theatre hall before the performance started. Shara and Kulyash Baiseitova were waiting in excitement for their turn to come to the scene, confident in their charm, being young, dressed in brilliant concert costumes. Suddenly Saken approached them and said very pleasant words on how charming they were, but after kisses he remarked:

> **You are so beautiful, but how awfully you smell! It is not your fault but that of your men, who happened to get into possession of such flowers, not knowing how to care for them properly!" And he took out of his pocket a bottle of French perfume: "That is how you should smell!"[44]**

Shara and Kulyash hastily poured the entire bottle over their heads and gave the empty bottle back to laughing Saken. That small incident made a big impression on Shara, as she remembered every minor detail of it. She could not fall asleep that night for a long time, being excited by the compliments of the most brilliant man of the Soviet Kazakhstan. She writes that she found a book of his poems and imagined that Saken personally recited them to her. A year later Saken was purged, along with other prominent people of culture; his image and name were erased from textbooks and mass media outlets, while in radio and newspapers releases, he and others were named "dirty dogs, enemies, etc." Shara did not write about the tragic fate of these people even in safe times. According to his contemporaries' descriptions, Saken Seifullin was a very handsome man. Composer Yevgenii Brusilovski remarked:

> **Saken Seifullin was not only the first Kazakh writer. He was the first chairman of the republic's Sovnarkom, the first editor-in-chief of the Kazakh republican newspaper, in short, one of the founders of Soviet power in Kazakhstan. He was handsome, like a film star, with black moustache, looking down in Kazakh way, with a proudly set head and the slow, confident walk of a**

> **man with strong sense of dignity. He liked to exhibit his beautiful appearance and looked after himself carefully – how elegant was his costume, always brand-new and tidily ironed. Among all his other merits, Seifullin also played dombra quite well in the east-Kazakhstani manner and loved singing his songs… His vocal qualities were modest, but he could sing expressively and with good taste ….[45]**

Shara does not mention Seifullin's tragic fate, emphasizing the romanticized episode instead.

There is much that you cannot find in Shara's memoirs: There are no famines, reprisals, or people of other social and ethnic groups. There is no evaluation of the situation or any hints about her political views – one can read the hidden message only between the lines – or mentions of proper or improper ethical behavior. Personal tragic losses overshadowed others' tragedies. Her attitude to death was given a complex interpretation: as a sacrifice to something bigger and horrible, primarily as a biological fact – people used to die under different circumstances and not as part of a social-political process, when people disappeared due to a combination of objective reasons and human interference. But she remembers in detail emotional expressions after the humiliating experience of her inability to save her father and provide decently for his care and treatment due to his age and status, and the trauma of his non-burial. As an afterthought, she does not write about mother's sufferings and tears; she had to endure the tragedy in calm and patience. Shara does not highlight her mother's contribution to her success either, namely that she was doing all the housework for Shara after the disappearance of her father. The father proved to be much more significant; that is seen in the reference to the role of Stalin as a super-father who replaced the real father for her.

"THERE IS MUCH THAT YOU CANNOT FIND IN SHARA'S MEMOIRS: THERE ARE NO FAMINES, REPRISALS, OR PEOPLE OF OTHER SOCIAL AND ETHNIC GROUPS."

ARTEMY ALEXANDROV was arrested in 1937 and sentenced according to the 58th article to ten years in Krasnoayrsk camp of the GULAG. Shara's text explains his sudden disappearance as being due to misfortune.[46] She regrets his absence in the theater, as he was indispensable and could organically transform a Kazakh dance into a ballet performance without risking damage to both. Ballet was enriched by ethnic dance elements, and that was his invention. The first Kazakh ballet, *Qalqaman-Mamyr*, failed mainly due to not being staged by Alexandrov, in Shara's opinion. Among other reasons behind the failure, Shara points to her non-classical ballet education, defects in the music, and heavy, clumsy costumes.[47] The ballet survived only two seasons and was deleted from the repertoire. Although Shara does not write about the reasons behind the Alexandrov's fate (in the 1980s it was still dangerous to refer to the victims' background), she happened to learn about his tragic fate, and even intended to support him, as her relatives remember in retrospect. Alexandrov wrote her from Krasnoyarsk GULAG: "Sharochka, save me, I am starving; if you do not support me, I will die of hunger". Shara's biographer, Sharbanu Kumarova, states that when she actually found him, he had died.[48] People co-existed at the same time and space, but why were their fates were so different? They shared much in common in professional activities and interests, worked together day and night to realize some cultural project, although in different capacities, and with different degrees of responsibility. If a choreographer was the inventor of gestures, what was wrong in his interpretation of gestures to be performed by dancers? However, both ballet master and dancers took risks, experimenting with a strange mix of exotic and ethnic dances, and classical ballet.

Conclusion

Shara's memoirs, set in the Stalinist and post-Stalinist era, show how private life meets the Soviet imperative to dissolve the personal/individual in the collective/public. But the memoirs are formatted to ignore external reality: As an actor, Shara could hide her inner world, incorporating her achievements into the narrative of the Soviet regime's successes in transforming Kazakh life and constructing a new culture and a "model woman". Unlike many other women in the intellectual and artistic sphere, Shara was in a favorable position, being backed by a strong, talented and influential husband, who was appreciated by the regime for his great talent. But she never usurped the power due to his position; she worked long hours, and really earned her fame.

The Soviet regime exploited Shara's body, but she could still think and many years afterwards she provides a synopsis of the Stalinist period as her most successful, as the first Kazakh professional dancer and founder of the Kazakh dancing school. Her mind also conformed to the regime's policies and justified her compromised existence by professional activities for the sake of becoming a professional dancer. Shara Zhienkulova incorporated her mission profoundly, and in later years people still saw her as an icon of Kazakh female grace and beauty. But she does not present herself as a victim of the regime, instead preferring to be part of the Soviet official cultural vanguard that aimed to form tastes, interests and ideals of the Kazakh Soviet woman. If Shara had been the victim, she would not have employed her talents to be among the favored ones who enjoyed privileges and fame. Shara believed that she lived a happy life, being loved by the most talented man in the Soviet Kazakh arts, mother of a very talented writer, cherishing her grandchildren, and that she was blessed by the regime and its leaders, welcomed by critics, recognized as the symbol of grace and beauty for several generations of women. But the most remarkable of all – she survived Stalinism. If we compare the memories of those who were victimized by

the Stalinist regime and her memories about those years, one might think that historical backgrounds were taken from different countries, although the events occur within the same chronotope – Soviet Kazakhstan, Alma-Ata. Between the lines, Shara hints at postponed resistance to the regime: "*Despite the harsh environment and personal losses, I created a new form of cultural capital, but also augmented it*". She managed to appropriate and subjectivize ascribed identity. That identity was Soviet, coded in understanding of her mission, the need to fulfill duties, not to betray the republic's political leadership, to represent a new Kazakh Soviet woman and culture. Contrary to the tragic sentiments, Shara demonstrates her love, not fear. Etkind claims that the dominant feeling of Stalinist narratives is mourning. Nostalgic admiration of Shara in modern-day Kazakh culture, and society in the broad sense, indicates the level of consciousness and historical memory, as well as durability of the cult for talent. Those who survived – in particular, those who enjoyed the regime's paternalistic support – are currently employed for state and nation building processes. Zhienkulova upgrades herself to the level of historical subject. Memoirs can correct the vision of a person's ego; she/he makes efforts to correspond to the constructed stereotypes that fit that time and ideological frameworks.

SHARA WAS AWARE OF the power of the external forces regulating the lives of millions of Soviet people, but for the sake of her and her family's survival, she selected the most rational option – to hide away in the arts and family affairs. However, the fear was so strong that even many years later, she did not dare to let her thoughts about those forces come out. Shara Zhienkulova reveals the feminine features under Stalinism – flexibility, adaptability, and conformism, the attempt to settle conflicts peacefully or to avoid them. There were three men in Shara's life to whom she dedicated her memoirs – her father, husband and son; although the book is titled "My life is arts", it expresses her love for them. Her love of her husband is evident in every line, but brief expressions of her attitude to her father reveal her deeply hidden sorrow about his tragic fate and her fulfilled duty before him – to highlight his name via her deeds. Her text is purely feminine – what is the mission of a daughter, wife and mother, while motherhood was embedded into the pursuit career of a career. As a subaltern object, Shara was instructed to follow the classical patterns of body control as an intermediary between the civilized and those under the civilizing process, but gradually upgraded from the visualized conformity to hidden nonconformity, when she dared to write more about her genuine feelings behind her career achievements: love and fear. ■

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6. Choi Chatterji remarked, "...Soviet heroines were completely dependent on the state to uphold their authority in both the public and the private spheres". //Women in the Stalin Era. p. 65.
7. Zhienkulova, *Omirim menim-onerim*, 37.
8. Roza Barglanova (1922–2011) – Kazakh Soviet signer, performed songs of various genres. She left memoirs of her life and time. "*Ainalaiyn halkyma erkeletken*"/"*I am grateful to my people for tender love to me*" (Almaty: Atamyra, 2007).
9. Roland Barth, *The Death of the Author*. http://www.tbook.constantvzw.org/wp-content/death_authorbarthes.pdf
10. Shara's ancestors controlled the trade and production facilities along the border with China and the route from Verny to Bishkek was named "Baibulan's route" (after Shara's great grandfather). They were known for hospitality and charity. Before the family property was confiscated in 1927, most of the houses and apartments in Verny city belonged to Shara's father. Many prominent people of arts of 1920s rented rooms from her father. The father of future opera diva Kulyash Baiseitova was a shoemaker for Shara's father; while the father of the future Soviet leader Dinmukhamed Konayev was a customer in one of the family business networks. Shara's father intended to give her an Islamic education, and from the age of seven she leant Arabic and Koranic texts. But after the revolution her uncle, Sultan, joined the Soviet regime and encouraged Baimolda Zhienkul to give the girl a Soviet secular education in Verny grammar school. Her father regularly came to school to make *namaz* with Shara, and classmates teased her as "mullah-girl". Shara attended grammar school with the future leaders of Soviet Kazakhstan, for instance, Dinmukhamed Konayev.
11. Temirbek Zhurgenev (1898–1938), Commissar of Enlightenment and Education in the Kazakh ASSR (1933–1937), was purged in 1938. T. Zhurgenev was surprised by the heroic efforts and solidarity expressed by Kazakh writers during the preparation for the Decade. Most of them perished in the Great Purge. If Shara did not mention their fates, her ex-husband was more grateful and expressed deep regret about their early tragic deaths: "All were eager to support, helping and advising. If only it were like that all the time. I regret their fate, my dear seniors"// Zhandarbekov K., *Korgenderim*, 76.
12. Zhienkulova, *Omirim menim-onerim*, 37.
13. Tamara-khanum (Tamara Petrosyan, ethnic Armenian, 1906–1991), the first professional dancer in Uzbekistan.
14. Alexandrov-Martirosyan Alexandr Artemievich, born in 1891, in Tiflis, Georgia, Armenian, secondary education, ballet maker, worked for Moscow, then for Alma-Ata theaters. He was arrested on November 19, 1937 in Alma-Ata, sentenced on 31 December under 58th article of the criminal code (articles 10 and 6) to 10 years in the Far East, rehabilitated on May 25, 1989. Source: Data from Department of the Committee of the National Security of Republic of Kazakhstan, Almaty //http://lists.memo.ru/d1/f328.htm
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16 Tokash Bokin (1890–1918), Zhubanysh B ribayev (1898–1927), Magazy Masanchi (1885–1938), Gani Muratbayev (1902–1925). They were participants in the 1916 events, then joined the Bolshevik party and contributed to the establishment of Bolshevik control over Kazakh lands during the civil war. Their fates were different and ended tragically in the Stalinist purges (M. Masanchi was repressed in 1938).

17 Zhienkulova, *Omirim menim-onerim*, 27.

18 In 1925 J. Stalin appointed F. Goloschekin (1876–1941) the first secretary of the Kazakh ASSR Communist party, who upon arrival initiated the so-called Minor Revolution (second revolution) to cleanse the party cadres. After 1927 he launched series of punitive campaigns to eradicate the social and economic basis of traditional society and eliminate all real and potential opponents.

19 Zhienkulova, *Omirim menim-onerim,30.*

20 Ibid.

21 After Shara fled with Kurmanbek, her father Baimolda Zhienkul was released from prison for a short term. He learnt of his daughter's choice and came to talk to Kurmanbek. Shara did not know what the content of the conversation was, but her husband remarked that Shara's father blessed them with the words: "You will be patron and savior for my Sharazhan, my dear son. I also entrust you the patronage over my family".

22 Kanabek Baiseitov wrote that they hired two phaetons to kidnap Shara, one for the young couple, and the second for themselves. They first arrived at the place where Shara's elder sister, Khadisha, was living, and she supported her sister, as by that time she had already started an artistic career. Some days later by tradition, representatives of Kurmanbek – Zhumat Shanin, Amre Kashaubayev, Isa Baizakov, and Kanabek Baiseitov, people of the arts who were famous by that time – visited Shara's father, but he was very angry and refused to talk to them, while her mother told them that she had never thought of their daughter's marriage to the poor. Kanabek Baiseitov, *Na vsu zhizn,* 64–65.

23 In Kazakh traditional norms sanctioned by Islam, female body was the property of the family/clan and belonged to the father or other senior male within the family. After marriage, the right passed to the husband. Public exposure was possible only for women washing a body for funerals. Shara does not tell us how she dared to transgress those taboos. But, probably, her innate sense of freedom, her father's absence, and the backing and encouragement of her husband liberated her from outdated vision of what the female body is for. In the new conditions, it became an image of model woman, of the regime – the icon of style and example of proper female standards. She understands that in society, the female body never belongs to the woman.

24 Zhienkulova, *Omirim menim-onerim, 40.*

25 Ibid.

26 Zhienkulova, *Omirim menim-onerim, 35.*

27 Zhienkulova, *Omirim menim-onerim, 39.*

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29 Zhienkulova, *Omirim menim-onerim, 39.*

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31 Zherebkina I., *Feministskaya interventsia v Stalinism*, (M., Aleteiya, 2006).

32 Zhienkulova, *Omirim menim-onerim.*

33 Most of other sources indicate that he died at the Shymkent construction sites in 1937, at the GULAG construction site. Relatives of Shara (in a retrospective, 2012) gave an account that the Soviet politics in general was not favorable for their clan members; many perished or were socially downgraded: "Upheaval, famine, the purges of 1937, and the Great Patriotic war seriously affected the Zhienkulov clan. Most of the males perished or were wounded at the front. Shara's father, Baimolda Zhienkul, was sentenced, and died around the Taraz area during the famine. During the confiscation process, the Soviet authorities loaded his property onto 18 big carts. His two-storey palace was located where the Musrepov Kazakh Drama Theater for Youth now stands. That building was also removed. The family got into a miserable state, and only Shara could save them by her hard work..." in K. Stambekov, *Actor renowned among the people*, in *Shara*. Compiled by .Diyarova, 143.

34 Zhienkulova, *Omirim menim-onerim, 48.*

35 Zhienkulova, *Omirim menim-onerim,* 98–99.

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37 Zhienkulova, *Omirim menim-onerim, 107–108.*

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39 Kerzhentsev P. (1881–1940), Soviet statesman. In 1936–1938 was chairman of the Committee of Arts under the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR.

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43 Sefullin, Saken (1894–1939), Kazakh Soviet writer and statesman, one of the founder of Kazakh Soviet literature, was purged in 1937.

44 Zhienkulova, *Omirim menim-onerim, 107–108.*

45 Warshavskaya L., Samigulin I. *I borrowed that music from people*. Izvestia-Kazakhstan, 2005, 11 November //http://www.nomad.su?a=15–20051140014

46 Zhienkulova, *Omirim menim-onerim, 107–108.*

47 Zhienkulova, *Omirim menim-onerim,* 106–107.

48 Sharbanu Kumarova, *Minezi qubulanqurap* turatyn //Anyz adam, 2012, #20 (56), 25.

Fig. 2 A woman from Föhr, adorned with ribbon and furs, who is to become a godmother (THC 3435).*

FACES OF RUSSIA'S EMPIRE

THE BERGHOLTZ COLLECTION OF ETHNOGRAPHIC IMAGES FROM THE EARLY 18TH CENTURY AT THE SWEDISH NATIONAL MUSEUM

by **Nathaniel Knight,**
& **Edward Kasinec**

abstract

The Division of Prints and Drawings of the Swedish National Museum contains a collection with just over 200 hand painted images of the peoples of the Russian Empire which, up to the present time, has been largely unknown to scholars. The images, dating from the first half of the 18th century, are associated with the name of Friedrich Wilhelm Bergholtz (1699–1772) a courtier and collector who served as a tutor to the Grand Duke Petr Fedorovich (the future Peter III). In this article, the authors describe the contents of the collection, consider its possible origin, and assess its significance, particularly with regard to its depictions of Siberian peoples and Ukrainians.

KEYWORDS: Russia, 18th century, ethnographic images, costume drawings, Friedrich Wilhelm Bergholtz

* Images marked with an asterisk are available on the National Museum's online database: http://collection.nationalmuseum.se

Secular representational art came late to Russia. Depictions of the human figure in medieval Russian culture were viewed almost exclusively in a spiritual framework as a path to the divine through the medium of icon painting. Even the chronicles, with their miniature illustrations of historical events, aimed more toward symbolic truth than literal representation. Secular portraiture first appeared in Russia in the second half of the 16th century and only gradually gained acceptance among the elite in the century and a half that followed. Even during the reign of Peter the Great (r. 1682–1725), which brought, as James Cracraft has argued, a revolution in the use of visual images, art tended to be directed toward the visualization of power, either through portraiture, maps and military drawings, or allegorical compositions.[1] Depictions of ordinary people – their physiognomies, costumes, dwellings, religious practices and everyday life – were rare in early 18th century Russia. Images portraying life in the distant and nearly unexplored peripheries of the Empire were all the more unusual.

A large collection, therefore, of detailed ethnographic images dating from the 1730–1740s, depicting a broad range of peoples, religions, and cultures from throughout the Russian Empire, would be a rare and valuable resource. Just such a collection, in

fact, has been lying practically unnoticed for almost 250 years in the vaults of the Swedish National Museum in Stockholm. In the Museum's Division of Prints and Drawings two leather-bound volumes can be found containing just over two hundred hand painted, brightly colored, watercolors and oils depicting folk "types" and costumes from throughout the Empire. The collection is associated with the name of Friedrich Wilhelm Bergholtz (1699–1772), a courtier to the Duke of Holstein, who served as a tutor to the future Peter III in the first years of the reign of the Empress Elizabeth and later sought a Swedish pension after having been expelled from the Russian Empire in 1746. Bergholtz is better known for his collection, also housed in the Swedish National Museum, of architectural drawings of St. Petersburg and other Russian cities which constitute a unique house by house record of the Russian urban landscape. In 1963, the Swedish art historian Björn H. Hallström published a catalogue of the architectural drawings which included a biographical sketch on Bergholtz and reproductions of some of the drawings.[2] Seemingly as an afterthought, Hallström included an index of the ethnographic drawings compiled by Peter Pfab, a young scholar of Slavic languages and literatures. The index lists the drawings by inventory number and provides transcriptions of the captions accompanying each picture. No additional information is provided about the images, nor were they reproduced or even described.

Hallström's catalogue came to the attention of Edward Kasinec through his conversations with the historian James Cracraft going back to the early 1970s. In 2005, Kasinec travelled to Stockholm and viewed the original ethnographic drawings. The visit led to two short articles published in the journals *Ab Imperio* and *Sibirica*, the latter of which included black and white reproductions of three images from the collection.[3] A return visit in 2017 convinced Kasinec that more needed to be done to research and publicize the collection and toward that end he brought it to the attention of Nathaniel Knight, a specialist in the history of Russian ethnography. Knight was able to view the collection in Stockholm and take digital photographs, setting the stage for more detailed study of the images. Consultations with Han Vermeulen, the eminent historian of anthropology, shed additional light on the collection.

ABOVE AND BEYOND their intrinsic value and interest, the ethnographic images in the Bergholtz collection give rise to a host of intriguing questions. Who produced the images? Why and when were they assembled into an album? What was Bergholtz's role? And how did they end up in Sweden? Another avenue of investigation concerns parallel images. While is it certain that the Bergholtz images themselves have remained unpublished up to the present day (the only exception being the three images published in black and white by Kasinec and Kreslins in their article in *Sibirica*) a number of engravings produced in Russia and abroad through the 1770s show strong resemblances to images in the Bergholtz collection. How can these recurring images be explained? Were these secondary images copied directly from the Bergholtz albums, or were both the Bergholtz images and their parallels copies of now lost prototypes? Who might have had access to these images or the originals that they were based on, and why have these originals not been located?

We do not have definitive answers to these and other questions, and, given the inevitable loss of sources over almost 300 years, it is likely that some of the mysteries surrounding the Bergholtz collection may never be resolved. But our collaborative investigations have revealed connections and correspondences that allow us to offer some informed conjectures as to the origins, sources and significance of the Bergholtz collection.

The content of the Bergholtz collection

The two leather-bound folios that make up the Bergholtz collection contain some 207 separate images averaging roughly 22 by 16 centimeters in size. The images are executed in watercolor and oil on heavy paper pasted into the pages of the folio. The well-worn bindings appear to be undated but are consistent with binding styles from the mid-18th century. The only date that appears in the folios is 1863 when the volumes were transferred from the Swedish Royal Museum into the newly founded Swedish National Museum. The images themselves also bear a small round stamp usually on the bottom right corner with the letters KM indicating that they had once been housed in the Royal Palaces (Kungliga Majestät). More research is needed into the provenance of the collection within the Museum, but it appears that the earliest reference to the Bergholtz materials dates back to 1790 when the King's private collection of art was consolidated into the Royal Museum.[4]

"THE IMAGES WERE CREATED BY SEVERAL DIFFERENT ARTISTS WORKING IN DISTINCT STYLES."

The images were created by several different artists working in distinct styles and fall into six or seven clearly defined groups based on the style and geographic locations. The *initial* group (*fig.1*) contains images from the Baltic region and Finland. A *second* group (*fig. 2*), unique in that it is the only set of images from outside the Russian Empire, depicts the inhabitants of the North Frisian islands of Föhr and Sylt off the coast of the Duchy of Holstein. Both the Baltic and Holstein images correspond well to the widespread European genre of costume drawing. The figures are depicted head on with little or no accompanying background imagery, and considerable attention is paid to the detailed depiction of garments, including the elaborate headgear. The *third* group of images, showing the people of Russia proper, departs somewhat from this model. While costumes are still highlighted, a broader variety of occupations and activities are depicted. A striking set of images portray Russian Orthodox clergy in their liturgical robes, but also illustrate the sacraments of the Orthodox church from baptism to burial (*fig. 3*). Other images show characteristic trades and occupations: a Muscovite clerk in an old-style chancery, carpenters building a house, street vendors of various sorts, and peasants engaged in different aspects of the agricul-

tural cycle. Some of these paintings are reminiscent of the genre of urban "cries" which had become popular in the 1730s,[5] *(fig. 4)* while the religious images evoke comparisons with Bernard Picart's groundbreaking "Religious Ceremonies and Customs of All the Peoples of the World" published in seven volumes starting in 1723.[6] Several of the Russian images have a historical focus, harkening back to the last decades of the 17th century in their depictions of various ranks of the *streltsy*, Muscovite musketeer regiments abolished by Peter I in 1698.

FROM RUSSIA PROPER, the collection moves to a *fourth* group reflecting the southern periphery of the Empire. A small number *(fig. 5)* of exquisitely executed paintings depict the costumes of a Georgian nobleman and woman along with an attendant. A larger group of images from Astrakhan *[5]* highlight the ethnic diversity of the region. In addition to showing the nomads of the surrounding steppe – the Kalmyks, Kaisaks (Kazakhs) and Nogais (referred to as "Yurt" Tatars), the images depict the variety of trading peoples who would have passed through Astrakhan in the course of their business – Bukharans, Georgians, Greeks, Persians and even Hindus. *(fig. 6)* The Astrakhan images are painted in a less refined style more reminiscent of folk art but are strikingly vivid and lively. Most figures are depicted in groups and scenes of daily life and household implements appear. In addition to the German language captions found on all of the images, likely in Bergholtz's hand, the Astrakhan images also include Russian language captions in orthography and script consistent with the immediate post-Petrine era.

The *next group [6]* of images takes the viewer eastward, starting from the Middle Volga region and then extending across the Urals and through Siberia as far as Yakutsk to the north and the Transbaikal region to the south. The images are executed in a consistent artistic style similar to that of some of the Russian images. As with the other images, close attention is paid to costume, but the artist also took pains to show characteristic details of lifestyle and occupations. Settled peoples are portrayed, for example, with houses in the background, while nomadic peoples are depicted on horseback or in front of circular dwellings resembling yurts. *(fig. 7)* Some of the images highlight indigenous religion, including several striking depictions of eastern Siberian shamans. Others show adaptation to the harsh environment including hunting equipment, sleds and winter costumes.

The *final* set of images *[7]* focuses specifically on Ukraine and is distinct not only in terms of the location, but also their artistic medium. While all the other images are executed in watercolor, the Ukrainian images are painted in oil directly on paper. Due to the unstable medium, many of the images are in need of conservation. Nonetheless the paintings are vivid and revealing. While specific locations are not mentioned in the captions, the images capture a broad swath of Ukrainian society both urban and rural, from ordinary peasants to wealthy noblemen.*(fig. 8)* As with the Russian images, costumes are depicted in colorful detail, yet the images show distinctive occupations as well, especially connected with agriculture. The images also reveal the ethnic diversity of Ukraine in the 1740s. Alongside ordinary Ukrainians, the

Fig. 1 Bride and Groom from the Järva district in Estonia (THC 3418).*

Fig. 3 The last rites as practiced by the common people at a Russian funeral (THC 3461).

Fig. 4 A seller of buckwheat cakes (grechniki). (THC 3496).*

Fig. 5 A Georgian nobleman and noblewomen in their costumes (THC 3498-99).

Fig. 6 Two Constantinople merchants who are doing business in Astrakhan (THC 3553).*

artist depicts Poles, Zaporozhian Cossacks, Greeks, Armenians, Wallachians and even Roma (Ziegener). *(fig. 9)*

How and when were the images created?

If we accept that the images in the Bergholtz collection date from no later than the 1740s, their historical significance becomes immediately apparent. In many instances these would be among the earliest images of their kind in existence. But how do we know that these images actually are from the 1740s, and what evidence is there to connect them with the figure of Friedrich Wilhelm Bergholtz? On the face of it, the evidence appears slim. Bergholtz's name does not appear anywhere in the two albums, nor does there appear to be a paper trail establishing Bergholtz as the source from which the Swedish royal family received the albums. The case for Bergholtz's role, admittedly, is circumstantial, but strong, nonetheless. The core fact tying Bergholtz to the Stockholm images is the connection between the ethnographic albums and the larger collection of Russian architectural images also in the Swedish National Museum. Björn Hallström, who had access to Bergholtz's correspondence and other handwritten archival documents, clearly affirms that the captions on the architectural drawings are in Bergholtz's hand.[7] The captions on the ethnographic drawings appear to be in the same hand. *(fig. 10)*

Above and beyond the captions, other evidence links the ethnographic drawings to Bergholtz and his circle. The inclusion of the images from the North Frisian islands of Föhr and Sylt are strongly suggestive of a connection with the Duchy of Holstein. Not only did Bergholtz serve in the Holstein court from a young age, the Grand Duke Peter (1728–1762), for whom he worked as tutor, retained his title as Duke of Holstein and by many accounts felt a deeper loyalty to his native Holstein than to the Russian Empire which he was destined to rule as Peter III. Another intriguing hint can be found in the caption to image #3536 in Hallstrom's catalogue which mentions the name "Herr Graf von Brümmer" [Otto Friedrich von Brümmer, 1690–1752], Bergholtz's inseparable companion. The two had met in Russia in the 1720s and served together in the Holstein court in the 1730s. Both came to Russia in 1742 with the Grand Duke Peter to serve as his tutors, both were dismissed by the Grand Duke following his marriage and both were expelled from Russia in 1746. After their departure, the two shared a common household in the North German town of Wismar which at the time was under Swedish rule. The mention of Brümmer's name supports the notion that the caption writer was someone in Brümmer's circle (i.e. Bergholtz) and also ties the captions to the period in which Brümmer was active in Russia. The date 1746 also appears in a mysterious inscription in image #3547 that reads "1746 anno significavi Astrachanaei Josephus Sablucowskij." While the name Josephus Sablucowskij remains obscure as does the larger significance of the note (which is written separately from the regular caption) it does help to place the image chronologically. And whatever the significance of 1746 may have been for Sablucowskij, it was certainly significant for Bergholtz and Brümmer.

None of these pieces of evidence in and of themselves would be sufficient to definitively establish Bergholtz as the source of the ethnographic images, but taken as a whole, they add up to a strong circumstantial case that Bergholtz assembled the collection of images, wrote the captions and later donated the albums to the Swedish crown.

ASSUMING THAT IT WAS Bergholtz who created the collection, there remains the question of why he would have done this – for what purpose was the collection assembled? One possibility is that Bergholtz, knowing he would be expelled from Russia, deliberately brought with him materials that he knew to be of "intelligence" value to the state or states that would host him. In fact, the drawings passed on by Bergholtz would almost certainly have been viewed as sensitive at the time. Detailed plans of city streets and building facades in St. Petersburg and Moscow could have been of use to Swedish diplomats, spies and even, possibly, an invading army.[8] Even information on the peoples of Siberia was considered a state secret.[9] It is unlikely, however, that Bergholtz could have assembled such an extensive collection on short notice under immediate threat of deportation. A far more likely scenario is that he assembled both the architectural and the ethnographic images over the course of several years while serving in Russia. One possibility, which we believe deserves serious consideration, is that Bergholtz's activities as a collector were an outgrowth of his primary occupation in Russia – serving as tutor to the Grand Duke Peter.

Teaching the young Grand Duke must have been a formidable challenge for his tutors. Even taking with a grain of salt Catherine the Great's biased portrayal of him as little more than an imbecile,[10] the extant accounts make it clear that book learning was not his strong suit. Although Bergholtz and Brümmer left no direct evidence of their pedagogical methods and challenges, their colleague, Jacob Stählin (1709–1785), left a brief but revealing account.[11] Peter, according to Stählin, was not lacking in intelligence, but was immature, impatient and constantly prone to distraction. In order to hold his attention, Stählin notes, his teachers made frequent use of visual materials. Globes, maps, models and even an elaborate "fortification cabinet" were all brought to bear in the struggle to evoke and sustain the interest of the young man. Drawings and paintings played an important part in this pedagogical approach. Stählin describes a secret set of large format folios entitled "Forces of Empire" showing all the fortifications "from Riga to the Turkish, Persian and Chinese borders, in plan and in profile with their locations and surroundings." Not only did Stählin use these illustrations to teach military science, they also served as an entry into discussions of history and geography. Illustrations also played a major part in the everyday amusements of the Grand Duke. Stählin writes:

> **In the evenings, when the Grand Duke was not called to the Empress or to a court reception, the tutor [Stählin] entertained him with large volumes from the Academy [of Sciences] Library, especially those which contained instructive illustrations, [...] as well as**

Fig. 7 A Buryat rider in all his armor at Irkutsk. Buryat winter yurts shown in background (THC 3527).

Fig. 8 A Ukrainian Lütwin (Belarusian) collecting honey from his beehives (THC 3592).

Fig. 9 A Ukrainian Ziegener (Roma) (THC 3605).

> **various mathematical and physical tools and models from the Kunstkamera, along with samples from the three realms of the natural world."[12]**

AN ALBUM WITH colorful and engaging illustrations of the peoples of the Empire including Holstein would have been entirely consistent with this pedagogical approach. The same could be said, incidentally, about the architectural drawings and plans which Bergholtz also collected. Hallström and later scholars, in fact, have noted the correspondence between the locations depicted in the architectural drawings and the movements of the Imperial court in the period when Bergholtz was serving as Peter's tutor.[13] In particular, the presence of both architectural drawings of Kiev and the extraordinary collection of Ukrainian ethnographic images suggests a likely connection to the court trip to Kiev in the summer of 1744, which Catherine the Great describes in her memoirs. Elizaveta Stanuikovich-Denisova suggests that Bergholtz may have intended to create an album-atlas to "memorialize and glorify the house of Holstein" possibly with the intention of presenting it to Peter when he came to the throne.[14] Hallström, in turn, suggests that Bergholtz may have had an interest in publishing a series of engravings on Russia, an ambition that, if true, was never realized.[15] But we should also consider that these collections may have had their origin as pedagogical materials used to teach the Grand Duke. Peter, by all accounts, was indifferent to, if not actively disdainful of his future subjects in the Russian Empire. Materials to better acquaint the heir to the throne with the peoples whom he would soon be ruling would have been of obvious utility to his teachers, and given his propensity for visual learning, an album of engaging, well-executed drawings would have been the perfect medium. It is clear from Stählin's memoir that the tutors were given almost unlimited funds and unrestricted access to state institutions including the museums and libraries of the Academy of Sciences in their search for materials to enrich the Grand Duke's education. Bergholtz's position as tutor would have provided him with the means to assemble the Stockholm collection and given him good reason to undertake the project.

"BERGHOLTZ'S POSITION AS TUTOR WOULD HAVE PROVIDED HIM WITH THE MEANS TO ASSEMBLE THE STOCKHOLM COLLECTION."

Revelations of the Bergholtz collection: Siberia and Ukraine

Apart from its immediate historical and artistic significance, the ethnographic images in the Bergholtz collection shed light on several significant questions. The Siberian images, in particular, may hold the key to a longstanding mystery. During the time that Bergholtz, Brümmer and Stählin were attempting to educate the Grand Duke Peter, the largest and most significant scientific expedition to Siberia in the 18th century was concluding its activities. Known as the Second Kamchatka Expedition, the undertaking, led by the historian Gerhard Friedrich Müller (1705–1783) and the naturalist Johann Gottfried Gmelin (1709–1755), brought together over 500 participants, from world renowned scientists to ordinary soldiers and sailors, in a quest to draw the vast Siberian expanses into the realm of science. Three professional artists accompanied the scientists, many of whom were themselves capable draftsmen. The artists were provided with detailed instructions compiled by Müller himself and received addition guidance from Georg (1673–1740) and Maria-Dorothea Gsell (d. 1743) who ran the Academy of Sciences workshop for scientific illustration.[16] Depiction of the human inhabitants of Siberia together with their dwellings, household implements, and other attributes of daily life was a major aspect of the artists' assignment. Yet of the mass of illustrations which we can only assume must have been produced by the expedition, it appears that almost nothing has survived. Beyond a few exceptions – the illustrations for Stepan Krashenninikov's *Description of Kamchatka* (1755), a series of city panoramas and a set of botanical illustrations – scholars are unable to account for the images produced by the expedition's artists. A likely explanation for this absence is the catastrophic fire that destroyed a good portion of the Academy of Science's museum, the Kunstkamera, in 1747. Many of the artifacts collected by the expedition are known to have been destroyed in the fire, and it is likely that illustrations were also destroyed.[17]

Examining the Siberian drawings in the Bergholtz collection, however, a curious correlation comes to light. The locations mentioned in the captions correspond closely to the path followed by the historical-geographical branch of the expedition lead by G. F. Müller. Could these images, taken out of Russia by Bergholtz in 1746, constitute a rare remnant of the illustrations produced for the Second Kamchatka expedition? The evidence that we have uncovered suggests that this is in fact the case.

In May of 1734, the leadership of the Second Kamchatka expedition sent a shipment of artifacts to the Imperial Senate. The inventory of the shipment makes reference to a set of eight drawings showing women's costumes of the peoples of the Middle Volga Region.[18] The costumes are shown from front and back and depict women of the Cheremis'(Mari), Chuvash, Votiak (Udmurt) and Kazan Tatar peoples. It appears that G. F. Müller intended these drawings to accompany a work he was preparing on the non-Christian peoples of the Middle Volga Region. Although Müller drafted the manuscript in 1733, it was not published until the 1750s when it appeared first in Russian and then in German in Müller's *Sammlung Russische Geschichte*.[19] It was not until 1791, eight years after Müller's death, that a full separate edition appeared in Russian with eight engraved illustrations corresponding exactly to the drawings described in the inventory from 1734.[20] These eight illustrations are nearly identical to the drawings that appear in the Bergholtz collection under the inventory numbers THC 3505–3512. The only differences are the backgrounds and the medium: the Bergholtz collection images

are watercolors, while the 1791 Müller illustrations are engravings. Otherwise, the models, poses, costumes, and ornaments are almost identical. *(Fig. 11)* From this correspondence, we can conclude that the drawings on which the Bergholtz watercolors were based were produced no later than 1734, and that they were the same drawings that served as the basis for the engravings that appeared in the 1791 edition of Müller's work on the Volga peoples.

A FURTHER CONNECTION between the Second Kamchatka Expedition and the Bergholtz collection is revealed in the inventory of a shipment of maps, diagrams and drawings sent by Müller to the Academy of Sciences in September 1746. The inventory includes a list of 28 drawings of peoples of the Volga region and Siberia, starting with the same eight drawings that were submitted in 1734. The additional drawings also correspond closely to the images in the Bergholtz collection, both in their subjects and in the order of their presentation. But if the drawings in the Bergholtz collection are the same as the ones Müller collected, why did Müller report returning them to the Academy of Sciences several months after Bergholtz and Brümmer had been expelled from Russia? The simplest explanation would be that the images in the Bergholtz collection are copies of originals, most likely drawn by one of the artists assigned to the expedition.[21] The drawings in the 1746 inventory are marked "for the *Description of Peoples*" [*Zu der Beschreibung der Völker*] suggesting that Müller intended the images to serve as illustrations for a larger project on the peoples of Siberia. Initially, Müller had compiled detailed descriptions of each group (the same peoples depicted in the Bergholtz collection), which he brought together in the manuscript volume *Nachrichten über Völker Siberiens*.[22] Müller's notes, in turn served as the basis for his *Beschreibung der sibirischen Völker*, a thematically organized analysis of the customs and characteristics of Siberian peoples, which Müller drafted between 1736 and 1740 while still in Siberia.[23] Neither of these works were published in Müller's lifetime. Müller returned from Siberia to a hostile climate in the Academy of Sciences. Not only was he not rewarded for his prodigious research, his materials, painstakingly gathered over a ten-year period, were greeted largely with indifference. In the period from 1744–1746, Müller presented a number of works to the academy including his *Description of Siberian Peoples*, which he submitted in April of 1745, but none of these works other than the first book of his History of Siberia made their way into print.[24] During this period, in his work at the Academy of Sciences, Müller would almost certainly have crossed paths with Jacob Stählin who was supervising the Academy's project to create a Russian atlas in which Müller also participated. It is possible that Müller also knew Bergholtz through German circles in St. Petersburg. One way or another, it appears that either Stählin or Bergholtz was able to gain access to Müller's collection of drawings of Siberian peoples, make high quality watercolor copies, and return the originals in time for Müller to submit them to the Academy of Sciences in September 1746. A slight complication with this hypothesis is the fact that the Bergholtz collection includes nine additional images not mentioned

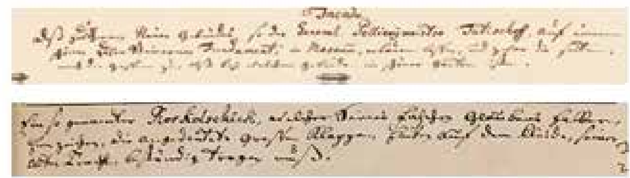

Fig. 10 Handwriting of F. W. Bergholtz. Top: caption to THC 9076:90 (Palace of Police Chief Tatishcheff); Bottom: caption to THC 3472 (An Old Believer). Numerous additional examples of Bergholtz's hand can be found in the captions to the architectural drawings on the Swedish National Museum's online collection.

Fig. 11 Cheremis' (Mari) woman living Kazan Province. Left, THC 3505*; Right, engraved illustration from G. F. Miller [Müller], *Opisanie zhivushchikh v Kazanskoi gubernii iazycheskikh narodov* (St. Petersburg, 1791).

Fig. 12 A Young Ukrainian city dweller (THC 3573) .

Fig. 13 Left: THC 3491 v– A peasant with his flail in hand; Right, J. B. Le Prince, "Executioner of the Streltsy" in *Les Strelits: Encienne et seule milice de Russie jusqu'qu temps de Pierre le Grand* (1764).

Fig. 14 Mongol Shaman with arrow. Left: THC 3450 – A Mongolian shaman who pierces his clothing with an arrow; Right: A Tungus Shaman from the River Argun. J. G. Georgi, *Opisanie vsekh obitaiushchikh v Rossiiskom gosudarstve narodov* (1777–1778; 1799).

in the 1746 inventory.[25] It is possible, though not probable, that the Bergholtz images are the originals and that Muller submitted copies to the Academy. More likely, the original drawings were lost or destroyed and consequently never returned to Müller.

Regardless of the still obscure details, our findings show, we believe irrefutably, that the Siberian images in the Bergholtz collection were created as part of the Second Kamchatka Expedition. This places them among the only surviving visual records of a landmark expedition and probably the earliest representations of many of the native peoples depicted in the images. This is, we believe, a major discovery that adds a critical new component to our knowledge of this key episode in the exploration of Siberia.

ANOTHER ELEMENT of the Bergholtz collection which may be of considerable historical significance are the images of Ukraine *(group 7 above)*. While we do not have direct evidence, it is highly likely that the Ukrainian portraits are connected with the visit undertaken by the court of the Empress Elizabeth (r. 1741–1762) to Kiev in the summer of 1744. Among the travelers was the recently arrived fifteen-year-old Princess Sophie Auguste Friedericke of Anhalt-Zerbst, the future Catherine the Great (r. 1762–1796). In her memoirs, Catherine describes the trip in humorous terms, with Grand Marshall Brümmer and Grand Chancellor Bergholtz as the butt of her fiancé Peter's pranks.[26] The Kiev trip also figures in the architectural drawings in the Bergholtz collection. Numerous sketches and architectural plans from the trip can be found in a collection of amateur pencil drawings which Hallström believes may well have been the work of Bergholtz himself.[27] Many of the drawings depict the small town of Kozelets, where the group spent a considerable amount of time before travelling onward to Kiev itself.

Kozelets was, in fact the hometown of Count Alexei Razumovsky (1709–1771), Elizabeth's unofficial husband. Born a simple Cossack, Razumovsky was recruited at a young age to sing in the Imperial Capella. There he attracted the attention of Elizabeth and the two became inseparable. Soon after Elizabeth came to power in a palace coup in 1742, the couple, it was rumored, were secretly married at an estate outside of Moscow. Although Razumovsky did not have much to offer in the way of political acumen, he used his influence with Elizabeth to advance the fortunes of his native Ukraine, to which he was deeply devoted. Elizabeth's trip to Kiev in 1744 may have represented a first attempt on Razumovsky's part to draw the Empress's attention to his native land and improve its political status. If this was his goal, he seems to have largely succeeded. Within a few years, Elizabeth agreed to restore the Ukrainian Hetmanate to its formerly autonomous status and appoint Alexei's younger brother Kyrill (1728–1803) as Hetman.

We can only speculate as to the role the ethnographic images may have played in these events, but whoever assembled them clearly went to great lengths to present a rich cross section of Ukrainian society. *(Fig. 12)* The choice of medium, oil paint on paper, also suggests an effort to create particularly bright and striking images that would leave a strong impression. Perhaps the paintings were presented by proponents of the Hetmanate,

eager to take advantage of the opportunities presented by the ascendency of Razumovsky by highlighting the distinctiveness of Ukrainian society. It is also possible that Bergholtz may have commissioned the paintings while in Ukraine to memorialize the impressions of the trip for the young Grand Duke and his future wife. Whatever the circumstances surrounding the creation of the images, what we can say with certainty is that the paintings may be the earliest such depictions of Ukrainian people. Previously, the earliest Ukrainian ethnographic imagery was thought to be a collection of watercolors housed in the Volodymyr Vernadsky Library in Kiev which were published in 1847 in Aleksander Rigelman's *History of Ukraine* but were likely produced in the 1770s.[28] A collection of remarkably vivid and diverse images of the Ukrainian population predating by at least 30 years the earliest previously known comparable material is of enormous significance not only from the perspective of art history, but for Ukrainian culture more broadly.

The Bergholtz collection: parallel images and copies

We have argued that the images in the Stockholm collection were probably taken from Russia by Bergholtz at the time of his expulsion from the Russian Empire in 1746. The fact that at least some of the images were likely copies, however, complicates the picture. It appears that at least some of the original drawings may have remained in Russia, where they served as models for later copies closely resembling the Bergholtz images These parallel images can only be found for some parts of the collection. We were not able to find any such correspondences related to the Baltic, Astrakhan and Ukrainian images. The parallel images that do appear are all related to the Russian and Siberian collections. The clearest parallels to the Russian images in the Bergholtz collection can be found in the engravings of Jean Baptiste LePrince (1734–1781).

"THE PAINTINGS MAY BE THE EARLIEST SUCH DEPICTIONS OF UKRAINIAN PEOPLE."

LePrince spent four years in Russia starting in 1758 during which time he taught at the Academy of Arts, participated in the decoration of the Winter Palace and undertook several expeditions to portray Russian costumes and national types.[29] He returned to France with a large collection of drawings which he continued to publish as engravings in the decade following his voyage. Most of LePrince's drawings appear to be original works; however, it is evident that he also worked from earlier visual sources. Among these sources were drawings which may also have served as models for some of the depictions of Russian subjects in the Bergholtz collection.

In 1764, LePrince published a collection of engravings entitled the *Les Strelits* which purported to represent various ranks and roles within the Muscovite musketeer regiments, the streltsy, disbanded by Peter the Great after their abortive uprising in 1698. LePrince's depictions are almost identical to the set of images in the Russian section of the Bergholtz collection which also show depictions of old Muscovy. In the same year, LePrince published a set of engravings of the Russian clergy which closely resemble images in the Bergholtz collection. While LePrince introduces subtle differences in facial features, the poses, costumes and props in LePrince's engravings are nearly identical to the Bergholtz images.[30] *(fig. 13)*

We have no direct evidence as to how LePrince may have gained access to the Bergholtz images (or their sources). It is worth noting, however, that his position in St. Petersburg, teaching in the Academy of Arts, could easily have brought him into contact with officials from the Academy of Sciences. Jacob Stählin, the Grand Duke's former tutor and colleague of Bergholtz, was himself an acclaimed engraver and would almost certainly have been interested in the work of the talented young Frenchman. He may well have allowed LePrince to copy images he had at his disposal related to the images Bergholtz had brought to Sweden.

IN ADDITION TO his albums on the Streltsy and the clergy, LePrince produced numerous engravings of images from Russia proper as well as Siberia. A large number of his Russian images appear to have been original works, but the Siberian images, most of which were published as illustrations to the Abbé Jean-Baptiste Chappe d'Auteroche's *Voyage en Siberie* (1768), are largely derivative, raising questions as to whether LePrince actually traveled to Siberia. But if LePrince's Siberian images were copied from earlier sources, they are notably lacking in identifying details. Both the Bergholtz images and LePrince's engravings, for example, include images of a Samoyed mother and her child, however the details are entirely different and LePrince's representation is almost entirely lacking in ethnographic verisimilitude. A much close correspondence, however, can be found in another set of images created by the engraver Christopher Melchior Roth (1720–1798) which found their way into the most emblematic visual representation of the peoples of the Russian Empire in the 18th century, Johann Gottlieb Georgi's (1729–1802) *Description of all the Peoples Inhabiting the Russian Empire.*

Roth, an engraver from Nuremburg who served for ten years in the Academy of Sciences, set about in the mid-1770s to publish a series of engravings under the title *Russia Revealed, a Collection of the Costumes of all the Peoples Inhabiting the Russian Empire*. His publication drew the attention of the naturalist Johann Gottlieb Georgi, recently returned from travels in Siberia as part of the major academic expedition directed by Peter Simon Pallas (1741–1811). Georgi proposed to combine Roth's engravings with ethnographic descriptions of the various peoples to create a comprehensive ethnographic encyclopedia summing up the research carried out on the peoples of the Empire since the start of the century.[31] Both Roth and Georgi were affiliated with the Academy of Sciences, giving them access to the Academy's collection of drawings and artifacts, including the illustrations G. F. Müller had prepared for his still unpublished "Description of all the Peoples of Russia." Müller had been obliged to turn over his materials to the Academy of Sciences and had evidently lost

track of the images, but when Georgi published his volume, Müller recognized his drawings. In his history of the Second Kamchatka Expedition, Müller recalls an incident in which he met an elderly Mongolian Shaman who performed a trick in which he seemed to draw an arrow through his midsection while in a deep trance. Müller questioned the man and uncovered the ruse, and then brought in an artist to record the scene. "I had it drawn," he wrote, "and the figure can be found in the pictures accompanying Mr. Georgi's Descriptions of the Peoples of Russia. The copper engraver Roth has obtained my drawings, I do not know how, from the academy."[32] The same drawing of a Shaman with an arrow piecing his waist appears among the Bergholtz images. *(fig. 14)* In fact, a number of Roth's engravings of the peoples of the Middle Volga and Siberia clearly resemble images in the Bergholtz collection. Roth, to be sure, was not an exact copyist. He made little effort to reproduce the precise poses, backgrounds and individual features, but the details of costumes show undeniable correlations. In all, seventeen of Roth's engravings (of the 100 published in Georgi's compendium) can be associated with images from the Bergholtz collection.[33] It is interesting to note that Georgi's captions do not always correspond to Bergholtz's notations. Different locations are given for some of the images and ethnic identifications do not always correspond. This suggests that Roth may have obtained Müller's images, but not the accompanying descriptions. It is also worth noting that none of the images in the Bergholtz collection that are missing from Müller's 1746 inventory appear in the Roth engravings. This reinforces the supposition that the originals were lost before Müller submitted the inventory and drawings.

AFTER THE PUBLICATION of Georgi's volumes in the late 1770s, no further appearances of the Bergholtz images have been identified. The one exception is the 1791 publication of the Müller's study of the peoples of the Middle Volga region with its eight engravings corresponding to the images Müller reported submitting to the Imperial Senate in 1734. Most likely the plates from which the images were printed were engraved much earlier, perhaps by the same artist who created the original drawings. Some of the images from the famous collection of ethnographic miniatures created by the Imperial Porcelain Works, likely at the behest of Catherine the Great, harken back to Müller's images, but via Roth's engravings on which the collection was based.[34] In the 18th century, drawings, which could not be directly reproduced, were often seen as disposable raw materials for engravings which constituted the final permanent iteration. It is plausible, therefore, that the drawings which Roth attained from the Academy of Sciences never made it back to their repository but were lost or destroyed in the process of creating the engravings. This would explain why no traces of the images have been detected in the Archive of the Academy of Sciences, the Kunstkamera or any other Russian archive and why, consequently, they remained unknown to scholars almost up to the present day. The fact that a set of beautifully executed copies survived undetected in the Swedish National Museum is a remarkable piece of good fortune that, among other things, sheds a revealing new light on the sources of Roth's iconic images of the peoples of the Russian Empire.[35]

Concluding thoughts

A great deal more research is needed to arrive at a fuller understanding of the origins of the Bergholtz collection, the artists responsible for its images, and the circumstances surrounding its creation and preservation in Stockholm. The Swedish National Museum has taken an important first step in facilitating this study by making digital reproductions of some of the images available on its online database.[36] We hope very much that this work will continue and that soon the entire collection will be available in electronic form to scholars around the world. Already, the collection has expanded our knowledge in a number of important areas. Many questions remain, however, and it will take the collective effort of numerous scholars to fully unlock the mysteries of the Bergholtz collection. ■

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14 Ekaterina Stanuikovich Denisova, "Deiatel'nost' F.-V. Bergkhol'tza v Germanii: k izucheniiu putei formirovaniia kollektsii arkhitekturnykh chertezhei v XVIII v." in *Aktual'nye problem teorii istorii i iskusstva,* v. II (SPb, 2012) 357.

15 Hallström, 13.

16 On the Gsells see Vermeulen, 162–163.

17 Fortunately, a large number of watercolors depicting the objects on display in the Kunstkamera were preserved. An overview and analysis of these images has recently been published: *The Paper Museum of the Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg c. 1725–1760: Introduction and Interpretation,* Renée E. Kistemaker, Natalya P. Kopaneva, Dobora J. Meijers, Georgy V. Villinbakhov, eds. (Royal Netherlands Academy of Sciences, 2005). The volume focuses primarily on the representation of physical artifacts. There is no mention of a collection of ethnographic drawings.

18 Wieland Hintzsche, ed., *Dokumente zur 2. Kamčatka expedition – Akademiegruppe*; *Quellen zur Geschichte Sibiriens und Alaskas aus russischen Archiven*, Bd. 5 (Halle: Franckesche Stiftungen, 2006), 281.

19 Vermeulen, *Before Boas,* 173.

20 G. F. Miller [Müller], *Opisanie zhivushchikh v Kazanskoi gubernii iazycheskikh narodov* (St. Petersburg, 1791).

21 It is interesting to note that the 1734 inventory, according to Wieland Hintzsche, was written in the hand of Johann Wilhelm Lürsenius (1704–v1771), one of the three expedition artists. Perhaps these were his works. Hintzsche, ed., *Dokumente*, p. 281.

22 Vermeulen, 177–178. The volume has been published as Gerhard Friedrich Müller, *Nachrichten Über Völker Sibiriens (1736–1742)*. Eugen Helimski, and Hartmut Katz, eds*., Hamburger Sibirische Und Finnougrische Materialien*, v. 2. (Hamburg: Institut für Finnougristik/Uralistik, 2003).

23 Published as G. F. Miller, *Opisanie sibirskikh narodov*, A. Kh. Elert, W. Hintzsche, eds., (Moscow: Pamiatniki istoricheskoi mysli, 2009).

24 A. I. Andreev, "Trudy G. F. Millera o Sibiri," in G. F. Miller, *Istoriia Sibiri*, izd. 2–e, (Moscow: Vostochnaia literature, 1999), t. 1, p. 81.

25 The additional images appear, on the basis of a comparison of the 1746 inventory with the Hallström catalogue, to be as follows (numeration as given in the Pfab inventory in Hallström): THC 3519, Tartarisches Mädgen, zu Kusnezk; THC 3520 Tartarisches Mädgen, zu Kusnezk; THC 3530 Brazkisches Mädgen; THC 3531 Brazkisches Mädgen, von hinten zu; THC 3532 Brazkische Frau, mit Ihrer Tochter, zu Selenginsk; THC 3534 Tungusisches weib, des Kimskischen (should be Ilimskischen–an apparent misreading by Pfab) Gebiehtes; THC 3535 Jakuzkischer Tunguse; THC 3536 Ein junger, Jakuzkischer Tunguse welchen der Herr Graf von Brümmer geschenckt bekommen; THC 3538 Bratzkischer Schaman, zu Udinskoy Ostrog von hinten zu. One image listed as #27 in the 1746 inventory (Tatarische Heidnische Opfferung) does not appear to have been included in the Bergholz collection.

26 Catherine, 14–15.

27 Hallström, 12–13.

28 Aleksandr Rigel'man, *Letopisnoe povestvovanie o Maloi Rossii i eia narode i kozakakh voobshche*, (Moscow: v Universitetskoi tipografii, 1847).

29 On LePrince and his activities in Russia see Elena Vishlenkova, *Vizual'noe narodovedenie imperii, ili 'uvidet Russkogo dano ne kazhdomu* (Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2011), 72–78.

30 It is possible that versions of the Muscovite images copied by LePrince in his album on the *streltsy* may be housed in other repositories. The *Horizon History of Russia* (New York: American Heritage, 1970) contains four of the images of *streltsy* (158–159) that appear in LePrince's album. In style and content, they are almost identical to those in the Bergholz collection. The images are credited to the British Museum, but we have been unable to verify the source.

31 On Roth and Georgi's publications see Vishlenkova, 48–61.

32 *Materialy dlia istorii Imperatorskoi Akademii Nauk*. (Sankt Petersburg : Tip Imperatorskoi Akademii Nauk, 1885–1900), t.6, p. 409. (Courtesy of Han Vermeulin)

33 The correspondences are as follows. Numeration of the plates follows the 1799 Russian language edition of Georgi's *Opisanie* and the Pfab inventory in Hallström's catalogue. #11 Cheremiska women – THC 3505; #12 – Cheremis' woman from the back – THC 3506; #22 – Ostiak from the Ob River – THC 3524; #27 – Kazan Tatar Woman – 9THC 3511; #28 Kazan Tatar Woman from the back – THC 3512; #29 Chatskaia Tatarka – THC 3516 (Tatar woman from Tomsk); #33 – Siberian Bukharan – THC 3513 (Tobolsk Bukharin); #37 Barabinskaia Devka – THC 3515 (Tatar maiden from Tobolsk); #46 – Tatar maiden from Kuznetz–THC 3519; #47 – Tatar maiden from Kuznetz, from the back – THC 3520; #48 – Tatar girl from Kuznets – THC 3517; #49 – Tatar girl from the back – THC 3518; #58 – Samoyed woman with child – THC 3525; #59 – Tungus hunter – THC 3535; #62–9 Tungus Shaman from Argun river (with arrow) THC 3540 (Mongolian shaman piercing his clothes with an arrow); #80 Bratsk (Buryat) maiden at the Udinskoe settlement – THC 3528; #81 Bratsk maiden from the back; THC 3529; #86 Mongolian Shaman – THC 3541.

34 Vishlenkova, 64–65.

35 For example, the linkages put forth by A. E. Zhabreva in the various collections of Russian costume drawings, would have to be significantly revised taking into account the Bergholz images. See A. E. Zhabreva, "Izobrazheniia kostiumov narodov Rossii v inostrannykh izdaniiakh XVIII – nachala XIX veka," in *Istoriko-bibliograficheskie issledovaniia: Sbornik nauchnykh trudov*, vyp. 10 (St. Petersburg, 2006), 275.

36 See http://emp-web-84.zetcom.ch/eMP/eMuseumPlus?service=ExternalInterface&module=exhibition&moduleFunction=result&filterName=filter.tours.all. The search engine for the museum's database is somewhat cumbersome, but the words "Dräktskiss Ryssland" in the quick search box should produce the images. The database can also be searched by inventory number. Many images remain to be digitized and the museum has apparently left empty placeholders under the corresponding inventory numbers.

THE PROTESTS IN BELARUS AND THE FUTURE OF THE COUNTRY'S LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY

by Marina Henrikson

There is no single established acronym encompassing the different spectrums of sexuality and gender. The author has chosen to use LGBTQ+, but LGBTI and LGBT+ appear in the article in cases where a specific actor uses these acronyms in their communication.

In the ongoing protests in Belarus against Alexander Lukashenka and the sitting regime, the LGBTQ+ community walks alongside other demonstrators, with a common wish to see a regime change. The LGBTQ+ community perceives a political turnaround on the highest level as a first step towards a more inclusive society where the community would have a more defined space.

During the last few years, the LGBTQ+ movement has acquired a more visible role in Belarusian society after longer periods of societal disregard of the community's existence. Nick Antipov, a Belarusian LGBTQ+ activist and human rights defender, says to *Baltic Worlds* via link that the movement was previously non-existent on the official agenda:

"We were not included in the public discourse; there was no discussion in the public sphere. We didn't exist in the media sphere, and if we did it was argued our specific concerns were just part of a Western concept [of identity]."

Antipov is co-founder of MAKEOUT, a Belarusian feminist, anti-discriminatory project. The initiative focuses on questions of gender and sexuality, and its members strive to increase the awareness of these topics in society as well as to strengthen the LGBTQ+ community and other groups that are facing discrimination based on gender or identity.[1]

The initiative started in 2014 but was not legally registered as a project until 2018. Antipov says that the project needed to be officially registered or the members' activities would be considered illegal. The application was refused nine times before it was suddenly approved.

A bumpy road ahead

The LGBTQ+ movement in Belarus is facing many obstacles, including widespread hate speech, bias-motivated violence and a lack of anti-discriminatory legislation. Homophobia and transphobia are not uncommon on official levels, and a reluctance to accept LGBTQ+ people is relatively widespread throughout society in general.

According to an annual report produced by the European branch of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA-Europe), bias-motivated speech and violence were two of the main problematic issues for the LGBTI community in Belarus in 2019. The lack of appropriate legislation is also of concern. Björn van Roozendaal, Programmes Director at ILGA-Europe, explains:

"In Belarus, there is no legislation that prevents hate crime and hate speech against LGBTI people, and there is nothing that ensures equality, non-discrimination or family rights of LGBTI people. Civil society is subjected to a large amount of pressure from the authorities, starting from the de facto impossibility of registration of NGOs, ranging to pressure on activists, and this makes the work much harder and perilous for LGBTI groups."

PHOTO: PRIVATE

ANTON, A BELARUSIAN ACTIVIST who has been working with many Belarusian feminist and queer initiatives since 2015 and who prefers to leave out his last name for security reasons, outlines some additional obstacles facing the community:

"Same-sex marriage and the adoption of children by same-sex couples are forbidden. [...] The definition of hate crimes does not explicitly mention crimes aimed at people because of their SOGI [Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity], it just says 'crimes based on ... hatred towards any social group'. Only once, in 2016, was this law used in a homophobic attack case."

MOREOVER, TRANSGENDER PEOPLE cannot change their passport ID number, which means that they are involuntarily outed to officials since these numbers stand for one's gender assigned at birth. The gender transitioning process, whereby you transfer to the gender presentation that is in line with your internal sense of gender, is also complicated and one has to deal with doctors who do not always possess enough knowledge about the subject matter. The problems are worse outside of Minsk, according to Anton.

Furthermore, he explains that people who change their legal gender from female to male receive a military service card, but they are not allowed to serve in the military. The card includes a code for a group of medical diagnoses, namely 19a, which stands for several severe psychiatric conditions. Some employers require such a military card when interviewing potential employees and may reject the candidate on basis of such a diagnosis.

Living and identifying as a LGBTQ+ person is not illegal, yet one's experiences and existence are largely made invisible. Nadzeya Husakouskaya, who at the time of the interview worked as a researcher at Amnesty International, says the law does not simply mention LGBTQ+ people.[2]

"No, there is no law explicitly protecting LGBTQ+ people. However, being a LGBTQ+ person is also not criminalized."

"IN BELARUS, THERE IS NO LEGISLATION THAT PREVENTS HATE CRIME AND HATE SPEECH AGAINST LGBTI PEOPLE."

Yet Husakouskaya perceives Belarus as being a highly binary society, with strong heteronormative attitudes on display. There are certain societal expectations concerning gender, and gender non-conforming persons find it relatively difficult to navigate in public spaces. Women are, for example, expected to present themselves in a certain way, in line with socially expected standards of femininity. They are still to a high degree relegated to the domestic sphere, but over the last few months of Belarusian protests women are visibly reclaiming the public space, thus challenging the old structures.

A more active player

The Belarusian LGBTQ+ community is also challenging traditional structures to a higher degree than before and its increased

visibility and organization has resulted in negative repercussions on the part of the state.

Nadzeya Husakouskaya says that representatives of the state structure have always expended a considerable amount of energy on political opponents, and since the LGBTQ+ movement was previously not perceived as a political actor and was not overly organized it was to a certain extent left to be. Once its members got organized, claimed the public space and became vocal, however, the state pushed back.

The backlash on the part of the state has intensified from 2018 onward, according to Husakouskaya, after the British Embassy in Minsk flew a rainbow flag on the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia, IDAHOT, on May 17 that year. The British activities generated a response from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which published a statement on its website. ILGA-Europe's Annual Report covering 2018 states that it was not the first time the Embassy flew the rainbow flag, but in previous years the government had simply ignored the action.[3]

ILGA-EUROPE NOTES that the Ministry of Interior's statement read that the UK was challenging Belarusian "traditional values" and called LGBTQ+ people and same-sex relationships "fake". This in turn led to an online petition requiring an investigation of the legality of the statement. However, on the same day that the online petition was published then Minister of Internal Affairs, Ihar Shunevich, stated the UK Embassy's action was propaganda of an unacceptable way of life. Social media users responded with publishing posts with the hashtag #Iamnotfake.

About a week later Belarusian activist and co-founder of MAKEOUT, Victoria Biran, did a one-person protest outside the Ministry of Internal Affairs in which she posed for photos holding a poster with the text "You yourself are fake".[4] This led to her being found guilty in court for violating the "procedure for the organization and holding of mass events", a legal breach according to Article 23.34 of the Code of Administrative Offenses of Belarus.[5] She was sentenced to a fine.

Nadzeya Husakouskaya says that the fact that the LGBTQ+ community and others responded to the statements from governmental levels changed something in the dynamics between the community and the state:

"When the LGBTQ+ community started to react to the statement of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, tension was created. The community entered a more politicized state".

Generations of activists and a new reality

Nick Antipov from MAKEOUT says that the country has already experienced strengthened LGBTQ+ activism from 2014 onward. He states that there have been three generations of LGBTQ+ activists in the post-Soviet period operating in the years 1990–2004, 2007–2013 and 2014–2020, respectively. In between these periods the activity waned due to more wide-spread persecution.

As examples of current activities organized by the activists, he mentions the establishment of educational programs for the population at large and initiatives targeting young LGBTQ+ people.

Nick Antipov, co-founder of MAKEOUT.
PHOTO: MATEUSZ REKŁAJTIS

Nadzeya Husakouskaya, independent consultant.
PHOTO: PRIVATE

Several initiatives have started in cities other than Minsk. Previously, LGBTQ+ activism was mainly concentrated to the capital.

"The community has been more active. We have sought to amplify our voice, and we have done a good job in raising this voice in the media."

2020 WAS A VERY TURBULENT YEAR for the whole of Belarusian society, including Antipov and his fellow activists. For the LGBTQ+ community, all activities were at first put on hold by the spread of Covid-19:

"It all started with Covid-19, hindering all types of activism since there were no events due to safety restrictions. Some activists found other volunteer work".

The presidential elections on August 9 resulted in other types of initiatives, however. Antipov says that the goals of the community changed - the focus became to support civil society at large and protest injustices on a more general level.

According to Anton, the LGBTQ+ community has been an integral part of the protest movement against the sitting regime, but the activists do not usually bring forward specific demands concerning their situation:

"It's important to note that LGBTQ+ people have participated and are participating in all kinds of activities to remove Lukashenka and help victims of regime violence. Most of the time they don't bring rainbow flags or make statements demonstrating that they belong to the community. I know queer people who interviewed victims of prison torture in August, who have sown flags for the protests, who put white-red-white flags on their windows, who made leaflets, [...] who gave parcels to the detained and sent them postcards – and I took part in some of these things myself."

Despite it not being a regular occurrence, rainbow flags have at times been waved during the demonstrations, and queer columns have been organized. According to Björn van Roozendaal at ILGA-Europe, such actions resulted in mixed reactions from the other participants:

"During the massive protests, there were several initiatives

of local LGBTI groups forming their own columns of marchers where they displayed symbols, including flags, that openly showed their LGBTI and sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC). There was some criticism from the main groups of protesters, but there was also support from others."

Yet cases of abuse due to protesters' LGBTQ+ identity or the showcasing of symbols supporting the community have been registered. Amnesty International launched a petition for above mentioned LGBTQ+ activist Victoria Biran who was detained on her way to the Women's March in Minsk on September 26.[6] The petition reads that she was likely targeted because she was carrying a rainbow flag, and that as an LGBT+ activist, Biran is at heightened risk of ill-treatment in detention.

AISHA JUNG, SENIOR CAMPAIGNER at Amnesty International's Europe and Central Asia Regional Office, explains:

"[...] those who are perceived to be politically active, including LGBT+ activists, are singled out for particularly harsh treatment in detention. For those perceived to be transgressing strongly entrenched societal 'norms' around gender, that vulnerability is only exacerbated further."

Victoria Biran was released on October 11. According to a statement from Amnesty International, her friends said that when Biran was brought to the police station a law enforcement official asked her to point out LGBT+ activists from a list of names.[7] Police, however, denied that they knew about her LGBT+ activism and had not noticed her rainbow flag.

Another case of ill-treatment concerns LGBTQ+ activist Zhenya Velko who was detained on the same day as Victoria Biran, on September 26, at the Women's March. Amnesty International has worked together with MAKEOUT on his case. According to a report by MAKEOUT, Zhenya Velko was subjected to cruel treatment and discrimination due to his transgender identity. He had to endure transphobic rhetoric, blackmail and serious threats of sexual assault and even murder at the time of the arrest and during his two days of administrative detention.

Appropriating the narrative

Despite the many challenges the members of the Belarusian LGBTQ+ community is facing, they are determined to work towards change. On a question from *Baltic Worlds* if a possible regime change could result in an improved situation for the LGBTQ+ community, Nick Antipov answers that in Belarus many people commonly use "when" the regime falls, not "if":

"We try to appropriate this narrative. When the regime falls, we will choose our government, parliament and strive for freedom of assembly. We must work with hope. We don't have guns; we only have stories that we want to amplify and change."

Antipov believe that regime change will only be a first step towards positive change, but it is nevertheless a starting point. The LGBTQ+ community must work together with the rest of Belarusian society and take further steps towards a greater understanding of the problems the community is facing. Homophobia does not vanish in an instant, but society must acknowledge the violence committed due to such homophobia, he says.

Nadzeya Husakouskaya says that when the Lukashenka regime falls, there is a window of opportunity for the community. Nobody can then say that its members have not been there, that they have not been part of bringing about change.

"WE MUST WORK WITH HOPE. WE DON'T HAVE GUNS; WE ONLY HAVE STORIES THAT WE WANT TO AMPLIFY AND CHANGE."

HOWEVER, HUSAKOUSKAYA ARGUES, in the current situation in Belarus some aspects of identity politics become quite redundant since all sectors of society are mobilized and differences in their identities are bridged on many levels. Belarusian society is not willing to tolerate violence at any level, towards any citizen, no matter their identity. There is an increased acknowledgement of the fact that every person, whoever they are, has the right to a dignified life.

Husakouskaya recognizes that there is an unprecedented diversity among the protesters, a solidarity between different classes and groups and that such unification of the people can result in different groups being able to co-exist in society after Lukashenka has been replaced. Husakouskaya also hopes that when the regime is gone, there will not be a re-traditionalization of society.

For Nick Antipov, the current times involve both highs and lows – when he is at his highest point, he believes that the regime will soon fall and at his lowest he thinks that they will all perish. However, he says that the wheels of change have been put into motion and that there is no way back to what was:

"There is no alternative to continuing the protests, there is no going back. Lukashenka does not want to leave, but we will not leave either. We have no choice but to continue."

Marina Henrikson, currently a freelance journalist, holds a PhD in Russian Studies.

references

1 MAKEOUT, last accessed November 10, 2020, https://makeout.by/about_us.html.

2 Nadzeya Husakouskaya left Amnesty in December 2020, and is currently working independently as a consultant in the area of LGBTQ+ rights in Europe and Central Asia.

3 ILGA-Europe, Annual Report 2019, last accessed November 11, 2020, https://www.ilga-europe.org/annualreview/2019.

4 Viasna, May 24, 2018, last accessed November 13, 2020, https://spring96.org/ru/news/89959.

5 ILGA-Europe, Annual Report 2019.

6 Amnesty International, petition, September 30, 2020, last accessed November 13, 2020, https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur49/3143/2020/en/.

7 Amnesty Internationl, October 15, 2020, last accessed November 13, 2020, https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/EUR4932282020ENGLISH.pdf.

Nuclear Superpowers

Art, culture, and heritage in the Nuclear Age

Eglė Rindzevičiūtė talks to Ele Carpenter about the strong correlation between the experience of imperialism and colonial power, high technology and cultural responsibility.

by **Eglė Rindzevičiūtė**

Intellectual and public debates on nuclear power in Lithuania and the Baltic states have gained a new impetus in recent years, due to significant external factors. A number of geopolitical events have occured: the Fukushima disaster (2011), the building of new nuclear power plants such as the one in Belarus on the Lithuanian border, nuclear tests in North Korea (2016, 2017) and the new Cold War following the war between Russia and Ukraine (2014), which led to renewed nuclear arguments between the United States and Russia. In addition there has also been a cultural shift that influenced those audiences that do not necessarily follow high technology and high politics. The HBO released TV mini-series called *Chernobyl* (2019) was widely viewed and won many awards. In expert circles, environmental discussions include not only the issue of the extreme long-term storage of radioactive nuclear waste and its cultural memory, but also the colonial relationships between the center and the periphery that have been perpetuated in the decommissioning of mines and nuclear industrial and weapons establishments. Since the very beginning of the nuclear era contemporary artists have been fascinated by nuclear technoscience and its aspects of the dangerous, the spectacular, the mundane.

Ele Carpenter, curator of the exhibition "Splitting the Atom", and I first met at a book presentation at the Royal Asiatic Society in London, not far from Euston station, which is going to be demolished soon to make way for a high-speed railway. It was a very informative meeting for me as it included many members of the British anti-nuclear community. At the meeting, many people complained about the lack of public interest, particularly among young British people, in nuclear issues. However, when Ele a few years later organized a public lecture on decolonizing the nuclear by the American scholar Gabrielle Hecht at Goldsmiths (2019), the large auditorium was completely full. Clearly something has changed and people are again worried about nuclear power. In 2020 Ele Carpenter curated the exhibition "Splitting the Atom" together with Virginija Januškevičiūtė. The exhibition at the Contemporary Art Centre and the Energy and Technology Museum in Vilnius, Lithuania was shown between September 18 and October 25, 2020.

EGLĖ RINDZEVIČIŪTĖ: **How did you enter the field of nuclear culture and how do you see its transformation during your career?**

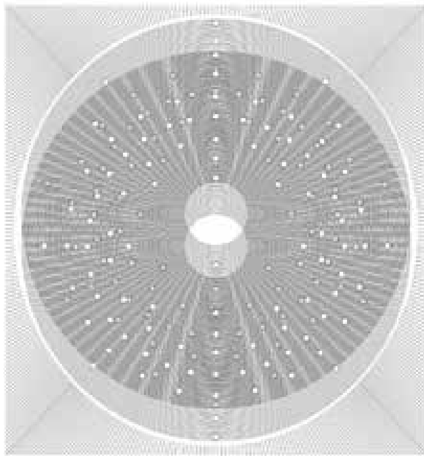
ELE CARPENTER: My mother is a life-long anti-nuclear activist, and as a child I was involved in 'Families Against the Bomb', the Greenham Womens' Peace Camp, Cruisewatch, Sea Action and Nuke Watch. She was involved in non-violent direct action, political lobbying and community organizing, and even went to prison for her peace actions.

Ele Carpenter is curator of the exhibiton “Splitting the Atom” in Lithuania. PHOTO: UMEÅ UNIVERSITY

She eventually went on to establish the Nuclear Information Service, and regularly attends the Aldermaston Womens’ Peace Camp. In the early 1990s I left activism to become an artist, and although my work had political references, I was looking for more of a sophisticated visual culture, beyond binary politics and slogans. I suppose I felt that the visual references of the peace movement were tired clichés and predictable arguments that had minimal effect. Activist images work well as props for actions, visual markers for people in public space and as creative projects to bring groups of people together, like a banner-making workshop or making a giant coffin for a mass die-in. Ideally, the slogans aimed to catch the eye of a newspaper editor and hit the headlines. However, this has changed now that demonstrations are archived as anthologies of placards on social media.

So, speeding on a few years, I became a curator and had a particular interest in socially engaged art, community cinema and tactical media. Then, in early 2010, my mother told me about an advisory group that she had become involved in. The role of the group was to advise the British Ministry of Defence on how to dismantle its old nuclear submarines. She asked me if I would be able to give a talk to the group about how art could help them ask more complex questions. She thought everything had become very clinical, simplified and needed another kind of language in order to rethink the problems. At first, I said no, because I had no idea how this could fit in with my curatorial practice, and I took a year or so to think about it. In 2011 or 2012, I can’t remember now, I decided to take the challenge and I gave my talk to the Submarine Dismantling Project Advisory Group. To my complete surprise the group was really interested in my approach, and I realized that art could do something very important in this strange nuclear aesthetic space. My talk was about how artists deal with concepts, how they unravel language and materiality to create new conceptual frameworks, new vocabularies, and ways of thinking about things. I presented works that dealt with systems of power, with law and ideas, and I don’t think they had expected the intellectual rigor of the work. The aim was not to illustrate, or explain, or justify, or protest, but to create a space for things to become more complicated – for the ethics and aesthetics to become entangled and more interesting.
I learned that my approach to art worked in bringing together very diverse groups of people with vastly different political opinions. It was a space of curatorial facilitation and I invited artists along at every step of the way, eventually forming the Nuclear Culture Research Group.

I often talk about curating as a form of knowledge production and I see this taking place in all the nuclear culture projects. The most important process is the roundtable discussion, where artists, scholars and people from the nuclear sector share their practices and ideas. Activists often attend, but they are usually frustrated at the lack of



One Too Many, etching, Yelena Popova, 2018.

Yelena Popova, *One Too Many* (U238>Pu239), 2018, design for jacquard woven tapestry.

“We’re all hoping that the only good that might come from the Pandemic is a shift towards practices of social and planetary care with deeper integrity, beyond capitalism, to break through the rising tide of the populist far right and its brutality.”

positioning. People like to know which ‘side’ you are on. That’s fair enough, but just counting numbers relating to for and against isn’t going to help if nobody has a language to even discuss the matters at hand. If I have to state my political alliance, then I’m anti-nuclear for so many reasons, but aesthetically its more complex. Radiation is magical and beautiful, as well as dangerous; we can’t just simply hate it, it’s part of the world.

Over the last seven years the Nuclear Culture Project has held around six exhibitions, loads of field trips to nuclear sites around the world, and about ten roundtable discussions. Throughout the process I’ve been learning about what it means to live and work in a radioactive environment and have even undertaken training in radiation protection. We’ve engaged over 100,000 people through these events and raised the level of debate regarding what it means to make art in response to nuclear conditions. I really wanted to move away from all the conventional nuclear iconography and also move away from speculative fiction and all the Cold War tropes. Godzilla, mushroom clouds, uranium toothpaste and peace cranes were the tired images of my childhood, and none of them seemed to deal with the present.

My intention was always to focus on the contemporary nuclear industrial complex through organizing artists’ visits to nuclear sites and engaging people from the industry, STS and the nuclear sciences and humanities in the debate about art. As APG said: “the context is half the work”. So the Nuclear Culture Project creates the context for artists to have access to people who understand and work in nuclear industries and studies.

I think it’s become a critical mass of practices and interests that has been successful in creating a new discourse around nuclear arts, one that is more clearly engaging with radioactive waste and the decolonial issues of nuclearity – as Gabrielle Hecht explains – in which uranium mining and processing hasn’t been designated as a nuclear site, allowing it to sit outwith nuclear regulations.

The focus of contemporary discourse is now on the Anthropocene and planetary care, feminism and decolonization, and the effects of nuclear technologies are central to all of these. The Women’s Peace Movement developed the practice of non-violent direct action to effectively remove American nuclear weapons from British soil. The nuclear military industrial complex has always been a colonial project, from the extraction of uranium, testing atomic weapons and the military threat. The human marker of fallout and high-level waste buried in the fossil record are the two geologic golden spikes of the Nuclear Anthropocene. These man-made anthropogenic radioactive isotopes will provide geologic evidence of human activity on earth for millions of years. I often invoke Mark Fisher’s citation of Jameson – that it’s easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism. And it’s probably easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of nuclear weapons. We’re all hoping that the only good that might come from the Pandemic is a shift towards practices of social and planetary care with deeper integrity, beyond capitalism, to break through the rising tide of the populist far right and its brutality.

Yelena Popova, *Visaginas Parquet RMBK-1500, 2000*; *Keepsafe I-II, 2020*; and *Ripple Marked Radiance After Hertha Ayrton*, 2019.

PHOTO: DAINIUS PUTINAS

So the whole concept of nuclear culture today has been transformed beyond 'making the invisible visible' and beyond iconographic representation. Instead, we have a more plural, critical, embedded and reflective set of practices that seek to problematize and contradict, revealing not just the visual but the instrumentalization of the visual or the mathematics of data, or the thousands of years of storytelling needed to make sense of the uranium in the rocks under our feet.

EGLĖ RINDZEVIČIŪTĖ: **Your recent exhibition *Perpetual Uncertainty* was shown in Sweden. Having curated "Splitting the Atom" with Virginija Januskeviciute, how would you compare the societal debate on nuclear power in Sweden and Lithuania?**

ELE CARPENTER: Sweden has a unique approach to its radioactive waste management insofar as it has government-funded public consultation and independent advisory bodies (MKG). There's something similar in Belgium, but nothing like this in the UK. The official line is that Sweden has high levels of public trust in government and experts. Thus, the population supports the plans for a geologic repository for spent fuel. But, of course, there are always people protesting because who wants radioactive waste buried beneath their landscape? And more to the point, there are still many unanswered questions about the containment of waste underground.

In people are worried about the Finnish nuclear power plant just a few miles across the Gulf of Bothnia, whilst in Vilnius people are very concerned about the new nuclear power plant at Astravets in Belarus. In both countries there's a feeling that a foreign nuclear plant is worse than a local nuclear plant – better the devil you know than the devil you don't. However, there are obviously huge differences in public accountability in Finland and Belarus, so the situations are not really comparable. However, my point is that in every country, all nuclear industries are convinced that their processes are safe – and the more you believe this, the more you have problems. Nuclear technologies are inherently unstable and need to be constantly recognized as such.

Lithuania has a very different nuclear politics, transitioning from a Soviet nuclear plant to a European Union decommissioning project. It was only when I started reading the documents about Ignalina that I understood the important role Sweden has played in advising Lithuania, both on improving safety at the plant following Chernobyl, and in the plans for a geologic storage facility for spent fuel.

However, artists in Lithuania are generally focused on the social culture around decommissioning the plant, and not the issues of waste, heritage and deep time anthropogenic isotopes. And, of course, the Soviet nuclear legacy includes the memory of having weapons pointing at the UK. I really feel that we are in a unique historical moment, in which Lithuania, Sweden and the UK are all members of the EU.

EGLĖ RINDZEVIČIŪTĖ: **Your mother travelled to Lithuania as a women's rights activist, although few in the UK showed much interest in the Baltic states. How come her choice, and did your mother's professional engagement shape your career choices? The nuclear field is notoriously homosocial and is dominated by militarized, masculine values. How has it been for you to find your role in it as a woman?**

ELE CARPENTER: For me, the Womens' Peace Movement is central to feminism and rethinking structures of care and decision-making. My mother once said to me "if the Government can pay people to build nuclear weapons, then they can pay people not to" and of course, she's right. So the project of peace is not just about resistance, it's about

"Too often academics and cultural organizations rely on a vintage history, one that stopped 20 years ago so that it doesn't get muddled up with the present."

care, and how we live day to day. The Peace Camp at Greenham was always about asymmetry – how we could set up an asymmetrical set of power relations, architectures and social practices in comparison to the military. When my mother tells me stories about her travels in the Baltics in the late 1980s and early 1990s she talks of women working within very formal structures, trying to create symmetrical forms of power in really difficult conditions, not having the space or vocabulary to see that not all forms of organization have to be the same. Perhaps I'm following in her footsteps trying to create spaces for serendipity rather than control.

EGLĖ RINDZEVIČIŪTĖ: While researching nuclear cultural heritage in Russia and the UK, I was struck by the very strong correlation between the experience of imperialism and colonial power, high technology and cultural responsibility, which I saw in both countries. While this cultural responsibility does not always take democratic forms, it is an important prerequisite for the development of critical and societal engagement in technopolitics. In the Baltic states, which have traditionally been considered rural, ethnonationalist and victimized by the neighboring great powers, societal interest in technopolitics is not of self evident importance. Even in academia, environmental humanities and STS subjects are in the minority. At the same time, as demonstrated by "Splitting the Atom", there is a strong artistic interest in this area. I wonder if contemporary art and the museum and heritage sectors could become the driving forces that lead to the renewal of public debate and academic research?

ELE CARPENTER: Absolutely, art is creating heritage through its own production all the time and can create a context for the complexity of heritage sites and materials to be discussed. Our intervention into the Simulator for the Ignalina reactor control room is an interesting example, particularly with the addition of the Finger Pointing Worker film from Fukushima being screened in the space.

In the UK there has been a massive and sustained peace movement against nuclear weapons, as well as nuclear energy, and this lobby has been instrumental in creating the public discourse around an otherwise very secretive industry. It's often activist campaigns that lead to improving safety and making information public, although activism has paid little attention to heritage. The concerns are very valid and should be taken into account in our cultural heritage practices as curators. Firstly, heritage projects should not create a false divide between the past and the present. Too often academics and cultural organizations rely on a vintage history, one that stopped 20 years ago so that it doesn't get muddled up with the present. This is politically insincere and completely at odds with contemporary art and its interrogation of the present. For example, the information boards about the first British operational nuclear weapon, the Blue Danube at RAF Barham, describe British nuclear weapons in the 1980s, as if nuclear weapons were an historical event. Meanwhile, the Trident warheads trundle up and down the motorways between Aldermaston and Burghfield where they are built and reconditioned, and the naval base at Faslane in Scotland where they are deployed. The peace movement suffers from exactly the same disassociation. There are so many new research and archive projects about Greenham in the 1980s, but only a handful of women go to the Aldermaston Womens' Peace Camp, which takes place one weekend every month. Of course, it's important to build archives of the past, but we really need art to keep us grounded in the theatricality of this archival process, and how we perform heritage-making with care. ✕

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Note: "Splitting the Atom" was initiated by Eglė Rindzevičiūtė as a parallel project to the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council networking project "Nuclear Cultural Heritage: From Knowledge to Practice". The network's partner project, "Atomic Heritage Goes Critical", led by Anna Storm, will organize an international scientific conference on the histories and cultures of atomic power in cooperation with Lithuanian partners in June 2021.

Valentin Novopolskij as Oleg in the film *Oleg* by Juris Kursietis.

TO EUROPE WITH HOPE: JURIS KURSIETIS' *OLEG*

The goEast Film Festival celebrated 20 years anniversary in 2020. It was in the German city Wiesbaden that the first festival was arranged 2001 to support the Eastern and Central European cinema. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic situation worldwide the whole festival was online with the support of a VR platform for participants and viewers. The films touched upon a wide range of topics such as Europe and the relations between East and West, migration and identity, social conditions, gender, employment issues and several others. In the section called "Europa Europa", the film *Oleg* by Juris Kursietis, 2019, was shown. *Oleg* has scenes filmed in Latvia, Belgium, France and Lithuania, and in brief is a fascinating and powerful depiction of the fate of a migrant seeking for fortune in Europe.

Oleg have already won prizes and recognitions. It was shown at the 51st Cannes' Directors' Fortnight Film Festival in 2019 and received several awards, namely "Best Feature Film", "Best Supporting Actor" and "Best Cinematographer" at the Lielais Kristaps Latvian National Film Festival .

OLEG IS AN ETHNIC Russian butcher living in Riga (Valentin Novopolskij), with a non-citizen passport, going to Belgium to work in a meat factory. As he owns the so called "grey" passport and therefore belongs to the Russian minority of the Latvian state, he has the permission to work only in a specific butchery, from which however he is thrown out after an accident happened to one of his colleagues. From this moment on, all his efforts to be employed and earn some money to pay the debts he has back home, fail. He ends up working for the polish mafia, being threaten by the boss Andrzej (Dawid Ogrodnik) who gave him the false polish documents in return for risky and unpaid jobs.

The figure of Oleg is continuously associated with the biblical image of the sacrificed lamb, openly disclosed in a scene when the protagonist, lost in his despair and disorientation, enters a cathedral, where the image of the sacrificing act is explained. The figure of the lamb and his destiny stands to describe the conditions migrants may find in an unknown and

unhospitable environment, in search of fortune and money. These conditions lead the protagonist to a desperate search for friends and affects, sometimes also pretending to be someone else. When Oleg sneaks in a cocktail party of a theater company he "plays the part" of an emerging actor, charming a woman, that however, when discovering Oleg's real condition, rejects him with no pity; in justifying himself, the protagonist says that he had just heard someone speaking in Latvian thinking it was a good idea to crawl into.

THROUGH THE EVENTS of the film, Oleg keeps on repeating some crucial phrases describing his conditions as "I am alien to everything "or "Am I this lamb that has to be sacrificed?" referring to himself or to God. However, he carries on preserving a hopeful, trusting and sometimes naïve spirit in dealing with problematic situations when, for example, he meets Malgosia (Anna Próchniak), Andrzej's girlfriend and tries to save her from her violent relation. Finally, he is arrested and sent back home. The film has a strong religious end, with Oleg's receiving baptism in a lake at home, allowing the religious substrata to emerge from inside him, as it never really abandoned him.

The director Juris Kursietis wanted to describe "modern slavery" and during his research he came into contact with illegal workers, to learn the reality behind the facades.

Kursietis openly declares the will of keeping spiritual strata in several scenes, avoiding an excessively rigid depiction of the social reality, but presenting a character which, even if not a real orthodox practicing, keeps deep inside this feeling of hope, coming from a religious comfort. ✕

Michela Romano

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Note: Further information about goEast is to be found at https://www.filmfestival-goeast.de/en/Press/index.php. Information about Juris Kursietis and *Oleg* is to be found at: https://cineuropa.org/en/video/372707/.

THE CASE OF YURII DMITRIEV AND THE CASE OF RUSSIAN KARELIA

"Tucked away" behind Finland, the Russian Republic of Karelia is nowadays chiefly known in the West for the scandalous trial against Yurii Dmitriev, local historian and chairman of the Karelian branch of the human rights organization Memorial who, in 2016, was accused of sexually abusing his adopted daughter. Obviously, the real reason for this accusation is that, since the 1990s, Dmitriev has published a lot of material on Stalin's purges in Karelia in the 1930s and discovered mass graves at Sandarmokh and other places.[1] Such material is contrary President Putin's current policy of "patriotic" history writing, in which the Soviet victory in the Second World War is the main theme. In 2020, the 75th anniversary of this victory was celebrated with much pomp and ceremony all over Russia.

THIS COMMENTARY aims to provide a context for the Dmitriev "affair" by presenting Karelia, its people, its history and its economic and political development.[2] At the end of the text, some comparative conclusions for Russia in general are drawn. The commentary is primarily based on Russian press and official material, as well as on Finnish research, which is best informed concerning Karelia.

The land and the people

The Republic of Karelia is one of Russia's 85 federal subjects and has the longest border with a Western country, namely, Finland, which has two Karelian provinces. Present-day Karelia includes areas seized from Finland during the Second World War. Among Russia's six western border regions, Karelia is the only ethnically-based unit.

These days Karelia has a relatively small and decreasing population spread over a vast area, mostly living in Petrozavodsk and urban areas. The overwhelming majority of the population is Russian, while Karelians, the titular nation, make up only 7.4% (45,570),[3] and the other Finno-Ugric peoples, Finns and Vepsians even less.[4] The Karelians and Vepsians have gradually become thoroughly Russified and adhere to the Russian Orthodox Church, unlike most Finns. Nowadays, only around one half of Karelians speak their own language as they have become quite urbanized. However, even among the less urbanized Vepsians, only 37.5% (2002) speak their own language.[5]

SINCE GORBACHEV'S perestroika efforts were made to make Karelian the second language of the republic. A process of creating a new literary language in Latin script started. However, this was difficult because Karelian has several dialects. Some schools started teaching Karelian and Veps, the university of Petrozavodsk set up a Faculty of Baltic-Finnish Philology and Culture in 1993, and books and newspapers, radio and television programs were produced in both languages.[6] A "Congress of the Karelians" in the republic is regularly held in Olonets and is devoted to the development of the language, welfare, civil society and environmental issues.[7]

However, after Vladimir Putin became President of Russia, the process of Russification in Karelia and elsewhere resumed. The amount of cultural events, mass media productions and education in Karelian and Finnish was reduced. Street signs are generally in Russian, and the National Finnish Theatre in Petrozavodsk mainly stages plays in Russian.[8]

The Republic of Karelia

Status: Subject of the Russian Federation, part of its Northwestern Federal District.
Geography: Area: 172,400 km^2. 723 km border with Finland, located south of the White Sea, with the two largest lakes in Europe, Ladoga and Onega.
Capital: Petrozavodsk on the western shore of Onega. 280,000 inhabitants. Head of the Republic: Artur Parfenchikov
Population: 643,548 (census of 2010), 622,484 (2018 estimate)
Density: 3.7 per km^2
Urban: 78%
Nationalities: Russians: 82%
Karelians: 7.4% (45,570)
Belarusians: 3.8% (23,345)
Ukrainians: 2% (12,677)
Finns: 1.4% (8,577)
Vepsians: 0.5% (3423)
Official language: Russian. Since 2004, Karelian, Veps and Finnish have also been recognized.

Monument to Otto Willy Kuusinen (1881–1964) in Petrozavodsk, erected in 1973. PHOTO: ANDREW ZORIN

Indeed, Karelia has also become a mainstay of Russian history and culture. Its official name is *The Republic of Karelia*, not *The Karelian Republic* – thus, it is an administrative rather than an ethnic marker. The capital of Petrozavodsk was founded as a Russian factory site in 1703 in honor of Peter the Great and is now totally dominated by Russians. The Orthodox sanctuaries of Kizhi and Valaam are considered to be a part of Russian cultural heritage and receive federal support. Not only Kalevala but also Russian folk tales (*byliny*) were recorded here, and Karelia plays a cherished role in Russian and Soviet war history, as will be shown. Karelian lakes and forests have been popular among Russian tourists for decades.

Changing borders and the Finnish factor

The current ethnic composition and political status of Karelia is primarily a result of wars, changing borders and political repression in a historical process in which Finland and the Finns have also played a prominent role. The Karelians as a people were first mentioned in 11th century bark chronicles.[9] When Finland was an integral part of Sweden up until 1809, several wars were fought with Russia and its predecessor states over Karelia. In the Treaty of Stolbovo of 1617, large parts of East Karelia were ceded to Sweden. In order to escape the Lutheran Swedes and Finns, thousands of Karelians fled to the Tver region, where some still remain to this day.[10] However, in the 18th century, Sweden lost parts of East Karelia in two wars with Russia. When Russia conquered the whole of Finland in 1809, it was made a Grand Duchy under the Tsar but regained the Stolbovo border and retained Swedish legislation. In the 19th century, national consciousness arose, and in northern Karelia the Finnish ethnographer Elias Lönnrot compiled folk songs and poetry and created Kalevala, the national epos of both Finns and Karelians.

AFTER THE RUSSIAN Revolution and the declaration of independence, a fierce civil war broke out in Finland in January 1918 between revolutionary Red Guards backed by lingering Russian army units and the bourgeois government. It was won by the latter with German support, and around 20,000 Red Finns escaped to Soviet Russia, of which 2,000 escaped to Soviet Karelia. During the Russian Civil War in 1919, Finnish troops, with discreet official support, intervened in Russian Karelia in order to annex the Olonets (Aunus) region. An independent republic was proclaimed in Uhtua (now Kalevala) and recognized by Finland. However, these schemes were soon crushed by the Red Army, which had gathered strength. In October 1920, the Peace of Tartu (Dorpat) was concluded.

It restored the Finnish border of Stolbovo (plus Petsamo) including a Soviet promise to grant East Karelia a high degree of autonomy. Still, even after the peace treaty had been signed, Finnish volunteers unsuccessfully intervened in support of an uprising in East Karelia.[11]

Instead, in 1920, the Communists formed the so-called Karelian Workers' Commune which, in 1923, was transformed into the first Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic (ASSR) of the Russian part of the Soviet Union (RSFSR), and was granted the same economic rights as the Soviet republics, though no constitution.[12] Edvard Gylling, who had been Commissar for Finance in the Red government in Finland and fled to Karelia, became head of the government there until 1935. Finns dominated the political and cultural landscape, and most books published in Karelia were written in Finnish. Contrary to the Peace Treaty of Tartu, Finnish, not Karelian, became the second official language after Russian. As a result of the Great Depression and unemployment in Finland and North America in the early 1930s, many Finns and the so-called Kiruna Swedes moved to Russia and Karelia, enticed by the promise of work. The number of Finns in Karelia rose to at least 12,000, not counting illegal migrants.[13]

On the other hand, in the 1920s, large Russian-speaking areas were added to Karelia, and with Stalin's five-year plans and the industrialization process, more Russians migrated to Karelia. Their share of the population rose from 55% (112,000) in 1920 to 63% (297,000) in 1939, whereas the Karelian share decreased from 42.7% to 23.2%.

When the big purges started in the 1930s, and a broad forbidden border zone was created, Finns and other minority groups and foreigners were deported suspected of being unreliable. They were mostly sent to Gulag camps in Karelia or remote parts of the Soviet Union. Thousands of people were executed, for example at Sandarmokh, including Finnish leaders like Gylling and almost all Finnish members of the Communist Party, as well as hundreds of Swedish workers. In 1938, it was forbidden to speak Finnish in Karelia and an effort was made to develop a Karelian literary language, while Russian became compulsory in schools.[14]

"WHEN THE BIG PURGES STARTED IN THE 1930S /…/ FINNS AND OTHER MINORITY GROUPS AND FOREIGNERS WERE DEPORTED SUSPECTED OF BEING UNRELIABLE."

IN ACCORDANCE with the Soviet-Nazi non-aggression pact, in November 1939 the Soviet Union launched the so-called Winter War against Finland and proclaimed a Finnish "democratic" republic in Terijoki (the present-day Zelenogorsk) headed by Otto Willy Kuusinen, former member of the Red government in Finland who had fled to Moscow and become a top-ranking Soviet official. This indicated a desire to take control of Finland, as was happening with the three Baltic states. However, the plan was abandoned due to strong Finnish resistance. In the Moscow Peace Treaty of March 1940, Finland still had to cede parts of East Karelia, as well as Hangö (Hanko) and the Karelian Isthmus including Viborg (Viipuri), Finland's second largest city at the time. Over 400,000 people fled to Finland. Karelia was then upgraded from an autonomous status to the Karelian-Finnish Soviet Republic, with Kuusinen at its helm, and Finnish again became the official language.

DURING THE SO-CALLED Continuation War, in 1941–1944, Finland, in partnership with Hitler's Germany reconquered the lost areas and most of the refugees returned.[15] A military administration was established beyond the former border up to the White Sea Canal in order to prepare for the annexation, and the process started of fennicizing the Karelians and expelling the Slav population.[16] Six concentration camps were set up, including civilian camps, in which children, old people and Russians in particular perished, mostly from illness and cold.[17] In 1944, when the fortunes of war changed, the Soviet Union reclaimed Karelia and added more Finnish areas, notably Petsamo. The Finnish population fled once again, this time for good. In 1946, the Karelian Isthmus was transferred to the Leningrad *oblast*, probably for military reasons and, in 1956, Karelia was again demoted to autonomy status.[18]

When the Soviet Union fell apart and became the Russian Federation, Karelia, like many other parts of the USSR, declared itself a sovereign state and acquired republican status again, with its own foreign ministry.[19] A national Karelian movement arose and demanded a national territorial area and a special chamber in the regional parliament for the native Finno-Ugric peoples with a veto right over certain issues or quotas of seats. Some radicals called for unification with Finland and maintained contact with like-minded radicals in Finland.[20] However, Karelia was not granted a power-sharing agreement with the federal center, unlike several other republics in the 1990s, and when Putin became president, federal power was strengthened at the expense of the republics.[21] Together with the dominance of the ethnic Russians, this has ensured that Karelia has become tightly integrated into the Russian Federation. However, there are also economic factors.

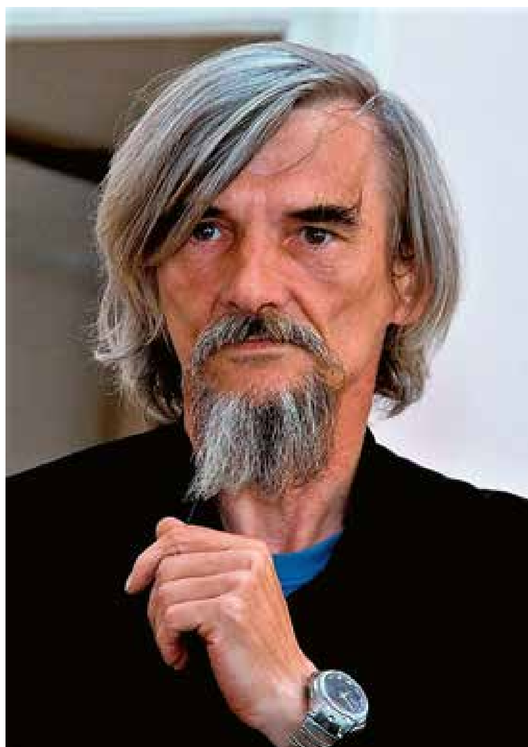
Forestry, Gulag and economic development

Russian Karelia is covered by up to 85% of forest. Thus, the economy is dominated by wood and wood processing industries, which currently produce 25% of the paper in Russia, but Russian Karelia also has various mineral and related industries, hydro power and fish production.

The production and export of wood has played a key role in Karelia's economic development ever since Tsarist times. When Karelia became an autonomous Soviet republic and during the NEP period, when private enterprise was permitted, it

had a "ministry" of economy, the right to levy taxes and to carry out foreign trade, and the republic could use its revenues for the benefit of the peasantry, which constituted around one half of the population. The first serious setback came in 1926, when Karelia's budget was subjected to negotiations with the RSFSR and Union commissariats, and large Moscow-based companies and trusts were given a free hand to operate in Karelia and maximize production.

As preparations for the first five-year plan for industrialization and the collectivization of agriculture then started, and sources of funding for the necessary import of machinery were sought, focus fell on forestry products, which were the USSR's third most important export items after grain and oil. The Karelian Forest Trust (Karelles), which had paid 60–80% of all tax revenues, had to transfer its entire production to the all-Union forest export company. The final blow was the Soviet tax reform of 1930–1931, which transferred Karelia's tax revenues to the RSFSR budget.[22]



Yurii Dmitriev. PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

FURTHER, COLLECTIVIZATION became a means of providing cheap labor for the ambitious plans of expanding forestry (besides leading to a collapse in food production). There were not enough local lumberjacks and bringing in seasonal workers from outside was too expensive. Thus, workers from the *kolkhozes*, who received half the salary of "free" workers, were increasingly recruited by the forestry companies, reaching two-thirds in 1933. Moreover, the state started to extensively use forced labor, especially in remote locations with harsh climates.[23] Already in the 1920s, the security police (OGPU, later NKVD) had established a prison camp on the Solovki Islands in the White Sea, which soon became the model of forced labor for the entire Gulag system.

The Gulag administration was also allowed to take over vast forest areas (one third of Karelia's resources in 1933), as well as construction jobs. The Karelian authorities initially protested that its companies and their workers had lost jobs and that the Gulag administration paid no taxes and followed no rules. However, their protests were in vain. Many thousands died as a result of executions, hard labor, cold, starvation and diseases. A hideous example is the construction of the White Sea Canal to Lake Onega in 1931–1933, where it is estimated that 25 000 out of 170 000 prisoners perished.[24] This project soon became a model for Stalin's other canal projects. Ultimately, it transpired that the Gulag system had been unprofitable from the start. Solovki was closed in 1939 due to the war, and the White Sea Canal was of limited use since it was only three meters deep. After Stalin's death, the entire Gulag system was dismantled.

MOVING FORWARD to the 1990s, the Soviet-planned economic system was replaced by a difficult transition to a market economy. However, the reliance on forestry persisted in Karelia. As in the 1920s, Karelia was once again allowed to engage in foreign trade, specifically with Finland and Sweden. Exports accounted for more than 40% of total production in 1998, which was dominated by raw materials, mainly unfinished wood (rounded timber),[25] and Finland became the single most important market. Finnish and Swedish companies invested in the Karelian pulp and paper industry and started large-scale logging. Karelia further benefitted from cooperation with aid projects from Finland and the EU in the framework of the EU's Northern Dimension. It was included as a member of the Barents Regional Council and became the cross-border Euregio Karelia with three Finnish regions. A good deal of the aid went to building new border stations, as well as roads and railways going in the Finnish direction in order to facilitate trade and tourism.[26] Tourism increased in both directions, thanks to relaxed visa rules.[27]

Karelia was hit hard by a federal decision to raise customs duties on timber exports by 300% in 1999 so as to promote the processing industry and, even though this was soon revised, the export of roundwood gradually shrank considerably, while the processing industry grew.

Another problem was that the logging industry was extensive and dug into protected areas with old forests, evoking protests from environmental groups in both Karelia and abroad. Further, Western companies were afraid of making major investments due to the volatile judicial climate, widespread corruption and the unclear division of labor with the federal center, so many of them withdrew from Karelia.[28] This was followed by Western sanctions against Russia on account of its aggression against Ukraine in 2014, the Russian counter-sanctions on Western exports of foodstuffs, the fall of the world market oil price and the depreciation of the ruble, as well as a policy of import substitution. Consequently, Karelia became ever more dependent on Moscow.

It is true that in 2018 the republic re-

corded industrial growth that was slightly higher than average, particularly in the processing industry, increasing tax revenue, and growing exports (12%), which were six times higher than imports. Tourism increased, for example to Solovki. Business contacts were established with China. However, the budget was unbalanced and incurred debts to the Federation. Thus, a federal target program was adopted for the development of Karelia until 2020, including investment in the mining and forest industries and in logistics.[29] Karelia was included in the list of regions with the most difficult economic and social situation and received five billion rubles for the program.[30] Some roads leading to the Finnish border were transferred to the Federation, which thereby assumed responsibility for their maintenance.[31] The airport in Petrozavodsk is being modernized and flight connections with Moscow improved. In September 2019, additional federal funding was allocated for improving the heating supply for the coming winter.[32]

NEVERTHELESS, despite sanctions, Karelia continued to be interested in economic cooperation with the EU. An economy minister claimed that the republic was a pilot region for Russia, offering one of the most flexible and attractive investment systems. Cooperation in the Northern Dimension and with the Finnish border regions, including the Euregio Karelia, continued.[33] A regular air connection with Helsinki was to commence in spring 2020. A Karelian minister was interested in the Finnish experience of handling garbage and expressed the hope that the introduction of Russian electronic visas for EU countries, valid for 16 days without invitation, would substantially increase the tourist flows to Karelia. For Karelia, this was scheduled to start in 2021.[34]

However, in 2019, Finland, which had long applied the Schengen rules for Russia more liberally than other EU countries, decided to tighten its rules by demanding proof of residence and travel tickets.[35] In March 2020 the Corona virus also hit Finland, Russia and Karelia, causing borders to close and a reduction in travel, thereby exacerbating the already tough economic situation.

Political control and repression

Karelia's economy and foreign relations are closely intertwined with its political development. In the 1990s, the republic was first headed by the Communist Viktor Stepanov, a former member of the Karelian Supreme Soviet and Karelian by origin. In the local election in 1996, he was defeated by Sergei Katanandov, the incumbent mayor of Petrozavodsk and also a Karelian by origin. Katanandov was one of the first leaders to join the Fatherland movement in 1998, which was designed to help Moscow mayor Sergei Luzhkov become the next president after the ageing Boris Yeltsin, and concluded a cooperation with Moscow, evidently hoping to get assistance from there. He also criticized the federal power in Moscow and wanted more power for the regions.

HOWEVER, WHEN Prime Minister Putin's *Unity* party won the State Duma election in Russia and Karelia in December 1999, Katanandov, like most other regional leaders, swung his support to Putin and his candidacy for president. He went further than others by proposing to extend the presidential term from four to seven years and "even for life if he has the support of the people /and/ is a normal, authoritarian leader capable of lifting the country out of a crisis." In the 2000 presidential election, Putin obtained above-average votes (64%) in Karelia and he particularly thanked Katanandov for this. Katanandov accepted Putin's strengthening of vertical power over the republics, including transferring more taxes to the Federation. On the same day as the presidential election, Katanandov held and won a referendum in Karelia on changing the constitution, which boosted the executive power over the legislature by making him 'Head of the Republic' (not president or governor), instead of prime minister.[36] He then remained in power until 2010.

When Putin returned to power in 2012 after Dmitrii Medvedev's four years as president, the reins were tightened, for example, by a law obliging political NGOs that received foreign money to register as 'foreign agents'. Katanandov's successor, Andrei Nelidov, was fired in May 2012, and later sentenced to eight years in jail for accepting bribes. Also, an advisor of his was sentenced to 29 years for pedophilia, a charge that was to be repeated. It is likely that the real reason was that Putin's *United Russia* party had scored badly in the 2011 Duma election and lost control of the Karelian parliament and that support for Putin in the 2012 presidential election was below average (53% vs. 63%) in Karelia. In turn, one reason for this was that the liberal party *Yabloko* had retained some influence in Karelia, while it had lost all its seats in the Federal State Duma. Its leader in Karelia, the businessman Vasilii Popov, was speaker in the Petrozavodsk City Council (Petrosovet) and, in 2013, Galina Shirshina, a young psychology professor, was elected mayor of Petrozavodsk, later called the last independent mayor in Russia.

In order to boost control, in 2012, Putin appointed Aleksandr Khudilainen, a Russian from St. Petersburg and a friend of the State Duma speaker, Sergei Naryshkin, as new head of Karelia, and he brought in his own protégés from St. Petersburg. When protests against Khudilainen broke out even among Communists in March 2015, the chairman of the Security Council, Nikolai Patrushev, who had been Minister of Security in Karelia and succeeded Putin as head of

"KARELIA WAS INCLUDED IN THE LIST OF REGIONS WITH THE MOST DIFFICULT ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SITUATION AND RECEIVED FIVE BILLION RUBLES FOR THE PROGRAM."

the FSB in 1999, came to his rescue. Patrushev declared that following the growing anti-Russian rhetoric in the West, nationalist and revanchist organizations in Finland had been activated and increased their influence in Karelia with the help of domestic NGOs. Shirshina retorted that Petrozavodsk's relations with its twin city, Joensuu, were mainly in the cultural field.

A Yabloko parliamentarian explained that Finland did not want any territories to be returned, because it could not afford to support them, and that the number of Finns and Karelians was too small to be relied upon. Actually, the number of Karelian separatists is totally negligible.[37]

THE END OF THE STORY was that several female Yabloko politicians were arrested on economic charges and Popov was driven into Finnish exile as a result of criminal charges. In late 2015, the Petrosovet voted to remove Shirshina,[38] from office and – like other cities – to cancel mayoral elections by the people in favor of the regional legislatures. In the 2016 city council election, Yabloko's party list was disqualified because of improper paperwork. Thus, the party has no seats there any more.[39]

Nevertheless, in early 2017, probably due to economic problems and subsequent popular protests, Khudilainen was prematurely replaced by Artur Parfenchikov, who was then confirmed as head of the republic in a local election (turnout 29%).[40] Parfenchikov had previously served as a prosecutor in Karelia and was until then director of the federal bailiff service in Moscow. He apparently had good connections with Patrushev who, in 2019, revisited Petrozavodsk in preparation for the republic's centenary, praising its economic achievements for "allowing *us* to increase *our* own budget revenues" (author's italics).[41]

Such is the context of the Dmitriev affair. Initially he enjoyed official support. He got access to NKVD archives, which allowed him to record the names of thousands of victims as well as of their NKVD henchmen. Soldiers and volunteers participated in Dmitriev's excavations, and the Russian Orthodox Church held services at Sandarmokh. However, in December 2016, Dmitriev was arrested, accused of possessing child pornography and an illegal weapon. He was acquitted of the pornography charge in April 2018 but was soon arrested again on a charge of pedophilia.[42] In 2019, Dmitriev's colleague Sergei Koltyrin, head of a Gulag museum at Medvezhegorsk, and his assistant, Evgenii Nosov, were sentenced to serve nine and eleven years, respectively, on a similar charge as Dmitriev. Koltyrin died in prison from cancer shortly afterwards.[43]

The trial against Dmitriev was repeatedly postponed, Dmitriev was held in isolation in bad conditions, and the official media kept silent about him. Nevertheless, he received strong support from the families of the victims, Russian and Western intellectuals, artists and human rights organizations. In July 2020, Dmitriev was finally sentenced by Petrozavodsk City Court to three and a half years imprisonment for pedophilia and sexual abuse of a minor, and was expected to be released in November 2020.[44] However, both sides appealed the verdict and 245 Russian cultural figures called for the trial to be transferred to another region. In September 2020, Karelia's Supreme Court sentenced Dmitriev to 13 years in prison for acts of sexual violence against his adopted child, an unprecedented prolongation which, considering that Dmitriev was 64 years of age and in bad health, may mean be a death sentence. The other charges of creating child pornography and possession of illegal weapons were sent back for retrial. Dmitriev was not allowed to attend the trial, his defense lawyer was ill, and the latter's stand-in only had a few days to prepare his case. The prosecution witnesses were anonymous. After the trial, the Russian mass media branded Dmitriev a sexual felon and a state TV channel showed a photo of the naked girl, which had been leaked from the trial. The whole trial must be regarded as FSB/NKVD's revenge on Dmitriev for his revelations and as yet another scandal in Russia's judicial system.[45]

"THE TRIAL AGAINST DMITRIEV WAS REPEATEDLY POSTPONED, DMITRIEV WAS HELD IN ISOLATION IN BAD CONDITIONS, AND THE OFFICIAL MEDIA KEPT SILENT ABOUT HIM."

Further, members of the Military Historical Society at Petrozavodsk University started publicly contradicting Dmitriev by claiming that the mass graves at Sandarmokh contained victims of the Finnish occupation army, and they started their own excavations to prove it.[46] Sergei Verigin, head of the History Department, argued that the numbers of victims of NKVD atrocities had been vastly exaggerated by so-called democratic forces, who wanted to politicize history and obscure the crimes of Russia's enemies during the war.[47] Finnish historians were able to rebut that the Finnish Army had not even reached Sandarmokh.

WHEN KARELIA and all of Russia prepared for the 75th anniversary of the Great Victory in May 2020, this internal historical issue was transformed into a foreign policy issue. On the basis of formerly secret NKVD material with testimonies about crimes by "Finnish fascists against peaceful Soviet citizens",[48] the Federal Investigation Committee (FIC) for the first time charged Finland with genocide. It was claimed that Finland had built 14 concentration camps housing 24,000 inmates, of whom 8,000 had perished. Over 7,000 inmates had been buried alive, killed in gas chambers or shot.[49] The Finnish Foreign Ministry responded by stating that the legal issues of the war had been resolved already in the Paris Peace Treaty and resolutely called for access to all NKVD archive material as Finland had already granted access to its archives, and for continued cooperation through the

existing channels.[50] Thus, the campaign against Dmitriev and his revelations was allowed to disturb Russia's official relations with Finland, relations which had otherwise been better than with most other democratic countries. The FSB's role in this is clearly visible.

In fact, the charge against Finland was soon removed from the FIC's website. The Russian historian, Anatolii Razumov, described it as counter-propaganda intended to divert attention from Stalin's own genocide policy.[51] Throughout 2020, Karelia, like all of Russia in 2020, was preoccupied with the celebration of the war victory, as well as of the republic's centenary.[52]

Some comparative conclusions

As shown above, Karelia exhibits both specific and general features among the regions of Russia. Specifically, it is one of the border regions and has the longest border with a Western country. Moreover, it has an ethnic minority that is shared with Finland. This has led to security concerns on both sides, particularly in Moscow, and has resulted in three wars and several changes of border. Furthermore, Karelia is one of the ethnically based constituent parts of Russia and Finns, closely related to Karelians, played a special role during its first decades.

However, like many other republics of the Russian Federation, Karelia has become thoroughly Russified through transfers of territory, the emigration of Karelians and Finns to Finland, the immigration of Russians and other Slavs and the suppression of its national culture. Today, Karelian culture is mainly a folkloristic façade for the benefit of the tourist industry.

Economically, Karelia is a northern Russian region which, since Tsarist times, has been dominated by its vast forests and related industries. Wood exports played an important role in financing Stalin's industrialization project. When the Soviet Union became Russia and Karelia was allowed to engage in foreign trade, the export of forest products to and investments from Finland and Sweden, for example, increased, as well as the number of border crossings. This made it stand out among the Russian regions.

However, when Putin became president, Karelia, like all other republics, lost control of its economy and foreign trade and became totally dependent on budget transfers and subsidies from Moscow. With the Western imposition of sanctions as a consequence of the Russian attack on Ukraine in 2014, Russia's turn to self-reliance and its persistent problems with corruption and legal insecurity hampered foreign trade even more.

IN THE POLITICAL REALM, Karelian efforts in the 1920s to achieve economic autonomy were crushed by Stalin's dictatorship and forced industrialization. Karelia became home to Gulag projects which were soon emulated throughout the Soviet Union, and the NKVD had a dominating influence, partly because it was a border region that had minorities suspected of foreign ties. The result was terror, followed by war.

After the Soviet Union fell apart and during the turbulent 1990s, Karelia witnessed a national reawakening and, as a border region, was in a good position to open up to the West and establish not only economic but also political and cultural ties, particularly with its Nordic neighbors.

Yet, when Putin, a former KGB officer, became president and reasserted federal control, Karelia quickly fell into line, like all the other republics. True, liberal groups still persisted during Medvedev's four years as president, but when Putin returned to the presidency in 2012 with a distinctly authoritarian and patriotic agenda, persons loyal to Moscow were appointed to lead Karelia. All political opposition was wiped out and intellectuals such as Dmitriev, who were fighting for human rights and against the rehabilitation of Stalin, were persecuted in every way possible. The FSB clearly played a key role in this, apparently following a tradition going back to at least the 1930s.[53] However, this is not a unique but rather a typical example of how the Russian political and judicial system currently works.

This is also true for the virulent Russian accusations against Finland in connection with the celebration of the Great Victory. The celebration involves asserting that Stalin's non-aggression pact with Hitler was justified, thereby setting Russia up against all those states that had suffered from its consequences. Not only Finland but also Poland, the first victim of the war, has been exposed to outrageous accusations, such as colluding with Hitler and unleashing the war. Karelia is thus a pawn in the Great Game, well reflecting Russia's official view of its history and its role in the world. ◼

"NOT ONLY FINLAND BUT ALSO POLAND, THE FIRST VICTIM OF THE WAR, HAS BEEN EXPOSED TO OUTRAGEOUS ACCUSATIONS, SUCH AS COLLUDING WITH HITLER AND UNLEASHING THE WAR."

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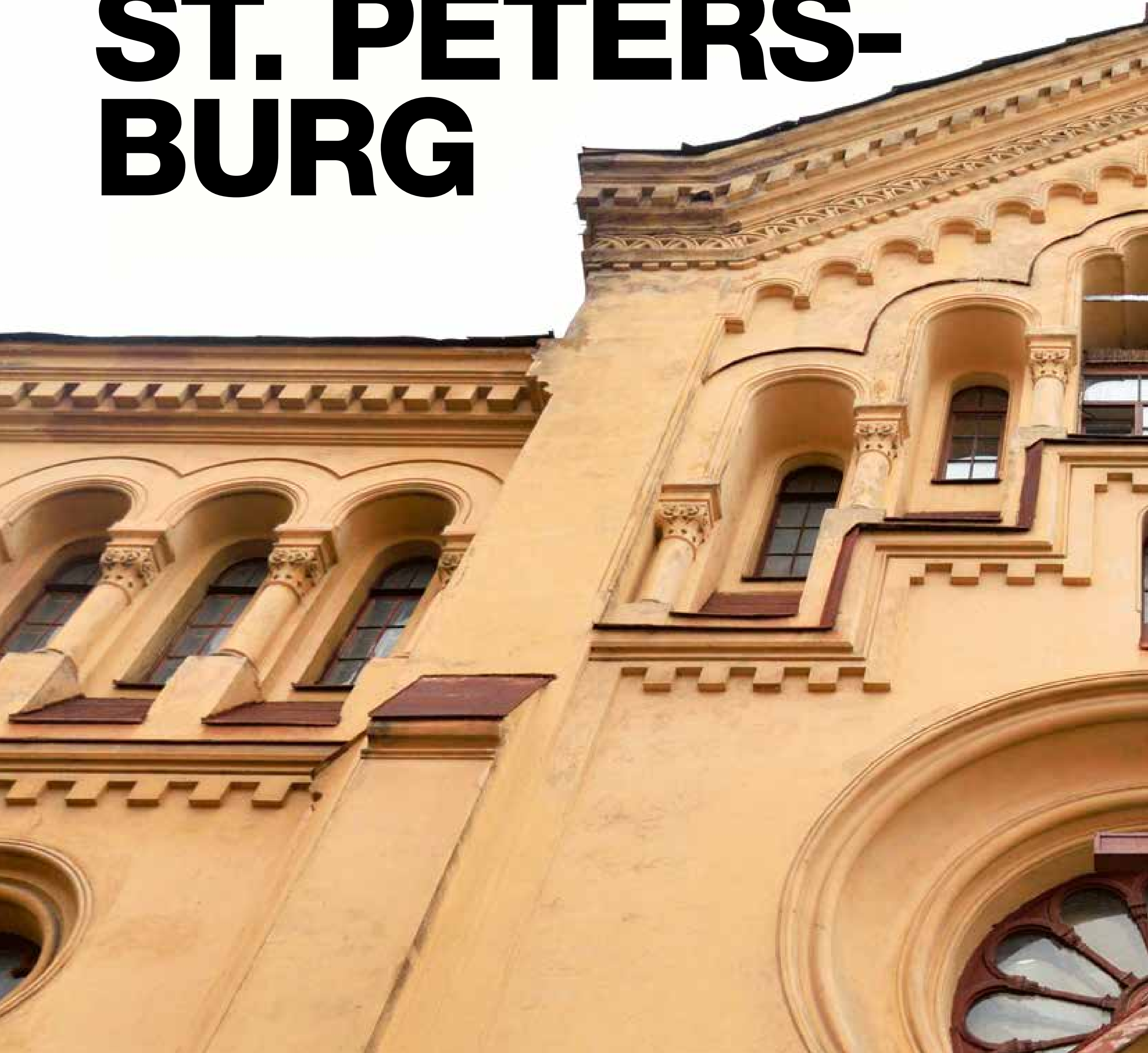
A SWEDISH OUTPOST IN ST. PETERS-BURG



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** & **Carola Nordbäck**

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

Along 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.[1]

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.

"AT THE END OF THE 19TH CENTURY THERE WERE AROUND 7,000 MEMBERS LISTED IN THE CHURCH RECORDS, THE HIGHEST NUMBER IN THE CONGREGATION'S HISTORY."

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.[2] 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.[3]

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 Prospect.

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 21st 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.[4]

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.[5]

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.[6] 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 17th 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.[7] 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.[8] 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 18th century, turned instead towards the Lutheran Church of Finland after 1809.[9]

Many Swedes emigrated to St. Petersburg during the 19th 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 19th century to include school teaching, girls and boys' homes, and activities for the elderly and the less well-off. At the end of the 19th 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.[10] 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.[11] 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.[12]

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.[13]

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.[14]

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.[15] 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.[16]

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

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.[17] Conditions for established communities changed and religious communities from Europe and the United States sought their way to Russia.[18]

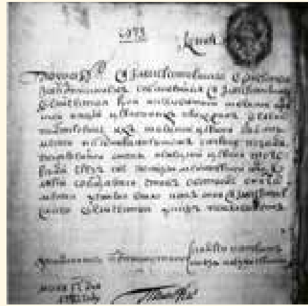
St. Catherine's Church comprises a number of large rooms and halls distributed on three floors plus a cellar. From 1991 to 2005, the newly formed congregation had to use a small room, the original organ loft. Cooperation with the sports school was not always the best. It was the congregation's ambition 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:

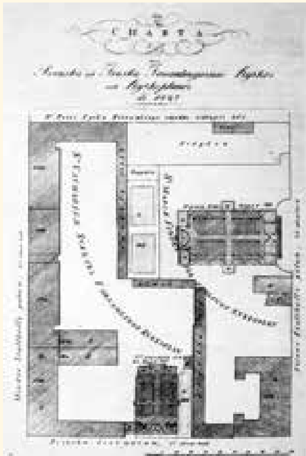
> **In 1934, the Soviet Union confiscated the church, and turned it into a gymnasium and sports hall. I have been there many times, and it smells of sweat. Internally, the church is utterly ruined. The floor of the nave has been painted green and has had handball markings added. Joists have been added 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 18th 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.**[19]

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.[20]

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

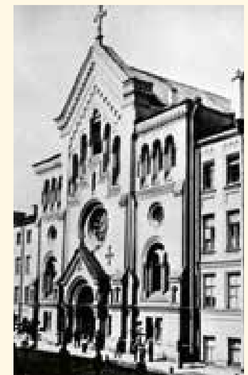
Empress decree by Anna Ioannovna, distinguishing Swedish-Finnish parishioners a site for building a church. Copy of 1762 (right). The congregation's first church was built in 1769, replaced by a new church in 1865.





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 19th 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".[21] 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.[22]**

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."[23] 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".[24]

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.[25]

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.[26] 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.[27] The neighborhood is referred to as the 'Lutheran quarter', thus consolidating and emphasizing the location's religious and cultural significance.[28] 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.[29] 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".[30] There are Swedish roots in the history of her own family.[31] 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.[32] No one, not least Sepponen himself, could have imagined that engagement in 1991 would extend right up until the present day (2020).[33] 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.[34] 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'[35]. 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[36].

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.[37]

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.

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

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".[38] 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.[39]

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.[40] 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.[41] Furthermore, there is alleged to have been a Swedish congregation formation in the city before St. Catherine's congregation was formed in December 1991.[42] 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.[43] Irina Sundgren, a Russian resident in Sweden, made representations to the Archbishop in her capacity as the official representative for the new church formation.[44] 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.[45]

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[46], he suggested that the possibility of pursuing activities in St. Petersburg should be looked into.[47] Ström not only referred to historical conditions but also to the fact that circumstances for new congregation

formations were more favorable 'today than 15 years ago, or even one year ago'.[48] 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.[49] 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."[50] 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".[51] 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.[52]

The Church of Sweden followed the developments in the Baltics and St. Petersburg.[53] 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.[54] 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.[55] 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'[56] and the Church of Finland's foreign center. St Catherine's was represented by Eero Sepponen.[57] It is not clear from the documents why members or the church council were not represented at the initial meeting.[58]

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.[59]

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".[60] Madestam's response to the parish members' 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 aidesmemoires, 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.[61] However, SKUT had its own principles to follow, and of course one compel-

"FROM THE CHURCH OF SWEDEN'S STANDPOINT, THERE WAS NO STRONG HISTORICAL TRADITION THAT CORRESPONDED TO [...] THE EXPRESSED DESIRE TO BE TIED TO THE CHURCH OF SWEDEN."

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.[62] 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).[63] 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.[64] 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.[65]

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 multipurpose 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 150th 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 vary 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 150TH 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 150th 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.

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

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 150th 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 18th century, a crossroads between different countries in a place were 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 25th 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 150th 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.[66]

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. ■

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1 Paul W. Werth, *The tsar's foreign faiths. Toleration and the Fate of Religious Freedom in Imperial Russia,* (Oxford: University Press 2014), 35, 39; Pieter Holtrop & Henk Slechte, *Foreign Churches in St. Petersburg and Their Archives 1703–1917,* (Leiden: Brill 2007), 1f.

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 20th 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.

13 See Isberg (1982).

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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.

17 See Kimmo Kääriäinen & Dimitri Furman, *Religiosity in Russia in the 1990s* and Marat Shterin, *Church-State Relationships and Religious Legislation in Russia in the 1990s* in Matti Kotiranta (ed.), *Religious Transition in Russia,* (Helsinki: Alexanteri Institute 2000), 28–75, 228–235.

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,* (Leuwen: Peeters 2004), Maija Turunen, *Faith in the heart of Russia,* (Helsinki: Kikimora 2005), Geraldine Fagan, *Believing in Russia - Religious Policy after Communism,* (London: Routhledge 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).

24 "Utgiftsområde 7 Internationellt bistånd" [Expenditure area 7 International aid] *Report 1997/98 by the Committee on Foreign Affairs*: UU02, (internet source).

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: Routhledge 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 18th 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 Erneugerung, Ein Essay" [Russian Lutheranism in Tradition and Renewal, An Essay]I *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.

PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Boris beside the Baltic at Merekule, 1910. Portrait by his father, Leonid Pasternak, oil on canvas.

THE NOBEL PRIZE AND RUSSIA

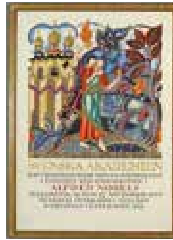
by **Magnus Ljunggren**

Russia's relationship with the Nobel Prize in literature has always been dramatic.[1] This, of course, is connected with the enormous and fundamental role the *Word* has played in Russian society. Contributing to the fascination surrounding the prize is surely the fact that the Nobel family, some of whom even spoke Russian, had such close ties to Russia.[2]

It all began in 1901, when the first prize was awarded to the French poet Sully Prudhomme. This motivated the Swedish writer Oscar Levertin to summon a group of colleagues and artists to issue an appeal in the daily *Svenska Dagbladet* [Swedish Daily Paper] relayed to Lev Tolstoj that criticized the choice of the Nobel Committee and declared that Tolstoj was the rightful laureate.[3] What Levertin did not realize, however, was that the Russian

PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Bunin's friends. Members of the Moscow literary group Sreda. Top row from left: Stepan Skitalec, Fedor Šaljapin, Evgenij Čirikov; bottom row from left Maksim Gor'kij, Leonid Andreev, Nikolaj Telešov.



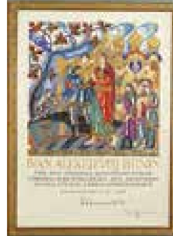


PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Ivan Bunin was awarded the Nobel prize in 1933. Galina Kuznecova (left), Ilja Trotzky (Il'ja Trockij), Vera Bunina, Andrej Sedych, Ivan Bunin. Shaking hand with the Crowned Lucia of Stockholm at the Nobel prize ceremonies, Stockholm, 1933.

writer had not yet been proposed. Not nominated until 1902, he was immediately dismissed by the chairman of the Committee Carl David af Wirsén for being something as outrageous as an "anarchist" and "pacifist."[4]

A few years into the 1920s there was a feeling that finally, after waiting for nearly a quarter century, a Russian Nobel Prize was on the way. That Russia had been forced to wait so long was, of course, an embarrassment. The October Revolution had not made the matter any easier. Now the earlier laureate Romain Rolland nominated three émigré Russians to share the honor: Ivan Bunin, Maksim Gor'kij and Konstantin Bal'mont.

Consequently, Bunin began actively lobbying from his exile in Paris. He established personal contact with a group of translators at the Slavic Department of Lund University which – led by Professor Sigurd Agrell – wanted to translate Russian literature into Swedish expressly to pave the way for a Nobel laureate.[5]

BUNIN'S OPTIMISM grew as translations on a very high professional level began to trickle in. His friend Ivan Šmelev, who had recently arrived in Paris, got his hopes up as well and began sending his dark contemporary prose to the group in Lund and to Nobel Committee member (and poet) Anders Österling. His efforts resulted in a translation of the novel *Čelovek iz restorana* with an appreciative foreword by Österling.[6] Soon he was pushing for broader Swedish support, also sending his books to Academy member and Nobel laureate Selma Lagerlöf, hoping, of course, that she would nominate him.[7]

"BUNIN WAS AWARDED THE PRIZE AS THE LAST REPRESENTATIVE OF THE GREAT CLASSIC RUSSIAN PROSE TRADITION."

Newly appointed Professor of Slavic Studies Anton Karlgren was tasked by the Academy to write expert evaluations of the nominees. He portrayed Bunin as the last link in a powerful manor house tradition, an exquisite painter of mood and portrayer of nature whose works were artistically superior to both Bal'mont's lyrical "soap bubbles" and the propagandistic tenor of Gorkij's proletarian novels.[8]

In 1928 Gor'kij (who that year would return to the Soviet Union after ten years in exile) was nominated for the prize. Despite Karlgren's assessment, he came close to winning it but only just missed the short list.[9]

For the next few years Sigurd Agrell continued to nominate Bunin and another émigré, Dmitrij Merežkovskij. Karlgren dismissed the latter as high-flown and overrated.[10] On the other hand, he added to his positive report on Bunin, stating that he had to some extent overcome his limitations in his new novellas, where his Russian sense of a passing era had acquired universal dimensions. Karlgren noted his crystal-clear style, descriptions chiseled in every detail, and hypersensitive human portraits.[11]

When Bunin learned that he was among the leading contenders for the 1930 prize, he declared to people close to him that the time had come to "push all the buttons."[12] Soon he tried to recruit other Slavist professors to nominate him.

In Paris the competitors followed closely the lay of the land in Stockholm. Šmelev wrote letters discussing in detail how Agrell as promoter and Karlgren as expert could be cultivated.[13] Karlgren's assessment of him, however, was explicitly dismissive. Šmelev was simply not good enough.[14]

In 1931 the Nobel Committee came out in strong support of Bunin, but remarkably enough, when the vote was taken, it was decided to award the prize posthumously to the Swedish poet Erik Axel Karlfeldt. As soon as this became clear, Bunin, Šmelev and Merežkovskij each began a new push.[15] Merežkovskij got in touch with key individuals in Sweden, including members of the Nobel family, to get a definite idea of his chances. His economic situation was at the time so precarious that he suggested to Bunin that the eventual winner of the prize should commit to ceding 200,000 crowns to the other.[16]

PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Boris Pasternak, Nobel Laureate in Literature 1958. Right a USSR stamp, Soviet Nobel laureates in Literature.

PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Michail Šolochov (left), and Nikolaj Belochvostikov, Soviet's Ambassadeur in Stockholm, at the Nobel Prize ceremonies 1965.

In the runup to the 1932 award a group of young leftist Swedish writers sent a sympathetic telegram to Gor'kij, who had not been nominated, regretting that the Swedish Academy had not dared to give the Soviet writer his "well-deserved prize."[17] Echoing the 1901 communication to Tolstoj, the telegram was also published in *Dagens Nyheter*[Daily News]. When the honor finally went to John Galsworthy, it was after a tough final round in which Bunin was one of his two main rivals.

In a major 1933 article in the émigré Riga newspaper *Segodnja*, the exile poet Georgij Ivanov complained about the Academy's consistent refusal to acknowledge Russian literature. He wondered how long this was going to go on.[18] His protest was followed up in the Swedish Social Democratic daily *Folkets Dagblad*, which stated that the Swedish Academy was living with a "Russian ghost."[19]

That year Bunin was nominated as before by Agrell, this time, however, together with Gorkij, apparently influenced by the telegram in *Dagens Nyheter*. The time had finally come, and given Karlgren's support, there was no doubt which of the two candidates the Academy would prefer. In 1933 Bunin, supported not least by Anders Österling, became the first Russian writer to win the prize "for the strict artistry with which he has carried on the classical Russian traditions in prose writing." While it is true that Bunin had lobbied intensely, he had also had the good fortune to have an insightful evaluator in Karlgren and a brilliant translator in Agrell.

THE 1933 CHOICE SHOULD, of course, be viewed not least as an attempt on the part of the Swedish Academy to rehabilitate itself for having ignored Russian literature for three decades. Bunin was awarded the prize as the last representative of the great classic Russian prose tradition. It was a bitter moment for Šmelev and Merežkovskij. They did not participate in the festivities, and rivalry for the prize had destroyed Šmelev's longstanding friendship with Bunin.

The Soviet reaction was vehement. *Literaturnaja Gazeta* declared that the Swedish Academy had rewarded a howling counter-revolutionary wolf.[20] The Soviet ambassador to Sweden, Aleksandra Kollontaj, had attempted through her contacts in Stockholm to prevent Bunin from winning the prize. But she did not get far.[21]

Soon Bunin himself nominated his friend and colleague Mark Aldanov. Karlgren, however, was very cool to his candidacy. It was a friendly gesture on Bunin's part, but in fact thanks to Bunin's proposal, Aldanov, the author of easily accessible political novels, continued to vaguely hope for a prize up until his death in 1957.[22]

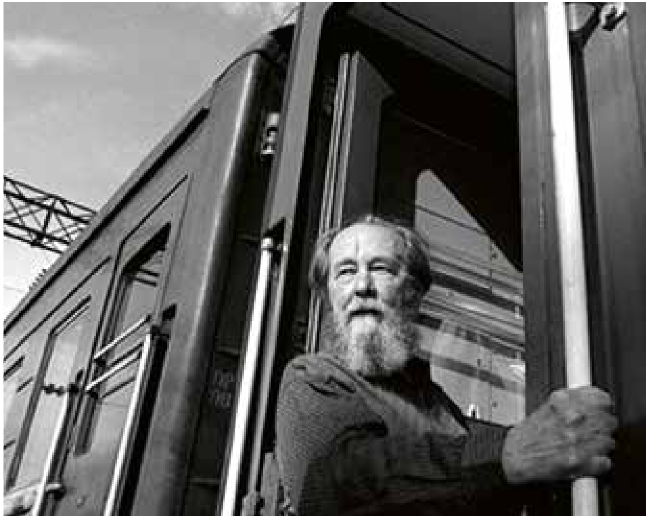
A sensational Russian nominee emerged in 1946 when Professor Cecil Bowra of Oxford University proposed Boris Pasternak, who in the postwar situation was entering a kind of internal exile. His nomination soon prompted the Soviet authorities to advance Michail Šolochov as a counter candidate. Shortly after meeting with Soviet colleagues on a propaganda visit to Sweden, certain leftist Swedish writers let it be known in several newspaper articles that it was disgraceful that both Tolstoj and Gor´kij had been passed over, and that the reason Šolochov had not yet received a prize had to do with the Academy's reactionary attitude toward the Soviet Union.[23]

Šolochov had in fact not yet been nominated, but the Academy understood the signals being sent and saw to it that one of their members did so. The two candidates were polar opposites: one an exclusive modernist poet and the other a Socialist Realist prose writer dedicated to revolution and collectivization.

Karlgren was asked to submit an expert report. His opinion of both candidates proved to be negative, albeit on different grounds. He confessed that despite "months of effort," he was regrettably unable to get anywhere with Pasternak, whose poetry he described as verbal torrents without substance, "blobs of words" indiscriminately spewed out by an apparently "agitated person."[24]

Karlgren's evaluation of Šolochov was a massive 136 pages. Perhaps he felt he needed to motivate in detail what became an outright condemnation. Šolochov, he maintained, distorts reality in *Tichij Don*. Although it is an exciting and entertaining novel that especially in the beginning shows verve and vigor, it is miles away from the historical truth. The portrayal of collectivization

PHOTO: MIKHAIL EVSTAFIEV/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS



Aleksandr Solženicyn, Russian writer and Nobel Laureate in Literature 1970, looks out from a train, in Vladivostok, summer 1994. Solzhenitsyn returned to Russia after nearly 20 years in exile.

PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Joseph Brodsky (Iosif Brodskij), 1987 laureate.

PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

The suitcase with which Brodsky left his homeland, on June 4, 1972, carrying a typewriter, two bottles of vodka, and a collection of poems by John Donne is today displayed in the Anna Akhmatova Museum, St. Petersburg.

in *Podnjataja celina legi*timizes "the treatment of an entire community in a way unparalleled until the recent world war." What it presents is the ruthless crushing of the peasantry in the version propagated by the powerful, which consists of "shameless distortions" of historical facts. Consequently, it is a Stalinist work done to order that does not lack literary merits but is basically intended to confuse and mislead.[25]

Pasternak was nominated again in 1949 by Bowra and also in 1948 and 1950 from within the Academy. Each time, however, he was eliminated prior to the Nobel Committee's final discussion. The stated reason was that – obviously influenced by Karlgren's catastrophic evaluation – its members had not been decisively persuaded of his "significance."[26] Naturally, there was also concern about the impact of a prize on "a writer in Pasternak's especially sensitive position."[27]

The Soviets knew nothing about Karlgren's report, but they evidently had other things on their mind in the sclerotic final years of Stalin's reign. After his death they began acting in various ways. In 1955, to a certain degree on orders from above, the writer and academician Sergej Sergeev-Censkij nominated Šolochov.[28] Docent of Slavic Languages Nils Åke Nilsson, who now was an increasingly well-established expert on Russian literature, wrote a supplementary report on what Šolochov had by this time accomplished beyond the two novels. He was not particularly impressed.[29]

IN 1957 THERE WAS a bombshell. Pasternak's novel *Doktor Živago*, which had been rejected by Soviet journals, was smuggled to the West and published in Italy. This put his candidacy in an entirely new light. A new report submitted by Nils Åke Nilsson finally gave him the esteem he deserved as a seminal poet and the author of a magnificent novel portraying the turbulence of revolution refracted through a poetic sensibility.

In connection with disturbing rumors about Pasternak's increasingly strong candidacy, the Soviet Central Committee decided to intensify propaganda for Šolochov, especially by enlisting influential "friends" in Stockholm.[30] In 1958 he was nominated as though on cue by the Swedish PEN Club. That was not enough, however, for the Nobel Committee continued to dismiss him on the same grounds as before. The time had come instead for Pasternak, who was awarded the prize for both his poetry and his prose.

"THE RESULT WAS AN UNPARALLELED SOVIET CAMPAIGN AGAINST PASTERNAK AND AN INTERNATIONAL DRAMA ABOUT WHICH BOOKS ARE STILL BEING WRITTEN."

The result was an unparalleled Soviet campaign against Pasternak and an international drama about which books are still being written. A couple of days later he was expelled from the Writers Union. The Soviet press declared that he had produced a putrid invective. Letters to the editor showered him with hatred: true, no one had read his malignant works, but everyone was filled with indignation over his "betrayal." The mood at a writers' meeting in Moscow rose almost to hysteria. Pasternak was a traitor. According to one speaker, his novel was an "atomic bomb" aimed at the Soviet people.[31]

Pasternak canceled his trip to Stockholm for fear he would be prevented from returning home. But in his own eyes he never renounced the prize and was prepared to fight for his work and his honor. He viewed opinion in the West as a guarantee he would

PHOTO: ALEXANDER MAHMOUD/© NOBEL MEDIA AB

Svetlana Aleksievič was awarded the Nobel Prize in 2015.

not, as in Stalin's day, have to pay with his life. Although he withstood the waves of slander, he died only a year and a half later. The persecution took its toll.

In the summer of 1962 the Swedish librarian and poetry expert Erik Mesterton visited Pasternak's fellow poet and friend Anna Achmatova at her dacha in Komarovo on the Gulf of Finland. He showed himself to be remarkably well versed in *Poėma bez geroja*, one of the two major works just being published in the West in which she speaks on behalf of the entire nation crushed under Stalin's heel. Her guest made a strong impression on her.

From Achmatova Mesterton went on to the next dacha, where he happened to ask what Anna Andreevna might think about getting a Nobel prize. His question immediately took flight all over Leningrad and then throughout the entire Soviet intelligentsia, awakening dormant hopes. Mesterton had been "sent by the Academy." The prize should obviously go to Achmatova to make amends for the persecution and humiliation she had suffered.[32] Soon she herself wrote a veritable love sonnet to him, the "faithful friend" from the northerly climes who had aroused such enormous expectations.[33] The truth, however, was that until 1965 Achmatova was never even nominated. She would pass away a year later.[34]

Šolochov hoped as well, and the Soviet Union continued to lobby for a prize. I interviewed him in 1963 – his visits to Sweden were now becoming frequent. Then something happened: Karl Ragnar Gierow, the newly elected secretary of the Academy, changed his position. Arguments were heard within the Nobel Committee that Šolochov's mighty epic *Tichij Don* was perhaps sufficient. Evidently no one was yet aware of the doubts that had been raised as to his authorship. At this point Karlgren's assessment was overturned.

Nobel Committee Chairman Anders Österling stated explicitly in the course of the discussion in 1965 that the time had come to remedy historical "omissions" vis-à-vis Russia/the Soviet Union. He probably had both Tolstoj and Gor'kij in mind.[35] There is much to suggest that the Academy felt called upon to balance Pasternak's prize politically. The cruel irony was that it was Erik Mesterton who had discussed in a special statement the possibility of dividing the prize between Achmatova and Šolochov. If one of them was to be given priority, however, he thought it should be Šolochov.[36] Just to be on the safe side, Österling argued that as he saw it, Achmatova's fate was more significant than her "powerful, elliptical" poem – *Requiem*.[37]

In the Soviet Union the election of Šolochov was of course greeted with ovations. For the first time an awarded prize could be accepted. It had taken twenty years. Naturally, among the liberal intelligentsia the reaction was the opposite. They viewed Šolochov as a representative of the old power elite that was now taking political revenge after the Thaw years.

IN 1970 ALEKSANDR Solženicyn was awarded the prize "for the ethical force with which he has pursued the indispensable traditions of Russian literature." He had already been expelled from the Soviet Writers Union and branded a pariah. The Soviet Writers Union declared that the Swedish Academy had allowed itself to be drawn into a shameful game that did not seek to benefit literature but "was dictated by speculative political considerations."[38] Solženicyn's novels *Rakovyj korpus* and *V kruge pervom*, which focused on the crimes of Stalinism as their central theme, were not only viciously anti-Soviet but also "artistically weak" in general.

Gradually – after the publication of *Archipelag GULAG* the campaigns aimed at Solženicyn intensified into a tornado. In 1974 he was arrested and deported, which enabled him in December 1974 to come to Stockholm to accept his prize.

The next Russian laureate had been driven into exile two years earlier: the poet Iosif Brodskij, alias Joseph Brodsky, who was awarded the prize in 1987. Remarkably, in its motivation the Academy did not, as had been the case until then, anchor Brodsky in a great Russian tradition. They could very well have done so, for Osip Mandel'štam and Anna Achmatova were his obvious poetic precursors.

This was during the initial phase of Michail Gorbačev's perestroika. The first Soviet reaction was the same old one: Brodsky was branded an enemy, an American rather than a Russian writer. Just now, however, he began to be published cautiously in his homeland, at the same time as excerpts from *Doctor Živago* appeared for the first time in a Soviet journal. Soon glasnost surged like a tidal wave, and Brodsky was re-evaluated.

The Russian language got its sixth laureate in 2015 when Svetlana Aleksievič – herself Belarusian with a Ukrainian mother – was awarded the prize for the powerful five-part oratorio *Golosa Utopii* she composed around the nameless sufferings of 20th century Russia/the Soviet Union. She lived her first forty-three years in the then Soviet Union. As was the case in the good old days, she was belittled by the currently trend-setting Russian nationalist writers, the heirs of Bolshevism. Remarkably, a few liberal colleagues also found her to be too journalistic.

Thus, the prize has always been surrounded in Russia with drama. In retrospect we can see that Tolstoj, Gor'kij and Achmatova absolutely should have received a prize, as should several Russian writers who unfortunately never were nominated, especially Anton Čechov and Michail Bulgakov. The likewise never proposed Andrej Platonov, Vasilij Grossman, Osip Mandel'štam and Marina Cvetaeva were surely equally deserving.

One thing is clear: of the six Russian-speaking recipients of the world's most important literary distinction, no fewer than five were initially declared unworthy in their native land. That says something about the explosive power of literature in Russia. ×

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Translated by Charles Rougle.

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Geopolitics, genetics and genocide.
Small seeds in world history

Den stora fröstölden. Svält, plundring och mord i växtförädlingens århundrade [The Great Seed Theft. Famine, starvation and murder in the century of plant breeding.]

Jens Nordquist. (Lund: Historiska media, 2020), 333 pages.

Geopolitics, as defined by the controversial political Scientist Rudolf Kjellén (1864–1922), is the state's handling of its natural and cultural resources, leading to its growth or decline, to autarky, wealth or territorial expansion, in relation to competing territorial states.

Jens Nordquist's book focuses on a less known part of World War II history – the Nazi German appropriation (read theft) of a Soviet seed collection. However, this event had a long and intricate pre-history and a surprising unravelling, involving world leaders, renowned scientists and impostors.

Plant breeding may appear to be an uncontroversial and positive activity. With the insight of Darwin and Mendel, plant breeding changed from a traditional practice into a scientific endeavor, carried out at agricultural universities and state experimental farms. Improving yield became a national goal, in order to feed the domestic population, as well as to increase exports or reduce imports.

Nordquist's main figure is the Russian and Soviet geneticist Nikolai Ivanovich Vavilov, born in 1887. Inspired by the rediscovery in 1900 of Gregor Mendel's findings on heredity, Vavilov chose to study at the Agricultural University in Moscow, combining field studies with learning English, French and German. During his doctoral studies in St. Petersburg, he visited Great Britain, Germany and France, meeting their most prominent biologists and geneticists. Concerned about the recurrent famines in Russia, he sought to use the scientific insights of plant breeding, attempting to identify seeds suitable for crossbreeding, particularly species that were resistant to cold and draught. On a mission to Persia in 1916 in order to cure a disease among Russian troops caused by infected wheat, he crossed back into Gorno-Badakhshan in the Russian Pamir collecting wild, hardy species that would form the basis of his further collection of seeds.

VAVILOV'S CAREER was promoted by the new Soviet government. He was allowed to attend an international scientific congress in New York in 1921, touring the US in order to meet colleagues, including geneticist Herman Muller, and to collect seeds. Before returning, he also toured Western Europe, including the Swedish plant breeding station at Svalöv, where he met the country's first Professor of Genetics, Dr. Herman Nilsson-Ehle. They would become leading Mendelian geneticists. However, Vavilov's fame, which peaked around 1929, would lead to his downfall. With Stalin as a dictator, cosmopolitan science and the slow progress in plant breeding was increasingly regarded as contradicting Marxism and the need for rapid development. A relatively young agronomist, Trofim Lysenko, promised great harvests based on a theory of genetic adaptation that had no scientific basis.

The Russian geneticist Nikolai Ivanovich Vavilov starved to death in a Saratov prison in 1943.

Lysenko's proletarian background and anti-cosmopolitan stance, together with his Marxist rhetoric led him to become Stalin's advisor on plant breeding, and eventually Vavilov was ignored, finally dying from starvation in a Saratov prison in 1943. His seed collection in Leningrad would be saved during the German siege by large sacrifices by his former colleagues. Other parts of the Soviet Union were under German occupation or annexation and would be used in different ways.

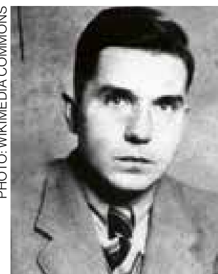
Both Germany and Russia lost territory after the Great War. While the Soviet Union could retain its fertile black soils in the Ukraine, Stalin's forced collectivization of agriculture led to the

Continued.
Geopolitics, genetics and genocide

PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

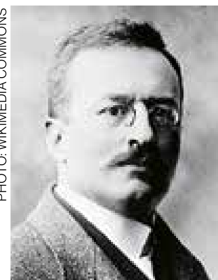
Maize diversity in Vavilov's office.

PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS



Heinz Brücher.

PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS



Sven Hedin.

destruction of yields, even leading to mass starvation, particularly affecting the Ukraine. In Germany, revanchists not only demanded the return of ceded territories; they began looking for further *Lebensraum* in Eastern Europe. Lebensraum, literally *living space*, was defined by geographer Friedrich Ratzel as a biological area necessary for survival but was increasingly interpreted as a German demand for territorial expansion. With the war shortages and post-war famine in mind, the Nazi regime rapidly took control of plant breeding, aiming at autarky. Soviet scientific genetics was regarded as an ideal since Vavilov had presented his ideas about the origin of wild seed at the 1927 Conference on Genetics in Berlin. Heinrich Himmler, an educated agronomist, was in charge of the SS and its cultural and scientific organization *Ahnenerbe* (*Ancestral Heritage*), a pseudo-scientific endeavor to revive old "Aryan" knowledge, including expeditions to Tibet to seek Germanic roots – and seeds. Swedish explorer of Inner Asia, Sven Hedin, who was admired by and also admired Hitler, was regarded as an ideal. The expeditions succeeded in collecting a large number of seeds, returning home a few weeks before September 1, 1939.

If German plant genetics observed the rules of Vavilov, Muller and Nilsson-Ehle, Nazi ideology would require a racist interpretation on the human race. Among geneticists competing for Himmler's protection, a young student was favored because of his admiration for Ernst Haeckel's social Darwinist ideas about active eugenics in order to create a pure and vigorous race. Heinz Brücher is given much attention by Nordquist, but is less of a hero than Vavilov.

THE SOVIET-NAZI PACT of 1939 and the ensuing land grab gave Germany access to Soviet raw materials. However, its experts soon realized the need for a political Nazi takeover of the mismanaged production of the Soviet black soils area and its oil fields. Plants breeding stations were established in the new Greater Germany, including the planning of a large agricultural station at Rajsko in annexed Poland, eventually depending on slave laborers from the neighboring Auschwitz concentration and extermination camp. With its invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941, Nazi Germany not only intended to secure food and fuel for its population at the expense of its victims; it also intended to get hold of the seeds and plants cultivated by Vavilov and his colleagues, but which had been deemed useless by Stalin and Lysenko.

Brücher, born in 1915, combined studies of biology with anthropology and had already joined the Nazi Party in 1934. He soon surpassed his professor in political status, adopting Haeckel's ideas about eugenics. Serving in the German advance towards Moscow, he was called home to help in the plundering of Soviet plant breeding stations. In the summer of 1943, he was commanded by the newly established *Sven Hedin Reichsinstitut*

für Innerasien und Expeditionen, [Sven Hedin National Institute for Inner Asia and Expeditions] under Himmler's Ahnenerbe, and under the protection of the Waffen-SS, to explore the Ukraine and Southern Russia for seeds and experimental plantations. Brücher reached the Nikitsky Botanical Garden near Yalta and was impressed by the way Vavilov's gene bank was organized, but was also dismayed at how badly Germany had utilized it. He succeeded in bringing large quantities of different seeds back to the Sven Hedin Institute in order to be stored and cultivated at the Institute's derelict castle in Lannach, Austria. Brücher was promoted to head the SS Institute for plant genetics, the *Wildsippeninstitut* and, when the war started turning against Germany in 1944, he was saved from military service by Himmler and Göring so he could continue his work at the Institute. Thanks to a number of well-kept foreign female prisoners and a British prisoner of war, botanist William Venables, Brücher achieved good results and, in spite of tensions with his superiors, he was awarded an order. With the Red Army advancing, Brücher was ordered to destroy the castle and its treasures. However, he and Venables were able to leave the Institute intact for the British before Soviet forces took over.

AFTER THE WAR, Brücher hibernated. On July 19, 1946, Sven Hedin wrote in his diary about letters he had received from two Germans: one, a deeply anti-Semitic Nazi Party ideologist called Alfred Rosenberg, begging for help for his family; the other from "a Dr. Brücher, recommending Tibetan wheat to be planted here" (evidently meaning in Sweden]. Hedin immediately contacted Nilsson-Ehle, his acquaintance from the National Union Sweden-Germany, which had started in 1937 with members ranging from outspoken anti-Semites to naïve fellow travelers. (Hedin, himself of partial Jewish descent, had made some futile attempts to defend and help German Jews during the war). In his correspondence, Brücher underlined the international composition of the workers at the Hedin Institute, not mentioning how it operated like a prison camp under the SS. As a prerequisite for transferring seeds, Brücher demanded help to leave Germany and to be hired as a researcher at the Seed Association. Professor Åke Åkerman (also with strong links to Germany) started legal proceedings to get Brücher a permit to Sweden and applied to the Agricultural Research Council for a research grant, underlining the importance of both the material and the person. Brücher was granted a permit for a three-month stay in Sweden, arriving in February 1948, formally leaving the US Occupation Zone without permission. When interrogated by the Swedish Immigration Police, Brücher gave his life story but hid all the negative aspects of his appointments and tasks, and was granted entry to Sweden. He started working at Svalöv and in the late spring was able to show the participants at the 8th International Conference on Genetics his cultivation of Tibetan and Russian seeds. The conference chairman would have been Herman Nilsson-Ehle, but his recent past caused the other geneticists to protest. Muller was appointed chairman and Nilsson-Ehle refrained from participating. During the conference, Brücher visited the Argentinian consulate in Gothenburg to apply for a visa and in October 1948 he left Sweden with his bride, botanist Ollie Berglund. They would continue to conduct research in a country that welcomed high ranking Germans without asking questions about their past.

NORDQUIST'S LAST SECTION of the book is devoted to geneticist Norman Borlaug, his successful experiments with wheat and the geopolitical repercussions of the "green revolution".

Much of Nordquist's well-written and fascinating narrative is based on secondary sources, particularly the Soviet and Nazi German parts of the story. Hedin's role is based on Nordquist's own archival studies, while the story of Brücher and his SS connections is mainly derived from Dr. Carl-Gustaf Thornström's research in cooperation with German historians, which is gratefully acknowledged in the chapter on sources.

The great seed theft? Well, it was more about a number of changes of access to the seeds and their applications. Two structural agents were involved in the process: The various states, acting through national territorial regulations, or authoritarian leaders and individual geneticists, balancing between their own knowledge as international scientists and their livelihood positions under the restrictions defined by the state authorities. Geopolitics is not only about the brutal power of weapons; it is also about the handling of natural resources, like seeds, and of cultural resources, like geneticists.

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Jan Grabowski's research is facing a lawsuit in Poland.
New book on the Polish Police during WWII

On the Watchpost. The complicity of the Polish and Polish Criminal Police in the Holocaust. Review of Na posterunku. Udział polskiej policji granatowej i kryminalnej w zagładzie Żydów

Jan Grabowski
432 pages.
Wydawnictwo Czarne, Wolowiec
2020.

The new book by Professor Jan Grabowski is likely to stir even more irritation among those who prefer to forget the involvement of segments of Polish society in the Holocaust. Along with Professor Barbara Engelking, he is a defendant in a civil suit, accused of infringement of personal rights and defamation. The co-editors of an extensive double volume *Night without End* on fate of Polish Jews in the General Government (GG) lost in first instance in February 2021. In this review, I introduce Grabowski's latest book to a wider readership. Given the attention that the lawsuit and the current Polish government's history politics have gained worldwide, one may assume that *Na Posterunku* will reach a wider audience, once translated into English. Before that, it is my ambition to bring the book's content to the readership and locate Grabowski's contribution in the context of the current Polish government's campaign to defend Poland's name in the world, with Holocaust history at its epicenter.

THE POLISH POLICE in the GG (PP) was created in the autumn of 1939. Soon after the start of the occupation, it became obvious to the Nazi leadership that their own forces were overstretched. They were unable to uphold order in the growing chaos and violence that followed the war campaign in September 1939. This applied particularly to the rural areas, to which a 5,000-strong force of *Ordnungspolizei* (Orpo, the Order Police) was sent. Its prospects for fulfilling its mission were small, given its low numbers, lack of knowledge of Polish and the hostility of the population. In October 1939, all pre-war police officers of the Polish State Police remaining in the General Government were ordered to report for verification and service. They were joined by constables from the parts of Poland incorporated into the Reich. Participation was mandatory, and failure to show up punishable. Jan Grabowski has not found traces of any officers refusing duty, suggesting the hypothesis that very few if any did so. The Polish government in exile viewed the setting up of a new force as inevitable and encouraged the former officers to join, hoping they would be able to protect the population in one way or another. By late 1940, over 10,000 former interwar officers were manning police stations all over the GG, with some stations in bigger towns almost reaching their pre-war crew numbers. The Polish Police, as the force was called, operated as a force under Polish commanders with German superiors within the police forces in the GG. The Polish Criminal Police (*Polska Policja Kryminalna*, PPK), comprising pre-war secret police and criminal police officers, served directly under German commanders under the auspices of the *Kriminalpolizei* (the Criminal Police, Kripo). The title of the book (ironically?) refers to the PP's and PPK's actions during WWII as "On the Watchpost. The complicity of the Polish and Polish Criminal Police in the Holocaust". As it happens, *On the Watchpost* was also the name of the main Polish police journal published in 1920–1939.

As the PP was poorly paid, the officers were tempted to look for opportunities to make ends meet. Their participation in the extraction of resources from the population (commissions ordered by the authorities, mainly of agricultural products) and related activities gave them some opportunities to earn extra income either by commissioning more than necessary or extracting bribes. A more lucrative business, and less likely to provoke negative reactions from the population, was to extract resources from Polish Jews. There were plenty of opportunities. PP officers took part in *all* phases of the persecution and mass murder of Jews in the GG, from enforcement of wearing special insignia, confinement in ghettos (open or closed, but always supervised), restrictions on bringing in food to ghettos, the possession of cash and gold, to Operation Rheinhart – the liquidation of ghettos and either killing the Jews on the spot or sending them to death or work (concentration) camps. The final and longest phase was the *Judenjagd*, "the hunt for Jews". It lasted from 1942 to the very end of war (war operations in the GG ended in February 1945) with unremitting intensity, pursuing Jews who were hiding in ruins, woods, in private and farm homes, or using false ("Aryan") papers. Organized *Jagdkommandos* containing German police or gendarmerie, along with Polish police officers, combed through towns and the countryside in search of Jews. Officers of the Polish Police would also intervene after requests from locals, who were likely to hand over the Jews they found. Grabowski shows that the Polish Police engaged to high degree in actions not known to, or sanctioned by, the Nazi German structures, with space for appropriating more of the spoils of Jewish movables and money.

THE NUMBER OF PUNISHABLE offences in the GG grew over time due to new restrictions and the deteriorating economic situation. For a Jew, being outside the confines of the Nazi created system of oppression became a crime. For the police officers, there was a growing number of offences to handle, and to employ for their own gains. Grabowski has previously covered the hunt for Jews in a book published in Polish in 2011 and English in 2013, a local historical case study of the county of Dąbrowa Tarnowska east of Cracow.[1] In a way, "On the Watchpost" constitutes a much

ILLUSTRATION: MOA THELANDER

On the 75 years Remembrance Day of WWII the 27th of January, the Swedish public agency Living History Forum invited Jan Grabowski to talk on the Raoul Wallenberg Square in Stockholm. PHOTO: LEVANDE HISTORIA

bigger version of his *Hunt for the Jews*, as it covers the whole territory of the GG (including the activity of the PPK in the District of Galicia where *Ukrainische Hilfspolizei* (Ukrainian auxiliary police) was doing the job of the PP), while the groups engaged in the chase of Jews in hiding remain the same. Before publishing *Na posterunku*, Grabowski was co-editor and a contributor to *Night without End*, the anthology of the fates of Jews in a number of GG counties mentioned at the beginning of the text.[2]

GRABOWSKI FINDS THAT the PP officers were very valuable to the Nazi administration during the Holocaust. Without them, and the efforts of the non-Jewish population in general, the task of identifying and bringing Jews to their death would have been much harder. The German gendarmes or police officers were unable to detect the slight differences in behavior and/or pronunciation, while the PP officers were likely to notice any deficiencies in cultural capital among the potential suspects. Several had known the Jews they were facing before the war, particularly in rural areas and small towns. Appearance was still the single most fundamental identification factor, but there were many others – such as adults renting a room or a flat alone (as many Jews had lost their spouses, families and relatives before going into hiding), or being recognized by former schoolmates or working colleagues. In bigger towns, the visual inspection was the first step in identifying a Jew before checking documents and eventually bringing the person to the police station if the papers were in order. An entire ecosystem that worked against Jews in hiding developed – neighbors and fellow villagers, fellow passengers and conductors on tramways and trains, rickshaw and coach drivers, police and criminal police informers, police officers, officers of the criminal police. In fact, any person at any time could denounce a Jew, down to gangs of children or adolescents harassing their peers. In most of the GG, the closest available person of authority, the master of life and death, was an officer of the Polish Police of the General Government. In general, the Polish population considered that contacting the PP in order to get rid of Jews in hiding or on the run was a safer alternative than contacting the Nazi security apparatus. The latter were more likely to ask problematic questions and suspect people of hiding Jews or robbing Jewish property, with potentially severe consequences all the way to the death penalty. The PP offered a more appealing way of sharing the spoils, with less risk involved. By the autumn of 1942, Emmanuel Ringenblum, Jewish-Polish historian documenting the ongoing Holocaust, claimed the Polish population viewed the remaining Jews as "walking dead" (literally "dead on the leave"); people were so accustomed to the ongoing murders of Jews.[3] Ringenblum was himself denounced along with 20 other Jews in March 1944, in a joint operation of German detachments, the PP and the Polish Criminal Police. All perished.

The participation of firefighters in the Holocaust is a new finding by Grabowski, and an area of potential future research. The Nazi administration called both professional firefighters employed by municipalities and their rural colleagues serving in the Voluntary Fire Brigades (Ochotnicza Straż Pożarna) to participate in cleansing the ghettos. The reason seems to have been practical – they were expected to control and contain fires. In some places, as in Warsaw, the firefighters would use their posi-

tion to help Jews escape. On other occasions, they would make sure Jews remained in the burning buildings, so their movables could be plundered later. Rooms and attics were searched for Jews with professional vigor and expertise by those originally trained to pull rooms and buildings apart in order to save lives and property. In rural areas, the firefighters were often likely to take a more active part than expected in cleansing ghettos. Just like their PP colleagues, they also took unsanctioned initiatives when it came to tracking, murdering, and robbing Jews. In areas where the presence of the PP and German attachments was weak, the locals could ask firefighters to assist them in "searches".

THROUGHOUT THE BOOK, Jan Grabowski is critical of the contemporary Polish "myth of national innocence". According to him, it has been growing in recent years, and is backed by publications, commemorations, medals, coins and other paraphernalia. "The theme of saving (Jews) has, regrettably, become a hostage of history politics", operating beyond the context of the history of the Nazi occupation.[4] Saving of Jews was the single most dangerous conspirative pursuit one could engage in, Grabowski finds. A police officer who decided to save Jews would find himself "at the epicenter of danger", between Germans, the PP hierarchy, colleagues, and the PP *esprit de corps*. All this, in addition to the "traditional" dangers such as neighbors, fellow villagers, partisans, and robbers (do not forget the old anti-Semitic template of "Jewish gold"). Around 15 PP officers have been declared to be *Righteous Among the Nations*. Piotr Kruk, a captain and head of XVII police station in Warsaw, was executed for defending Jews against his subordinates. A police officer's help, one soon learns, could take various forms. He could do a minimum and not take pro-active measures, let people through the police cordon during the cleansing of ghettos, or tolerate smuggling of food into ghettos (without which most Jews inside would have starved to death long before Operation Rheinhart). Finally, there was direct support. The last mentioned could take the form, as in the unique case of a ring of Austrian and Polish police officers in Cracow, of facilitating smuggling, fighting blackmailers of Jews, or issuing of false identity documents and smuggling Jews out of the GG altogether. From Warsaw, there is a handful of accounts of police officers helping Jews in several ways.

Grabowski is unable to answer the question haunting genocide research: That is, why and in what ways people turn into mass murderers. He claims there is no simple answer. The much-used explanation, that of the death penalty for helping Jews, does not work in this case, as many PP officers were executed by the Nazis in 1943–1944 for cooperating with the Polish Underground. This generally known fact, however, did not discourage others from continue to cooperate, or even make the first contact. Grabowski has not found a single case of a PP officer being executed for refusal to kill Jews. His hypothesis is that the PP and the PPK were organizations that constituted "one of important elements of strategy of the final solution of the Jewish question". Their activities had "definitely criminal character". He also refers to Emanuel Ringenblum, who in 1943 claimed that "Polish fascism, allied with anti-Semitism, possessed the majority of Polish society".[5] Grabowski follows Ringenblum in claiming that anti-Semitic sentiments were probably more important than the potential material gains.

Thorough the book, Grabowski returns with distaste to the attempts of current Polish history policy to paint the Poles as helping Jews when possible, while also suffering almost as badly from the hands of the occupiers (something he calls *Holocaust equalizing*).[6] Indeed, to anyone – like myself – with fundamental knowledge of the Holocaust in the GG, the fate of the two groups is incomparable.

Grabowski declares that attempts to influence research on the Holocaust on Polish soil by the current Polish government (the Law and Justice (PiS) party and its coalition partners in the United Right) is unlikely to succeed. This because the Holocaust perhaps constitutes the single aspect of Polish history that is of universal interest. Tinkering with this part of the past is not likely to pass unnoticed.

PROFESSOR JAN GRABOWSKI published his newest book just months before a lawsuit was filed against him and Professor Barbara Engelking. They edited the above-mentioned two-volume book on the fate of Jews in several counties of the General Government during WWII – *Night without End*, also writing chapters on the counties of Wegrów and Bielsk respectively.[7] The author collective found that of the 300,000 Jews who survived ghettos, ran away and hid, approximately 200,000 were either denounced or killed by Poles. The claims of the editors of *Night without End* were just too much for the Law and Justice coalition and the NGOs close to it. *Gazeta Wyborcza* suggests that the multitude of detailed accounts of denunciation and death in the volumes could not be left without comment.[8] The amendment to the so-called "Holocaust law" (actually changes to the law on the IPN, the Institute of National Memory) were voted into force by both the Sejm and the Senate and signed into force by President Andrzej Duda in January 2018. In a gesture of compromise towards Israel, potential criminal responsibility for claiming Polish compliance in the Holocaust was removed from the amendment. At the same time, the exemption of artistic or academic activity was removed, and those became open to (civil) lawsuits by the IPN or classified NGOs such as the League. Jörg Hackmann has found that in practice, the amendment

The Markowa Ulma-Family Museum of Poles Who Saved Jews in World War II, in Markowa, Poland, March 2019. PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

made denying the Holocaust equivalent to anti-Polonism, as denying Nazi crimes was placed on a level with claiming Polish co-responsibility for them.[9] In the case of Grabowski and Engelking, a civil lawsuit was filed by the Polish Anti-Defamation League on behalf of Filomena Leszczyńska. The 80-year-old claimed the book slandered the memory of her uncle Edward Malinowski who was a village elder in Malinowo, in the region of Podlasie, during the war. According to *GW*, she claimed she was contacted by several people after hearing about the story on the radio. *GW* assumes that the League contacted her, and that this very organization actually was behind the lawsuit. The head of the League, Maciej Świrski, is also the head of the supervisory board of the PAP (The Polish State Press Agency). The lawsuit is based on information on page 150 (*GW* wrongly quotes p. 157) in the first volume of *Night without End*. The statement is based on testimonies of Estera Drogicka (née Siemiatycka), a Jewish survivor whom Malinowski helped by not denouncing her and by using his authority as a village elder to pick her to go and work in East Prussia (by then she had acquired false documents stating that she was Belarusian). Malinowski took most of Drogicka's belongings and half of her money. In the trial against him after the war, she testified in his defense. However, in a Shoah Foundation interview from 1990s, she revealed Malinowski's taking of a chunk of her belongings, but also that he, along with a forest ranger, denounced twenty-two Jews hiding in the forest to the German gendarmerie. Filomena Leszczyńska claimed that the history of her uncle was purposely manipulated so Poles would be depicted as murderers of Jews, requesting a formal written apology in newspapers and 100,000 PLZ (26,000 US dollars) compensation for the damage caused by the publication.[10] According to Engelking, Drogicka testified in favor of the village elder to express her gratitude for saving her life, but also because she feared for it. When Malinowski was in custody while accused of cooperating with anti-government partisans in 1949, his wife and son enumerated the villagers who had communicated with the authorities. Those were soon beaten up by the partisans, while a paramedic who tended their wounds was killed on the following day. Engelking also underlined the fact that people behaved in many ways in the midst of the Holocaust. Some could be a combination of saviors, denouncers and killers. According to Engelking, Malinowski was something between a hero and a blackmailer.[11] In *Na posterunku*, Grabowski illuminates several such cases, for instance of staunch anti-Semites risking their lives to save Jews they found "decent" or for other reasons.

HOWEVER, ONE DOES NOT find the information about the post-war developments described above by *GW* in the text of the book chapter. Faced with the evidence presented there, the reader cannot come to the conclusion that Malinowski "is complicit in the deaths of several dozen Jews", nor that he "robbed" Drogicka, as the main text claims.[12] From the footnote 397 on page 150, one learns that Malinowski fed her and several Jews who gathered in his barn at nights. The information comes from Drogicka's testimony during Malinowski's post-war trial,

and there are no references to the Shoah Foundation Institute interview almost fifty years later, in which, according to Engelking's statement in *GW*, she could safely express her suspicions concerning Malinowski's activities. However, the footnote contains the information that the court acquitted Malinowski.[13] Thus, there is no reference to the testimony used by Engelking to claim illicit activities on his behalf in *Night without End*. The Polish Anti-Defamation League used this fact, and contacted Leszczyńska for steps aiming at discrediting the scholars. In the ruling on February 9, 2021, the Warsaw district court sentenced Grabowski and Engelking to apologize for "the inaccuracies", while finding those not to be deliberate – a ground for refusing Leszczyńska any financial compensation. On the following day, both historians declared they would appeal the verdict.[14]

Grabowski has encountered the Polish state apparatus before, for example when the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs contacted the Swedish MFA with a request to cancel his invitation to give a lecture to the *riksdag* in 2020. His home university of Ottawa received a letter from the Polish Anti-Defamation League requesting the termination of his contract, as he was supposedly promoting a falsified account of the history of the Holocaust. Grabowski has drawn parallels with anti-Semitic campaign in 1968 against scientists and intellectuals in the People's Republic of Poland, the goal being to discredit and scare them.[15]

BOTH GRABOWSKI and Engelking have dedicated most of their careers to Holocaust-related issues. They have published dozens of works, written with great commitment and with the focus on illuminating the fate of the victims, as well as showing the perspectives of the perpetrators and bystanders. It is hardly surprising, then, that they would be the first researchers to experience the indignation of a state sponsored NGO armed with the amendment to the law on the IPN. At the same time, the latter institution's employees produced a number of negative reviews of the book, one of these reaching 70 pages. Grabowski described it as a collective work aiming at discrediting him and Engelking rather than pursuing a debate on the topic.[16] The public expression of doubt as to their work is unlikely to upset their international reputation or careers. However, the effect could be a situation when less established scholars abstain from reporting their results black on white, or even from research on potentially "anti-Polish" subjects. The intent was to discredit the editors of *Night without End* in particular, and Holocaust research in general, in the public eye. Footnotes and ways of referring to source material should be matters for discussions within the academic community, and not a base for displaying feelings hurt in a lost case of Polish philo-Semitism during WWII. ■

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PHOTO: BOELLSTIFTUNG/FLICKR CC

ANDREA PETŐ AWARDED DOCTOR HONORIS CAUSA

ANDREA PETŐ, Professor in the Department of Gender Studies at Central European University, and a Doctor of Science of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, is awarded Doctor Honoris Causa of Södertörn University 2021. Andrea Pető is a corresponding member of *Baltic Worlds*' scholarly advisory board and has contributed to the journal also as guest editor, author and reviewer. She is furthermore author of several monographs, editor of numerous volumes, as well as over 250 articles and chapters in books published in more than 20 languages.
Andrea Pető is at the forefront of gender research in Central and Eastern Europe and therefore one of the current Hungarian regime's primary targets. Her contributions illuminate Stalinist and Nazi persecutions from a gender perspective, and she has travelled widely to lecture and promote gender research, not least in Eastern Europe and the Middle East. Further she is a frequent speaker on the subject of Academic Freedom.
Due to the pandemic, she will be awarded her title at the Södertörn University Commencement Ceremony in 2022 together with Julia Kristeva, formerly Professor at Paris VII and also she honorary doctorate for 2021.

correction

Baltic Worlds isn't yellow

The cover of the latest issue, *Baltic Worlds* 2020:4, was painted yellow, due to a technical mistake at the print house. The issue, with its originally cover, is also to be found OA at the webpage's backlist.

Baltic Worlds' statement of purpose

BALTIC WORLDS is a scholarly journal published by the Centre for Baltic and East European Studies at Södertörn University, since 2008. It publishes articles in social sciences and humanities as well as environmental studies, practicing a double-blind peer-review process, by at least two independent specialists. *Baltic Worlds* is listed in the Norwegian bibliometric register (DHB), included in EBSCO databases, DOAJ, and Sherpa/RoMEO.

Baltic Worlds is distributed to readers in 50 countries, and reaches readers from various disciplines, as well as outside academia. In order to present multi- and interdisciplinary ongoing research to a wider audience, *Baltic Worlds* also publishes essays, commentaries, interviews, features and conference reports. All content relates to the Baltic Sea Region and the wider Central and Eastern European area, including the Caucasus and the Balkans.

Baltic Worlds regularly publishes thematic sections with guest editors, enabling deeper explorations into specific fields and research questions. International scholarly collaborations are encouraged. *Baltic Worlds* wishes to advance critical engagement in area studies and to apply novel theoretical and methodological approaches to this multifaceted field.

The journal's Scholarly Advisory Council consists of international scholars, representing different disciplines and with specific knowledge on the area.

The Scholarly Advisory Council

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The print journal is distributed in 50 countries. It is also published open access on the web.

BALTIC WORLDS

on the web

FAR-RIGHT ACTIVISM, MEMORY POLITICS & THE INTERNET

The Södertörn University scholars Andrej Kotljarchuk, Madeleine Hurd, Steffen Werther, and Francesco Zavatti opened the workshop with a presentation of their research project "Memory Politics in Far-right Europe: Celebrating Nazi Collaborationists in Post-1989 Belarus, Romania, Flanders and Denmark". Andrej Kotljarchuk's subproject "'Martyrs for Europe': The Legacy of Belarus Waffen-SS and Home Defense Veterans in Today's Belarus" is examining the use of revisionist narratives from the Second World War and of the postwar anti-communist resistance in post-Soviet Belarus. In Steffen Werther's and Madeleine Hurd's sub-project "Memory Work of 'Germanic' Waffen-SS Veterans after 1990 and the Legacy of the Waffen-SS in a European Perspective", the focus is on Waffen-SS veterans' identity and memory work and particularly on the legacy and ideology of Waffen-SS veterans in European far-right groups and in popular culture. The present writer, Francesco Zavatti, in his subproject "The Memory Work of the Legionary Movement across the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries" analyses how, once Ceauşescu was gone, the Legionary Movement symbols and anti-Semitic rhetoric were again publicly showcased by intense and dedicated memory work, publishing history books, memoires and periodicals and by public commemorations.

THE FIRST SESSION during day 1 focused on the similarities and differences between the construction of victims by far-right groups. Sophie Schmalenberger was shedding light on how far-right groups exploit and incorporate memory activism, which she understood as comprising practices and performances that commemorate and mourn, thereby drawing attention towards its grievable bodies. The case study

The opening of the workshop.

focused on the reaction of the Alternative for Germany party (AFD) to a group of asylum seekers killing an inhabitant of Chemnitz. The second session looked how decontextualization, whataboutism and plain falsification favor the fostering of self-exculpating narratives among the far-right. Vanessa Tautter here argues that because of the internet, the global memory culture has been increasingly accessible at a local level, enhancing the transnational impact of the concept of 'victim-orientation' on the European mnemonic landscape. Marta Simó presented a paper analyzing how the long duration of the Francoist dictatorship has allowed Blue Division veterans to commemorate their alignment with Nazi Germany in public ceremonies for decades.

Day 2 was focused on the power of the internet in mainstreaming the voices of the European far-right. Michael Cole was comparing the Ukrainian government's narratives on the Second World War with the narratives promoted online by far-right groups. Cole shows that hostility towards Russia favored the radicalization of the Second World War's narratives, with the inclusion of elements that previously had only been promoted by far-right groups and which were not widely popular among Ukrainians. Other Eastern European far-right groups also succeeded in establishing their narratives on a mainstream level. The Lithuanian far-right activists who run the revisionist online platform "Pro Patria" have, as Justina Smalkyté pointed out, disregarded mainstream topics exploited by the other Lithuanian far-right groups, focusing instead on the German occupation and Lithuanian anti-communist resistance. Interestingly, "Pro Patria" did not cooperate with other Eurosceptic and nationalist parties in Europe. A similar method for emerging and becoming mainstream has been implemented in the Czech Republic by the far-right Workers' Party for Social Justice. Ilana Hartikainen shows how these neo-Nazis found a solution by presenting the party as the ultimate defender of the Czech Republic and in constructing the European Union and immigrants as the "new invaders", multiculturalism as the invaders' ideology, and the other Czech parties as collaborationists of the new "occupying" powers.

OVERALL, THE EUROPEAN far-right has demonstrated that the internet and social media are easily weaponized in the attempt to globalize the messages of secluded groups. As shown by the papers presented in the workshop, European far-right groups have succeeded in expanding their wartime and postwar revisionist discourse in order to better address mainstream politics, of readapting their messages to avoid legal hurdles, and of normalizing their discourses by drawing on the memory frameworks of an online Europe. ✖

Francesco Zavatti

Note: A longer version of this report is to be found on *Baltic Worlds'* webpage.

The international workshop "Far-right Memory Politics in the Internet Era" was organized by Francesco Zavatti on January 15–16, 2020, with support from CBEES.