

# Constructing Identity

## Kaliningrad and the Appropriation of Place



**Jamie Marc Freeman**

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**Submitted on 28.09.2018 in requirement of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, School of History, University of East Anglia.**

**Word Count: 80,304**

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many individuals and institutions are to thank for facilitating the completion of the thesis. To anyone I have inadvertently left out, my apologies - and thank you.

I owe a debt of gratitude to Robert Thorne, donor of the Leipzig Postgraduate Scholarship in Modern European History, without whose support I simply would not have been able to first embark on postgraduate study. I am immensely grateful to the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council and in particular to CHASE - the Consortium for the Humanities and Arts South-East England - both for their support and innovative approach to doctoral funding. Many of the research trips, training courses and interdisciplinary collaborations that have come to define my thinking over the course of the doctorate would not have been possible without their encouragement and generosity.

I am most indebted to my supervisor, Peter Waldron, whose unwavering enthusiasm, knowledge and academic support have been a continued source of inspiration.

Particular thanks to Veronika Bowker for her help deciphering and translating the more obscure linguistic anomalies, and for her patience, kindness and talent as a teacher of Russian language.

Thanks to those who have presented alongside me at conferences and to those that commented on various research papers over the years, be it at the Annual Conference of the Association of Slavic, East European & Eurasian Studies (ASEEES) in Washington and Chicago; the Annual Conference of the British Association of Slavonic & East European Studies (BASEES) in Cambridge; the European Cities and Regions in Transition Symposium at the University of British Columbia, or the Urban Seminar Series at the Center for Urban History

Title Image: The House of Soviets (Image taken by Author), 2016.

of East Central Europe, L'viv. I am especially grateful to Charles Beacroft, Cathie Carmichael, Dame Elizabeth Esteve-Coll, Ian Collins, Alex Davidenko, Ilya Dementiev, Sophia Dyak, George Gilbert, Paul Greenhalgh, Ryan Hale, Anna Kurpiel, Claudia Milburn, Michal Mlynarz, Jan Musekamp, Matthias Neumann, Brigitte Le Normand, Elliot Short, Gregor Thum, Mark Vincent, Jonathan Waterlow and Andy Willimott - all of whom have provided valuable advice and stimulating discussion on countless occasions.

The friendship, support and encouragement of Claire Allerton, Joshua Arnfield, Liz Ballard, Paul Bryan, Nell Croose Myhill, Henry Jackson Newcomb, Tristan Reed, Rudi Roberts, Daniel Rowe, Alex Sanders, Rosie Higham-Stainton and Jake Stone has helped to keep me sane over the years, I am grateful to all of you. I owe a significant debt also to the members of the SPT Collective. Their sharp intelligence, interdisciplinary thinking and acute cultural awareness has had a profound impact, and their generosity has made the doctorate a much more enjoyable experience than it would have been otherwise - thank you.

A special thank you to Molly Molloy, whose love, support and sea views have been invaluable. And to my family, without whom none of this would ever have been possible.

Jamie Freeman,  
Norwich, 2018

# ABSTRACT

In 1945, the Red Army marched into Königsberg, beginning the process of it becoming the Soviet city of Kaliningrad. Seventy years later, the contemporary resonance surrounding Russia's sphere of influence, coupled with the recent centenary of the Russian revolution, has led to a renewed interest in Soviet studies. Yet, Kaliningrad remains largely unexplored, and virtually unknown outside a narrow field of specialists. This thesis thus considers critically how Soviet manipulation of public space was employed in an attempt to ease the complex transition of East Prussia from Königsberg to Kaliningrad. In a departure from current approaches in the field, the thesis places Kaliningrad in the broader Baltic context and provides an examination of the actual 'spatial' aspect of this history. In particular, it provides an analysis of how Soviet city planners envisaged the city being 'embodied' by citizens - how they were to interact, engage and move within it - to demonstrate that this was just as important as what the built space itself was supposed to represent in terms of its symbolism at the Soviet Union's westernmost frontier. The thesis further documents how Soviet placemaking techniques - first adopted by the Bolsheviks in their attempt to encourage the new Soviet settlers to assimilate to their new homeland - have continued to hold resonance in contemporary Kaliningrad. In turn, it demonstrates that the Soviet project - although left unfinished - has had a significant and lasting impact on the region and its inhabitants.

## NOTE ON RUSSIAN NAMES AND TRANSLITERATION

Most Russian names have been rendered into the Latin text in accordance with the Library of Congress system of transliteration, except when another spelling has become standardised in English, for example, Trotsky instead of Trotskii and Mayakovsky instead of Maiakovskii. Several other names are also written in their more familiar form, such as Yuri instead of Iurii and Ilya instead of Ilia. Due to the existence of a number of different transliteration systems, when citing passages that do not adhere to the Library of Congress system, the original translation of the cited works has been kept in the interest of ease of reference.

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## INTRODUCTION

### The place where I was born

*In his preface to *The Marble Faun*, Nathaniel Hawthorne wrote that, 'No author, without a trial, can conceive of the difficulty of writing a romance about a country where there is no shadow, no antiquity, no mystery, no picturesque and gloomy wrong' [...] It seemed to me that this was exactly how things stood in my adored homeland. In the place where I was born.*

*Yuri Vasilievich Buida*<sup>1</sup>

If at the time of Buida's birth in 1954, Soviet Kaliningrad - still very much in its infancy - offered little in the way of a distinct heritage to its inhabitants, the same cannot be said for the land within its spatial coordinates. Nestled between Lithuania to the north and east, Poland to the south and the Baltic Sea to the west, this 5,350-square mile region had once been a 'centre of 'European history and culture.'<sup>2</sup> Founded in 1255 by the Teutonic Knights, Königsberg originally emerged as the historic seat of the Hohenzollern monarchy. By virtue of its geography, over the course of the next 700 years the region developed as a Hanseatic commercial centre, and was made rich through the commerce of people, goods and ideas. With vast reserves of amber, it played a prominent role in the manufacture of luxury, which was in turn reflected through its impressive architecture and royal grandeur. Both rich in the traditions of the Prussian aristocracy and a city of high culture, Königsberg became a capital for museums, theatre, art and music. It became a

hub for artists, musicians, philosophers and scholars of all kinds, especially the prestigious University of Königsberg. As Ernest Geller wrote in a retrospective on Königsberg resident Hannah Arendt:

It was in Königsberg that the torch of the Enlightenment burned with its fiercest flame, in the thought and the person of Immanuel Kant, who was a universal mind without ever having left the city [...] it was there too that the Jewish followers of Moses Mendelssohn systematically transmitted the new secular European wisdom to the East European Jewish community.<sup>3</sup>

Indeed, alongside Kant, many other important intellectuals, such as Simon Dach, Käthe Kollwitz, Agnes Miegel and Hannah Arendt helped to shape Königsberg into the ‘...the greatest cultural landmark of the East.’<sup>4</sup> Although undeniably tarnished by Nazi rule in the inter-war period, prior to World War Two Königsberg had been a vibrant and significant centre of modernist culture, and home to approximately 400,000 people.<sup>5</sup>

Yet the outbreak of war in September 1939 was to have profound consequences for East Prussia. The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of August 1939 first saw Hitler and Stalin agree to partition Poland and for the USSR to annex the Baltic republics, forming a Soviet-German border between East Prussia and Lithuania. The invasion of Poland by Germany and the Soviet Union a month

later brought the former of these agreements to fruition, with the Baltic States coming under Soviet control in August 1940. As a result, East Prussia became the only part of Germany proper to border the Soviet Union following the onset of Operation Barbarossa in June 1941 - with Königsberg serving as a supply port for the Eastern Front.<sup>6</sup> The breakdown of relations between the USSR and Nazi Germany, however, only fuelled Soviet interest in the region.

Certainly, the German invasion of the Soviet Union served to confirm the historical precedent of the East Prussian threat - with the region having also operated as a strategic base for military action during both the Napoleonic and First World Wars. As such, during a conversation with the British Foreign Minister, Anthony Eden, in Moscow in December 1941, Stalin proposed that part of East Prussia be provisionally incorporated into Soviet Lithuania. This territory, Stalin argued, could be used as a reparations payment - just as the Rhineland and Ruhr had functioned following the First World War.<sup>7</sup>

By the Tehran conference in December 1943, however, such tentative suggestions had turned into full demands for annexation:

Marshall Stalin said that if the Russians would be given the northern part of East Prussia, running along the left bank of the Niemen and

including Tils[i]t and the City of Königsberg, he would be prepared to accept the Curzon Line as the frontier between the Soviet Union and Poland. He said that the acquisition of that part of East Prussia would not only afford the Soviet Union an ice-free port but would also give to Russia a small piece of German territory which he felt was deserved.<sup>8</sup>

Indeed, Stalin again repeated his request three months later; this time provoking a sympathetic response from Churchill:

... The soil of this part of East Prussia was dyed with Russian blood expended freely in the common cause. Here the Russian armies, advancing in August 1914 and winning the battle of Gumbinnen and other actions, had with their forward thrusts and much injury to their mobilisation forced the Germans to recall two army corps from the advance on Paris, whose withdrawal was an essential part in the victory of the Marne. The disaster at Tannenberg did not in any way undo this great result. Therefore, it seems to me that the Russians have a historic and well-founded claim to this German territory.<sup>9</sup>

Despite Churchill's acknowledgement of Russian claims to the land, however, at the Potsdam Conference in July-August 1945, he and Truman instead proposed that a temporary Control Commission be established within the 1937 borders of the German State. East Prussia, it was proposed, would form part of the Allied Occupation Zone, overseen by the four allied powers and complete with a temporary German administration. Stalin, however, was starkly opposed to the notion that a German administration be established in

Königsberg, even if only temporarily. As he proclaimed, 'we'll throw it out, we'll definitely throw it out'.<sup>10</sup>

With Stalin refusing to compromise on the issue, it was finally agreed that Königsberg would remain temporarily under Soviet jurisdiction; permanent decisions as to its status and borders, however, were to be determined with the formal peace treaty. Yet, such a treaty never materialised and, as relations deteriorated, Königsberg's provisional status became permanent.<sup>11</sup> The southern two-thirds of East Prussia - including the cities of Elbin, Marienwerder, Deutsch-Eylau, Bartenstein, Rastenburg, Allenstien, Johannisburg and Soldau - were incorporated into Poland; and the Memel Region, north of the Memel River, including the city of Memel, (present day Klaipeda), was folded into the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic. The remaining territory, including Königsberg and the Samland Peninsula, and the towns of Insterburg, Tilsit, Pillau, Cranz and Gumbinnen, fell to the Soviet Union and was formally annexed on October 17, 1945.<sup>12</sup>

Whilst Königsberg's future was being decided around the negotiating table, however, its past was being destroyed by war. Before 1944 - despite its proximity to the Eastern Front and aside from serving as an early target for

Soviet aviation in 1941 - it had remained relatively unscathed by the war.

However, two bombing raids in late August 1944 finally reduced much of the medieval centre to rubble. Led by Wing Commander J. Woodroffe, 176 RAF Lancasters made the 1900-mile round flight from Lincolnshire to deliver 'one of the most successful 5-group attacks of the war'.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, as the damage assessment report by Bomber Command proclaimed:

1900 miles, 176 aircraft, 485 tons of bombs, 16 minutes and 400 acres of devastation. This calls, and without apology, for yet another misquotation of the Prime Minister's famous epigram, 'Never has so much destruction been brought by so few aircraft, at so great a distance in so short a time'. Königsberg, the capital of East Prussia, the greatest port in Eastern Germany, and the base for nearly 50 enemy divisions is practically no more. Königsberg, the administrative centre of that province of Germany which has been the malignant breeding ground of the arrogant military caste, a town which has stood unchanged for 600 years has, to the benefit of mankind, been wiped out over-night.<sup>14</sup>

Michael Wieck - a local Jewish resident of Königsberg, however, provided a much more sombre account of the destruction:

Today everyone's nervous. The air warden passes on the announcement that a large number of British planes are approaching Königsberg. The mounting tempo of the flak tells us this is true. And then it begins. The earth begins to quake, and a rumbling, thundering sound we've never heard before petrifies us. Herr Rogalli turns white,

which I note with secret glee. All the time the rumbling and wailing is getting louder and louder - the bombs whizzing down must have sound devices - I strain to see if I can tell by the sound when it will be our street's turn and how far away the bombs are hitting. It's impossible since the bombs are different sizes. I wonder what would happen if our building took a direct hit. The floor shakes, the walls wobble and our faith in our building's strength evaporates... The sky to the north of the city glows red. How many has the raid killed or injured? There's the smell of fire, there's a whiff of phosphorus or magnesium. But the relief, not having been hit, outweighs every other thought.

Just three nights later, on August 29, we were driven to the cellar again, and this time the inferno is almost beyond description. The raid and explosions never stopped. Several times we thought our building was hit, but it wasn't. The Hufen - an outlying district of Königsberg - was only partially destroyed. This time the bombers systematically and thoroughly carpeted the entire city from the North Train Station to the Main Station. They were using napalm for the first time. They also used a variety of bombs, high explosives and incendiary devices, so that within a short time every part of the city was set ablaze. The civilians living in the narrow streets had no hope of escaping the heat or firestorm. They were incinerated in front of their houses as effectively as in their cellars. The only ones who survived were those who saw the danger in time and during the raid itself - before the fire broke out - escaped the centre of the city. Many jumped into the Pregel... Historic Königsberg was to be left to its fate. Helplessly, we watched it burn.<sup>15</sup>

The RAF bombing raids proved decisive and, just eight months later, the Red Army came to occupy the city.

How the Soviets sought to deal with Königsberg's pre-war past following its annexation into the USSR in 1945 represents one of the greatest peculiarities to emerge from the Bolshevik project. Unlike its Baltic neighbours, which were also incorporated into the USSR at this time, the Soviets lacked any meaningful presence in the region prior to its annexation, (the Baltic states, however, had been part of the former Russian Empire). Thus, whilst in the Baltics a clear - albeit tenuous - narrative that portrayed the Red Army as liberators who had saved 'a humane Soviet society' from being 'torn apart by Nazi brutality' was promoted, in Königsberg the situation that presented itself was far more ideologically problematic.<sup>16</sup> Despite its rich 720 years of history, the region of Königsberg had played host to only a brief spell of Russian administration in the eighteenth century, which had all but left no trace.<sup>17</sup>

Methodology: Nation states construct their own image of the past to shore up their ambitions for the future

*The history of nationalists is all about false continuities and convenient silences, the fictions necessary to tell the story of the rendezvous of a chosen people with the land marked out for them by destiny.*

Mark Mazower<sup>18</sup>

The starting point of this project is Mark Mazower's theory of nationality - that 'nation states construct their own image of the past to shore up their ambitions for the future'. In his view, 'the history of nationalists is all about false continuities and convenient silences, the fictions necessary to tell the story of the rendezvous of a chosen people with the land marked out for them by destiny'.<sup>19</sup> Framed within the ideological context of Soviet nationality policy, the thesis considers how these principles of nation-building were applied in the specifically *a-national* Sovietisation of Kaliningrad, former Königsberg.

After an introduction setting out the geographical, historical and political context of Soviet Kaliningrad, the thesis is divided into four sections. The first chapter of the thesis documents the initial attempts made by the Soviets to construct their own image of the past. Through the application of significant archival research, it analyses how the Bolsheviks sought to approach

Königsberg's German heritage, following the region's occupation by the Red Army in the summer of 1945. Hitherto, Königsberg had been the capital of East Prussia and, although its symbolic value was clear, the region had neither undergone revolution 'from below', nor had it witnessed the liberation of an oppressed people from the vices of capitalism or fascism. Consequently, the annexation of Königsberg failed to sit comfortably within the Soviet historical narrative.

The chapter traces the initial attempts to establish a historical link between Russia and the newly acquired East Prussian territory. Through an analysis of the policy of renaming the region's towns and cities, it demonstrates that, due to the lack of convincing evidence tying the land to Russia, the Soviets had little choice but to treat the land as *terra nullius* (land unoccupied) instead. The Bolsheviks were thus forced to embark on a process of eradicating the region of its former German topography - most notably manifesting in the renaming of the territory from Königsberg to Kaliningrad.

Following Mazower's assertion, the chapter posits that the decision to treat the land as *terra nullius* meant that a new historical narrative, centred upon the Soviet victory in the Great Patriotic War, was thus required. In turn, it was

further necessary to construct new foundational pillars of memory - upon which, a new, ideologically agreeable narrative could be anchored. Through the study of the new Soviet school curriculum for the region, however, the chapter further demonstrates that, until such pillars had been established, Bolshevik efforts were firmly set upon directing the attention of the newly arriving Soviet settlers away from Kaliningrad's complicated regional history, and towards the conception of the territory as an integral part of the wider USSR.

With attention diverted away from Kaliningrad's former German past, the Bolsheviks began to construct new monuments in the region to serve as foundational pillars for the new historical narrative. Such monuments, so the decision to treat the land as *terra nullius* dictated, were centred almost exclusively around the memorialisation of the Great Patriotic War. Indeed, to use Mazower's terminology, only once such markers of the fictions necessary to tell the story of the rendezvous of the new Soviet settlers with the new land of Kaliningrad were in place, could the Sovietisation of the region begin in earnest.

The second section of the thesis subsequently focuses on the Bolshevik manipulation of the city's built environment. Through the lens of Lewis Mumford's assertion that, 'through its concentration of physical and cultural power, the city heightened the tempo of human intercourse and translated its products into forms that could be stored and reproduced' - the chapter critically considers whether the cultivation of Kaliningrad's public spaces was successful.<sup>20</sup> From the outset, the manipulation of the city's built environment had been understood by the Bolsheviks as essential for the successful appropriation of place by the new settlers. Indeed, as David Crowley and Susan Reid have further noted, across the regimes of Central and Eastern Europe, city planners had to distinguish the new 'socialist space from earlier bourgeois or fascist configurations of the same terrain, and [from] that other political space, 'The West''.<sup>21</sup> Certainly, as was also the case elsewhere in the Soviet Union, the post-war reconstruction of Kaliningrad's cityscape was hailed as an extension of the delayed Pyrrhic victory over Nazi Germany that had left the city in ruins. In Kaliningrad, however, this notion held particular weight given the fact that the new Soviet city was to be built from the ruins of a fallen fascist stronghold.

Yet, whilst the understanding of what was to be achieved through the manipulation of Kaliningrad's built environment was clear, the successful

appropriation of the place by the newly arriving Soviet citizens simply could not wait for such aims to be realised in their entirety. Thus, efforts had to be employed to encourage the new Kaliningraders to understand the physical manifestations of this procedure *during* the process of the city's reconstruction. With reference to substantial archival documentation, the chapter demonstrates that city excursions and tour guides were used effectively to achieve this aim.

Having successfully fostered an attachment between the new settlers and their new homeland, the Bolsheviks found that local citizens became increasingly vocal about what changes they wished to see enacted in their city. In particular, the old castle ruins at the former centre of the city proved especially emotive, provoking both substantial debate and the emergence of wildly conflicting opinions as to its future aesthetics. Finally, however, decisive action was taken by the Bolsheviks with regard to the reconstruction of Kaliningrad's city centre. Work began on the construction of a new monument - the House of Soviets (*Dom Sovetov*) - that, in Lewis Mumford's terms, would be 'capable of transmitting complex culture from generation to generation'.<sup>22</sup> Yet, this bold and ambitious attempt to manipulate space was, in the end, never completed - ultimately coming to serve as a suitable metaphor to the USSR's ensuing disintegration.

The third section of the thesis follows the legacy of the Soviet project in Kaliningrad through the processes of *perestroika* (restructuring) and *glasnost* (openness) and into the contemporary period. It demonstrates that, as was the case elsewhere in the Soviet Union, in Kaliningrad the general re-evaluation of history that accompanied the disintegration of the USSR's hegemony, was oriented towards those aspects of the past that had been manipulated during the creation of the Soviet historical narrative. But, Kaliningrad was unique as the quest to 'correct' history was manifested through the confrontation with a 'historical truth' that the Bolsheviks had spent nearly half a century trying to erase - the existence and heritage of Königsberg.

The chapter thus documents how - as a consequence of Soviet nationality policy - Kaliningrad emerged from the collapse of the Soviet Union both as an exclave of Russia and without a common ethnic origin amongst its citizens. The consequences of this are analysed through the framework of Balockaite's research into the former planned socialist towns of the Eastern Bloc. She argues that the institutionally produced media in such towns adopt one of four different strategies in their redefinition of place: i) active forgetting of the

socialist past; ii) commercialisation of the socialist past via tourism; iii) ironic imitation of the West, vis-à-vis de-ideologized images of 'green and young' towns; and iv) bifurcation of consciousness into private remembrance and public forgetting of the past.<sup>23</sup>

By further applying Balockaite's framework to the institutionally produced markers of place identity available in Kaliningrad, the thesis demonstrates that new types of territorial identity - outside of Balockaite's framework - have formed in the region. In particular, it illustrates that - through the adoption of placemaking techniques first used in the region by the Soviets - city tours have once again aided in the redefinition of Kaliningrad's historical, social, economic, cultural and political characterisations of place. In turn, this has provided a basis upon which the idea of a new 'native population' can be built, and signifies that the Soviet project - although left unfinished - has had a significant and lasting impact on the region and its inhabitants.

Building on the Estonian scholar Ene Kõresaar's work on 'cultural memory', the final section of the thesis situates Kaliningrad's redefinition of place identity within the more general experience of post-Soviet Baltic reorientation.

Influenced by the Baltic experience of Soviet rule during the twentieth

century, Kõresaar asserts that cultural memory offers a dynamic and dialectic process between the past and the present, which can unite change and continuity into a whole. In her view, the collective memory of a group is directly connected to its modes of biological knowledge, and it changes continually according to the new experiences a person acquires in the course of their life. In collective memory, continual dialogue takes place between different times, realities and systems of experience and interpretation. This makes memory the basis for identity and a carrier of continuity.<sup>24</sup>

In turn, the chapter posits that, as in Kaliningrad, the Baltic states' entry into the post-Soviet sphere has also entailed a reorientation in both the concept of ownership and in government. However, the existence in each Baltic state of a historical ethnic base - something nationality policy, as enacted in Kaliningrad, ensured the latter did not have - has meant that overcoming the resulting identity crisis in the Baltics has proved significantly easier than in neighbouring Kaliningrad.

Evidenced through a comparative analysis of the twentieth anniversary celebrations of the Baltic Way in the Baltics and the 750<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of Königsberg in Kaliningrad, the thesis further demonstrates that

the means through which a stable Baltic national identity has been able to grow alongside the littoral states' integration into the western world have not been replicable in Kaliningrad. Rather, the appropriation of similar practices in Kaliningrad has instead served to highlight the difficulties faced by the region in the process of constructing a post-Soviet place identity in the absence of a national heritage. Indeed, this is a notion that held equally as true during the 2018 Football World Cup as it did with the arrival of the Red Army seventy-two years earlier.

## We laid down our loved ones

*This East Prussian soil, which has nourished us for so long, and into which we laid down our loved ones, which has drunk our sweat and our blood, it does not nourish us anymore.*

*Hans Deichelmann - April 1945*<sup>25</sup>

When the first Soviet troops set foot in the region in April 1945, questions of how to manipulate Königsberg's history into the Bolshevik worldview were the least of their concerns. Although broadly viewing themselves as liberators rather than captors, in the immediate aftermath of war practical concerns took precedence over ideology. As the NKVD Commander of the First Belorussian Front, Pavel Zelenin, reported on April 13, 1945, around 100,000 civilians - approximately a fifth of the pre-war population - remained in Königsberg; the overwhelming majority of whom were children, women and the elderly.<sup>26</sup> With the city itself in ruins, in the initial days and weeks following the siege, those remaining in Königsberg were reduced to '... scouring bomb shelters for canned foods and salvaging meat from the corpses of dead horses in the streets.'<sup>27</sup>

With virtually no involvement from local anti-fascist committees or grassroots civilian organisations, the region was placed under the control of the 11<sup>th</sup> Guards Army of the Third Belorussian Front, who stayed behind to organise

the occupation whilst the Red Army marched on towards Berlin. Having wiped out not just Nazi soldiers, but also the structures of the state administration - most damagingly the ration system that had been established in the last months of the war - the primary focus of Königsberg's rehabilitation was to gain control over the collection, production and distribution of the city's limited remaining resources. Indeed, 'the Red Army conquerors were forced to become caretakers, lest the entire population of the city - not only the German civilians, but also German POWs housed in camps across the city, former forced labourers and thousands of Red Army soldiers - starve to death.'<sup>28</sup>

Even with victory, the difficult ideological questions about how to incorporate Königsberg into the wider territory of the Soviet Union were not initially addressed. A Provisional Administration for Civilian Affairs in Königsberg, under the direction of Viktor Gerasimovich Guzii, was established on May 26, 1945, in parallel with the army's Special Military District. However, it received few clues as to how to proceed - either from Moscow or from the Military Command in Berlin.<sup>29</sup> Unlike many Soviet cities - in which Moscow and regional architects had begun forming blueprints for their reconstruction during their German occupation - Königsberg had '...no centralised planning committee, no architects, no city council and no budget.' Rather, the Special

Military District and the Provisional Administration for Civilian Affairs in Königsberg were by and large left to their own devices.<sup>30</sup>

Despite the Provisional Administration's best efforts both to gain control of Königsberg's remaining resources and to restore city life and industry, the ambiguity regarding the region's status served to create continual administrative confusions during the first year of Soviet occupation. One of the main difficulties faced in Königsberg during 1945 and 1946 was the reluctance of either the military command of the Soviet Zone of Occupation or the Third Belorussian Front to accept responsibility for the region. Although the Third Belorussian Front's Military Council had instructed the military administration overseeing the occupation of Königsberg to reconstruct the city, they provided little in the way of funding or resources to allow for the successful implementation of this aim.<sup>31</sup> Indeed, the provisional military administration was time and again denied its requests for money and food:

For example, instead of delivering a month's worth of rations for the civilian population and Soviet administrators as promised, the Military Council of the Third Belorussian Front in August 1945 gave only five to six days' worth of rations and only for the administrators, refusing to send any food to feed the Germans at all. General-Major Mikhail Pronin, the then head of the Provisional Administration for Civilian Affairs, begged the Military Soviet of the Front to reconsider: If

Königsberg did not receive the funds from somewhere, he explained, 'the personnel I bear responsibility for will be left with nothing to eat.'<sup>32</sup>

Pronin's problems were further exacerbated by the system of reparations payments. Despite Königsberg having come under Soviet rule, for the purposes of reparations, the region was still largely viewed as enemy soil. As such, whilst the local Soviet administrators were desperately trying to assert control over the urban and rural economies, Soviet reparations units were also simultaneously extracting industrial and agricultural equipment, as well as raw materials, to send back to the homeland. These included vital means to ensure the provision of food to the local inhabitants, such as tractors, ploughs, hand tools and livestock.<sup>33</sup>

As a result, in the first year of Soviet Königsberg very little progress was made towards its reconstruction. Realising the current situation was unsustainable, Guzii wrote to Aleksei Kosygin - Deputy Chairman of the USSR Council of People's Commissars - in February 1946, expressing his concerns about the impossibility of continuing the underfunded and disorganised military occupation. Alongside a sobering account of the shortages, delays and failures faced by the region, Guzii requested that the Council of People's Commissars 'speed up the process of establishing organs of Soviet order' in the territory,

noting that the provisional military administration was never have supposed to take on the long-term reconstruction of the city.<sup>34</sup> His request was met with a response two months later and, on April 7, 1946, the region of Königsberg was officially incorporated as an official administration district, or *oblast*, into the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR).<sup>35</sup>

## German money doesn't have any worth now

*Still, their [the Germans'] clothing is often much better than one would guess from superficial appearances. The many stains and patches are often just purposeful artificial productions; a tattered coat won't get ripped off, so you'll sew a few patches on it. Then you're not so easily a 'capitalist.' Under the patches they've hidden one or a couple thousands [marks]. But for the most part, German money doesn't have any worth now. No Russian is interested in that.*

*Hans Deichelmann - April 1945*<sup>36</sup>

The inclusion of the city and oblast into the RSFSR in 1946 allowed the city's administration to at last move away from simple, practical subsistence and begin to understand the region in relation to the wider Soviet project. Keen to integrate Königsberg into the USSR, initial focus was placed on attempting to manipulate the pre-war past to fit the Soviet historical narrative. Stalin's declaration at the Tehran Conference in December 1943 that East Prussia was a land of Old Slavs<sup>37</sup>, however, remained startlingly unconvincing. With no usable predecessor on which to anchor, it quickly became clear that only its occupation by the Red Army justified its existence as Soviet territory and, as such, that 'there was no alternative to starting the region's history with the end of World War Two.'<sup>38</sup> In order to eclipse the rich heritage of Königsberg from the region, however, the land had to be treated as *terra nullius*. This notion most clearly manifested itself in a decree of July 4, 1946, which declared the renaming of both the city and the oblast as Kaliningrad.<sup>39</sup>

Indeed, plans to give the Königsberg Oblast a new name reflective of its status had first begun in May 1946, with suggestions offered by officials both in Königsberg and Moscow. Guzii, for instance, had 'suggested the highly symbolic Slavgorod, (the Russian root *slav* in this case meaning either 'glory' or 'Slavic')'.<sup>40</sup> Another early proposal from Moscow was simply to translate Königsberg literally as Korolevets, since the name had been used in Russian for Königsberg in the past. However, as A. G. Kuman from the Institute of Geography of the Academy of Sciences observed, 'the 'king' in question was Ottokar II, who, 'although he was a Czech (Slavic) prince', had taken an active part in the plunder raids against the Lithuanian people, thereby making Korolevets an unsuitable name for a Soviet city'.<sup>41</sup> Yet, both suggestions, following much discussion, were eventually dropped in favour of the less politically charged Baltiisk - in recognition of Königsberg's proximity to the Baltic Sea - that 'even appear[ed] on some early correspondence in late May 1946'. However, 'the death of the nominal head of state of the USSR, Mikhail Kalinin, on June 3, 1946, led to the new suggestion, soon adopted, that Königsberg be offered in his memory as Kaliningrad - the city of Kalinin'.<sup>42</sup>

Having taken decisive action to enact a break with the region's past, what to do with the local indigenous population that remained became of particular concern. The Germans still inhabiting Kaliningrad did not quite resemble displaced persons subject to repatriation, nor liberated (annexed) peoples deemed worthy of Soviet citizenship.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, with many of the new administrators appointed to the region having been chosen due to their bravery during the war - rather than their understanding of Marxist theory - they remained torn between the old goals of socialist internationalism, ('workers of the world, unite'), and the war-time notion of nationalism, ('the victory of the Great Russian people over the German fascists').<sup>44</sup> Although the Provisional Administration had been forced to utilise the remaining able-bodied Germans left in the region during the first weeks and months of the restoration project, the continued ambiguity towards their legal status had also encouraged the active recruitment of Soviet citizens from elsewhere in the USSR to the region instead. The watershed moment in Soviet settlement came late in the summer of 1946, when the USSR Council of Ministers issued an order (No. 1298 from June 21, 1946, signed into effect by Stalin on July 9, 1946) calling for the planned, centralised settlement of the newly renamed Kaliningrad Oblast.<sup>45</sup>

Practical considerations, in particular the continued lack of food, meant that collective farmers were promised special incentives to entice them to the region. From July 1946, these included:

.... [A] free one-way train fare to Kaliningrad Oblast and the transfer of up to two tons of cattle and household possessions; financial support of 1,000 roubles to the head of the household and 300 roubles for each additional member of the family; a loan of cereal grains, a credit of up to 10,000 roubles to build or repair a house; the possibility of long-term credit to purchase farm animals for individual farmsteads; and release from paying taxes for three years.<sup>46</sup>

In order to entice further settlement to the region, new settlers were additionally ordered to produce letters that described the abundance of their new lives in Kaliningrad, which were subsequently published in the *kolkhoz* newspapers of their former homes.<sup>47</sup>

Such promises were relatively well received and, according to official statistics, 2,990 families had arrived by September 1, rising to 11,675 by November 1 and 278,000 Soviet settlers by January 1, 1947.<sup>48</sup> Despite the incentives provided by the state to collective farmers, however, the majority of the new settlers were destined for the city.<sup>49</sup> They came from fifty separate oblasts and republics across the USSR: '23 per cent from Black Earth Lands; 24.7 per cent

from the Volga region; and 16.7 per cent from Belorussia'. Despite the region's status as a 'Closed Military Zone' (as of July 4, 1946) - meaning that the new settlers were supposed to be screened before being allowed to move to the region - regulations were often disregarded due to continuing labour shortages. Thus - although the official programme of resettlement required all families that were to be resettled to have two working adults - 'in reality, many 'fictitious' families with single mothers or mostly children arrived, [as well as] ... large numbers of younger people with no children whatsoever.' Indeed, 'of the new settlers arriving between 1945 and 1950, 84 per cent came from peasant ancestry, 11.5 per cent from workers' families and only 3.5 per cent from the professional class'; many of whom were poorly educated.<sup>50</sup>

In this context, already by the end of 1946 the remaining German Königsbergers found themselves a minority in Soviet Kaliningrad. Having previously benefited from their status as the 'chosen people' under the Nazi regime, they now found themselves at the bottom of a new hierarchy due to both their nationality and (implied) ideology. As many of the new settlers understood it, they had been forced from their previous homelands because the Germans had destroyed their homes. Consequently, it was German Königsbergers who predominately faced the brunt of the difficult conditions left in the wake of war. And, as a result of political hardship, malnutrition,

forced labour, starvation and outright execution, as many as half the Germans who fell under Soviet jurisdiction in April 1945 did not survive the following three years.<sup>51</sup> Indeed, as the doctor Hans Deichelmann asked himself in the fall of 1947:

[Why was it that] it was mainly only Germans who starved? That now perhaps for every 100 Germans, one malnourished Russian comes in [to the hospital]? Is it equality that here all the Russians more or less quickly acquire possessions while the Germans lose more and more? Is it equality when women and children are deprived of ration cards, [since] it's known that they must continue to work if only for the heated workplaces?<sup>52</sup>

The growing anti-German sentiment in Kaliningrad continued to increase, finally resulting in a letter in early February 1947 from A. Shubnikov - a representative from the RSFSR Council of Ministers - to the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Andrei Smirnov. In it, he expressed his concerns regarding the ambiguous status of the German inhabitants left in Kaliningrad. Smirnov, in turn, wrote to Molotov - the Minister of Foreign Affairs - expanding on Shubnikov's letter and casting the presence of the German population in Kaliningrad as politically dangerous. As he explained, the presence of Germans:

Should be considered dangerous since the large number of Germans living on the territory of Kaliningrad Oblast is creating a mood of

uncertainty among Soviet citizens, and among the Germans there is the impression that the Soviet Union's occupation of this territory is only of a temporary nature.<sup>53</sup>

A response from Moscow was received on October 11, 1947 in the form of plans for 'the Resettlement of Germans from Kaliningrad Oblast to the Soviet Zone of Occupation in Germany.' And, under the supervision of the First Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs, Ivan Serov, by 1948 all remaining survivors had been deported to Germany. Indeed, as George Kennan noted in his memoirs:

... There were considerable sections of it [speaking of East Prussia] where, to judge by all existing evidence, scarcely a man, woman, or child of the indigenous [German] population was left alive... [The Soviets] ... swept the native population clean in a manner that had no parallel since the days of the Asiatic hordes.<sup>54</sup>

## The Russian word for banner

*Her train ticket bore the name of her destination: The town of Wehlau. She arrived, however, to find workmen blanking out this name from signs in the station. That night she and two friends speculated as to how the town would be renamed. Her own suggestion, 'Somewhere', was dismissed as too definite, not Russian enough. Her friends suggested 'Sometime or Other' or 'Any Old How'. In the event, the town was called Znamensk, after the Russian word for banner.*

*Yuri Vasilievich Buida*<sup>55</sup>

Having rapidly re-populated the region with citizens from elsewhere in the USSR, the Bolsheviks turned their attention towards restructuring the city and oblast along socialist lines. The triumph of Soviet ideology over fascism in World War Two had confirmed in the minds of the Bolsheviks beyond any doubt that they truly were '...the purveyors of a new, scientifically advanced belief system.' Kaliningrad - due to both its status as a tangible 'trophy' of this victory and as the Soviet Union's westernmost frontier - was thus to be used to promote the benefits of this '.... novel, rational and just social order.'<sup>56</sup> In order for this to be successful, however, the city first had to be conceived - both by the new settlers and Soviet citizens more broadly - as an integral part of the Soviet Union. Put simply, the region was to function as a type of Soviet 'turn-of-the-century New York City - viewed as a melting pot into which peoples of different national backgrounds [had] entered and out of which Americans [had] emerged.'<sup>57</sup>

In Soviet Kaliningrad, this notion manifested itself most clearly through changes to the urban fabric: first through the ideological condemnation of the German city's layout and topography; then - once finances allowed - through the physical destruction of its most symbolic markers. Indeed, fundamental to this process was the restructuring of the built environment. As the city's newly appointed chief architect, Navalikhin, made clear in his first official announcement:

Soviet Man has arrived in this city, a city devastated by air raids and shelling as victor and creator, bringing with him leading progressive culture. The expectations that Soviet man has of his socialist city are far more demanding than the principles of planning that are applied in capitalist countries.<sup>58</sup>

This sentiment was further echoed in a 1948 article in *Kaliningradskaja Pravda*:

A young Soviet city grows and develops at a speed which is unfamiliar and unknown in capitalist cities. This is because only Soviet people are capable of realising such a grandiose project... This is because the wise party of Bolsheviks lead them.<sup>59</sup>

As Alexei Yurchak has argued, 'state ideology promoted the 'sameness' of Soviet space. It operated through the 'hegemony of representation', the

selection and use of state-determined imagery in the design and organisation of the city space throughout the country'.<sup>60</sup> In this way, predictable and standardised space was to enhance the incorporation of the newly formed Kaliningrad Oblast into the 'family' that was the ideological space of the Soviet Union:

...From Moscow to the very borders,  
From the southern mountains to the northern seas,  
A man walks as the master  
of his immense motherland.<sup>61</sup>

But the fruitful reconstruction of Kaliningrad also relied heavily upon a stable workforce. Thus, dissuading the hopeful arrivals from leaving the region became one of the highest priorities during the first post-war decade. Indeed, this was a process easier said than done. Having approached the land as *terra nullius* and by importing citizens from all over the USSR, the Soviets had prevented the new settlers from developing not only a means of identifying with one another through a shared past, but also a way of relating to the new place they had come to populate.<sup>62</sup> Consequently, it became essential to '...augment at all costs the process of identification *with the place* among recent settlers.'<sup>63</sup>

The idiom of labour was thus initially employed as a means through which to both anchor the arriving settlers to the new territory and to help forge a regional identity. Following similar principles to Locke's theory of labour - that one gains ownership by mixing one's labour with an entity, either a building or the entire city - it was believed that, through employing the new settlers in the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the city, the resulting mixing of labour with the emergence of the new socialist city would, in turn, help further their association with it.<sup>64</sup> Thus, not only was Kaliningrad to be brought in line with the 'generic socialist city' - 'a land of no ruins, light new buildings containing modern flats and offices, large boulevards, hotels, public libraries, a theatre, new tramways, public boats on the Pregel etc.', - but it was to be the new settlers *themselves* who were going to build this future utopia out of the ruins of a fallen fascist stronghold.<sup>65</sup>

As well as providing a means of cementing the cohesion between periphery and centre, however, the restructuring of Kaliningrad was also employed as a way of condemning the physical structure of the pre-war city of Königsberg that had once stood in its place. As an article in *Kaliningradskaja Pravda* asserted:

It is important to note that the city centre was constructed by Germans unsystematically and in a barbarian way. In general this is characteristic

of all capitalist cities. There are many streets so narrow that a tram can barely move along. Wide avenues and tree-lined boulevards will replace these streets and buildings.<sup>66</sup>

As this article alludes to, the condemnation of Königsberg was directed not only against the specifically German and hence 'fascist' character of the city, but - given the territory's new status as the westernmost frontier of the Soviet Union - also against those features deemed to be generic of all capitalist cities: 'the uneven development of areas in the city; the poor state of working-class quarters; and the antiquated norms of light and air in office and residential buildings.'<sup>67</sup> In this way, the architecture and urbanism of Soviet Kaliningrad were portrayed as 'the physical manifestation of the societal transformation brought about by communism.' Kaliningrad was to simultaneously become both a 'corporeal paradigm of the triumph of socialism over capitalism' and 'a laboratory and home for the new breed of *Homo Sovieticus*.'<sup>68</sup> Indeed - as the renaming of Wehlau implied - it was to be a 'banner' of Soviet power.

## Dreams are made of the same stuff as words

*Prussian time...  
I lived in the eternity which I saw in the mirror.  
It was life that was a dream at the same time.  
Dreams are made of the same stuff as words.*

*Yuri Vasilievich Buida*<sup>69</sup>

By 1956, the population of Kaliningrad was beginning to increase due to natural causes - through an increase in childbirths, rather than because of migration from elsewhere in the Soviet Union.<sup>70</sup> It thus seems reasonable to suggest that the Bolsheviks were successful in their aim of augmenting the process of identification with the place amongst recent settlers. Yet, one should be cautious of attributing the realisation of this aim with the successful construction of a socialist utopia in the heart of Europe. Indeed, despite the promising portrayals of progress documented by *Kaliningradskaiia Pravda* in 1948, the reconstruction of the German built environment of Königsberg into the young Soviet city of Kaliningrad had quickly run into difficulties. The late incorporation of the oblast into the RSFSR had resulted in severe shortages of trained architects, building materials, few investments and budgets that were consistently too small for the ambitious rebuilding programmes - not least because the city and oblast had been indirectly excluded from the USSR's first post-war Five-Year Plan for Economic Development (1946-1950).<sup>71</sup> The result of these shortcomings is alluded to in Buida's account of growing up in the

town of Znamensk. Far from becoming a 'banner' town of Soviet progress, it appears that little progress had been made in ridding the built environment of its former German character:

I was born in the Kaliningrad region nine years after the War. From childhood I've been used to streets being cobbled or bricked and lined with pavements. I'm used to steep tiled roofs. To canals, sluices, dyked marshes, to perpetual damp and forests planted in rows. To dunes. To a sea whose flat waters shade imperceptibly into a flat shore.<sup>72</sup>

Indeed, without the resources to rid the region of the physical remnants of its pre-Soviet past, it is perhaps unsurprising that these relics from a time unknown began to shape the way the new settlers came to identify with the land they now occupied. As Buida goes on to explain:

One day I found out that my little native town used to be called not Znamensk but Wehlau. Germans had lived there. This had been East Prussia. Fragments remained: A Gothic echo, a quirkily shaped door-handle, part of a shop-sign. Unlike a hermit crab unthinkably occupying another sea dweller's shell, I had to know at least something of the life that came before mine and gave my life its form. Teachers, and adults in general, were of little help. Not that they weren't interested in the past of this land, it's just that they had no time for it, and anyway they'd been told that the past of other people was no concern of theirs. It was enough to know that this had been a 'stronghold of militarism and aggression', that Kant was born and died here... Old-timers would tell you that this building had been the town's school and that one the transit prison. Or the other way around. Some could dimly remember the brief period when Russians and Germans had lived here

together, before the Germans were taken off to who knows where, to Germany most likely. The land became ours. For now and all eternity, so spake the truth, tasteless as a pebble from the river.<sup>73</sup>

Certainly, Buida was not alone in his desire to understand something of the life that came before his. As the trust in the promised golden future of the Soviet city was severely undermined during the 1950s and 1960s, an increasing number of Kaliningraders came to identify on some level with the mysterious past of the former Königsberg.<sup>74</sup> Indeed, heritage lists in the region began to include German buildings and memorials, and some citizens even tried to actively prevent the demolition of old German ruins.<sup>75</sup>

This notion is most clearly expressed by the events surrounding the future of the ruined city castle. Having been left untouched since the region's annexation in 1945, for more than two decades the old castle ruins had stood on the highest point in the landscape, the *Königs Berg* (King's Mountain). But, during the mid-1960s its destruction became a priority - offering as it did a symbolic means of irrevocably extinguishing the burgeoning popular appropriation of the region's former German heritage.<sup>76</sup> As one Soviet official put it:

The castle has to go. We must erect a bright and cheerful building in its place, as a symbol of the times. The people can sense the sinister force of this fortress.<sup>77</sup>

Following direct orders from Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev in 1968, the castle was to be razed and replaced by a new building, The House of the Soviets. Designed as 'one glorious statement of Soviet social, political and cultural superiority; the ultimate demonstration of Soviet progress', it was to be the tallest building in the city, rising to nineteen storeys high and featuring an overtly futurist design that was to be visible all across Kaliningrad.<sup>78</sup>

Yet, although the castle was eventually levelled in 1969, strong opposition from within the local populace preceded its destruction. For many, particularly youngsters, this derelict castle in the heart of the city had served as a playground and a source of mystery and fascination. It had provided an enigmatic link to another world, a world the Party was actively seeking to eradicate from the region's history. As such, the castle had '...developed into the unofficial landmark that people identified with, and popular legends of the city's history [had] emerged as people fantasised about underground vaults and hidden treasures.'<sup>79</sup> Indeed, attachment to the castle as a means of identifying with the place had become so crucial to many Kaliningraders, that -

in an attempt to limit the popular impact of the event - the Party was forced to ban photography whilst the castle was being demolished.<sup>80</sup>

## Bright at first it was, the thing you wanted

*Bright at first it was, the thing you wanted,  
Forward aiming, came close to belief,  
But when you saw then what you ought to do  
Looking stony-eyed down on the whole,  
The thing in which your living gaze was caught,  
No longer fire-bright, now scarcely shone,  
A naked head, all bathed in blood, a monster,  
Upon whose eyelash hung a single tear.*

*Gottfried Benn, The Whole* <sup>81</sup>

The widespread opposition to the destruction of the old castle ruins exemplifies clearly a fundamental paradox that emerged during the formative adolescent years of Soviet Kaliningrad. Having understood from the outset that the sovietisation of the built environment was vital for the successful integration of the region into the wider Soviet sphere, its transformation had remained a focal point of Bolshevik city planning since its annexation. Yet, although acutely aware of the importance of restructuring the German urban environment along socialist lines, a lack of resources and slow progress prevented the materialisation of any real meaningful change during the first post-war decades. However, not only unable to realise the promised socialist utopia, the Bolsheviks also struggled to eradicate the major landmarks of the region's pre-Soviet past.

For decades, these relics served as a daily reminder to the new settlers that - despite the new Soviet historical narrative - far from inhabiting a 'land unoccupied', the place that they now called home had once belonged to someone else. Thus, with few tangible signs of progress towards the new socialist utopia, Kaliningraders instead 'deployed imagination in the representation of the place.'<sup>82</sup> As Buida recalls:

...And life? What kind of life was it here? ... A ten-twenty-thirty-year layer of Russian life trembled on a 700 year foundation about which I knew nothing.... I knew no way of understanding this world other than by inventing it.... Gathering the fragments of life and transforming them by the force of imagination into some kind of a picture... It was the creation of a myth. Close by, a stone's throw away, lay an enchanted world.<sup>83</sup>

Indeed, Benedict Anderson has convincingly argued that imagination can be used as '.... an everyday social and common practice of citizens in the creation of a sense of unity and the commonwealth'<sup>84</sup> - particularly in societies that lack other forms of appropriation. For those arriving in Kaliningrad - without a means of identifying either with one another through a shared past, or with the land they now occupied - it was relics such as the old castle ruins that provided the basis of social cohesion. Through a process of collective imagining, the new settlers were able to create a means of normalisation and,

more importantly, form a basis for the construction of a local identity outside of the Soviet narrative:

Shadows and secrets belonged to an alien world that had plunged into non-being. But, in a strange way, these shadows and secrets - or perhaps the shadow of a shadow, the hint of a secret - became part of the chemistry of my soul. At one time I felt split in two.<sup>85</sup>

This notion is further emphasised by Olga Sezneva's assertion that:

German ruins were romanticised, and mysterious stories about them circulated. For instance, the most popular product of collective imagination was the underground Königsberg of sewers, tunnels connecting different parts of the city and bunkers hiding stolen museum treasure.<sup>86</sup>

Indeed, the popular appropriation of these imagined myths ultimately came to serve almost like 'cultural memory' for the new Soviet settlers.

Consequently, by the time the Bolsheviks eventually got around to ridding the city of these vestiges of fascist rule, they found themselves not just destroying the German relics of the former Königsberg, but also the founding pillars of many of their own citizens' self-understanding. Accordingly - rather than encouraging these citizens to assimilate to the broader Soviet family - the

restructuring of Kaliningrad towards the 'generic socialist city' instead helped foster a sense of difference amongst Kaliningraders. Indeed:

... more and more people claimed to have been socialised and affected by the Prusso-German element in the city's environment. They insisted on having a different sense of self, a different understanding of the place and, as a result, a conflict with the officially promoted self-understanding vis-à-vis place.<sup>87</sup>

## You can't get to Königsberg from there

*Kaliningrad is not a Prussian city  
You can't get to Königsberg from there  
[...] do you know, people, do you know  
how our Soviet lieutenant  
cried out to the fascists: don't shoot!  
The great Kant is buried here!  
And in the same instant as the lieutenant  
[in a wave of fire...]  
fell upon Kant's grave  
it became doubly sacred.*

*Polina Kaganova, On the Road to Berlin.* <sup>88</sup>

Ultimately, the disparity between 'the position taken by the Party and the sentiment of Kaliningrad's residents towards the city's German heritage was never resolved.<sup>89</sup> The destruction of the castle ruins - far from cementing the Soviet State's elite capital in the field of memory<sup>90</sup> - actually allowed for the German past of the city to provide a way of escaping the dreary Soviet present.<sup>91</sup> By adopting a collective imagination, Kaliningraders were able to subvert the Soviet state's apparent representational hegemony and, 'through the production of alternative histories, the residents of Kaliningrad distanced themselves from the Soviet system. The unique history of Königsberg, its geographical specificity and the imagination of its residents in the context of domination and ideological control by the Party, produced a favourable background for resistance to and subversion of state ideology.'<sup>92</sup>

Yet, although this subversion provided a sense of ‘distinctiveness’ that allowed one to distance oneself from the wider Soviet project, it was not until the onset of *glasnost*’ and *perestroika* and the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union, that it was able to ‘congeal into a distinct regional ‘identity.’”<sup>93</sup> Indeed, as Bauman asserts:

Identity is realised only at the moment that it springs into discourse as an individual, collective, or scientific concern. Its ontological status is always in the present tense: its function is to resolve the tension between ‘what is’ and ‘what is desired’. Hence, ‘identity’ enters Time in the dimension of the present. Both history and collective memory, although referring to the past, are, in fact, attributes of the present.<sup>94</sup>

For Kaliningraders, however, the history with which they began to identify was not just that of, literally, a foreign country, but one that had ceased to exist prior to their arrival. As a result, the disintegration of the Soviet Union’s hegemony brought to the fore questions of the region’s ambiguity. Indeed, as Buida put it:

But if a Russian in Pskov or Ryazan could enter an enchanted world which he had inherited by right, what was I here, a man without a key, of a different race, blood, language and faith? At best a treasure-seeker, at worst a grave-digger.<sup>95</sup>

Certainly, this notion of difference did not manifest itself into the formation of a new nationality. Unlike its Baltic neighbours, Kaliningrad did not declare independence in 1991. Whilst the Baltic states' entry into the post-Soviet sphere also threatened to provoke a crisis of identity, the existence in each Baltic state of a historical ethnic base meant that their ability to overcome the resulting reorientation of ownership and government proved significantly easier than in neighbouring Kaliningrad. Kaliningrad, on the other hand, has remained an exclave of the Russian Federation to this day. For Kaliningraders, however, their unique experience of post-war displacement - of the multiple discontinuities that mark Kaliningrad as a place - nonetheless continue to intensify a sense of 'difference' amongst the local populace. Indeed, the following excerpts taken from an interview conducted by Olga Sezneva in 2001 are particularly telling in this regard:

Participant 1: We have no common border with Germany, hence we will not become German. We have no common border with Russia, hence we will never be completely Russian here.

Participant 2: This is neither Russian nor German land, but ours.

Participant 3: We are cosmopolitans here. We live without [a] homeland, without Russia. We're different here, non-Russians. We are the hybrid of Russians and someone else.

Participant 1: We have no roots.

Participant 4: We all came from different places; my father is from the city of Saratov, my mother is also from some Russian hinterland. We

are some kind of America here - we are born here, for sure, but still are somehow not from here.<sup>96</sup>

Just as Nathaniel Hawthorne was adamant about the difficulty of writing a romance about a country where there was ‘no shadow, no antiquity, no mystery, no picturesque and gloomy wrong’, the Bolsheviks were certain that such a place could provide the melting pot into which peoples of different national backgrounds would enter, and out of which the Soviet Man would emerge. Far from becoming a Soviet ‘New-York City’, however, Kaliningrad has come to represent something truly unique in the modern world, the consequences of which are still yet to be realised.

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<sup>1</sup> Buida, Yuri, *The Prussian Bride*, (trans. by Oliver Ready), Sawtry: Dedalus, 2002, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Sezneva, Olga, Architecture of Descent: Historical Reconstructions and the Politics of Belonging in Kaliningrad, the Former Königsberg, *Journal of Urban History*, vol. 39, no. 4, 2013, p. 774.

<sup>3</sup> Geller, Ernest, Accounting for the Horror, *Times Literary Supplement*, Issue 4140, London: Times Newspapers Ltd., August 6, 1982, p. 843.

<sup>4</sup> Falk, Lucy, *Ich blieb in Königsberg: Tagebuchblätter aus dunklen Nachkriegsjahren*, Munich: Gräfe and Unzer, 1965, p. 82.

<sup>5</sup> Sezneva, Olga, Architecture of Descent: Historical Reconstructions and the Politics of Belonging in Kaliningrad, the Former Königsberg, p. 774.

<sup>6</sup> Saunders, Edward I. J., *Imagining Königsberg, 1945 - 2010*, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 2013, p. 39.

<sup>7</sup> Kostiashev, Yuri, Stalin i Kaliningradskaia oblast: popytka istoricheskoi rekonstruktsii, *Acta Historica Universitatis Klaipedensis*, vol. 18, 2009, p. 58; Krickus, Richard J., *The Kaliningrad Question*, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002, p. 29.

<sup>8</sup> United States Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States Diplomatic Papers, the Conferences at Cairo and Tehran, 1943*, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1943, p. 604.

<sup>9</sup> Letter from Churchill to Stalin, February 20, 1944, reprinted in *Correspondence Between the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR and the Presidents of*

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*the USA and the Prime Ministers of Great Britain During the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945, Volume 1: Correspondence with Winston S. Churchill and Clement R. Attlee (July 1941-November 1945)*, Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1957, p. 207.

<sup>10</sup> *Berlinskaia (Potsdamskaia konferentsiia rukovoditelei trex derzhav - SSSR, SShA i Velikobritanii*, Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1984, p. 57; United States Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers: the Conference of Berlin (the Potsdam Conference), 1945, Volume. 2*, Washington DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1945, p. 96.

<sup>11</sup> For a comprehensive analysis of Kaliningrad's legal status during the Soviet and post-Soviet periods, including discussions of the Allied conferences and complications concerning Kaliningrad's international status, see Filatov, A. V., Patserina, V. N., *Naseleinie Severo-Vostochnoi Prussii posle II Mirovoi Voiny. Pravovoi Analiz, Chast' I: Pereselenie ili Izgnanie? Pravovie Predposylkii i Posledstviia*, Kaliningrad, Russia: Biznes-Kontakt, 2001, pp. 9-25.

<sup>12</sup> Eaton, Nicole, *Exclave: Politics, Ideology and Everyday Life in Königsberg-Kaliningrad, 1928-1948*, unpublished PhD thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 2013, p. 118.

<sup>13</sup> Middlebrook, Martin., and Everett, Chris., *The Bomber Command War Diaries: an operational reference book, 1939-1945*, Harmondsworth: Viking, 1985., p. 575.

<sup>14</sup> London, The National Archives (TNA), War Office (WO), Air 14/3773, BC/S.30329/INT.I. Assessment No. 26.

<sup>15</sup> Weick, Michael, *A Childhood Under Hitler and Stalin - Memoirs of a 'Certified' Jew*, Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003, pp. 98-101.

<sup>16</sup> Swain, Geoffrey, *Between Stalin and Hitler - Class war and race war on the Dvina, 1940 - 46*, London & New York: Routledge Curzon, 2004, pp. 137-138.

<sup>17</sup> Rittersporn, Gábor, T., Die Stadt im Westen: Wie Königsberg Kaliningrad wurde by Per Brodersen, *Slavic Review*, vol. 69, no. 3, 2010, p. 779.

<sup>18</sup> Mazower, Mark, *Salonica, City of Ghosts - Christians, Muslims, and Jews 1430 - 1950*, London: Harper Perennial, 2005, p. 474.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> Mumford, Lewis, *The City in History - its origins, its transformations, and its prospects*, London: Penguin, 1961, p. 648.

<sup>21</sup> Crowley, David., and Reid, Susan E., Socialist Spaces: Sites of Everyday Life in the Eastern Bloc, pp. 1 - 22, in Crowley, David and Reid, Susan E., (eds.), *Socialist Spaces - Sites of Everyday Life in the Eastern Bloc*, Oxford: Bloomsbury, 2002, p.4.

<sup>22</sup> Mumford, Lewis, *The City in History*, p. 648.

<sup>23</sup> Balockaite, Rasa, Coping with the Unwanted Past in Planned Socialist Towns: Visaginas, Tychy, and Nowa Huta, *SLOVO*, vol. 24, no. 1, 2012, pp. 41-57.

<sup>24</sup> Kõresaar, Ene, *Ideologies of Life - Collective Memory and Autobiographical Meaning - Making of the Past in Estonian Post-Soviet Life Stories*, (trans. Tiina Kirss), Tartu: Tartu University Press, 2005, p. 204.

<sup>25</sup> Deichelmann, Hans, *Ich Sah Königsberg sterben: Tagebuch eines Arztes in Königsberg 1945 bis 1948*, Beltheim-Schnellbach: Lindenbaum Verlag, 2013, p. 27. [20 April 1945]. As cited in Eaton, Nicole, *Exclave*, p. 110.

<sup>26</sup> Moscow, Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii (GARF), 9401.2.95.39-43, 13 April 1945. As cited in *ibid.*, p. 119.

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- <sup>27</sup> Eaton, Nicole, *Exclave*, p. 125.
- <sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 123.
- <sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>31</sup> Kaliningrad, Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Kaliningradskoi Oblasti (GAKO), R330.2.4.4-7, 12 May 1945; GAKO, R330.2.6.4-5, 4 June 1945; GAKO, R330.1.7.14, 18 June 1945; GAKO, R330.1.7.8, 3 June 1945; GAKO, R332.2.3.37-8; GAKO, R330.1.5.61-3, 12 November 1945. As cited in Eaton, Nicole, *Exclave*, p. 127.
- <sup>32</sup> GAKO, R330.2.7.2, 11 August 1945, as cited in *ibid.*
- <sup>33</sup> Eaton, Nicole, *Exclave*, p. 128.
- <sup>34</sup> GAKO, R332.2.7.506, 28, no date, [after 1 February 1946]. As cited in *Ibid.*, p. 129.
- <sup>35</sup> GAKO, R330.2.1.3, 16 May 1945, as cited in *ibid.*
- <sup>36</sup> Deichmann, *Ich Sah*, p. 33, [20 April 1945]. As cited in *Ibid.*, p. 201.
- <sup>37</sup> The reference to 'ancient Slavic soil' is not included in the paraphrased English minutes published by the United States Department of State, only the mention that Stalin felt the territory was 'deserved.' The Soviet publication from 1984 includes the quote about 'ancient Slavic soil': *Sovetskii Soiuz na mezhdunarodnykh konferentsiakh perioda Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny 1941-1945 gg. Tom II. Tegeranskaia konferentsiia rukovoditelei trekh soiuznykh derzhav - SSSR, SShA i Velikobritanii (28 noiabria - 1 dekabria 1943 g.)*, Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1984, p. 150. See also Eaton, Nicole, *Exclave*, p. 117.
- <sup>38</sup> Rittersporn, Gábor, T., *Die Stadt im Westen: Wie Königsberg Kaliningrad wurde* by Per Brodersen, p. 779.
- <sup>39</sup> Eaton, Nicole, *Exclave*, p. 130.
- <sup>40</sup> GARF, A259.6.3923.215 [no date, early-mid 1946]; GARF, A259.6.3923.54, 28 May 1946. As cited in *Ibid.*, p. 159.
- <sup>41</sup> GARF, A259.6.3923.87, 15 May 1946. As cited in *Ibid.*
- <sup>42</sup> Eaton, Nicole, *Exclave*, p. 159.
- <sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 226.
- <sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 227.
- <sup>45</sup> GAKO, R298.1.4.10, as cited in *ibid.*, p. 186.
- <sup>46</sup> Eaton, Nicole, *Exclave*, p. 186.
- <sup>47</sup> GAKO, R297.1.125.1-2 [July] 1946, as cited in *Ibid.*
- <sup>48</sup> Hoppe, Bert, *Auf den Trümmern von Königsberg: Kaliningrad 1946-1970*, Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2000, p. 37.
- <sup>49</sup> Eaton, Nicole, *Exclave*, p. 188.
- <sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>51</sup> *Ibid.* p. 175.
- <sup>52</sup> Deichmann, *Ich Sah*, p. 207, [December 1947]. As cited in *ibid.*, p. 241.
- <sup>53</sup> GARF, A612.1.1.26, no date [spring of 1947], as cited in *ibid.*, p. 261.
- <sup>54</sup> Kennan, George, *Memoirs 1925 - 1950*, New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 1967, p. 265.
- <sup>55</sup> Buida, Yuri, *Zamok Lokhshtedt, Znamya*, vol. 2, (2000), pp. 179-80. As cited by Chandler, Robert, in *Russian Short Stories from Pushkin to Buida*, London: Penguin Books, 2005, p. 374.
- <sup>56</sup> Hoffman, David, *Stalinism: The Essential Readings*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2003, p. 108.

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- <sup>57</sup> Chinn, Jeff and Kaiser, Robert, *Russians as the New Minority, Ethnicity and Nationalism in the Soviet Successor States*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996, pp. 66-67.
- <sup>58</sup> Originally appeared in *Kaliningradskaja Pravda* in 1948. As quoted by Kettenacker, Max in *The Castle, the Cathedral, the Monster and the Fishing Village - A History of Königsberg and Kaliningrad*, *Cambridge Architectural Journal*, vol. 17, 2005, p. 57. [No specific date given].
- <sup>59</sup> *Kaliningradskaja Pravda*, 1948. As quoted by Sezneva, Olga in *Living in the Russian Present with a German Past: The Problems of Identity in the City of Kaliningrad*, pp. 47-64, in Crowley, David and Reid, Susan E., *Socialist Spaces*, p. 53. [No specific date given].
- <sup>60</sup> Yurchak, Alexei, *The Cynical Reason of Late Socialism*, *Public Culture*, vol. 9, no. 2, 1997, pp. 161-88.
- <sup>61</sup> Sezneva, Olga, *Living in the Russian Present with a German Past: The Problems of Identity in the City of Kaliningrad*, pp. 47-64; Petrone, Karen, *Life has Become More Joyous, Comrades: Celebrations in the Time of Stalin*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2000, p. 54.
- <sup>62</sup> Sezneva, Olga, *Modalities of Self-understanding, Identification and Representation in the Post-1991 Kaliningrad. A Critical View*, in Berger, Stefan, *Kaliningrad in Europa: Nachbarschaftliche Perspektiven nach dem Ende de Kalten Krieges*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2010, p. 41.
- <sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>64</sup> Sezneva, Olga, *Modalities of Self-understanding*, pp. 42-43.
- <sup>65</sup> Berger, Stefan, *How to be Russian with a Difference? Kaliningrad and its German past* *Geopolitics*, vol. 15, no. 2, 2010, pp. 348-349.
- <sup>66</sup> *Kaliningradskaja Pravda*, 1946, As cited by Sezneva, Olga in *Living in the Russian Present with a German Past*, p. 52. [No specific date given].
- <sup>67</sup> Sezneva, Olga, *Living in the Russian Present with a German Past*, p. 52.
- <sup>68</sup> Kettenacker, Max, *The Castle, the Cathedral, the Monster and the Fishing Village*, p. 58.
- <sup>69</sup> Buida, Yuri, *The Prussian Bride*, p. 16.
- <sup>70</sup> Sezneva, Olga, *Modalities of Self-understanding*, p. 43.
- <sup>71</sup> Eaton, Nicole, *Exclave*, p. 134; Berger, Stefan, *How to be Russian with a Difference?*, p.349.
- <sup>72</sup> Buida, Yuri, *The Prussian Bride*, pp. 14-16.
- <sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*
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- <sup>78</sup> Kettenacker, Max, *The Castle, the Cathedral, the Monster and the Fishing Village*, p. 58.
- <sup>79</sup> Sezneva, Olga, *Living in the Russian Present with a German Past*, p. 55.
- <sup>80</sup> Kettenacker, Max, *The Castle, the Cathedral, the Monster and the Fishing Village*, pp. 57-58.

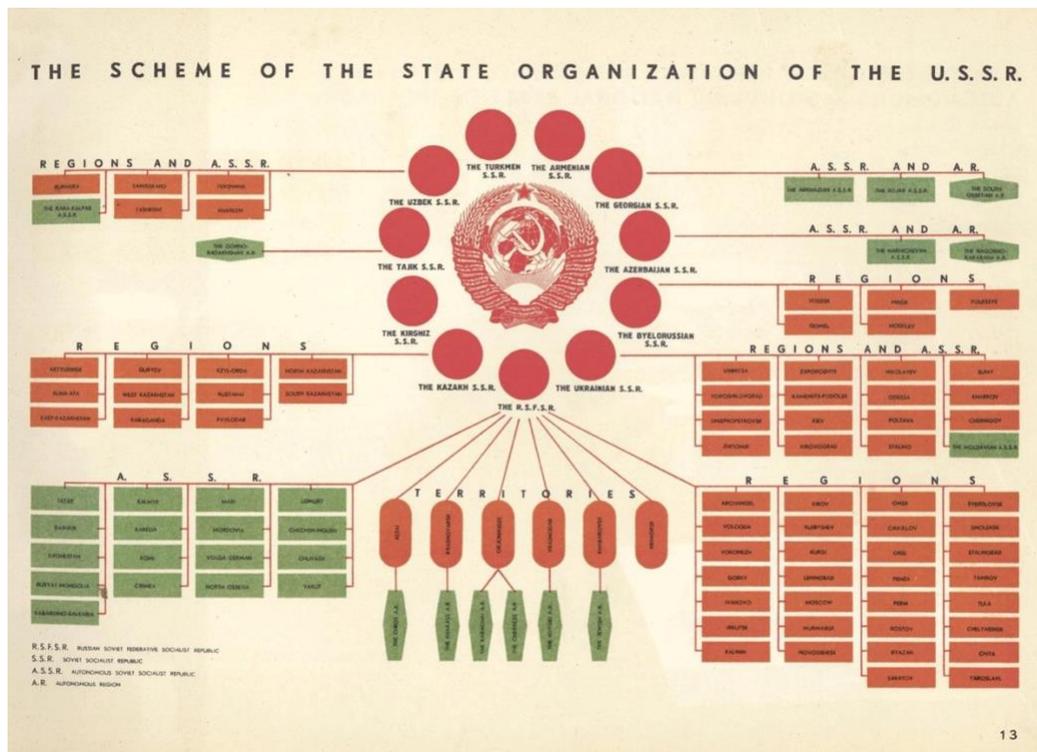
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- <sup>81</sup> Translation of poem by Mike Mitchell, as quoted by Buida, Yuri, in *The Prussian Bride*, p. 16.
- <sup>82</sup> Sezneva, Olga, *Living in the Russian Present with a German Past*, p. 61.
- <sup>83</sup> Buida, Yuri, *The Prussian Bride*, pp. 14-16.
- <sup>84</sup> Sezneva, Olga, *Living in the Russian Present with a German Past*, p. 61.
- <sup>85</sup> Buida, Yuri, *The Prussian Bride*, p. 16.
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- <sup>87</sup> Sezneva, Olga, *Modalities of Self-understanding*, p. 45.
- <sup>88</sup> Polina Kaganova, *Dorgoi na Berlin*, *Zvezda 2*, 1972, p. 120. As cited in Eaton, Nicole, *Exclave*, p. 278.
- <sup>89</sup> Kettenacker, Max, *The Castle, the Cathedral, the Monster and the Fishing Village*, pp. 57-58.
- <sup>90</sup> To use the definition of Diana Eglitis and Laura Ardava, the 'elite capital in the field of memory' constitutes: 'the exercise of political elite power in the definition and legitimation of a particular vision of the past.' Eglitis, Daina S., and Ardava, Laura., in, *The Politics of Memory: Remembering the Baltic Way 20 Years after 1989*, *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol. 64, no. 6, 2012, p. 1052.
- <sup>91</sup> Sezneva, Olga, *Converting History into 'Cultural Treasure' in post-1991 Kaliningrad: Social Transitions and the Meaning of the Past*, Working Paper no. 5, New York: International Center for Advanced Studies, New York University, May 2002. The debate surrounding the renaming of the city is ongoing. More and more Kaliningraders are doubtful whether one of Stalin's henchmen, Kalinin, is an ideal patron of their city. As noted by Berger, Stefan in 'How to be Russian with a Difference?', p. 350.
- <sup>92</sup> Sezneva, Olga, *Living in the Russian Present with a German Past*, pp. 59-60.
- <sup>93</sup> Sezneva, Olga, *Modalities of Self-understanding*, p. 46.
- <sup>94</sup> Sezneva, Olga, *Living in the Russian Present with a German Past*, P. 61.
- <sup>95</sup> Buida, Yuri, *The Prussian Bride*, pp. 14-16.
- <sup>96</sup> This is from a September 2001 focus group conducted with eleven participants, all of whom were born in Kaliningrad and aged from thirty-five to forty-five years old. Further details can be found in Sezneva, Olga, *Modalities of Self-understanding*, p. 51.

## IDEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

Our nation has been in transit

*For most of the twentieth century, our nation has been in transit. We travelled in carts, rattling over country roads and potholes. We smashed the Germans and sent men into space, but, in the process, we destroyed families and lost our sense of history... We mutilated our country.*

Vladimir Zhirinovskii, 1993 <sup>1</sup>



1. El Lissitzky, *The state structure of the USSR for the World's Fair, New York, 1939.*<sup>2</sup>

The paradoxical nature of Soviet urban planning policy in Kaliningrad was indicative of a larger contradiction in Bolshevik thinking that came to engulf the Soviet Union during its final years. The manipulation of Kaliningrad's urban

fabric was, of course, an extension of the Soviet Union's larger ideological aim of using social engineering as a means to 'reshape people on a large scale'.<sup>3</sup> Yet, having remained committed to the notion that the socialist project could apply science to manipulate the mass consciousness of its citizens - away from previous national affiliations and towards the supranational building of socialism - little thought had been given as to what might happen if the Soviet project ever was to fail. Indeed, in 1920 - during the early years of revolution and civil war - General Brusilov had been far more concerned that:

... Communism is completely unintelligible to the millions of barely literate peasants and it is doubtful they will fight for it... its philosophy of internationalism is fundamentally alien to the Russian people... If Christianity failed to unify the people in two thousand years, how can Communism hope to do so when most of the people had not even heard of it three years ago? Only the idea of Russia can do that.<sup>4</sup>

Less than a century later, however, as Zhirinovskii's words suggest, it became clear that it was no longer clear what 'the idea of Russia' actually meant. What it did *not* mean, on the other hand, was made explicit by the waves of independence and the revival of nationalist sentiment across the Eastern Bloc that accompanied the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Meanwhile, Kaliningrad found itself caught in the middle of two diametrically conflicting responses to the USSR's disintegration and - for the second time in its short history - was forced to forge a new identity from the remnants of its fractured past.

The complexity of the situation faced in Kaliningrad during the late 1980s was rooted in a Soviet strategy that had been adopted long before the region's emergence in 1946 - namely, Soviet nationality policy. Defined as 'the system of theoretical assumptions, established practices and institutional arrangements which regulate nationality relations in a multi-ethnic state', Soviet nationality policy 'encompassed the entire historical development of Soviet society'.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, from the first days of revolution - despite Brusilov's concerns - the Soviet Union conceived of itself as an internationalist republic that 'was to serve as both an alternative model and as a catalyst for the destruction of worldwide imperialism'.<sup>6</sup> As the *ABC of Communism* declared: 'it is essential that the working-class should overcome all national prejudices and national enmities' so as to create a 'unified world socialist republic'.<sup>7</sup>

This notion proved particularly important during the early years of revolution, due to the Bolshevik conviction that, 'fired by the Russian example... workers in other European countries would hasten to overthrow their imperialist governments and join their Russian comrades'.<sup>8</sup> In order to facilitate this process, many of the Bolshevik leaders themselves refuted any national identity of their own: 'Lenin wrote on his passport application 'no nationality', and Trotsky, when asked if he was Jewish or Russian, replied: 'Neither, I am a

Social Democrat and an internationalist'.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, 'Lenin cited turn-of-the-century New York City - viewed as a melting pot into which peoples of different national backgrounds entered and out of which Americans emerged - as evidence that socio-economic development was the key to solving the national problem. Inter-national Soviet citizens would similarly be forged in the industrial cities of Russia and the USSR' - a principle that too came to inform Soviet policy in Kaliningrad three decades later.<sup>10</sup>

In this context, the seizure of power in 1917 was understood not just in terms of liberating the working classes from capitalist oppression, but also of freeing entire nations from imperialist rule. 'Soviet Russia was conceived not as an ordinary national state but as the first stone in a future multi-national socialist edifice. The reach of the Russian Revolution was to be limitless'.<sup>11</sup> Thus, although socialist ideology subordinated nationalism in favour of international class unity, from the outset Lenin nonetheless remained acutely aware of its power - and therefore was reluctant to ignore it. As he proclaimed, 'if we say that we do not recognise the Finnish nation but only the toiling masses, it would be a ridiculous thing to say. Not to recognise something that is out there is impossible: it will force us to recognise it'.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, in Lenin's understanding, nationalism and the desire for autonomous rule did not occur naturally, but rather was 'contingent on the sense of oppression that

nationalities experienced from imperialism'.<sup>13</sup> In his view, it was a type of 'pubertal disorder of the human race, a necessary phase, but something to be got through as swiftly as possible'.<sup>14</sup>

In order to expediate this aim, Lenin declared 'the full right of separatism from Russia of all nations and nationalities oppressed by tsarism or joined by force within the borders of the state'. The key to encouraging citizens to gravitate towards the Soviet project, he believed, was to educate the proletariat of the superior status of the new belief system. However, it also remained essential that the fruitful rapprochement and eventual merging of nations into a new supranational state was 'reached not through force, but voluntarily, by the will of the workers'.<sup>15</sup> As he explained:

The Bashkirs do not trust the Great Russians because the Great Russians are more cultured and used to take advantage of their culture to rob the Bashkirs. So, in those remote places the name 'Great Russia' stands for 'oppressor' and 'cheat'. We should take this into account. We should fight against this. But this is a long-term thing. It cannot be abolished by decree. We should be very careful here. And a nation like the Great Russians should be particularly careful because they have provoked such bitter hatred in all the other nations.<sup>16</sup>

Consequently, in so far as the Bolsheviks understood it, fundamental to the successful gravitation of proletarians towards the socialist project was the

separation of the newly formed Soviet Union from the imperious connotations of its predecessor, the former Russian Empire. To this end, Lenin actively denounced the 'great power chauvinism' of the Russians, proclaiming his commitment to cut the Russians down to size 'as one nationality among others'. 'The Great Russians', it was argued, had 'belonged to an advanced, formerly dominant nation possessed of a secure tradition of national statehood and frequently guilty of ethnic arrogance and insensitivity'. 'All other nationalities, defined negatively and collectively as 'non-Great Russians', were victims of tsarist-imposed statelessness, backwardness and 'culturelessness', which made it difficult for them to take advantage of new revolutionary opportunities and sometimes tempted them to engage in 'local nationalism''.<sup>17</sup> As Lunacharskii - the People's Commissar of Education - went on to explain: 'We must educate people... so that they regard everyone, no matter what nationality they belong to, as their brothers, so that they love equally every inch of our common planet, and so that, if they have a prejudice in favour of Russian people, the Russian language, or the Russian countryside, they should recognise that the feeling is an irrational prejudice'.<sup>18</sup>

These principles were reflected in policy, and, with the first Soviet constitution - adopted in July 1918 - the Soviet Union became 'the first modern state to place the national principle at the base of its federal structure'.<sup>19</sup> Likewise, at

the Tenth Party Congress in March 1921, the party declared that it was its 'task to help the labouring masses of the non-Great Russian peoples to catch up with central Russia, which has forged ahead'.<sup>20</sup> In practical terms, this policy manifested itself through an active process of 'indigenisation' (*korenizatsiia*) - 'essentially affirmative action in favour of non-Russians'.<sup>21</sup> Preferential treatment was given to the representatives of local nationalities within their own territories, and all national Union republics obtained 'identical state, bureaucratic and educational structures, analogous research and development establishments - including republican academies of science with comprehensive sets of research institutes and identical organisations for the production and distribution of culture - from state publishing houses and ministries of culture and education to the 'creative unions' of writers, artists, architects and other cultural producers'.<sup>22</sup> Although each was to use the native language of their respective republic, every institution was 'to have the same Marxist curriculum regardless of the linguistic medium'.<sup>23</sup> Thus, whilst the ultimate goal remained as 'the abolition of all backwardness and thus all difference', the fulfilment of this aim was 'postponed indefinitely'.<sup>24</sup>

But if 'Lenin's acceptance of the reality of nations and 'national rights' was one of the most uncompromising positions he ever took', it was Stalin who went on to become 'the true 'father of nations' (albeit not all nations and not all the

time)'.<sup>25</sup> Indeed, 'one of the fundamental innovations of federal state formation under Soviet rule was the Stalinist linkage of ethnicity, territory and political administration'.<sup>26</sup> Stalin oversaw the growing institutionalisation of ethnicity through the creation of a federation of ethno-territorial units, governed by indigenous political figureheads.<sup>27</sup> Consequently, during the 1920s, 'many nationalities became demographically more consolidated within their 'homelands', acquired effective and articulate political and intellectual elites, and developed a shared national consciousness'.<sup>28</sup> Even the disruption caused by the rapid industrialisation and social transformation of the first five-year plan did not curtail the cultural and social gains made by non-Russians in the process of nation building.<sup>29</sup> Rather, 'the 'Great Transformation' of 1928-1932 turned into the most extravagant celebration of ethnic diversity that any state had ever financed'. What is more, whilst 'the 'Great Retreat' of the mid-1930s reduced the field of 'blossoming nationalities'', it too 'called for an ever more intensive cultivation of those that bore fruit'.<sup>30</sup> Indeed, as Stalin proclaimed in 1930, ethnic nationalism within the Soviet Union was here to stay:

The theory of the fusion of all nations of [...] the USSR into one common Great Russian nation with one common Great Russian language is a nationalist-chauvinist and anti-Leninist theory that contradicts the main thesis on Leninism, according to which national differences cannot disappear in the near future but will remain in

existence for a long time, even after the victory of the proletarian revolution on a world scale.<sup>31</sup>

The Bolshevik commitment to Soviet nationality policy is all the more significant due to the fact that, from March 1925, the USSR had committed to building socialism 'in one country' - 'a country with a central state, a centralised economy, a definite territory and a monolithic Party'.<sup>32</sup> More remarkable still is the fact that - because of the belief that the successful assimilation of all nations to the Soviet project required the suppression of 'great Russian chauvinism' - the commitment to Soviet nationality policy further necessitated the active discrimination against the idea of 'Russianness' itself. Indeed, as Yuri Slezkine has noted:

If the USSR was a communal apartment, then every family that inhabited it was entitled to a room of its own. But what about the Russians? In the centre of the Soviet apartment there was a large and amorphous space not clearly defined as a room, unmarked by national paraphernalia, unclaimed by 'its own' nation and inhabited by a very large number of austere but increasingly sensitive proletarians. The Russians, indeed, remained in a very special position. They could be bona fide national minorities in areas assigned to somebody else, but in Russia proper they had no national rights and no national opportunities (because they had possessed and misused them before). The war against Russian huts and Russian churches was the Party's *raison d'être*... In fact, ethnicity-based affirmative action in the national territories was an exact replica of class-based affirmative action in

Russia. A Russian could benefit from being a proletarian; a non-Russian could benefit from being a non-Russian.<sup>33</sup>

Certainly, if one is to use Stalin's assertion that 'a nation is a historically evolved, stable community based on a common language, territory, economic life and psychological make-up manifested in a community of culture',<sup>34</sup> then the Russians - more so than any other ethnic group residing in the USSR - were deprived of these prerequisites. However, they were not the only exception: 'The Soviets were not a nation either... the USSR [also] had no national identity, no official language and no national culture [of its own]'. Indeed, the USSR was like Russia in so far as both were to represent pure 'socialist content' completely devoid of national form.<sup>35</sup> What is more, as Hosking has further argued, 'in a sense, the Russians were the orphans of the Soviet Union. They had no Communist Party, no capital city, no Academy of Sciences, no national encyclopaedia, no radio or television networks separate from those of the Soviet Union as a whole. They had no means to defend their own interests when they clashed with those of other nationalities. Yet at the same time those deprivations marked out Russians' supranational status as the custodians of the USSR as a whole, their permanent role as responsible 'elder brother', whatever they might think of the other 'prodigal sons''.<sup>36</sup>

Thus, whilst the 'national consciousness' of non-Russians was being actively nurtured, that of Russians was simultaneously being consciously dismissed. On the one hand, Soviet nationality policy left them with an ambiguous, intentionally weakened and ill-defined republic that many were reluctant to call their own. On the other - having already been deprived of their own room in the communal apartment - the Bolshevik attempt to manipulate mass consciousness had meant that the most widely accepted elements of Russian pre-revolutionary common culture, namely the tsar and the Orthodox Church, had been actively discredited. Yet, such efforts were not carried out in vain. The destruction of these values and traditions were intended to make room for the new Soviet culture; 'a specifically proletarian view of the world - tough, muscular, assertively unrefined, collectivist, mechanised and confident of creating a new world':

Here they are, those calloused hands!  
These huge rakes,  
That pierce the depths of the earth  
With fingers of red steel!

Here they are, those calloused hands!  
That will build a home  
For freedom, art and science  
With no room for pain or suffering.<sup>37</sup>

Stalin's 1934 proclamation that 'Life has become better, Comrades! Life has become happier' declared that the USSR had at last been successful in this aim; that it had "divested itself of everything backward and medieval' and become an industrialised society based on a solid socialist foundation'.<sup>38</sup> This meant, at least in terms of official representation, that 'time had been conquered and the future had become the present. All essential differences had been overcome, all scholarly pursuits had become Marxist and all non-Marxist pursuits had disappeared'.<sup>39</sup>

Indeed, such assertions do not appear to have been entirely fictitious; by the mid-1930s, there is evidence that the Bolshevik approach to the nationality question was finally beginning to pay dividends. Even many Harvard Project<sup>40</sup> interviewees - despite their status as dissenters from the Soviet Union - spoke favourably of the USSR in terms of its promotion of ethnic equality. As one reflected: 'I am not against any nationality and although I am Ukrainian I am not a nationalist... In our history - and I know Russian history well - the leaders come from all peoples. There have been Ukrainians, White Russians and others who have been great leaders of the people. The white Russians are the majority in the Soviet Union, but they cannot say anything against the other peoples.'<sup>41</sup> Similarly, another noted that:

There is no nationality that has less trouble with the police than others. The Russians, however, have more trouble than any of the others. This is on account of a law on Great-Russian chauvinism, violation of which can be punished with up to ten years of prison. Violation might take the form of a disparaging remark by a Russian about another nationality, or a member of that nationality implying inferiority of that particular race... Incidentally, other nationality groups could make remarks about races without fear of punishment.<sup>42</sup>

Perhaps most strikingly of all, one interviewee seems to have subverted all questions of national difference in favour of class-based concerns entirely:

Another good attainment is the nationality question. That has been decided on a positive side. In a country with many nationalities there must be brotherhood between the nationalities. There must be no hatred sown between nationalities. If there is, it would not be a people's government. Class hatred, I mean, national hatred is not needed for the people. [Interviewer: Does national hatred exist in the Soviet Union?] No, I did not see it, there was no class hatred. [Interviewer's notes: The respondent again substituted the word class for the word nationality]. It was amazing to me to have the question 'what is your nationality' asked. I feel that a person must only be a good person. He must be judged not by his nationality but his personal qualities. That is my opinion.<sup>43</sup>

The promotion of a supranational 'Soviet' identity was further aided by the acquisition of new heroes to call their own. In particular, the expeditions of aviators and polar explorers were widely celebrated. In 1932, for example:

Otto Schmidt led a crew of polar explorers in the ship *Cheliuskin*, which traversed the Arctic Sea route in one navigational season. But, on a second voyage in 1933-1934, it was trapped by pack ice and then sank, leaving 104 people stranded on a remote ice floe. The hastily organised air rescue aroused genuine public concern, then rejoicing when it was successfully accomplished, and the whole narrative soon became a sacred text celebrating the heroism, resourcefulness and technological sophistication of Soviet society.<sup>44</sup>

Certainly, such events appear to have had a significant unifying effect; as the explorer Ivan Papanin expressed when he landed at the North Pole: 'No distance can separate us, citizens of the USSR, from our country, the first socialist country in the world, from the Bolshevik party, or from the warmth of our people'.<sup>45</sup>

Indeed, as this popular song from 1936 further demonstrates, by the mid-1930s a 'Soviet identity' devoid of national affiliation was becoming increasingly well defined:

Broad is my native land.  
It has many forests, fields and rivers.  
I don't know of any other country  
Where a man breathes so freely.

From Moscow to the very borders,  
From the southern mountains to the northern seas,

A man walks as the master  
of his immense motherland.

But we will knit our brows severely  
If the enemy wants to break us.  
We love the motherland as we would our bride.  
We protect her as we would our affectionate mother.<sup>46</sup>

## The outstanding nation among all the nations

*I drink above all to the health of the Russian people, because it is the outstanding nation among all the nations which make up the Soviet Union. I drink to the health of the Russian people because in this war it has deserved general recognition as the driving force among the peoples of the Soviet Union.*

*Joseph Stalin, May 1945*<sup>47</sup>

Just five years later, however, this 'affectionate mother' required the protection of her peoples as she came under attack from fascist Germany. As Hosking has argued: 'War confronts everyone with the question of where their primary loyalties lie - in the twentieth century, above all with which nation they belong to. The categories of citizenship and nationhood come together'.<sup>48</sup> The Great Patriotic War was no exception. The excessive brutality of the Germans - encouraged by their openly declared policy of annihilation - 'ensured that most Soviet citizens, whatever their previous views... came to see the war as a national one', and 'soldered Russian and Soviet patriotism together'.<sup>49</sup> As one Red Army soldier, writing to *Komsomolskaia Pravda*, put it:

The Aryan-blooded Fascist Ober-vermin wants to enslave our freedom loving hearts. That will never be! Never will those monstrous vampires gain a hold on our hearts, which are filled with freedom, pride, and infinite devotion to our beloved and long-suffering Homeland. Russian hearts, forged in the Bolshevik smithy, will never yield to the German scum.<sup>50</sup>

Thus, although the Bolsheviks officially remained committed to internationalist principles, the war quickly took on a national colouring. Many soviet citizens 'came to see the struggle as one, not between imperialists and toilers, but between Russians and Germans. In ordinary parlance the terms 'Fascist' and 'Hitlerite' were used less than simply 'German'.<sup>51</sup> As Konstantin Simonov put it in his 1942 poem, 'Kill him!', published in *Pravda* the same year:

If your home is dear to you where you were nursed as a  
Russian...  
If your mother is dear to you and you cannot bear the thought  
of a German slapping her wrinkled face...  
If you do not want to give away all that you call your Homeland  
Then kill a German, so that he  
Not you, should lie in the earth...  
Kill a German every time you see one!<sup>52</sup>

Indeed, even the new national anthem adopted - albeit in archaic language - the concept of Russia as the heart of the USSR:

An unshakeable union of free republics  
Has been united by Great Rus.  
Long live the country founded by the people's will.  
The united, mighty, Soviet Union.<sup>53</sup>

It is within this context that one must consider the post-war annexation of both Königsberg and the adjoining Baltic territories into the Soviet Union. In

particular, the decision to integrate the newly formed Kaliningrad into the RSFSR, rather than incorporate it into the Lithuanian SSR, (as had been the advice of Pakarklis - a specialist on the Lithuanian people's struggle against the Teutonic Knights), meant that, from the outset, Soviet nationality policy was enacted in distinct and diametrically opposing ways across the USSR's new westernmost territories. As a result, the contradictions and nuances that had accompanied the implementation of Soviet nationality policy elsewhere in the Soviet Union during the 1920s and 1930s were exacerbated in the Baltic region on a profound scale and, ultimately, served as a catalyst for the disintegration of the Soviet project less than half a century later.

Unlike in Kaliningrad, the moulding of the Baltic territories to fit the new belief system following World War Two could not rely on the complete erasure of their respective former histories. In part, this was due to the fact that Soviet influence in the region had - albeit only just - preceded the outbreak of war. Indeed, following the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact in 1939, the Baltic territories of Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia had become central to the Soviet's newly granted sphere of influence. In line with Soviet nationality policy more broadly, prior to the war the Bolsheviks initially sought to consolidate its control in the region through the provision of so-called 'mutual assistance pacts' - offered to each country during September and October

1939 under the guise of respecting both Baltic sovereignty and their declarations of neutrality. However, the German invasion of the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxemburg and France - followed by the withdrawal of the British army from the continent by the end of May 1940 - resulted in a hastening of the Bolshevik desire to bring the Baltic territories firmly under Soviet influence. By May 1940, as an *Izvestiia* article made clear, Soviet policy towards the region had come to adopt a different approach: 'The neutrality of small states, which do not have the power to preserve it, is a mere fantasy. Therefore, there are very few chances for small countries to survive and to maintain their independence'.<sup>54</sup>

One month later, on June 14-15, the USSR presented 'to the ambassadors of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in Moscow ultimata that charged the three countries with failure to implement properly the provision of the base treaties and with conspiring to create an anti-Soviet coalition'.<sup>55</sup> In turn, it subsequently demanded that an unrestricted number of Soviet troops be granted entry to the region, and that the governments of Konstantin Päts, Kārlis Ulmanis and Antanas Smetona be replaced. For many in the Baltics, there seemed to be little alternative to accepting the Bolsheviks' terms. Indeed, 'what was true of Päts in Estonia was equally true of other Baltic leaders: 'It was better to face an uncertain future with the Estonian people

intact than to resort to armed resistance that would lead to the certain destruction of a significant minority of the nation".<sup>56</sup> Consequently, the Soviet army first crossed the border into Lithuania on June 14, 1940 - arriving in Estonia and Latvia three days later.<sup>57</sup>

Within weeks, 'People's Government's' that were 'national in form and socialist in content'<sup>58</sup> - in accordance with Stalin's 1934 proclamation - had been established. Following Soviet nationality policy as enacted more broadly throughout the USSR, the new governments were headed by and consisted of indigenous political leftists or opportunists - selected not for their particular expertise in governing, but rather because they had previously demonstrated considerable affability to the Soviet Union: in Lithuania, by the journalist Justas Paleckis; in Latvia, by the biologist Augusts Kirchensteins; and in Estonia, by the physician-poet Johannes Vares. In addition, 'persons likely to be loyal to the new order - members of the Communist Party, crypto-communists who had been 'underground' in the three countries and cadres arriving daily from the USSR [were] placed in position of authority at every level'. On July 14-15, 'democratic' elections were held in all three countries, and on July 17 it was announced that the 'working peoples' list had received the overwhelming majority of votes in each country: representing 99.2 per cent in Lithuania; 97.5 per cent in Latvia; and 92.9 per cent in Estonia. In their first meeting on July

21, the three new administrations subsequently declared their respective countries to be Soviet Socialist Republics - each sending delegations to Moscow to officially apply for their annexation into the USSR. These were, of course, 'accepted' by the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, and thus on August 3, August 5 and August 6, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia respectively were all incorporated into the Soviet Union.<sup>59</sup>

However, Soviet jurisdiction in the region quickly came under threat. And, as a result of the growing signs that Germany was planning to invade the Soviet Union, those who had chosen to resist the new Soviet order became increasingly susceptible to deportation. Indeed - although in the eleven months following the arrival of the Red Army in June 1940, there had been some cases of imprisonment, execution and deportation - the process of cleansing the Baltic republics of all opposition dramatically changed gear in June 1941. Tensions peaked on the night of June 13, when the Baltic states succumbed to their first experience of mass deportation. Entire categories of people - members of certain pre-war organisations; those who had held important posts in the pre-war governments; and those who had otherwise been in the public's eye nationally, regionally, or locally because of their wealth or influence - were removed from the population. Tragically, it was in

many cases local citizens who, now loyal to the new governments, compiled the lists that the communist officials worked from.<sup>60</sup>

On the night of June 13 alone, 15,424 people were deported from Latvia; approximately 10,000 from Estonia; and in Lithuania approximately 18,000. The deportees were not granted hearings or trials, nor were they necessarily accused of any specific crime - 'the appearance of one's name on a list was sufficient'. Indeed, of all the turbulence initiated by the arrival of the Red Army soldiers to the region in June 1940, it was this night that proved the most traumatic. The deportations affected the largest number of people - both in numerical and demographic terms; and were felt in both urban and rural areas - by all nationalities and by all occupational groups. Yet, despite the severity of the deportations, the Bolsheviks were still unable to retain influence in the region. Just one week later, around three million Nazi soldiers descended upon the Soviet Union. Army group *Nord*, on route to Leningrad and totalling around 650,000 men, traversed Lithuania, reaching Riga on July 2 and crossing the Estonian border on July 7 - thus bringing World War Two to the Baltics.<sup>61</sup>

Four years later, however - following the Baltic Offensive of autumn 1944, the littoral states again fell firmly back under Soviet jurisdiction. In this context, the Baltic experience of a double, successive occupation in World War Two -

first by the Soviets and then by the Nazis - posed both new opportunities and specific difficulties for the incorporation of the territories back into the USSR. Most notably, the events of the war years meant that the renewed Soviet presence in the region now appeared to fit neatly into the Soviet historical narrative. Indeed, as the Bolshevik propaganda sought to iterate: 'First, ...a humane Soviet society had been torn apart by Nazi brutality in 1941; and second, ...this humane Soviet society had been established legitimately in June 1940'. Care was, however, taken to deflect from the deportations of June 1941, instead stressing that '... those massacred by the Nazis were innocent Soviet citizens, [cautiously] sliding over the fact that the vast majority of the victims were Jews, who had been Soviet for less than a year'.<sup>62</sup>

Correspondingly, the 'mild authoritarian' regimes, headed by Päts, Ulmanis and Smetona during the era of independence, were branded as 'fascist' and proclaimed to represent 'the triumph of counter-revolution'. In this way, the Soviets sought to create a natural continuity between the 'short lived setback in the revolutionary struggle of the working people' during the inter-war independent years, and the later period of wartime Baltic collaboration with the Third Reich'.<sup>63</sup>

On the other hand, however, the traumatic events of the war years meant that many Baltic citizens remembered the war somewhat differently. As Monika

Jonynaitė-Makūnienė explained, for many, the story of World War Two began not with Operation Barbarossa and the Nazi invasion of June 22, 1941, but, rather, with the arrival of the Soviets following the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact almost exactly one year earlier:

We knew it was war; I started feeling a tremor somewhere inside... nobody knew that the troops were being mobilised and that the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact, the treaty, was being enacted. We didn't know these things.

... The Russians came, for the first time, on June 15, 1940... And then another spring came and the Second World War broke out. Thus began the period of German occupation. We greeted those Germans happily because we knew the Russians were an occupying force - we were all old-timers. We found it unacceptable. We knew what Russians meant - probably from history, from the time of the Tsars. We knew we wouldn't bend ourselves to the new, Soviet rule.

... The Russians [returned] in July 1944... Two brothers of mine, one of them 23 years old, the other, 21, went into hiding because the Russians immediately began recruiting for the Soviet army. We couldn't understand why we had to join the Russians. It was totally incomprehensible. We thought the war would end, they'd take Berlin, everything would go back to normal and those Russians would leave, and for now we'd just hide. This is what we thought... But nothing was that simple.<sup>64</sup>

Despite these discrepancies, the promotion of the 'Great Patriotic War' in the Baltics nonetheless followed the model adopted throughout the Soviet Union at large, 'becoming the cornerstone of Soviet patriotism, the demonstration of

national virtue and proof of the link between the communist party and its people'. As in Kaliningrad, at least in theory, 'Sovietness ... [was to become] ... a natural attribute to all those who had fought in the war - either actually or metaphorically on the home front'.<sup>65</sup> Paradoxically, however, in the Baltics the glorification of this momentous victory over fascism only served to reinforce 'extreme anti-Russian and anti-Communist embitterment'.<sup>66</sup> Their experience of overwhelming collective victimisation during the war years fostered a feeling of ethnic solidarity and moral outrage that rendered them irreconcilable to the Soviet war narrative. As Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn recalled of his time in the Gulag:

[After the war] other forms of human association... [began to bind] ... people more closely than the work teams artificially put together by the administration. Most important were national ties. National groups - [including]... Estonians [and] Lithuanians - which informers could not penetrate, were born and flourished.<sup>67</sup>

Indeed, the disparity between the Baltic and Soviet memories of the war years was further exacerbated by the way in which this 'Soviet patriotism' was promoted through the erection of war monuments. In line with the 'nationalisation' of the war under Stalin, central monuments to the 'unknown' soldier were erected. In Tallinn, for example, twelve Red Army soldiers were reburied in Tõnismägi, despite the fact that no fighting had taken place

anywhere nearby - its location was chosen purely on the basis of its centrality, so that the memorial could be used for ceremonial purposes.<sup>68</sup> Furthermore, the message of these Soviet victory monuments - which were erected in every capital of Soviet-dominated Eastern Europe and the Soviet republics - was univocally selective: Heroicization of the 'warrior-liberator' (*voin-osvoboditel*). This resulted in significant restrictions on the commemoration of suffering.<sup>69</sup> As Reinhart Koselleck notes, only the memory of 'Russian victory was allowed and compulsorily executed' - the commemoration of the deaths of the vanquished was excluded from the public space.<sup>70</sup> Indeed, this had a particularly damaging effect in the Baltics, where the deportations of June 13-14 had left a bitter legacy.<sup>71</sup>

Yet, if the conflicting memory of the Great Patriotic War served to reinforce notions of national identity in the Baltic states, in neighbouring Kaliningrad the situation was significantly more nuanced. The incorporation of the region into the RSFSR in 1946 meant that, in terms of Soviet nationality policy, Kaliningrad - like Russia proper - forewent any official national identity, language, or national culture of its own. Indeed, more so than any other 'Soviet' territory, the symbolic significance of the region - coupled with the decision to treat the land as *terra nullius* - meant that Kaliningrad appeared uniquely situated to provide the 'melting pot' conditions into which peoples of different national

backgrounds could enter, and out of which Soviet citizens would emerge. As a result, The Great Patriotic War came to serve a very different purpose in the region. Not only did it provide the foundational myth of the territory's birth, but it also enabled an explicitly non-regional (and non-ethnic) approach to Bolshevik placemaking and assimilation policies. The symbolic wartime victory over (and subsequent annexation of) German Königsberg offered not just fundamental, tangible proof of the validity of the Soviet project; it also simultaneously provided a useful means through which to situate the Kaliningrad region as a vital part of the wider Soviet Union.

The promotion of The Great Patriotic War as a foundational pillar of Kaliningrad's historical narrative was also echoed elsewhere in the Soviet Union. Most notably, the war provided Russians with a sense of patriotism that had formerly gone unacknowledged. Having previously been deprived of any clear national status of their own, Stalin's May 1945 speech reflected the 'most Russian-nationalist he ever made'.<sup>72</sup> Indeed, although memories of the war quickly became 'rationed and shaped to the purposes of the regime, not articulated as part of authentic social memory',<sup>73</sup> Soviet victory - and the Russians' role in it - was undeniable. As a result, many Russians thus came to identify 'themselves unthinkably with the Soviet Union... sometimes refer[ing] to non-Slavs as *natsmeny* - '*national people*'. Rather like the American term

'ethnic', it implied that Russians themselves had no ethnic identity'. 'A similar message was [also] implicit in a ditty about the first cosmonaut that was popular in the 1960s:

... What a good thing that Yu. Gagarin  
Is not a Tungus nor a Tartar,  
Not a Ukrainian and not an Uzbek,  
But one of us, a Soviet man.<sup>74</sup>

Conversely, victory in the Great Patriotic War also caused 'the centre of gravity of the symbolic life of the Soviet state, and therefore of Soviet society too' to shift from the future to the past - 'from anticipation of the distant triumph of socialism to remembrance of the very real and undeniable victory of Soviet arms'.<sup>75</sup> Not only did this have uneasy connotations in Kaliningrad - where the lack of a usable past had meant that significant investment had been placed on the promise of a bright future - but it too led the Party to monopolise the remembrance of the war. As a result, Soviet society was obstructed from ever fully incorporating it into their social memory. Indeed, despite 'so many deaths to be mourned and so much suffering to be assimilated',<sup>76</sup> in May 1946 Stalin placed the figure of Soviet war dead at just 7 million.<sup>77</sup> Brezhnev's subsequent attempt to revive the Party's primacy went further still, creating 'a cult of the Great Patriotic War' that served to firmly place Soviet patriotism in the hands of the ruling elite - thus preventing its true inception into wider 'Soviet'

popular memory.<sup>78</sup> This cult narrative fixed the number of wartime losses at twenty million. 'Forty-five years would pass before a higher total... would be officially acknowledged'.<sup>79</sup>

Brezhnev's control over Soviet patriotism was further articulated in a 1972 speech, in which he proclaimed, 'the nationalities question, in the form it came down to us in the past, has been resolved completely, resolved definitely and irrevocably'.<sup>80</sup> It was declared that a new stage had been reached on the path towards the communist utopia - what was coined 'developed socialism'. What is more, the arrival of 'developed socialism', it was argued, had further brought with it a 'new historical community' of Russian-speaking 'Soviet people' (*Sovetskii narod*).<sup>81</sup> Yet, although the primary aim of Soviet nationalities policy during the Brezhnev era was not explicitly to elevate the status of Russians relative to the country's other nationalities, it nevertheless served to emphasise the critical role of the Great Russians in forging the USSR.<sup>82</sup> Consequently, over time, this focus on the past came to combine with 'the fracturing of national identity, *ruskii*, *rossiiskii* and *sovetskoi*, to hollow out the spiritual life of the Soviet peoples and to undermine their sense of community'. In this way, 'the Soviet regime gradually negated its own greatest triumph, weakened its bond with the Russian people, and prepared the way for its own eventual downfall'.<sup>83</sup>

## The idea of 'nation' connoted a certain inferiority

*I read somewhere about an incident after the revolution where a delegation of merchants and factory owners called on Trotsky 'as a Jew' at the Petrograd soviet to complain about the oppression of Red Guards, and he declared he was 'not a Jew but an internationalist...'. In Trotsky's view, the idea of 'nation' connoted a certain inferiority and limitation compared with the 'international'.*

*Nina Andreeva, 1988* <sup>84</sup>

By the turn of the 1980s, the Soviet leadership found themselves no longer able to continue to look back at past victories, however great, as a means of legitimising their rule. It became increasingly clear that collectivisation and shock industrialisation had dislocated the economy beyond repair and that a policy of reform was needed.<sup>85</sup> This came in the form of *perestroika* and *glasnost*'. Gorbachev hoped that '... more public discussion would mobilise enthusiasm for his innovations and [generate] popular support against what he saw as the self-interested resistance of conservative officials wedded to the unreformed command economy'.<sup>86</sup> As he stressed in an article in *Pravda*, it was now essential to '... keep to a position of historical truthfulness', for 'the truth is indivisible. We need complete clarity, precision, consistency and a moral reference point for the future'.<sup>87</sup>

The easing political pressure signified by this article encouraged the emergence of specialised action groups, who began to discuss serious social

issues and sought to do something effective about them. As they began to make public documents that had previously been hidden for decades, the extent to which the ruling elite had manipulated the peoples' knowledge of their collective past became increasingly overwhelming. One action group in particular, 'Memorial', came to represent the '... profound feelings of numerous Soviet citizens who wanted social memory to be restored and their suffering and grief over loved ones acknowledged in a dignified manner'.<sup>88</sup> As one of its founders, Yuri Afanasiev, explained:

The most important task of Memorial is to restore to this country its past. But the past is alive and present. Therefore, Memorial is a political movement, insofar as today has not yet settled accounts with yesterday. Our problem is the human being in history. But for us history is not just politics projected into the past, for man's historical habitat is culture. Therefore, Memorial is also a cultural movement. By talking about terror and lawlessness, we help to form a notion of legality in the public mind. Therefore, Memorial is also a movement concerned with the rule of law (*pravovoe dvizhenie*).<sup>89</sup>

As these words demonstrate, the party's strict control over the Soviet historical narrative meant that the search for 'historical truthfulness' could not help but become entangled with wider political questions and, most importantly of all, with the legitimacy of the party itself. The realisation that - in their pursuit of socialism - the Bolsheviks had in fact created a system capable of manipulating and distorting social and collective memory,

fundamentally discredited its continued existence. Indeed, whilst seeking to expose the true history of the party, many also unintentionally found themselves exposed to its most shocking secrets. As Adam Hochschild has recalled:

A Moscow clinical psychologist told me about a case of a woman patient from years earlier who had recently returned for more treatment, in deep distress. To her horror, newly published accounts told how her father, a diplomat, had denounced many people to the secret police and was responsible for their deaths. It was not by accident, she understood now, that he had remained alive and been promoted while his colleagues had perished. He had been dead for some years, but this woman now had to come to terms with her father all over again - something far more painful the second time.<sup>90</sup>

What thus prevailed in Russia was an overwhelming sense of guilt; as Nina Andreeva further reflected in 1988:

We are somehow embarrassed to say that it was indeed the Russian proletariat... who accomplished - in Lenin's words - 'the Russian revolution' and that the Slavic peoples stood in the vanguard of mankind's battle against Fascism'. [Indeed, in her eyes, the Bolsheviks' attempt to manipulate consciousness had resulted in] ... a pacifist erosion of defence and patriotic consciousness as well as a desire to categorise the slightest expressions of Great Russian national pride as manifestation of the chauvinism of a great power.<sup>91</sup>

In the Baltics, meanwhile, *glasnost* and *perestroika* were experienced differently. Initially, at least, the new reform-minded leadership in Moscow presumed that, of all the nationality-based republics, it was Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania who were most likely to prove amenable to its unfolding agenda of economic, social and political reform. 'Here, after all, were nations whose national cultures were endowed with many of the features judged by Moscow as important to its reform programme, including, most importantly, a recent pre-Soviet experience of both pluralist democracy and market-type economies'.<sup>92</sup>

Yet, whilst the Baltic states did initially display a willingness to engage in Gorbachev's plans for economic reform, their engagement with *glasnost* was more complex.<sup>93</sup> Here, the exposure of the 'black spots' in the Soviet Baltic historical narrative were not so much revelatory, but rather statutory; quickly manifesting through the commemoration of the victims of the mass deportations of June 13-14, 1941 and the rehabilitation of the statesmen of the independence era. The fiftieth anniversary of the Nazi-Soviet Pact on 23 August 1989, however, brought new demands. An estimated two million people - just under a quarter of the entire 8.8 million Baltic population<sup>94</sup> - joined hands across the Baltic borders in what became known as 'The Baltic Way'.<sup>95</sup> They demanded the recognition of the secret clauses of the Molotov-

Ribbentrop Pact, forcing Gorbachev to set up a commission to investigate the Pact. On December 23 and 24, 1989, its chairman, alongside Gorbachev's closest advisor, Alexander Yakovlev, presented the commission's findings to the Second Congress of the USSR People's Deputies:

The secret protocol of August 23, 1939 reflects precisely the inner essence of Stalinism. This is not the only one, but one of the most dangerous delayed action mines from the minefield we have inherited and which we are now trying to clear with such difficulty and complexities. It is necessary to do this... Sooner or later the truth will win out on God's earth and deception will be unlocked.<sup>96</sup>

But it was already too late. The subsequent recognition by the USSR Supreme Soviet Congress of Deputies of the secret protocol of the Nazi-Soviet Pact fatally undermined the legitimacy of Soviet rule in Baltic eyes; helping to fuel the drive for independence.<sup>97</sup> Within just six months of 'The Baltic Way', Lithuania became the first of the Soviet republics to declare its independence, and the Soviet Union recognised the independence of all three Baltic states on September 6, 1991.<sup>98</sup> Indeed, other republics also soon followed suit. Having never realised the construction of a true 'Soviet nation', when the 'Soviet state... lost its Soviet meaning', the national republics - first created under the federalist structure to prevent great Russian chauvinism - became the only

possible heirs. To use Slezkine's analogy, across the Soviet Union 'tenants of various rooms barricaded their doors and started using the windows'.<sup>99</sup>

Kaliningrad, conversely, found itself stranded in the corridors of the amorphous space previously attributed to the RSFSR. As their neighbours began barricading the doors around them, its status as part of the RSFSR meant that it became an exclave of the Russian Federation. Yet, unlike in Russia proper, there was no local 'Russian' basis to fall back on. Rather, the logic of Soviet nationality policy that had informed the post-war resettlement of the territory meant that settlers to the region lacked any common 'ethnic origin'. Indeed, by the turn of the 1980s, the population - if measured in terms of ethnicity - was comprised of Russians (78.3 per cent); Ukrainians (9 per cent); Belorussians (6.8 per cent); Lithuanians (2.4 per cent); and numerous other nationalities with populations below 1 per cent each. Put simply, Kaliningrad had become, in the words of Federov and Zverev, 'the only truly 'Soviet' region in the Soviet Union'.<sup>100</sup>

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- <sup>1</sup> Zhirinovskii, Vladimir, *My Struggle: The Explosive Views of Russia's Most Controversial Political Figure*, New York, NY: Barricade Books, 1996, pp. 15-17.
- <sup>2</sup> <https://twitter.com/sovietvisuals/status/1016218116702003201> - accessed 02.07.2018.
- <sup>3</sup> Cheng, Yinghong, *Creating the 'New Man' - From Enlightenment Ideals to Socialist Realities*, Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009, p. 22.
- <sup>4</sup> Figes, Orlando, *A People's Tragedy - The Russian Revolution: 1891 - 1924*, London: Jonathan Cape, 1996, pp. 696 - 699.
- <sup>5</sup> Zaslavskii, Victor, Nationalism and Democratic Transition in Post-communist Societies, *Daedalus*, vol. 121, no.2, 1992, p. 98.
- <sup>6</sup> Chinn, Jeff and Kaiser, Robert, *Russians as the New Minority, Ethnicity and Nationalism in the Soviet Successor States*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996, p. 65.
- <sup>7</sup> N. Bukharin and E. Preobrazhenskii, *The ABC of Communism: A Popular Explanation of the Program of the Communist Party of Russia*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969, p. 201.
- <sup>8</sup> Hosking, Geoffrey, *Rulers and Victims - The Russians and the Soviet Union*, London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006, p. 71.
- <sup>9</sup> Vdovin, A. I; Zorin, V. Yu; and Nikonov, A. V., *Russkii narod v natsional'noi politke: xx vek*, Moscow: Russkii mir, 1998, p. 87; Baruch Knei-Paz, *The Social and Political Thought of Leon Trotsky*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978, p. 536.
- <sup>10</sup> Chinn, Jeff and Kaiser, Robert, *Russians as the New Minority, Ethnicity and Nationalism in the Soviet Successor States*, pp. 66-67.
- <sup>11</sup> Suny, Ronald Grigor, *The Revenge of the Past - Nationalism, Revolution, and the Collapse of the Soviet Union*, Stanford CA, Stanford University Press, 1993, p. 85.
- <sup>12</sup> *Vos'moi s'ezd RKP (b): Protokoly*, Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1959, p. 55. As cited by Slezkine, Yuri, The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism, *Slavic Review*, vol. 53, no. 2, 1994, p. 420.
- <sup>13</sup> Suny, Ronald Grigor, *The Revenge of the Past - Nationalism, Revolution, and the Collapse of the Soviet Union*, p. 87.
- <sup>14</sup> Hosking, Geoffrey, *Rulers and Victims - The Russians and the Soviet Union*, p. 71.
- <sup>15</sup> Suny, Ronald Grigor, *The Revenge of the Past - Nationalism, Revolution, and the Collapse of the Soviet Union*, pp. 87 - 88.
- <sup>16</sup> *Vos'moi s'ezd RKP (b): Protokoly* p. 106. As cited by Slezkine, Yuri, The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism, pp. 420-421.
- <sup>17</sup> Slezkine, Yuri, The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism, p. 423.
- <sup>18</sup> Vdovin et al., *Russkii*, p. 103.
- <sup>19</sup> Pipes, Richard, *The Formation of the Soviet Union, Communism and Nationalism 1917-1923*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1954, p. 112.
- <sup>20</sup> Smith, Jeremy, *The Bolsheviks and the National Question, 1917 - 1923*, London: Macmillan, 1999, p. 26.
- <sup>21</sup> Hosking, Geoffrey, *Rulers and Victims - The Russians and the Soviet Union*, p. 73.
- <sup>22</sup> Zaslavskii, Victor, Nationalism and Democratic Transition in Post-communist Societies, p. 102.

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- <sup>23</sup> Slezkine, Yuri, *The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism*, p. 418.
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 424.
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 414.
- <sup>26</sup> Zaslavskii, Victor, *Nationalism and Democratic Transition in Post-communist Societies*, p. 100.
- <sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>28</sup> Suny, Ronald Grigor, *The Revenge of the Past - Nationalism, Revolution, and the Collapse of the Soviet Union*, p. 124.
- <sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>30</sup> Slezkine, Yuri, *The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism*, p. 424.
- <sup>31</sup> Stalin, I. V., *Sochineniia*, Moscow: Politizdat, 1952, vol. 13, p. 4.
- <sup>32</sup> Slezkine, Yuri, *The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism*, p. 434.
- <sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>34</sup> Stalin, I.V., *Marksizm i natsional'noi vopros*, Moscow: Politizdat, 1950, p. 51.
- <sup>35</sup> Slezkine, Yuri, *The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism*, p. 435.
- <sup>36</sup> Hosking, Geoffrey, *Rulers and Victims - The Russians and the Soviet Union*, p. 80.
- <sup>37</sup> A poem by an unknown Proletkult poet in Saratov, as cited in *ibid.*, p. 66.
- <sup>38</sup> Slezkine, Yuri, *The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism*, p. 442.
- <sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>40</sup> 'In the early years of the Cold War, American researchers from Harvard's Russian Research Centre embarked on a project to explore large-scale questions about the nature of Soviet society. These social scientists gathered data through documentation of the life histories, experiences and worldviews of Soviet refugees who managed to avoid repatriation to the USSR at the end of the Second World War. Project participants were recruited among ethnic Russians, Ukrainians, Belorussians and other former Soviet citizens - mostly former prisoners of war, migrant labourers and even Nazi collaborators - resulting in an extensive set of primary sources. These materials offer a glimpse into the lives of hundreds of individuals as well as data through which to analyse and better understand the workings of Soviet society on a broad scale. Including the stories of former schoolteachers, soldiers, dancers, farmers and more, it remains one of the largest collections of English-language, primary source material documenting Soviet life from 1917 to the 1940s.'
- <https://daviscenter.fas.harvard.edu/resource/voices-ussr-working-oral-histories-harvard-project-soviet-social-system-online/harvard> - accessed 12.02.2018.
- <sup>41</sup> Harvard Project on the Soviet Social System (HP). #48, Schedule A, vol. 5, available at - <http://harvardlibdev.prod.acquia-sites.com/static/collections/hpsss/index.html>.
- <sup>42</sup> HP #445(NY)1007, Schedule A, vol. 31, available at *ibid.*
- <sup>43</sup> HP. #387, Schedule A, vol. 20, available at *ibid.*
- <sup>44</sup> Petrone, *Life Has Become More Joyous, Comrades: Celebrations in the Time of Stalin*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2000, p. 48; McCannon, John, *Tabula Rasa in the North: The Soviet Arctic and Mythic Landscapes in Stalinist Popular*

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Culture, in Dobrenko, Evgenii and Naiman, Eric., (eds.), *The Landscape of Stalinism: The Art and Ideology of Soviet Space*, Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2003, pp. 242, 255.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 255.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.

<sup>47</sup> Stalin, I. V., Toast to the Russian People at a Reception in Honour of Red Army Commanders, May 24, 1945. Accessible at <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/stalin/works/1945/05/24.htm> - accessed 10.04.17.

<sup>48</sup> Rose, Sonya, O., *Which People's War? National Identity and Citizenship in Britain, 1939-1945*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, pp. 13-14; Hosking, Geoffrey, *Rulers and Victims - The Russians in the Soviet Union*, p. 190.

<sup>49</sup> Hosking, Geoffrey, *Rulers and Victims - The Russians in the Soviet Union*, p. 192.

<sup>50</sup> *Sovetskaia povsednevnost' i massovoie soznaniie: 1939-1945*, Moscow: Rosspen, 2003, p. 109. As cited in *Ibid.*, p. 193.

<sup>51</sup> Hosking, Geoffrey, *Rulers and Victims - The Russians in the Soviet Union*, p. 192.

<sup>52</sup> Simonov, Konstantin, *Stikhotvoreniia i poemy*, Moscow: Ogiz, 1945, pp. 5-8. See also, Goldberg, Anatol, *Ilya Ehrenburg: Writing, Politics, and the Art of Survival*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1984, p. 197; Tvardovskii, A. T., *Poemy*, Moscow: Sovetskii Pisatel', 1950, p. 119.

<sup>53</sup> Popovich, N., *Sovetskaia politika po ukrepleniiu russkogo patriotizma i samosoznaniia (1935-1945)*, in *Rossii v XX veke: istoriki mira sporiat*, Moscow: Nauka, 1994, pp. 468-474. As cited in Hosking, Geoffrey, *Rulers and Victims - The Russians in the Soviet Union.*, p. 211.

<sup>54</sup> Plakans, Andrejs, *A Concise History of the Baltic States*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011, p. 341.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 342.

<sup>56</sup> Raun, T. U., *Estonia and the Estonians*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1987, p. 142.

<sup>57</sup> Plakans, Andrejs, *A Concise History of the Baltic States*, p. 342.

<sup>58</sup> Frolova-Walker, Marina, 'National in form, Socialist in content': Musical Nation-Building in the Soviet Republics, *Journal of the American Musicology Society*, vol. 51, no. 2, 1998, p. 331.

<sup>59</sup> Plakans, *A Concise History of the Baltic States*, pp. 343-344.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 347.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> Swain, Geoffrey, *Between Stalin and Hitler - Class war and race war on the Dvina, 1940 - 46*, London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004, pp. 137-138.

<sup>63</sup> Krysin, Mikhail, *Pribaltiiskii fashizm*, Bucharest: Veche, 2007, p. 6; Brüggemann and Kasekamp, The Politics of History and the 'War of Monuments' in Estonia, *Nationalities Papers: Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity*, vol. 36, no. 3, 2008, p. 428; Kõresaar, Ene, *Ideologies of Life*, p. 205.

<sup>64</sup> Leinarte, Dalia, *Adopting and Remembering Soviet Reality - Life Stories of Lithuanian Women, 1945 - 1970*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2010, pp. 72-74.

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- <sup>65</sup> Fitzpatrick, Shelia, Late Stalinism in historical perspective, in Fürst, Juliane, *Late Stalinist Russia - Society between reconstruction and reinvention*, London: Routledge, 2006, p. 271.
- <sup>66</sup> Hosking, *Rulers and Victims - The Russians and the Soviet Union*, p. 221.
- <sup>67</sup> Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago*, vol. 3., (trans. H. T. Willetts), London: Bodley Head, 1976, pp. 235, 240.
- <sup>68</sup> Tammer, Enno, 'Õhkihamemm': kava me seda pronkssõdurit kardame!, *Postimees*, 27 May 2006. As cited by Brüggemann and Kasekamp in, *The Politics of History and the 'War of Monuments' in Estonia*, p. 433.
- <sup>69</sup> Brüggemann and Kasekamp, *The Politics of History and the 'War of Monuments' in Estonia*, p. 428.
- <sup>70</sup> Koselleck, Reinhart, *Die Transformation der politischen Totenmale im 20. Jahrhundert*, Vienna: Institut für die Wissenschaften vom Menschen, 2002, p. 73.
- <sup>71</sup> Conquest, Robert, *Nation Killers: the Soviet deportation of nationalities*, London: Macmillan, 1970; Nekrich, Aleksandr, M., *Punished Peoples: the deportation and fate of Soviet minorities at the end of the Second World War*, (trans. George Saunders), New York, NY: Norton, 1978.
- <sup>72</sup> Werth, Alexander, *Russia - The Post-War Years*, London, Robert Hale & Company, 1971, p. 17.
- <sup>73</sup> Hosking, Geoffrey, *Rulers and Victims - The Russians in the Soviet Union*, p. 222.
- <sup>74</sup> Fedyshyn, Oleh, S., The Role of Russians Among the New, Unified 'Soviet People', in Allworth, Edward, (ed.), *Ethnic Russia in the USSR: The Dilemma of Dominance*, New York, NY: Pergamon, 1980, p. 156.
- <sup>75</sup> Hosking, Geoffrey, *Rulers and Victims - The Russians in the Soviet Union*, p. 223.
- <sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 222.
- <sup>77</sup> Ellman, Michael and Maksudov, S., Soviet Deaths in the Great Patriotic War: A Note, *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol. 46, no. 4, 1993, p. 671.
- <sup>78</sup> Tumarkin, Nina, The war of remembrance, in Stites, Richard (ed.), *Culture and Entertainment in Wartime Russia*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995, p. 197.
- <sup>79</sup> Barber, John., and Harrison Mark., *The Soviet Home Front, 1941 - 1945: A Social and Economic History of the USSR in World War II*, London: Longman, 1991, p. 40.
- <sup>80</sup> Brezhnev then proceeded to contradict himself by acknowledging the 'new problems and tasks' that nationality relations continued to pose in the USSR. Connor, Walker, Soviet Policies Toward the Non-Russian Peoples in Theoretical and Historical Perspective: What Gorbachev Inherited, in Motyl, Alexander, (ed.), *The Post-Soviet Nations*, New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1992, p. 43.
- <sup>81</sup> The creation of a 'new historical community' was first announced by Khrushchev in 1957 but became a hallmark of Brezhnev's nationalities policy. Valery Tishkov aptly describes how the emphasis on 'Soviet socialist culture', despite its emphasis on Russian as a common means of communication, provoked objections on the part of many Russian nationalist intellectuals. 'To many of them, it signified a 'loss of one's roots' and abandoning the traditions of Russian folk (primarily peasant) culture. What was considered Russian by the non-Russian intellectuals meant 'Sovietisation' for Russian nationalists. This dissent served as a major cause behind the emergence of a Russian national patriotic movement, which in many aspects was the political

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- analogue of ethno-nationalist movements among other nationalities of the Soviet Union'. Tishkov, Valery, *Ethnicity, Nationalism and Conflict in and after the Soviet Union: The Mind Aflame*, Oslo: International Peace Research Institute, 1997, p. 87.
- <sup>82</sup> O'Connor, Kevin, *Intellectuals and Apparatchiks: Russian Nationalism and the Gorbachev Revolution*, Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2006, pp. 63-65.
- <sup>83</sup> Hosking, Geoffrey, *Rulers and Victims - The Russians in the Soviet Union*, p. 223.
- <sup>84</sup> Andreeva, Nina., I Cannot Waive Principles, *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, March 13, 1988.
- <sup>85</sup> See Hyland, William G., Brezhnev and Beyond, *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 58, no. 1, 1979, pp. 51-66.
- <sup>86</sup> Acton, Edward., and Stableford, Tom., *The Soviet Union - A Documentary History - Volume 2, 1939-1991*, Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2007, p. 386.
- <sup>87</sup> The principles of perestroika: a revolution in thought and action, *Pravda*, April 6, 1988.
- <sup>88</sup> Hosking, Geoffrey, *Rulers and Victims - The Russians in the Soviet Union*, p. 374.
- <sup>89</sup> Gromov A. V., and Kuzin, O. S., *Neformalii: kto est' kto?*, Moscow: Mysl', 1990, p. 107.
- <sup>90</sup> Hochschild, Adam, *The Unquiet Ghost - Russians Remember Stalin*, London: Serpent's Tail, 1995, p. 4.
- <sup>91</sup> Andreeva, Nina., I Cannot Waive Principles.
- <sup>92</sup> Graham Smith, Introduction: The Baltic Nations and National Self-Determination, in Smith, Graham, (ed)., *The Baltic States - The National Self-Determination of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania*, London: Macmillan Press, 1996, p. 1.
- <sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, p. XI.
- <sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>95</sup> The chain stretched from Tallinn in the north to Vilnius in the south, going through Latvia and its capital Riga - a distance of over 600 kilometres. - <https://blogs.it.ox.ac.uk/runcoco/2013/08/19/baltic-way/> - accessed on 20.08.2013.
- <sup>96</sup> Verbatim translation of Yakovlev's speech to the Second Congress of USSR People's Deputies on December 23, 1989, published in *FBIS: Soviet Union*, December 28, 1989, p. 248. As cited by Dreifelds, Juris, in *Latvia in Transition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 35.
- <sup>97</sup> See Taagepera, Rein, *Estonia - Return to Independence*, Oxford: Western Press, 1993, pp. 153-4, 172.
- <sup>98</sup> <https://blogs.it.ox.ac.uk/runcoco/2013/08/19/baltic-way/> - accessed on 20.08.2013.
- <sup>99</sup> Slezkine, Yuri, The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism, p. 452.
- <sup>100</sup> Klemeshev, A. N., and Fedorov, G. M., *Obrazovaniie i regionalnoi razvitiie*, Kaliningrad, 1998, p. 50; Federov G. M., and Zverev, Yu. M., *Kaliningradskiiie alternativy*, Kaliningrad, 1995, p. 102. As cited by Oldberg, I., in The Emergence of a Regional Identity in the Kaliningrad Oblast, *Cooperation and Conflict*, vol. 35, no. 3, 2000, p. 271.

## INSTEAD OF A LITERATURE REVIEW

### Our region is unique

*... After all, the population of our region is unique: it was created by natives from nearly all corners of our huge country. Here various tenors of life, customs and traditions, intertwined - especially during the first years when contact existed with the inhabitants of the former East Prussia.*

*Yuri Kostiashev<sup>1</sup>*

Symptomatic of a wider trend during the *glasnost*' years towards reconsidering the Soviet historical narrative, one of the first large-scale research projects regarding the transition of German Königsberg into Soviet Kaliningrad emerged from within Kaliningrad itself. Following the creation of the Association of Oral History by the Kaliningrad State University's History Department in 1988, Yuri Kostiashev and his colleagues embarked on an ambitious project to supplement the material available in the State Party Archives relating to the region's history. Unsatisfied with simply the 'history of plants and collective farms, five-year plans and initiatives, yields of milk, etc.,' the association sought to shed light on the more human elements of their collective past:

who were the people that arrived here in the now long since passed post-war years, who came to master this new periphery? What forced them to leave their native places and go to this foreign land? What were they met with? What did they see here? How were their relations with those who remained in the area until the end of the 1940s - the

local German population? How did they live, work, rest, raise children, what did they dream of? And what do these veterans think of the history of our region - the most western region of Russia, today?<sup>2</sup>

As the Association of Oral History understood it, the answers to such questions relied on the attestations of those surviving eyewitnesses who could still recount first-hand what it was like to live in Kaliningrad during those early years. To this end, over the course of four years - spanning the collapse of the system that had fostered the region's creation - Kostiashev and his colleagues conducted more than 320 interviews with first-wave settlers, (those who had arrived in Kaliningrad between 1945-1950). Participants spanned across fifty-one areas of both city and oblast. The interviews were then transcribed and cross-referenced with archival documents, certificates and other eye-witness accounts in a bid to ascertain the validity of the information gathered. As such, Kostiashev was able to collate an extremely rich collection of contemporary accounts that detail the everyday realities which faced the early Soviet pioneers upon their arrival in this foreign land: their experiences of recruitment; relocation; first impressions; finding a job; and, ultimately, making a home. Yet, despite the fruitfulness of his research - and indeed a largely positive response from local publishing houses - in the contemporary political turbulence of the early 1990s the work was deemed too 'delicate' for publication.<sup>3</sup>

The project was thus shelved until 1997, when Kostiashev's research again became subject to renewed interest. Having attracted the attention of G. I. Shcheglova, the then Chair of the Archive Committee, a publication contract to print 10,000 copies of the work was agreed. However, despite such promising developments, it soon became apparent that Shcheglova's support was not universally shared. Following a promotional campaign in the local media advertising the book's forthcoming release, debates once again emerged regarding the sensitive nature of the material. As Kostiashev explained 'one of the high-ranking officials of the regional administration at the time, who was responsible for culture, requested an imposition. Their verdict of the book said: 'In the current form it cannot be published. It demands radical modification.'" Indeed, the full list of amendments required for publication were substantial, including the exclusion of around eighty fragments of text and the withdrawal of a number of photographs deemed to be a 'darkening' of the region's past. Kostiashev starkly refused to fulfil these requirements, resulting in the collapse of the publishing agreement.<sup>4</sup>

Of particular sensitivity were the accounts that described the interactions between the newly arriving Soviet settlers and the former residents of Königsberg - especially those that detailed the lives of the 130,000 former East

Prussian inhabitants who had remained in the region after the war, and who were subject to forced deportation in 1948. With the Soviet historical narrative having treated the land as *terra nullius* prior to the formation of Kaliningrad in 1946, such exchanges proved difficult to reconcile. Yet - somewhat ironically - the very aspects that deemed the work too controversial for publication within Russia, conversely resulted in a keen interest in the work abroad. Tellingly, Kostiashev's research was first published in translation in Germany by Eckhard Matthes in 1999, with publication following in Poland a year later. By comparison, the work did not appear in Russia until 2002, when a small circulation edition was published by the St. Petersburg publishing house, 'Belvedere', following support from A. Tereshchuk - the editor-in-chief of the historical magazine 'Novyi vek' - as well as from Kaliningrad State University. The university subsequently also published an extended print run of a new and expanded edition in 2003 - fifteen years after the formation of the Association of Oral History that had pioneered the project.<sup>5</sup>

The fact that Kostiashev's research first found publication in Germany is indicative of a wider trend related to the interest in Germany towards the region. Beginning in the 1990s, hundreds of thousands of German 'nostalgia tourists' began capitalising on the relaxed travel restrictions that accompanied the collapse of the Soviet Union, finding themselves once again able to visit

the former lands of East Prussia. Although largely limited to those who had direct historical ties to the region, this renewed interest in Kaliningrad had repercussions within the domestic sphere also.<sup>6</sup> In 1994, for instance, two German MEPs challenged a report commissioned by the European Parliament which, acting on the recommendations of Magdalene Hoff - the then Chairperson of the European Parliament's Delegation for the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) - and scholar Heinz Timmerman, advocated that Kaliningrad's status as a Russian territory should remain settled. The MEPs instead suggested that European Union finances should be used to facilitate the region's return to Germany.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, time and again Kaliningrad has found itself the subject of widespread coverage in the German media. The year 2004, in particular, proved to be an especially newsworthy - playing host not just to the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Immanuel Kant - but also, significantly, to the accession of Poland and Lithuania into the European Union. As Stefan Berger and Paul Holtom have argued, 'the latter development transformed the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad into an EU problem, bringing it much closer to Germany than it had been before.'<sup>8</sup>

With 2005 also marking the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of World War Two and the 750<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formation of Königsberg coming a year later, Kaliningrad's increased geopolitical relevance to Germany also began to be

reflected culturally. There emerged ‘... a period of renewed fascination with Germans as victims of World War Two, as seen in publications such as Günter Grass’ novella *Crabwalk (Im Krebsgang)* on the 1945 sinking of the *Wilhelm Gustloff*, Jörg Friedrich’s study of the bombing of German cities, as well as an increasing media focus upon the ethnic cleansing of Germans from East Central Europe and the rape of German women by Soviet soldiers.’ Consequently, ‘calls to incorporate the former German territories of Eastern Europe into the memory landscape of contemporary Germany became more widespread.’<sup>9</sup> Indeed, beginning with the translation and publication of Kostiashev’s research by Eckhard Matthes in Germany in 1999, German scholarship has continued to play a defining role in piecing together the lost ‘memory landscape’ of East Prussia - not least, that pertaining to the fate of its former capital, Königsberg.

In this context, it is perhaps unsurprising that the publication of Kostiashev’s research proved sensitive in Germany also. In its review of Matthes’ translation, for instance, *Der Spiegel* ran with the headline ‘*Kaliningrad - ‘Es war die reine Hölle’’* (Kaliningrad - it was pure hell).<sup>10</sup> And made much of the censorship that prohibited the work’s publication in the region itself:

The relationship of the new colonists with the last of the ancestral population remains a ‘conflict prone topic’. Thus, the authors,

according to the Lüneburg Eastern European historian, Matthes, 'inevitably had to touch upon taboos', which have not been allowed to be touched within the Soviet Union for decades.

Russian publishing companies and authorities therefore responded critically to the presentation of the book's manuscript. Kaliningraders still cannot read about their roots from within the landscape.<sup>11</sup>

Nevertheless, the accessibility of Kostiashev's wealth of research - coupled with the keen interest in the region detailed above - has facilitated Germany's continued fascination with Kaliningrad.

Consequently, much of the contemporary scholarship regarding the transition from Königsberg to Kaliningrad has thus been undertaken by German scholars. In general terms, focus has centred upon the physical changes to the built environment that accompanied this transition, as well as on the processes and challenges associated with constructing a new Soviet settlement from the former fascist stronghold - especially those related to questions of identity. Of particular note are Bert Hoppe's *Auf dem Trümmern von Königsberg* and Per Brodersen's *Die Stadt im Westen: Wie Königsberg Kaliningrad wurde*. Taken together, they form the most valuable studies of the longer-term post-war Sovietisation of the city - from the late 1940s to the early 1970s. Both, in different ways, deal with centre-periphery relations, the long-term battle to

make a 'normal' Soviet city in light of its German past, and the development of a regional identity.<sup>12</sup> More specifically, Hoppe provides an examination of the agency of individuals and local officials in the redevelopment of the region - drawing from examples of architecture and town planning to document the ideological and appropriation strategies adopted in the region.<sup>13</sup> Hoppe further details the vast problems faced by the Party in seeking to implement these strategies: the stark lack of resources; the scarcity of skilled workers; and the disunity between the central planning initiatives in Moscow and local implementation, concluding that the attempt to transform German Königsberg into Soviet Kaliningrad was nothing short of a failure.<sup>14</sup>

Brodersen also takes the transition of the city as his starting point, focussing his attention more on the cultural and social elements of this process of appropriation: the creation of new discourses; identity building; and the forming of traditions during the period 1945 - 1970. Particular attention is given to the process of replacing German toponyms with Soviet symbolism. Brodersen evidences that the renaming of streets, towns, and ultimately both the city and oblast happened slowly, with little regard in Moscow as to local suggestions nor scholarly thought. He suggests that interest in Moscow towards the region waned after the initial occupation of the Red Army - with limited attempts to improve the material situation faced by the new settlers.

In addition, significant focus is placed on the cultural restructuring of the region - detailing the logistical and ideological difficulties of removing German landmarks and monuments at a time when both resources and plausible substitutes were limited. Like Hoppe, Brodersen draws the conclusion that the Sovietisation of Kaliningrad was unsuccessful, closing his work with a complaint lodged by an 'ordinary citizen' and detailing the woeful shortcomings by the Soviet administration in its implementation of infrastructural and regional development.<sup>15</sup>

Markus Podehl's 2015 work, *Architektura Kaliningrada - Wie aus Königsberg Kaliningrad wurde*, has too sought to further expand on the research of Hoppe and Brodersen (indeed, directly referencing the title of the latter in his own publication). With both former studies directed towards the period 1945 - 1970, Podehl's research instead focusses on the architectural developments that transformed the region during the 1970s and 1980s. It is, furthermore, a self-proclaimed attempt to '... make the forms of Kaliningrad's architecture more intelligible from their respective historical conditions and intentions.'<sup>16</sup> Through an interdisciplinary approach combining spatial and urban planning, landscape architecture and historical approaches, Podehl seeks to evidence the continuities in urban planning between Königsberg's pre-war architecture

and that of post-war Kaliningrad.<sup>17</sup> Despite its ambitious intentions, however, the work has received a mixed reception, not least, from Brodersen himself:

... As impressive as the first impression of the lavishly equipped, proud 1.2-kilogram heavy volume with 451 illustrations may be, it quickly vanishes in the face of a very descriptive account of the history of Kaliningrad. [...] The fruitful approach of the visual in turn leads to absurdity: the illustration of the book, which in combination with the text is intended to contribute in a new way to a deeper understanding of the city's history, kills the reader in its overflowing abundance and lack of treatment - and thus falls asleep quite often for this reason. Planning drafts for Soviet inner cities are reduced to illegible small format (pp. 96-97), and illustrations elsewhere are hardly recognisable. Photographs of building details are often unexecuted and of little significance [...] Conclusion: The claim to 'pioneering character' (p. 9) and the rather foggy result of the work stand in striking contrast to one another. This is a pity.<sup>18</sup>

Vasilijus Safronovas has, likewise, noted that, despite the proclamations set forth by the title, *Architektura Kaliningrada* (the architecture of Kaliningrad) - and indeed claims made by Podehl that he is the first to define it - the work falls short of providing a definitive clarification of what the specific characteristics that demarcate the region's built environment actually are. As Safronovas rightly asserts:

... one could ask what the difference [is] between *architektura Kaliningrada* and, for example, *architektura Minska*, *architektura Narvy*, or the architecture of any other city. Ambitions to radically

transform city centres manifested themselves in most cities of the USSR and the socialist bloc after the war. Similar combinations of urban structures are characteristic of more than one city. Probably the juxtaposition of Kaliningrad and other cities of the former East Prussia, and, no less importantly, the clearly revealed relationship between changes in urban planning in Kaliningrad and the demographic and social transformations, would have allowed for a better exploration of the specificity of Kaliningrad.<sup>19</sup>

As such, these aspects of Kaliningrad's history are still ripe for further investigation.

Whilst the contribution of German scholarship is significant, it is not exclusive. Kaliningrad has too been the focus of a number of English-language projects, with research broadly split between post-war and post-Soviet histories of the region. With regard to the former, Nicole Eaton's contribution is significant. Beginning her study in 1938 and following the transition of German Königsberg into Soviet Kaliningrad through the war years up to 1948, Eaton places a particular focus on the everyday experiences of the region's inhabitants during the brief period from 1944 to 1948 in which both the old German inhabitants and the new Soviet settlers co-existed in the region. Set against the more traditional studies of Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Russia, Eaton seeks to document these years 'from below' - as the entangled history of two

ideologies, two people, and one place. Although her research does not span beyond 1948, Eaton hypothesises that the Soviet annexation of Kaliningrad resulted in the formation of a 'Russian national homeland', complete with a Slavic myth of origin and ethnic requirements for membership.<sup>20</sup>

Post-Soviet histories of the region are, given the relatively contemporary nature of its disintegration, still notably limited. A significant intervention, however, is provided by Stefan Berger and Paul Holtom. Drawing on a range of materials - including media reports, books, films and interviews conducted in both Germany and Kaliningrad - their research offers a detailed account of the events and celebrations organised to mark the 750<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of Königsberg, held in Kaliningrad in 2005. Particular focus is placed on the various - and indeed often conflicting - identity discourses that accompanied the anniversary. The contrasting political symbolism attached to the celebratory events is discussed both in terms of the Russian national (federal) and regional (Kaliningrad) responses, as well as in terms of the German reaction. The German response to the anniversary celebrations is too considered in the wider context of contemporary discourses regarding German national identity - particularly in relation to the role of German expellee organisations in influencing how Königsberg is currently understood in

Germany. Their primary conclusions relate to the region's ability to serve as an intermediary for Russian-German reconciliation.<sup>21</sup>

Kaliningrad's relationship to its pre-Soviet past has also been the subject of study in other disciplines. Of particular noteworthiness is the work of the sociologist Olga Sezneva, whose research places a strong emphasis on the intersection between the built environment and culture. Addressing the ways in which traces and spaces of the past were reworked or even effaced - both physically and discursively - in Kaliningrad during the Soviet period, Sezneva stresses a disjunction between the official and popular versions of the city's history. A specific emphasis is placed on the way in which imagination was deployed in the representation of place. In the official version, Sezneva asserts, Kaliningrad's past was re-identified with the propagandistic imagery of the Soviet Union. In everyday discourse, however, Kaliningraders developed a different version, oriented towards Western Europe and drawing on Königsberg's German heritage. Without the ability for ordinary people to actually recall what life was like in Königsberg, however, Sezneva argues that memory was supplanted by imagination to create a rival version of place to that offered by the official Soviet narrative.<sup>22</sup>

Expanding on Sezneva's research, Edward Saunders has too sought to analyse the ways in which the memory of Königsberg has been represented in both the Cold War and post-Soviet cultural-political contexts of Kaliningrad. Focussing specifically on the representation of Königsberg-Kaliningrad in literature and photography during the period 1945-2010, he suggests that, far from having been forgotten, Königsberg has continued to remain a reference point in both Kaliningrad and in Germany - despite its disappearance from the map of Europe following World War Two. Arguing that the continued 'imagining' of Königsberg is primarily an act of nostalgia, Saunders departs from Sezneva's conclusions by suggesting that - rather than providing a mechanism through which to situate the city into the wider European community - the persistence of 'imagining' instead provokes a sense of contested space. Saunders concludes that the 'double city' at the heart of this contestation, most clearly symbolised by Kant, serves to demonstrate Germany's cultural disorientation after 1945 - both in terms of the place of the individual in history and the role of the imaginary caused by the suppression of history.<sup>23</sup>

In addition, research emerging from the Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University (IKBFU) - the former Kaliningrad State University - appears to once again be paving the way to deeper understandings of the people that inhabit the region. For instance, writing for a 2016 report published by the Baltic

Development Forum, entitled *Facets of Identity*, Ilya Dementiev - an Associate Professor at the Institute for Humanities, IKBFU - has started to reflect on what 'identity' means in Kaliningrad in the twenty-first century. Considered through the lens of Leonhard Euler's famous mathematical problem relating to the seven bridges of Königsberg<sup>24</sup>, Dementiev raises the question '... how can we reconcile the historical experience of all the peoples who used to inhabit former East Prussia with the ones who live in the modern Kaliningrad Region? Can we freely walk along the bridges binding us with the past and find the common way to the future?'<sup>25</sup> Reminiscent of Kostishov's oral histories, Dementiev - having been born and raised in the region himself - provides a unique account of his personal reflections and experiences of how identity is experienced in Kaliningrad.

One particularly pertinent anecdote describes Dementiev's attendance at a meeting of villagers of the Gavrilovo settlement (Ozersk district). The origin of the attendants ranged from Russian settlers who had arrived in Kaliningrad from Kirgizia and Kazakhstan in 1990, to Armenians and refugees from the Shaumyan district of Azerbaijan who had arrived two years later. Yet, regardless of their place of origin, Kaliningrad had become the place they called home. As Dementiev recalls, 'it was widely known even before that many wanted to move to the region, as it was a 'no man's land' in a sense [sic]

that everyone was a migrant here.<sup>26</sup> This notion should not be understated. As Kostiashev was also aware, Kaliningrad's population is unique - comprised of citizens from across nearly the entirety of the former Soviet Union.<sup>27</sup> Indeed, beginning with the generation born to those first-wave settlers who arrived in the region after World War Two, inhabitants of Kaliningrad lacked any meaningful common heritage with one another other than their mutual investment in the successful construction of a new Soviet homeland from the ruins of Königsberg.

As such, more so than anywhere else in the USSR, a regional case study examining Bolshevik policy towards questions of 'identity' - and specifically towards the promotion of 'a-nationalism' - seems fundamental to understanding the uniqueness of contemporary Kaliningrad. However, such a study remains noticeably absent from the current scholarship. With focus largely oriented towards the transformation of German Königsberg into Soviet Kaliningrad, or else the revival of the region's former East-Prussian heritage, the relationship between post-Soviet Kaliningrad and its Soviet past remains under-researched. What is more, at least for local scholars, the subject continues to prove contentious. As Dementiev notes:

... Living behind the facades of the German bastions, we are used to ignoring the fact that grey *khrushchoba* [sic] actually prevail over the gilt church domes. But the region is virtually the most Soviet one. People were coming here after losing their homes because they could live in the USSR. Armenian, Georgian and Azerbaijani people wanted to feel at home here - in Kaliningrad they are the same 'locals' as the Russian refugees from Central Asia or the Soviet Army ex-servicemen from the Baltic States. They were just like the rest of us, living here in the second or third generation. This area legally belongs to Russia, but spiritually - to all the citizens of the former USSR, all the grandchildren of junior sergeant Gamtsemlidze [sic]. It's the last splinter of the 'indivisible union' (as was proclaimed by the USSR national anthem) that got lost in this corner like a piece of amber with an inclusion that can often be found on the Baltic shores. Or maybe like Noah's Ark amid the waves of the ocean and its door are wide open [sic] to every living thing of all flesh.

But here we speak not of jewellery... but of living people.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Kostiashev, Yu. V., *Vostochnaia Prussia glazami sovetskikh pereselentsev: Pervye gody Kaliningradskoi oblasti v vospominaniyakh i dokumentakh*, Kaliningrad: Izdatel'stvo Kaliningradskogo gosuniversiteta, 2003, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>6</sup> Berger, Stefan, and Holtom, Paul, Locating Kaliningrad and Königsberg in Russian and German Collective Identity Discourses and Political Symbolism in the 750<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations of 2005, *Journal of Baltic Studies*, vol. 39, no. 1, 2008, p. 25.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-15118839.html> - accessed 11.01.2016.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Hoppe, Bert, *Auf den Trümmern von Königsberg/ Kaliningrad 1946-1970*, Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2000; Brodersen, Per, *Die Stadt im Westen: Wie Königsberg Kaliningrad wurde*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008.

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- <sup>13</sup> Diefendorf, Jeffry M., (Review), Hoppe, Bert, Auf dem Trümmern von Königsberg: Kaliningrad, 1946-1970, *Slavic Review*, vol. 60, no. 4, 2001, p. 866.
- <sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 866-867.
- <sup>15</sup> Hackmann, Jörg, (Review), Brodersen, Per, Die Stadt im Westen: Wie Königsberg Kaliningrad wurde. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008, *Journal of Modern History*, vol. 82, no. 4, 2010, p. 1000.
- <sup>16</sup> Brodersen, Per, (Review) - Podehl, Markus, Architektura Kaliningrada - Wie aus Königsberg Kaliningrad wurde, *JGO*, vol. 64, no. 2, 2016, p. 329.
- <sup>17</sup> Safronovas, Vasilijus, (Review), Podehl, Markus, Architektura Kaliningrada - Wie aus Königsberg Kaliningrad wurde, *Acta Historica*, Universitatis Klapidensis, 2015., pp. 218 - 219.
- <sup>18</sup> Brodersen, (Review), Architektura Kaliningrada, pp. 329 - 330.
- <sup>19</sup> Safronovas, Vasilijus, (Review), *Architektura Kaliningrada*, pp. 219 - 220.
- <sup>20</sup> Eaton, Nicole, *Exclave: Politics, Ideology and Everyday Life in Königsberg-Kaliningrad, 1928-1948*, unpublished PhD thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 2013.
- <sup>21</sup> Berger, Stefan, *Kaliningrad in Europa: Nachbarschaftliche Perspektiven nach dem Ende de Kalten Krieges*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2010; Berger, Stefan, How to be Russian with a Difference? Kaliningrad and its German past *Geopolitics*, vol. 15, no. 2, 2010, pp. 345-366; Berger, Stefan and Holtom, Paul, Locating Kaliningrad and Königsberg in Russian and German Collective Identity Discourses and Political Symbolism in the 750<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations of 2005, *Journal of Baltic Studies*, vol. 39, no. 1, 2008, pp. 15-37; Holtom, Paul, The Kaliningrad Test in Russia-EU Relations, *Perspectives on European Politics and Society*, vol. 6, no.1, 2005, pp. 31-54.
- <sup>22</sup> Sezneva, Olga, Architecture of Descent: Historical Reconstructions and the Politics of Belonging in Kaliningrad, the Former Königsberg, *Journal of Urban History*, vol. 39, no. 4, 2013, pp. 765 - 787; Sezneva, Olga, Living in the Russian Present with a German Past: The Problems of Identity in the City of Kaliningrad, pp. 47-64, in Crowley, David and Reid, Susan E., (eds.), *Socialist Spaces: Sites of Everyday Life in Eastern Bloc*, Oxford: Bloomsbury, 2002; Sezneva, Olga, Modalities of Self-understanding, Identification and Representation in the Post-1991 Kaliningrad. A Critical View, in Berger, Stefan, *Kaliningrad in Europa*, pp. 35-57.
- <sup>23</sup> Saunders, Edward I. J., *Imagining Königsberg, 1945 - 2010*, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 2013.
- <sup>24</sup> Seven bridges formerly linked the Pregel with the Old City of Königsberg - connecting the northern and southern parts of the city, as well as the two islands Kneiphof and Lomse. The task was to walk along all of the bridges, crossing each only once. In 1736, Leonhard Euler, a Swiss mathematician in the service of Catherine the Great, proved that the walk was impossible to complete. The methods he applied to solve this puzzle helped to pioneer the development of both graph theory and topology.
- <sup>25</sup> Dementiev, Ilya, Bridges to nowhere? Identity of the residents of the Kaliningrad region in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, in Henningsen, Bernd, (ed.), *Facets of Identity - the Baltic Sea Region and Beyond*, Copenhagen: Baltic Development Forum, 2013, p. 60.
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

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<sup>27</sup> Kostiashev, Yu. V., *Vostochnaia Prussia glazami sovetskikh pereselentsev: Pervye gody Kaliningradskoi oblasti v vospominaniyakh i dokumentakh*, p. 3.

<sup>28</sup> Dementiev, Ilya, *Bridges to nowhere*, p. 60.

## CHAPTER ONE

### The banner of the Soviet Union is now forever established

*The decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the USSR of July 4, 1946 has formed the new Kaliningrad region as part of the RSFSR, which bears the name of the great son of the Russian people, the outstanding statesman Mikhail Ivanovich Kalinin. The Kaliningrad region has great historical, international and educational value for our country. Over the city of Königsberg, nowadays Kaliningrad, and the surrounding districts of the former East Prussia, from where the hordes of Kaiser Wilhelm and Hitler's armoured gangs began their predatory campaigns into Russia, the banner of the Soviet Union is now forever established... Now there are no more dangers of German invasion from the West, and the Soviet Union has here a reliable stronghold.<sup>1</sup>*

One of the immediate upheavals faced by the Soviets after the occupation of Königsberg in the summer of 1945 was how to approach the region's German heritage. Whilst the German built environment - scattered across the region amongst the rubble and ruins left by war - was envisaged to be paved over and rebuilt as a model socialist city, the continued existence of German town and street names presented a different type of challenge. Although the region's symbolic value was clear, the annexation of German Königsberg failed to sit comfortably within the Soviet historical narrative - having neither undergone revolution 'from below', nor having provided the liberation of an oppressed people from the vices of capitalism or fascism. Thus, when the instruction came in November 1945 to rid the city of the names of 'fascist thugs, their leaders and other enemies of the people...'<sup>2</sup>, it was not immediately clear to

the provisional military administration as to what they should be replaced with; nor how best to implement this task in a manner that could effectively assist in the sovietisation of the region. Indeed, initially at least, street names were replaced not with new Soviet names at all, but, rather, simply with their pre-1933 German alternatives: 'General-Litzmannstraße, for example, once again became Stresemannstraße'.<sup>3</sup>

Even as preparations began to prescribe new Soviet names for the city's streets, the proposals offered by the provisional military administration remained distinctly pragmatic in scope. By and large, they continued to provide direct Russian translations of the German originals: Steindammstrasse (stone embankment) became Kamennaia (stone); Altergrabenstrasse (old ditch) became Starokanavnaia; Langestrasse (long, although possibly also a surname) became Dlinnaia; Gartenstrasse (garden) became Sadovyi Pereulok; Poststrasse (post) became Pochtovaia; Hafenstrasse (port) became Portovaia; even Soldatenweg (soldier) preserved its meaning as Soldatskaia - although presumably referring to soldiers of a different army. When direct translations were not possible, streets were often named after significant buildings in their vicinity - such as was the case of 'Drummstrasse (a surname), which became Klinicheskaia (clinic) and Augusta-Viktoria-Allee, which became Gospital'naia (hospital)'. Likewise, German street names that dictated specific cities or

regions within Germany were simply renamed after Soviet cities instead:

Wartenburgstrasse became Gorodskaja, (city); Lübekstrasse became

Novgorodskaja, and Tapiauwerstrasse became Belgorodskaja.<sup>4</sup>

Early attempts to impose a new Soviet impression onto the East Prussian landscape were further hampered by the limited resources available to actually implement the (already lacklustre) suggestions provided by the provisional military administration. Indeed:

Soviet administrators, new settlers, and German civilians [continued] to use the German names for most streets in the city... In some cases, even the so called fascist names remained in use. In a report from June 1946, the architect Timokhin still referred, without any degree of apparent self-consciousness, to General-Litzmann-Strasse.<sup>5</sup>

Yet, with little direction from Moscow, the names suggested by the provisional military administration faced little opposition, and, by August 1946, many had become permanent fixtures in the city. Although there had been some amendments during their implementation by the new Civilian Affairs Administration, these largely consisted only of replacing direct German translations with more general names: for example, 'Selkestrasse (a surname), having been recommended by the provisional military administration to be

renamed Sel'skaia (village), was instead changed to Malyi Pereulok (little alley); likewise, 'Holländerbaumstrasse, which first became Gol[[]]andskaia, became Pribrezhnaia (Riverside)'. But, whilst such revisions may have helped distance the region from its German topography, they did little to promote Soviet presence in the region. Indeed, there remained noticeably few attempts to engage in cultural myth-making during the early renaming campaigns of Soviet Königsberg.<sup>6</sup>

The incorporation of the region into the RSFSR and the renaming of Königsberg as Kaliningrad on July 4, 1946, however, signalled a noticeable shift in Moscow's focus towards the region. Although street names for much of the city had already been implemented, settlements outside the city were yet to be allocated new titles. Here, the RSFSR Council of Ministers played a much larger role, adopting an approach reflective of a more general shift in Soviet policy that had seen 'the naming and renaming of streets, squares, and parks' become 'an integral part of the post-war programme of urban agitation and identification'.<sup>7</sup>

Indeed, similar programmes took place across the USSR. In his research into the development of urban identity in Soviet Sevastopol, for instance, Karl

Qualls notes that post-war replanning in the city sought to resurrect 'a unique, local character to which residents could attach their ideals and aspirations' - heralding a 'new emphasis on local identity, historical depth and national pride'.<sup>8</sup> In Sevastopol, this notion, somewhat counterintuitively, manifested itself through the revival of the city's pre-revolutionary names - deemed more reflective of the city's character than their post-revolutionary counterparts. For instance, a street named in honour of Karl Marx once again 'reverted to Bol'shaia Morskaia (Big Naval) Street': 'Marx, of course, had no direct link to the city, only to its ruling ideology' - Bol'shaia Morskaia Street, however, to a far greater extent, 'carried the city's image as a naval, both military and commercial, port'.<sup>9</sup>

A local focus too informed the preparatory work of the RSFSR Council of Ministers, which was keen to use the renaming process in Kaliningrad to establish historical ties between the USSR and the former lands of East Prussia. Indeed, Stalin had already hinted at such links during the Tehran Conference in December 1943, stating that '... historically speaking, this is ancient Slavic soil.'<sup>10</sup> Likewise, a similar rhetoric was also utilised in militaristic propaganda throughout the war. As such, scholars from the Academy of Sciences in Moscow were requested to identify traces of ancient Russian-Slavic heritage in East Prussia that could be used to further reinforce this claim.

A. G. Kuman, a senior research associate at the Academy of Sciences, was one such scholar to respond to the request. Writing to suggest that the East Prussian and German place names had clear Slavic origins, he noted that there were several such names that '...deserve[d] to be preserved'. For, 'in them, despite their German transcription, the Lithuanian, and perhaps Slavic basis ... can be restored in the correct national pronunciation'. The village of Niemonen - lying on the Niemen river, for instance, was deemed by Kuman to be 'undoubtedly of Lithuanian origin' and, in his opinion, likely indicated the village's 'true old Lithuanian / Slavic name'.<sup>11</sup>

By far the most convincing argument for the existence of an old Slavic presence in the region, however, came from the Lithuanian Professor P. Pakarklis - a specialist on the Lithuanian people's struggle against the Teutonic Knights. In a report dated February 12, 1947, Pakarklis asserted that, prior to the arrival of the Teutonic Order in 1255, the territory had been inhabited 'exclusively by Lithuanians'. What is more, he claimed, despite the execution and extermination of many local people during the wars with the Teutonic Order and the beginning of German colonisation, through the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries, Lithuanians had continued to account for the

overwhelming majority of the population. Likewise, until 1638, he argued, churches in the districts of Insterburg, Tilsit, Ragnit, Dabrau, Taplauken, Georgenburg, Zalau and Shaken, continued to deliver all prayers and sermons exclusively in Lithuanian. The Lithuanian language had continued to be used in the Friedland, Gerduva and Fischhausen districts - only on the island of Königsberg alone, Pakarklis maintained, had the German language prevailed. Despite the sweeping Germanisation that took place during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, he contended, as late as 1940 in the regions of Tilsit and Rachita - as well as in parts of Labiau, Insterburg, Stalupenen and Goldap - elder generations could only speak Lithuanian, with nearly all middle-aged people also remaining fluent. Even during the years of Nazi terror, prayers and sermons continued to be offered in Lithuanian for the region's older inhabitants.<sup>12</sup>

Like Kuman, Pakarklis put forward a strong advocacy for restoring the region's old Lithuanian names:

I agree... that the Lithuanian names of the Kaliningrad region should not be replaced by new ones. The Lithuanian language is the language of the Union Republic. Many names, such as Istrutis (Insterburg), Velyau, Trapenen, Rachnit and others already appear during the campaigns of the Teutonic Order, with their names linked to the atrocities of the German aggressors of the Middle Ages. Some are

known as names of localities that took an active part in the peasant uprising of 1525. A number of them are widely known in the territory of the present Kaliningrad region. Many of the localities are mentioned in Lithuanian folk songs. Some names [too] have a philological significance for studying the language of Prussian Lithuanians.<sup>13</sup>

Indeed, so overwhelming was the presence of Lithuanian names in the former lands of East Prussia, that Pakarklis also considered it feasible for the region to at some point be incorporated into the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic:

... It is possible that over time, if not the entire Kaliningrad region, then a large part of it will be annexed to the Lithuanian SSR, as an area historically and geographically connected with the Lithuanian SSR. Especially connected to the Lithuanian SSR is that part of the Kaliningrad region called Prussia or Lithuania Minor, particularly those areas in which all adults from the local population can speak Lithuanian and the elderly people cannot even speak any German.<sup>14</sup>

His solution to the renaming question was thus to keep the old Lithuanian names of settlements in the Kaliningrad region, adapting them to the Russian language '... only in the sense that instead of the Lithuanian endings, 'ay' [and] 'i', to use the endings "ee', 's', etc.'<sup>15</sup>

However, not everyone shared Pakarklis' enthusiasm for the preservation of the region's Lithuanian heritage. In particular, V. I. Picheta - the Deputy Director of the Institute of Slavic Studies at the Academy of Sciences of the USSR and a specialist on early Slavic and Baltic history - in a report dated February 20, 1947, offered a more cautious approach to the task at hand. As he saw it:

The question of how to rename the new areas and settlements in the Kaliningrad region is very complex. In this case, you can go one of two ways:

- a) Give the localities new names or
- b) Preserve the old historical Lithuanian denominations to show which tribe this territory belonged to before it was captured by the Germans.

Like Pakarklis, Picheta acknowledged the historical presence of Lithuanians in the region who, 'even according to German data account[ed] for up to 40 per cent of the total population'. However, although he noted it was true that the land had vast historical significance for Lithuanians - serving as a centre of Lithuanian culture between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries - he was also concerned that promoting these facts as signifiers of historic Russian presence in the region might be misguided. Indeed, during the second half of the nineteenth century, he noted, '... Tsarism pursued the Lithuanian culture and forbade the printing of Lithuanian books in Latin letters'.

As such, Picheta was conscious of the fact that the process of renaming ran the risk of ‘... accusations of Russification and the destruction of the remnants of Lithuanian culture and traces of the presence of Lithuanians in the territory’. In particular, ‘... the complete destruction of the Lithuanian toponymy [was] likely to cause unfavourable responses in the United States, where Lithuanians numbered approximately 1 million, most of whom [were] hostile to the USSR’. Thus, in his opinion, whilst ‘... of course, where events of the Great Patriotic War are associated with a particular area, it is necessary to enter the appropriate names there’, for the majority of places, he suggested, it was better to follow in the footsteps of the German invaders, who had ‘... retained the old Lithuanian names, but only gave them German endings. I would do the same, only Russifying them, as suggested by the Lithuanian professor [Pakarklis], one of the rare connoisseurs of the Old Lithuanian language. In this case there will be no place for unnecessary conversations about the Russification of the region and the destruction of traces of Lithuanian settlements’.

Yet, whilst in principle Picheta agreed with Pakarklis’ recommendations - albeit for somewhat more pragmatic reasons - he remained unconvinced by the

ability of the Lithuanian names to reinforce the narrative that this land represented 'ancient Slavic soil'. In fact, he went as far as to imply that they suggested rather the opposite:

I note that this region has never been Slavic. Prussians and Lithuanians - the original populations of the region in different historical moments were never Slavs. This is indicated by the phonetics and morphology of the Lithuanian language.<sup>16</sup>

Indeed, Andrei Smirnov - the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs - similarly noted that, during the testing of the suggested Lithuanian names, a number of Russians had encountered '... disharmony and exceptional difficulty in pronunciation' - even with their endings Russified.<sup>17</sup>

This was, of course, an inconvenient notion - serving to undermine the belief that restoring the old Lithuanian place names could help to establish a link between the region's Soviet present and its pre-German past. Instead, it seemed that not only did the Lithuanian topology of such names lack any Slavic connection; but that promoting the land's Lithuanian heritage - having already incorporated it into the RSFSR - also risked mirroring the colonising characteristics of the former Russian Empire; something the Bolsheviks explicitly opposed. What is more - as colleagues from the Institute of

Ethnography noted - even if it were possible to construct a narrative that reclaimed the territory as old Slavic land, this was not necessarily of value to the new Soviet settlers arriving in the region. Indeed, as a letter jointly penned by P. Tolstov, a professor at the Ethnography Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR; V. I. Chicherov, an associate professor; and P. I. Kushner, an ethnic statistics and cartography student, warned: 'With a sharp change in the national composition of the population, new settlers usually rename the settlements to which they move to themselves: if the official names remain the same, [or if old names are restored], then the names given by the new population will take root in everyday life and become more well-known than the official names'. As such, in their opinion, it was '... advisable to choose names that have semantic significance in the Russian language when renaming'.<sup>18</sup>

Yet, though Picheta's conclusions may have proved inconvenient, they were not without truth. As Lebedev reported, separate investigations also appeared to lend further credence to the notion that reinstating the old Lithuanian names would fail to have the desired impact:

According to a telephone message from the head of the Civil Administration of the Kaliningrad Region, Borisov, and according to

available data of the State Planning Committee of the RSFSR ... citizens of Lithuanian nationality in the Kaliningrad region do not survive.

This is confirmed by a representative of the Council of Ministers of the RSFSR, Comrade V. G. Osipov, who travelled especially to the Kaliningrad region to study this issue....<sup>19</sup>

As a result of the difficulties faced by Russian-speakers in pronouncing the restored Lithuanian names, and indeed with no Lithuanians left in the region, it became clear that, in order to successfully anchor the land to the Soviet project, an alternative means of renaming was required. Picheta had been conscious of this also, and - although warning that opting to overlook the original Lithuanian names ran the risk of appearing explicitly oppressive - had too noted that it was necessary to 'take into account the opinion of the collective farmers who, in the new Russian names, are trying to preserve the memory of their former places of residence'.<sup>20</sup>

Indeed, how to rename the settlements and towns of the new Kaliningrad Oblast in the years following the war had never been solely the preserve of the USSR's top academics. As the ethnographers Tolstov, Chicherov, and Kushner observed, newly arriving citizens had their own ideas as to how to rename the towns and villages in which they settled. Rather than seeking to tie the land to

a fabricated old Slavic past, the new settlers instead drew inspiration from '... the heroes of the Great Patriotic War, civil wars, or according to the names of those settlements and localities from which they had come.'<sup>21</sup> In the ethnographers' opinion - so long as care was taken to ensure that such names '... correspond[ed] to the ethnic and historical requirements', and did not '...ignore the old Slavic names distorted by the Germans, or belittle the memory of great people whose names [might be] given to insignificant settlements,'<sup>22</sup> - this solution provided '... a very successful method of assigning new names...'.<sup>23</sup>

Ultimately, such arguments proved persuasive, with the final selection of names for the 125 settlements of the Kaliningrad region allocating clear weighting to those chosen by the new settlers. As A. G. Kuman summarised:

... The overwhelming majority of [the] new names [are] to be given at the suggestion and the desire of collective farmers [and] new settlers. ... Thus, a number of settlements (and village councils) receive new names based on the place of origin of collective farmers - either by the name of the republic, village, council, [or] city.

For example, at the suggestion of the collective farmers who had settled in Friedrichsberg, the town was renamed Pskov - the origin of the majority of the

town's settlers. Other examples included the renaming of settlements to Mordovia, Novo-Moscow, Yaroslavl and Chuvash - despite nearly a third of the last town's population being of German origin.<sup>24</sup>

As well as names reflecting the new settlers' respective places of origin, a significant number also followed the recommendations offered by the Institute of Ethnography - adopting the names of Soviet heroes who had died in the war. The village of 'Goldbach', for instance, was renamed 'Slavinsk', '... on the grounds that significant battles took place in the vicinity of this village that ended in 'glorious victory.'"<sup>25</sup> Likewise, 'Niemonen' - highlighted by Kuman as a village 'undoubtedly of Lithuanian origin' and with 559 people of a total population of 759 still being of German heritage - was nonetheless renamed 'Golovinko', 'in memory of the Hero of the Soviet Union, V. S. Golovkin, who died in the battles for his homeland and is buried in the Kaliningrad region'.<sup>26</sup> 'Pobeten' was similarly renamed 'Romanovo', 'in memory of the Hero of the Soviet Union P. I. Romanov, who died in the battles for his homeland and is buried in Pobeten', and 'Heiligenbeil' was renamed 'Mamonovo', 'in memory of Colonel Mamonev, who died in battles for his Motherland and was buried in the territory of the village Soviet'.<sup>27</sup> Indeed 'of the top thirty cities and towns, almost half received names connected to the Soviet invasion'.<sup>28</sup> On the other

hand, however - despite Pakarklis' protestations - '... only a few names reflect[ed] the Lithuanian or, perhaps, Slavic past...'.<sup>29</sup>

The final decision to adopt names that reflected the wishes of the new settlers, rather than restore the original Lithuanian names, signified a shift towards enabling the assimilation process to be made easiest for those who were arriving to settle in the region - as opposed to how the region could be most logically integrated into the USSR more broadly. Although the incorporation of the region into the RSFSR in July 1946 provided an early indicator of this process, during the first years of Soviet Kaliningrad the manner in which to negotiate the renaming process fluctuated significantly. With focus ultimately shifting away from seeking to associate the land with an old Slavic heritage, however, the only tangible justification for Soviet presence in Kaliningrad quickly became its victory in the Great Patriotic War.

This, of course, created a fundamental paradox. Here was a piece of land that represented the ultimate triumph of socialism over fascism, but that - with little choice but to anchor the region's 'Soviet' history with the creation of Kaliningrad in 1946 - also had to be treated as land *terra nullius*. In other words, here lay a former fascist stronghold in ruins, upon which was to be built a new bastion of Soviet power - a beacon of socialism at the USSR's

westernmost frontier. Yet, by its very nature, the region's acquisition could not be justified by Marxist-Leninist theory. Indeed, the German fascists had not been liberated; they had been defeated and, by 1948, deported. As such, Kaliningrad could only exist as a bounty of war, a trophy prize of a more abstract victory of 'Socialism' - the idea of which had itself become conflated during the Great Patriotic War with notions of Russian nationalism. How to articulate this message effectively - as had already become clear in the extensive discussions and debates surrounding the process of renaming the region - was thus by no means an easy task. Yet, Soviet terminology nonetheless had to be imprinted upon the landscape, and the new historical narrative both disseminated to, and adopted by, the new settlers.

Such practices, of course, were nothing new. Since the first days of the October Revolution and the subsequent establishment of the Soviet regime, the Bolsheviks had sought to 'carry out social engineering to reshape people on a large scale'.<sup>30</sup> From the outset, 'cultural enlightenment' work had been considered fundamental to this process, involving the 'complete and intensive political socialisation of new generations'.<sup>31</sup> Indeed, as the Bolsheviks understood it, political socialisation and education required the active engagement of its citizens. '... It was [to be] a dynamic process in which individuals were mobilised and organised to involve or commit themselves to

political action. They [were to] learn through practice, and ideology/ politics was [to be] made a part of their life experience as early as childhood'.<sup>32</sup>

Indeed, as Qualls has noted '... agitational spaces were only the classroom for educating the public about the city's history and traditions; people had to be instructed in how to read and understand the spaces'.<sup>33</sup>

A similar logic was also applied in Kaliningrad, with the region's Houses of Culture being seen as central to the successful sovietisation of the region. However, a review of the work of the region's cultural centres, dated December 1946, raised a number of concerns as to their ability to be successful in these aims. As a result, a new five-point plan designed to improve cultural education in the oblast was implemented. As Borisov - the Head of the Regional Department for Civil Affairs of the Kaliningrad Region - explained, it was 'essential to raise the ideological and political content of the work of the regional houses of culture', and 'to raise the role of the working people on the promotion of communist education'. Indeed, only through inspiring the '... study of our homeland, the new five-year plan, the USSR and RSFSR Constitutions.... amateur art groups, physical culture and sports', Borisov argued, could Kaliningrad serve as a source of great historical, international and educational value for the Soviet project.<sup>34</sup>

To this end, Borisov requested that all further forms of cultural enlightenment work henceforth focussed on the promotion of the new five-year-plan. In particular, cultural workers were to highlight examples of ‘... labour heroism at the forefront of industry, agriculture and knowledge of the natural sciences’.<sup>35</sup> In practical terms, this required each House of Culture to create a permanent district lecture hall and commit to organising at least two lectures a month. Such lectures, Borisov envisioned, were to be conducted by leading Soviet ‘assets’ in the region - be this intelligentsia, teachers, doctors, engineers or lawyers - whose messages would be supplemented with ‘... literature, visual aids, lecture notes’ etc., as well as with arts events and concerts.<sup>36</sup> These events - alongside film screenings, permanent showcases of newspapers, the deployment of agitation and art brigades, exhibitions about the new five-year plan and its implementation, as well as periodically organised exhibitions celebrating Soviet achievements in industry and agriculture - were designed to equip the new settlers with ‘... systematic political information’ in order to encourage them to associate this new foreign land as part of the wider Soviet Union.

## A young generation of Soviet patriots

*To bring up a young generation of Soviet patriots - people loyal to the Motherland, the Communist Party, the Soviet government and the great leader of the working people - Stalin, to raise people hating enemies of the people - such is one of the most important tasks of our school.<sup>37</sup>*

The distinct lack of regional focus that came to define both the renaming policies and cultural work during the early years of Soviet Kaliningrad had wide-ranging repercussions. Not least, the reluctance to align the territory with its pre-German Lithuanian heritage - coupled with the decision to incorporate the land into the RSFSR - meant that there was little in terms of a 'local history' which sat comfortably within the Soviet historical narrative. This, in turn, created distinct challenges with regard to how best to orientate the school curriculum in order to ensure it effectively served to promote the assimilation of the new Soviet settlers to the region.

Overcoming such challenges, however, was further complicated by the fact that there were vast discrepancies in the teaching abilities of those tasked with providing this education. For the academic year 1949 - 1950, for instance, in the Kaliningrad Regional School of Cultural Enlightenment less than half of the teachers had themselves received a higher education. Other teachers in the school possessed either an 'incomplete higher education', or else had

simply only been educated to secondary level. Teaching experience amongst the school's teachers also varied significantly, with the majority of educators having had less than five years' experience of practical training.

Nevertheless, regardless of education or previous experience, the mission statement of the Kaliningrad Regional School of Cultural Enlightenment - representative of the schooling policies across the oblast more broadly - was unequivocal. As Bachurin - the Director of Cultural and School Education - proclaimed: 'Proceeding from the decisions of the party and the government, the school considers as its main task to educate politically literate cultural and educational workers and to arm them with the Marxist-Leninist worldview...'. As he further noted, the school was to create '... highly educated and comprehensively developed citizens of the socialist homeland, who fervently love their country and are unquestionably devoted to the Lenin-Stalin party...'. Put simply, education was to serve to create students who were '... disciplined, innovative and courageous fighters for the cause of communism, and active builders of communist society'.

The practical implementation of this aim required that, regardless of subject, the curriculum remained strictly focussed on emphasising Kaliningrad's place

as part of the wider Soviet Union. In Geography, for instance, emphasis was placed not on Kaliningrad's specific topography, but rather on '... studying the nature and economy of the Soviet Union, the inexhaustible natural and human resources of our homeland, its economic and defensive power, the successes of socialist construction and the political and economic solidarity of the USSR'.<sup>38</sup> To this end, the course was made up of two parts. The first comprised of a general overview of the USSR, in which students were taught of the features and advantages of '...the socialist economic system, the socialist distribution of the country's productive forces, [and] the close interrelationships existing between certain branches of the planned Soviet economy...'. In addition, students were taught of the achievements and advancements made in Soviet science and technology - especially those deemed to be of significant importance in the development of the country's socialist economy. The second aspect of the course focussed on regional geographic surveys, pitched to enable students to '... firmly grasp the economic and geographical specifics of the Union Republics and regions of the USSR'. In particular, these regional studies emphasised '... the role of the Soviet people who are transforming our country' - both in terms of the achievements of Soviet science and technology and in the growth of cultural construction. In addition, two homework tasks were set for the subject. In the first semester, students had to write on the theme 'Moscow - the capital of

the USSR'. In the second, they were tasked with writing about a 'Hero City'. Notably - despite the integral place of the Great Patriotic War in both the renaming process and Kaliningrad's wider historical narrative - it was not offered as a choice of city to research; rather, students were limited to the choice of writing about either Sevastopol, Leningrad, Stalingrad or Odessa.<sup>39</sup>

Similarly, the school history programme also lacked a regional-specific focus, opting instead to promote '...the historical past of our Motherland, the emergence of classes and class struggle, the formation of the Russian centralised state and its transformation into a multinational state, [and] the struggle of the Russian state against external enemies...'. These included the Swedish and German feudal lords in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; the Tartar-Mongol conquerors; and the Polish and Swedish interventions. As was the case in Geography, providing students with a specific education of the history of the Kaliningrad region was substituted in favour of encouraging a '...conscious love for the Motherland, for oppressed classes and hatred towards the oppressors and enemies of our Motherland'. This, it was believed, would enable students to '.... develop social and historical concepts that will give them a Marxist understanding of history and prepare them for a conscious perception of the present'.<sup>40</sup>

Art was also envisaged as playing a fundamental role in achieving this aim. Indeed, whilst the Arts teacher, G. F. Zaborskii, was expected to instil ‘... in students a love for the subject, to make it interesting, intelligible and understandable’, this was not his sole purpose. Rather, ‘the most important thing...’, according to Bachurin, was ‘... to prove to students the identity and development of Russian art, its democratic character, its nationality, its independence from alien influence, the development of Soviet art along party lines and the mastery of the best traditions of the classical heritage of the past’.<sup>41</sup>

However, the emphasis on promoting Kaliningrad’s place as part of the wider USSR - rather than its specific and unique regional characteristics - was made most explicitly through the school’s cultural enlightenment work. Here, students were taught the theory of Marxism-Leninism, the issues of providing the working masses with a communist education and the tasks of the Communist Party in the field of ideological work. Once the theoretical approaches to cultural and educational work had been provided, students were then encouraged to put theory into practice by organising events of their own - both within the school and in cultural and educational institutions across

the city. Such activities included ‘... reading newspapers, conducting conversations, sharing political information, handing out newspapers and leaflets, organising exhibitions and window displays and holding evenings of rest.’ The benefits of such activities, it was hoped, would be twofold: firstly, they would enable the ‘... assimilation of Marxist-Leninist attitudes on ideological issues and communist education’; and secondly, would allow the students to master ‘... the means of cultural and educational work’, equipping them with the ‘...knowledge, content, form and method[s] of this work’, so that they would then be able to spread the socialist message to others.

The international focus of the course - whilst in line with both Soviet nationality policy more generally and the broader approach taken towards Kaliningrad’s incorporation into the RSFSR - had specific regional implications. Not least, it resulted in the work of the Oblast’s rural clubs being ‘poorly studied’ - something particularly problematic given that these were the very institutions it was hoped that the pupils of the school would later go on to manage. There were other shortcomings too. As Bachurin noted, the school’s cultural enlightenment work further suffered from the ‘... weak theoretical and practical training of the teacher... the abstractness in the presentation of material ... [and] ... the lack of necessary literature for students’. For these reasons, he complained - as well as due to the inadequacy of equipment and a

lack of educational and visual aids - there had been 'poor assimilation' among the students with regard to this subject.<sup>42</sup>

The key to rectifying these issues, Bachurin concluded, was to improve the resources held by the school's library. Despite having invested nearly 24,000 rubles in the acquisition of a collection of 4,598 books by 1950, the library was still deemed to be lacking both in the classic works of Marxism-Leninism and in broader literature pertaining to the ideas of cultural enlightenment. As such, replenishing the library's resources was considered fundamental to ensuring the further assimilation of the new settlers to the Soviet project. Indeed, as Bachurin went on to explain, it was the librarian's role to ensure that the full potential of the books' propagandistic message was exploited. As he understood it, this should have been the function of the school's library '... from the very beginning of its existence'. In order to be successful in this aim, Bachurin recommended that the school sought to adjoin itself with the library, and actively support more closely '... those activities that help the librarian to achieve greater reader enrolment and greater readability of the book'. On the library's part, it was to ensure the creation of both a list of recommended literature that took in to account the general education and age of its students, and curate its resources so as to provide easy access to '...

newspapers and magazine clippings on the most important current and international situations for the USSR'.<sup>43</sup>

To this end, during the school year 1949-1950, the library arranged thirteen book exhibitions that sought to promote significant dates and events, including: '70 years since the birth of Stalin'; 'The life and activities of Lenin'; 'Materials on the elections to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR'; 'The battle route of the Soviet Army'; and 'The works of the Stalin Prize laureates' - the latter featuring books such as 'Azhaiev's *Far from Moscow* and Maltsev's *With all my heart*'.<sup>44</sup> Indeed, such work proved effective. By the end of the 1952 academic year, the library's collection of books had '... increased by more than 2,000 volumes in comparison to the previous year ... [and] ... the number of readers [had] increased by 80 people'.<sup>45</sup>

The school also responded to Bachurin's recommendations, organising practical workshops '... intended to consolidate the theoretical knowledge of students and give them organisational skills'. Hosted by the teacher of Cultural Enlightenment Work, M. I. Yuriev, the workshops featured lectures by teachers in the Literature and Art departments, taking place both within the school itself and at cultural institutions across the city. Addressing Bachurin's

earlier criticism of a lack of focus on regional efforts in the cultural sphere, the series of workshops further provided students with the opportunity to ‘... acquaint themselves with the work of trade union clubs and factory red corners’. Here, ‘... they conducted conversations, readings, reports, evenings of amateur art, produced wall newspapers, propaganda leaflets, [and organised] showcases at local establishments and at the school’.<sup>46</sup>

Yet, despite being regionally focussed in delivery, the workshops remained explicitly non-regional in content. Far greater precedence was allocated to issues relating to Soviet ideology and the role of the USSR more broadly than to local events. Indeed, over the course of the workshops, seven talks were organised on subjects including: ‘The Decisions of the Party and Government’; ‘Current Domestic and International Issues’; and on works of literature. Eighteen wall newspapers were produced, as well as ten propaganda leaflets dedicated to topics such as: ‘The Day of the Soviet Army’; ‘International Women’s Day’; and ‘The Day of Elections to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR’. In addition, a conference and reading of Azhaiev’s book, *Far from Moscow* was organised, as were seven evening performances by amateur artists. Following the completion of each practical workshop, the students were asked to analyse and discuss the results of the events they had organised - to think about any shortcomings that may have arisen, and how they might avoid such

problems in the organisation of future events. Indeed, like that of the library, Yuriev's work too proved fruitful. As Bachurin noted, '... students reacted with great interest' to these classes<sup>47</sup> - so much so that, by 1951, all training practice had moved outside the walls of the school and took place '... directly in the red corners and clubs of the city's industrial enterprises'.<sup>48</sup>

Yet, the education and training of the region's youth could not solely rely on the efforts of its teachers. In order to be successful, close relationships with the pupils' parents also had to be established. However, '... due to the fact that students from all over the country...' had come to study in the region, schools often found that communication with their parents remained '... somewhat difficult'. Thus, in an attempt to encourage social cohesion, parents were invited to partake in both individual and group conversations about their children's progress. During these sessions, parents were encouraged to discuss both the content and manner in which their children were being taught, and to share their thoughts as to the quality of their children's school - in terms of its students, teachers and personnel. But the purpose of such meetings was not only to provide a platform for parents to voice their concerns. Rather, schools also sought to use this contact time to remind the parents that they had a responsibility to instil in their children the notion that it was their duty to the socialist state to 'study well'. To reinforce this aim, meetings were

staged in which students were made to ‘... make promises to study well... [and] ... be disciplined ...’ in the presence of their parents, teachers, class leaders, and the deputies and directors or academic units. Indeed, it was believed that only when a ‘close relationship’ between a student’s school and family was achieved, could a child be successfully directed ‘on the right path’; i.e., towards becoming a true ‘... builder of communist society’.<sup>49</sup>

In the school curriculum as in the policy of renaming, then, creating true ‘builders of communism’ relied on both the creation and promotion of a narrative that sought to situate Kaliningrad in the wider context of the USSR, rather than untangle the complicated regional-specific history of the territory. Schools were required to use all the resources at their disposal to achieve this aim, and - whether through teaching the students of the history of the emergence of class struggle and the formation of the Russian state; curating a library collection with an explicit focus on Marxist-Leninist literature; or by actively engaging students in practical work - remained committed to instilling in their pupils a ‘conscious love of country’ and ‘a conscious perception of the present’. Indeed, as Bachurin concluded, the work of schools remained essential to ensuring ‘... the fulfilment of the main task’ - namely, ‘... to educate the younger generation in the spirit of communism, in the spirit of

selfless devotion to the Lenin-Stalin party and to the great leader of the people, Comrade Stalin'.<sup>50</sup>

## Eternal glory to the Heroes who fell in battle

*Eternal glory to the Heroes who fell in battle with the enemy and gave their lives for the freedom and happiness of our people.*<sup>51</sup>

The successful establishment of a new historical narrative for Kaliningrad centred upon Soviet victory in the Great Patriotic War further required new monuments - to serve as both foundational pillars of public memory and to affirm and celebrate the feats of Red Army soldiers. Such monuments, it was envisaged, would represent ‘... the historic victory won by the Soviet armed forces over fascist Germany in the Great Patriotic War’, and clearly express how ‘... the Soviet army with a mighty blow [had] crushed this stronghold of Prussian militarism’. Indeed, as a report on the State Promotion of Monuments in the Kaliningrad region explained in September 1967, ‘... the history of the Kaliningrad region’ would ultimately be determined by ‘... the nature of its monuments’.<sup>52</sup>

Despite the more general move away from seeking to present the land as ‘ancient Slavic soil’, there nonetheless remained some initial attempts to utilise the pre-war heroic past of the Russian people as justification for Soviet presence in the region. During the first session of the Stalingrad District Soviet

on December 27, 1947, for example, I. G. Gavrilin opened proceedings by stating:

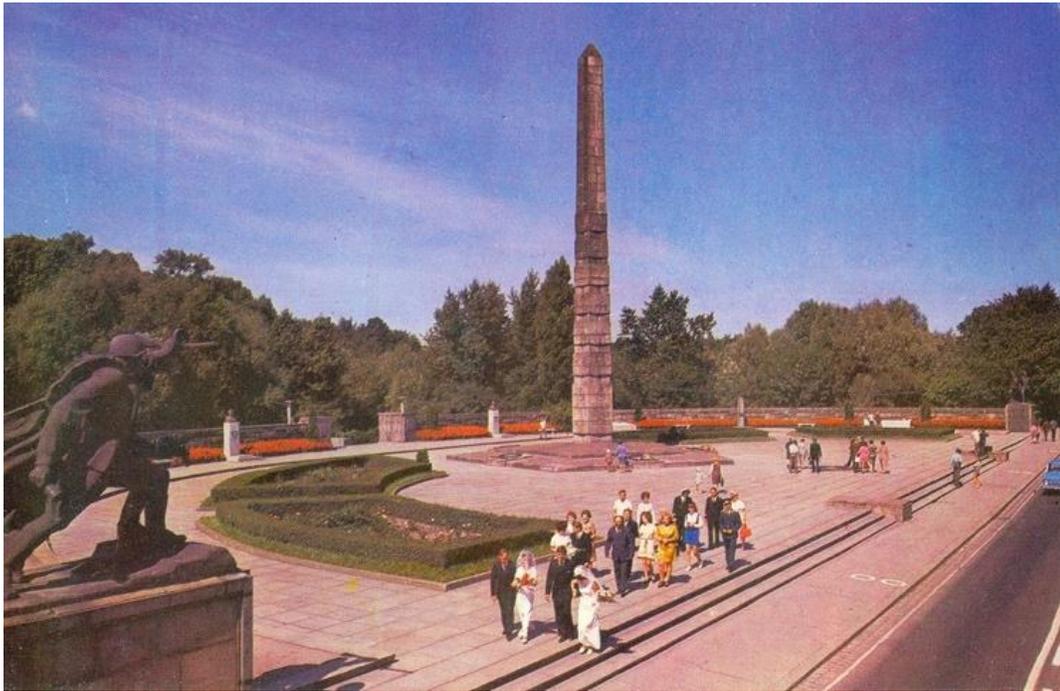
Comrade deputies! Today we are gathered for the first time on our ancient Slavic soil, which for 700 years was under the heel of the Teutonic Knights, as well as German-fascist bandits. German-fascist bandits attacked the Soviet Union to subjugate our people, bring them to their knees and destroy the first socialist workers' government in the world and establish the rule of landlords and capitalists in our land. The heroic Russian people did not tremble and did not falter. Under the leadership of our Bolshevik party, under the command of our dear Comrade Stalin, our people took up arms in defence of our beloved native land, and in brutal battle with the German invaders, secured the freedom and independence of our motherland and liberated these ancient Slavic lands from the invaders once and for all. This land will now be forever Soviet, and we should build a good, joyful life for our people. Let's make our young Soviet province cultured, prosperous and joyful.<sup>53</sup>

Indeed, similar notions also accompanied the early preparatory planning work regarding the promotion of monuments in the region. In Pravdinsk, for example, efforts were made to promote a mass grave of Russian soldiers who had fallen in the battle of Friedland on June 14, 1807. Likewise, in Sovetsk (formerly Tilsit), there remained a monument to the Russian soldiers who had died in battle there during the First World War.<sup>54</sup> Yet, whilst remnants of this former narrative still lingered, the overwhelming majority of preparatory work

fell in line with the new historical narrative. Efforts focussed upon identifying memorable places of military glory in the region connected with the heroic deeds of Soviet soldiers carried out during the Great Patriotic War. Approximately 300 such places were located in total, including fraternal and solitary graves, places of significant battles, and the locations of important strategic manoeuvres.

By far the most symbolic of these locations was the burial site of the 1,200 soldiers of the 11<sup>th</sup> Guards regiment, who had been fundamental in the final assault on Königsberg in April 1945.<sup>55</sup> Indeed, already by September 1945, a vast monument had been erected on the site of the mass graves in commemoration of the ultimate sacrifice made by these soldiers in the defeat of the German fascists. Designed by a team of Lithuanian architects and sculptors and led by Juozas Mikėnas, the monument consisted of a twenty-six-metre-tall central obelisk and eternal flame, (although this was not lit until 1960). This was surrounded by a series of red marble plates inscribed with the names of the 1,200 men interred below. Two sculptural groups were also erected on either side of the wall, featuring Soviet troops storming forward towards the city. One, entitled 'Assault', was accompanied by the inscription: 'The memory of our dead soldiers will be forever sacred to us'. The other, 'Victory', was inscribed: 'Eternal glory to the Heroes who fell in battle with the

enemy and gave their lives for the freedom and happiness of our people'. The monument also featured two commemorative busts: one of Stephan Savelievich Guriev, commander of the 16<sup>th</sup> Guards Rifle Corps who was killed by a shell splinter during fighting on the Samland Peninsula on April 22, 1945; and the other of Sergei Ivanovich Poletskii, the artillery commander of the 16<sup>th</sup> Guards Rifle Corps who was injured during the occupation of the River Pregel and who later died of his wounds on May 15, 1945.<sup>56</sup>



*2 Postcard depicting the Monument to the 1,200 buried soldiers of the 11th Guards Army, 1975.<sup>57</sup>*

Yet, despite a clear understanding of how monuments were to function in the promotion of the new historical narrative, the urgency with which they were

erected - coupled with the severe lack of resources available to facilitate their construction - meant that, by the early 1960s, such monuments were already beginning to fall into disarray. Indeed, as a report by Loshkarev - the Chairman for the Executive Committee of the City's Council of Working People's Deputies - dated November 1961, made clear, the contemporary situation in relation to this matter left much to be desired. On Komsomolskaia Street, for example, a monument dedicated to the burial site of approximately one hundred soldiers - including '... several Heroes of the Soviet Union who had died in the assault of Königsberg' - had fallen into disrepair. The poor state of this monument was deemed particularly problematic due to its central location in the city. As Loshkarev noted, the site provided a '... traditional place for workers to lay wreaths' and was '... widely visited by excursions and guests of the city'. Indeed, as he went on to explain, having existed '... since 1945 at the burial site, the temporary, brick obelisk has become unusable'. Its masonry had collapsed, its bricks had been stolen and - as Loshkarev understood it - the monument was no longer capable of providing '... the desired effect'. Rather, '... the shape and design of the obelisk, executed in wartime...' was only supposed to have been a temporary structure, and thus did not '... correspond to the greatness of the heroic deed' to which it was dedicated.<sup>58</sup>

So dismal was the state of monuments in the Kaliningrad region that G. Markov - a former Red Army soldier, who had himself participated in the storming of Königsberg and who had decided to pay homage to Kaliningrad in 1967 - felt it necessary to write to *Kaliningradskaja Pravda* to condemn what he had experienced during his visit. As he explained:

Recently, I was in Kaliningrad, the former Königsberg. I had to make a significant detour to get there, but I really wanted to see the city, and to see what had become of it after the assault of April 1945, in which I had taken part.

Upon arrival in the city, Markov first went to visit the city's most prominent memorial - the monument to the 1,200 buried soldiers of the 11<sup>th</sup> Guards Army. Despite being one of the largest and most symbolic monuments in the city, however, Markov found the experience to be deeply disappointing. Visiting the site after the Victory Day celebrations, he arrived to find wreaths lying obliquely and at random - scattered across the square and upturned by the wind. Aside from these, the only decorations adorning the memorial were flowers left in old pots or *kefir* bottles; much to Markov's disappointment, there was no landscaping or plantations of live flowers in the surrounding landscape. Put simply, the monument was a mess. As Markov continued:

I will not hide it. I could not stand it and started to clean up. After that I went to look for other monuments. And everywhere [was] the same, [monuments] overgrown with grass and without a fence.

Troubled by what he had seen, on his second day in Kaliningrad, Markov travelled to the City Council Office to question why it was that the monuments and graves he had visited were in such dire condition. With the office experiencing a backlog, however, he was told that he would have to visit the Agitation Department of the City Party Committee to discuss the issue instead. Markov obliged, and - although the department agreed with his criticisms - they explained that they simply did not have the staff nor the resources to ensure the maintenance of these historic sites. Understandably, Markov was extremely disappointed with this response. In his words, '... it was bitter and offensive'. He could not understand how it was that '... monuments in Kaliningrad [were so] far from the central streets and squares...' - especially given that, throughout the city, there were '... good places, even [some] with pedestals, but without sculptures...' which could have been used instead. For instance, he continued, '... the monument to the 1,200 hero-guardsmen is built on the outskirts and [was] built in a hurry after the war...'. In his opinion, it was already '... long in need of repair and reconstruction...'.

Indeed, given his involvement in the storming of Königsberg, Markov took the lack of care and maintenance of these monuments to heart, as he explained:

It was very difficult to lose comrades, but there was a war, and this does not happen without casualties, but it is very insulting to see such neglect of the dead.

It simply did not make sense to him that the state would issue funds for these monuments and common graves, but then - in the subsequent haste to complete their erection - resort to poorly executed and rushed constructions. More confusingly still, it seemed to him, '... no one [was] responsible...' for these shortcomings. By far the most offensive thing to Markov, however, was the fact that - despite the monuments being inscribed with the words 'Eternal glory to our fallen Heroes' - these sites remained poorly tended. 'And this is in Königsberg!', he proclaimed - a place where the victorious quests of the Red Army were supposed to hold a particularly symbolic weight.

Yet, such a phenomenon was not unique to Kaliningrad. As Markov conceded, the state of monuments in the region was no worse than those he had encountered in other parts of the Soviet Union. During a visit to Bryansk, for instance - whilst walking through the town's main square - Markov had come across '... a stone with the message that a monument would be erected in [its]

place...'. Such sites, he argued, were at serious risk of remaining unfinished indefinitely, as it seemed to him that people had long since forgotten about the promises of the more permanent memorials such stone markers represented. Indeed, as he continued: 'Please understand me correctly, I am not someone who makes an elephant out of a fly, but it is time to call things by their proper names. Travel to Kaliningrad, Orel, Bryansk and other cities where there was fighting, and you will see for yourself'.

Markov further disagreed with the proposed solution to these problems. Indeed, upon hearing that the patronage of such monuments was to be transferred to the Komsomol - who were to become solely responsible for checking that '... near the monuments and by the mass graves there [was] always order' and that the '... living remember about those who died defending them', Markov responded, '... this is blasphemy!' Rather, in his opinion, it was '... necessary for the deceased invalids of war to be buried at the expense of the State'. As he understood it, '... our state is the most powerful in the world, and it urgently needs to correct the mistakes it has made in this respect'. Furthermore, he explained - whilst a greater awareness and respect for the Soviet Union's war dead was '... necessary for all' - above all, such an education was of particular importance for '... young people; so that our youth are proud of the glorious past of the older generations'.

However, such complaints - Markov was keen to emphasise - were not solely his own. His decision to pen the letter came only after much consultation with '... the frontline soldiers with whom [he] fought'. As he concluded, '... I express not only my opinion, but also the opinion of many participants in the war, who fought in the partisan detachment at the front during the difficult years of the Great Patriotic War'. Collectively, they simply felt that much more had to be done in order to ensure the preservation of the '... eternal memory of those who perished in the battles of the Motherland...'.<sup>59</sup>

Certainly, Markov's comments were not taken lightly. In response, Romanin - the then Chairman for the Executive Committee of the City's Council of Working People's Deputies - wrote to the Oblast Executive Committee on April 29, 1967 stating that:

... the letter of Comrade Markov about the shortcomings in the maintenance of monuments [has been] considered. Indeed, the monuments mentioned in the letter, including the monument to 1,200 fallen heroes on Gvardeiskii Prospekt and on Komsomolskaia Street require repair. Taking this into account, the City Executive Committee will take appropriate measures.<sup>60</sup>

Such measures included preparing estimates for the cost of repairing the monument to the 1,200 fallen heroes and the cleaning of the surrounding area. Likewise, on Komsomolskaia Street, a new monument was to be built on the site of the existing memorial, and all mass graves in the city were to be assigned to collectives and organisations to ensure their permanent care.<sup>61</sup>

Romanin's response to Markov's complaints, however, also coincided with a much wider review of the state of monuments in the Kaliningrad region. Indeed, in the same year - in accordance with regulations provided by a state-wide review of historical and cultural monuments in dedication to the fiftieth anniversary of the Soviet state - the city branch of the All-Russian Society for the Protection of Historical and Cultural Monuments, together with the museum of local history, also conducted a review of the state of historical and cultural monuments in Kaliningrad.<sup>62</sup> Like Markov, they too reported a number of shortcomings as to the condition of these sites:

Many mass graves are kept in extremely unsatisfactory condition. Obelisks on common graves require repair. Fences are in most cases taken from old German cemeteries or made of wood. Many are lop-sided. Territories of common graves are not landscaped: there are few grave mounds, and, if there are, they do not correspond with the number of people buried. The greenery is either sickly or, on the contrary, rampantly overgrown with wild perennial flowers. Trees and shrubs have also not been trimmed in a timely manner and have

greatly expanded to darken the territory of the monuments. Separate common graves are overgrown with weeds and look completely abandoned.<sup>63</sup>

In addition, the report further complained about the haste at which such monuments had been erected. It noted that the attempt to preserve the memory of the Great Patriotic War had, instead, manifested itself simply as a ‘...short-term campaign’. In contemporary Kaliningrad, the report criticised, people only came to lay wreaths on state-promoted days, ‘... after which the monuments are rarely remembered and the wreaths laid are left to turn into garbage’.

As a result of these findings, the report concluded that the names of the warriors these monuments had been built to preserve - who had fought heroically during the Great Patriotic War and who had died during the assault on Königsberg - had ‘... not been immortalised’. On the contrary, although military commissariats had worked to establish ‘... almost all the names’ of those who had served in these feats of battle, ‘... obelisks on common graves continue[d] to remain nameless’.<sup>64</sup> Indeed, one particularly concerning discovery was the fact that, of the thirteen Heroes of the Soviet Union known to be buried in mass graves across the city, the names of seven of them - G. F.

Molochinskii; T. Kabilova; V. A. Popova; I. K. Tikhonenko; I. I. Dvorskii; G. P. Golovenski; and A. M. Yanalov - were still not present on tombstones, despite their burial places having been established.<sup>65</sup>

The report also identified seventeen streets in the city that had been named after Heroes of the Soviet Union who had fought at the Third Belorussian Front. Not a single one, however, provided any biographical information about the Heroes, nor details of the exploits which had justified the streets being named in their honour. As such, the erection of seventeen memorial plaques - intended to contextualise the streets and to encourage citizens to associate them with the Great Patriotic War - were recommended. For instance, on the street dedicated to Lieutenant Kniazev, the following words were to be inscribed:

Hero of the Soviet Union  
Lieutenant Kniazev Vadim Vasilievich  
1924-1945

Commander of a tank crew. On the night of October 6, 1944, he broke into the city of Kelma and captured the bridge. He repulsed numerous counterattacks of the fascists and kept the bridge until the approach of our units. Killed in battle on the far approaches to Königsberg.

Likewise, on Smirnova Street, a plaque was to be erected noting that Yuri Vasilievich Smirnov, ‘... on the night of June 25, 1944, whilst partaking in a tank assault attempting to break through the enemy’s defences north of the town of Orsha, fell from the tank heavily wounded and was captured by the fascists. Despite torture, he did not give out military secrets. After cruel suffering, he was crucified alive on the wall of the dugout’.<sup>66</sup>

Conversely, in numerous places where memorial plaques had in fact been erected, it was found that they contained incorrect information. This, the report argued, resulted in ‘... the true events of the assault of Königsberg [being] distorted’.<sup>67</sup> At school No. 14, for instance, there was a plaque stating that:

On April 7, 1945, the Hero of the Soviet Union Sergeant Ivan Nikolaievich Fetisov, was the first to break into the Ratshof car building plant and, together with his detachment, he repulsed five counterattacks of the enemy and destroyed twenty-five Hitlerites.

However, upon further investigation, neither the Society for the Protection of Historical and Cultural Monuments, nor their colleagues at the museum of local history had been able to find any record of a Hero of the Soviet Union with the name Ivan Nikolaievich Fetisov. They were, however, able to identify

a Hero of the Soviet Union with the name *Ivan Nikitovich Fedosov*, who had been awarded the title for his contribution to the storming of Königsberg. Problematically, Fedosov had ‘... performed a feat in the north-western outskirts of the city’, the nearest building to which was School No. 2 - not School No. 14. The storming of the Ratshof car building plant, it was also discovered, had in fact been undertaken on April 8, 1945 by Red Army soldiers under the command of Sergeant Kivilov - who had too subsequently been awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union.

Consequently, two new plaques were proposed, the first - to replace the existing text at School No. 14 - was to read:

On April 8, 1945, Hero of the Soviet Union, Sergeant Kivilov, first broke into this area and, together with the soldiers of his department, repulsed several counterattacks of the enemy. With this feat, the company was able to advance and join forces with the troops that had moved through the south.

In addition, a new memorial text at School No. 2 was to be erected with the inscription:

On April 7, 1945, the Hero of the Soviet Union Sergeant Ivan Nikitovich Fedosov, was the first to break into this area and, using captured weapons... repulsed three counterattacks of the enemy. With this feat,

Soviet troops were able to advance and secure the central part of the city.<sup>68</sup>

Similar problems also existed at other sites across the city. A memorial dedicated to the Heroes of the Soviet Union, Chief Sergeant Alexander Chernyomukhin and Junior Sergeant Vasilii Zhilchuk, for instance, claimed that they had destroyed thirteen machine guns and killed sixty Hitlerite soldiers and officers in battle. However, further research uncovered that the figures stated had been grossly exaggerated. The report thus deemed that a new plaque - providing a more accurate description of their feats - be erected in its place. It instead read:

Here, on April 9, 1945, Heroes of the Soviet Union - Sergeant Alexander Chernyomukhin and Junior Sergeant Vasilii Zhilchuk fired upon and destroyed the enemy. The artillerymen provided the advance of our infantry with well-aimed fire.<sup>69</sup>

Even at some of the most symbolic sites of the city, the information attributed to the feats of Red Army soldiers had not been checked for accuracy. The memorial plaque placed on the Cathedral bridge crossing the Pregel river, for instance, stated that:

On April 8, 1945, during the storming of Königsberg, the guardsmen of Colonel Tolstikov were the first to pursue the retreating enemy. Thanks

to the success of the Tolstikov division, Soviet troops were able to cross the river Pregel and break into the centre of Königsberg.

Yet, Colonel Tolstikov had not fought on the Cathedral bridge. He had instead crossed the river Pregel a day later by way of the castle. Indeed, the event to which the memorial plaque referred had in fact been launched by the 16<sup>th</sup> Guards Red Banner Rifle Corps, commanded by the Hero of the Soviet Union Major General S. S. Guriev. Consequently, this memorial, too, required correcting to properly attribute the feats to their rightful actors.<sup>70</sup>

Having thus exposed a number of shortcomings in how the feats of the Red Army were being preserved in Kaliningrad, the report concluded by recommending that the city carry out a number of measures focussed on immortalising the names of those who fell during the storming of Königsberg. This, the report proposed, could happen in a number of ways. Most importantly, the report argued, it was necessary to perpetuate the names of soldiers who fell during the storming of the city. One means by which to do this was to rebury the remains of soldiers who died during the assault on Königsberg in a common grave, with all the known names of the reburied inscribed on tombstones and additional slabs provided for the names of unknown soldiers, should they be discovered. This would, it was envisaged,

serve to ‘... make it possible to perpetuate the memory of all the dead, ensure the proper maintenance of the cemetery and to mark the appropriate military honours of the dead during revolutionary holidays and on other significant dates’. Alternatively, the city could carry out regional reburials - transferring the remains of soldiers from the most neglected and remote mass graves into single uniform cemeteries. This option, it was noted, would allow for the preservation of the names of Red Army soldiers in the areas of the city in which they had fought.<sup>71</sup>

If it was not possible to carry out these measures immediately, the report continued, then priority should be focussed on restoring the thirty-four mass graves located throughout the city. At each site, it was to be ensured that: all the names of soldiers known to be buried in these mass graves were inscribed on tombstones; the number of tombs located at the mass graves corresponded to the quantity of dead buried; existing obelisks were repaired; brick borders were replaced with new stone ones; seasonal flowers were planted in the beds surrounding the graves; the outdated wooden fencing around the sites was replaced with new metal posts; and that protective zones were allocated around the locations of mass graves.

In addition, it was deemed necessary to establish epitaphs on the mass grave located on Komsomolskaia Street dedicated to the Heroes of the Soviet Union buried there, and to correct the text of existing plaques to ensure that the information provided was factually correct. Furthermore, all Heroes of the Soviet Union were to have streets named after them - with accompanying memorial plaques providing biographical data and a description of their feats. Lastly, in order to ensure the successful implementation of these tasks, '... all work on perpetuation must be carried out centrally in one location'.<sup>72</sup>

However, whilst the state was only just beginning to address the problems in the preservation and commemoration of Kaliningrad's war dead, local initiatives had already taken significant measures towards addressing these shortcomings. Indeed, a number of organisations had already begun to take patronage over monuments - not only allocating their own funds for the repair of monuments - but also facilitating for the relatives of dead soldiers to visit their graves and helping to research the names of unknown buried soldiers, so that their names could be added to the epitaphs of mass graves. The Kaliningrad paper-making plant, for instance, dedicated resources to the erection of a monument to the Hero of the Soviet Union, K. Kartashev - who, following the initiative and participation of the factory's workers - had been reburied. In addition, the factory also frequently welcomed veterans of the

storming of Königsberg and the relatives of deceased soldiers into its vicinity.<sup>73</sup>

In the Dniester region too - home to a total of seventeen mass graves - local initiatives had seen new marble plaques with epitaphs installed on seven, as well as five new memorial plaques erected to mark the burial sites and graves of Heroes of the Soviet Union.

The regional administration's response to the report thus sought to build on these local initiatives. In contradiction to the report's recommendation - (and indeed in a manner that Markov would have considered 'blasphemous') - the local administration assigned all schools in Kaliningrad patronage over a monument in their local area. This entailed making each school responsible for their respective monument's maintenance and encouraged the active discovery of new information about those buried in the region. Indeed, despite the report's suggestion that all work had to be carried out centrally for it to be successful, such efforts proved effective. In just two years, the project was reported to have established '... more than one thousand names of soldiers buried in the territory, the discovery of [previously unknown] relatives [of the buried soldiers] and had ensured that the graves were [continually] well presented'. More importantly still, however, was the designation of the project as a '... huge educational tool that causes children to emulate the

Heroes of war and labour’, making them ‘...proud of the feats of their grandfathers and fathers’.<sup>74</sup>

Indeed, at School No. 1 in Gusev, for instance, students were taught about the feats of the Hero of the Soviet Union, A. A. Kolosov - after whom a street in the regional centre was named. They were encouraged to write a letter to his mother in the Tula region, as well as to the school where he had studied. In response, they received a copy of the Hero’s award sheet from the archive of the Ministry of Defence - as well as a letter from a military commissar, thanking the students for honouring the memory of their fellow countryman.<sup>75</sup> Likewise, at the Railway School in the Pravdinsk District, it was discovered that the railway guard, Private Ivanov - who had been posthumously awarded the Order of the Red Star - was buried in the village. Students were able to establish that Ivanov had been the son of Olga Ivanona, a milkmaid from the Lenin Collective Farm in the same district. They found out that she was still alive, and thus - after twenty-one years - were able to reunite her with the grave of her son. Pupils in the Pravdinsk school went further still, compiling ‘... a chronicle of the capture of Friedland (now Pravdinsk) by Soviet troops’.<sup>76</sup> Of particular note also were the efforts of School No. 11 in Sovetsk, whose work was deemed especially ‘purposeful’. Focussed on studying the history of their native city through the collection of historical materials, students at the school

had established their own museum of local lore, pioneering the preservation of the memory of distinguished heroes who had died during the assault on Tilsit. The school also played an active role in all mass festival events and monument building in the region.<sup>77</sup>

The effectiveness of this type of 'military-patriotic education' in Kaliningrad meant that its implementation was not solely limited to the region's schools. Indeed, during the 1950s and 1960s, the '... environmental determinism of the revolutionary avant-garde of the 1920s and first five-year plan was reinvigorated...'.<sup>78</sup> Furthermore, the notion that 'monuments and monumental space influence people's mentality' again came to be seen as '... the strongest factor for organising the psyche of the masses'.<sup>79</sup> Consequently, Kaliningrad's new programme of monumental propaganda began to be explicitly harnessed as a tool for educating all new settlers - not just school children - as to the principles of the new Soviet historical narrative.

Regular publications containing various materials regarding the region's monuments, as well as information about the history of Königsberg's conquest by the Red Army, thus began to be disseminated across the Oblast. As a follow-up report concerning the development of monuments in Kaliningrad

noted, '... articles in the regional newspapers *Kaliningradskaja Pravda* and *Kaliningrad Komsomolets*, as well as broadcasts on radio and television, [now] systematically tell about the monuments located in the territory of the region and their significance'. They too, it continued, provided information about '... the Heroes of the Great Patriotic War [...] and the combat feats that took place where the westernmost outpost of our motherland is now'.<sup>80</sup> Indeed, in the years 1966-1968, more than fifty articles on monuments were published in Kaliningrad's regional and district newspapers. Intended to promote both their significance and continued protection, the articles covered themes such as: 'In Honour of the Military Feat of the Soviet People' - which reported both on the erection of an Obelisk in the city of Sovetsk in honour of the opening of the 'Alley of Heroes' and a rally of working people at the mass grave of the soldiers who died in the capture of Tilsit; 'Meeting with the Hero' - documenting the meeting of schoolchildren with the Hero of the Soviet Union, Rybnikov, a participant in the East Prussian operation; and 'On the Streets of Heroes' - informing about the installation of memorial plaques on streets named after Heroes of the Soviet Union and participants in the assault of Königsberg.<sup>81</sup>

The Kaliningrad book publishing house also began to produce a number of works aimed at promoting the conquest and protection of Soviet power in the territory, including the titles: 'The Storm[ing] of Königsberg'; 'Glory is

Immortal'; and 'Dear Fathers - the Road of Heroes'. In addition, it produced a guide to 'Historical and Memorable Places in Kaliningrad', as well as a series of brochures entitled 'Cities in our Region' - in each issue of which, there was a chapter dedicated to Kaliningrad's military history, including photographs and information of local monuments dedicated to the Great Patriotic War.<sup>82</sup>

The publication of propaganda literature was further supplemented by an increase in lecture programmes organised by the Oblast's regional museums. Between 1966 and 1967, approximately 250 lectures on historical monuments in the region were held. As a general rule, each lecture was additionally accompanied by a screening of a documentary film from the museums' archives - such as the titles, 'The East Prussian operation and the storming of Königsberg' and 'Pigeons over the City' - a television programme filmed in Kaliningrad.<sup>83</sup> Other initiatives included curating a travelling exhibition, entitled, 'On the Monuments and Places of Military Glory of the Soviet Soldiers in the Kaliningrad Region' - which toured the Oblast's regional centres - as well as book and photographic exhibitions displayed in clubs and cultural centres across the region under thematic titles such as, 'Their Names are Immortal' and, 'They Died in our Neighbourhood'.<sup>84</sup>

Arguably the most effective of the tools used in Kaliningrad's promotion of this type of military-patriotic education, however, were visits to the regional sites of victory themselves. Such tours - often headed by veterans who had personally participated in the battles for the territory of Kaliningrad - were widely adopted. For instance, employees of the Regional Museum of Local Lore conducted more than 100 excursions and hiking tours along the former military communications route in 1967 alone. During the same period, the region's youth organisations conducted more than 800 hikes through the territory of the region - in which approximately 50,000 schoolchildren, students, workers and young rural workers participated. So popular were the excursions that Soviet citizens were reported to have '... travelled thousands of kilometres on foot, on bicycles, on buses and on boats...' to partake. On the way, they were able to acquaint themselves with the places of military glory of the Soviet Army and carry out searches for Unknown Heroes of the Great Patriotic War. Indeed, some even took patronage over the monuments and common graves of the fallen soldiers they passed. Others met veterans of war and labour and enjoyed mass military sporting games organised by soldiers especially for the gatherings. Over time, the combat routes of the regiments of the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 43<sup>rd</sup>, and 50<sup>th</sup> Guards Army all became permanent tourist routes in the region.<sup>85</sup>

These excursions, along with many others like them, helped to establish new objects, information and graves across the Kaliningrad Oblast. In turn, such new discoveries paved the way for new regional museums and exhibitions. In this way, such excursions provided a means through which to actively engage local people in the process of cultural myth-making. Yet, their popularity had wider implications also. Not least, the active engagement of Kaliningrad's residents in this process of cultural myth-making signified a keen interest amongst the local populace to understand more about the place in which they lived.

Indeed, before the mid-1960s such information had been consciously avoided. Rather, both the renaming campaign of 1946-1947 and the region's school curriculum had sought to actively deflect attention away from Kaliningrad's specific geo-historical context; instead prioritising the promotion of Kaliningrad's integrity as part of the wider Soviet Union. The review of monuments dedicated to the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the USSR, however, signified a stark change in policy. The revival of the campaign to immortalise the memory of those who died during the storming of the city now meant that the region's specific experiences during the Great Patriotic War - its 'local history' - could no longer be ignored.

It is, however, important to note that Kaliningrad was not the only region of the USSR to undergo a re-evaluation of its memory of the Great Patriotic War. Indeed - having long represented 'the cornerstone of Soviet patriotism, the demonstration of national virtue and proof of the link between the communist party and its people'<sup>86</sup> - across the Soviet Union, the wider process of de-Stalinisation had set in motion a move to 'reclaim the memory of the war' from its Stalin-centric discourse.<sup>87</sup> During Brezhnev's leadership in particular, the centrality of the war to a Soviet self-understanding less rooted in Stalinism was actively promoted. 'Victory Day was re-instituted as a public holiday in 1965, [and] veterans were given more generous state provision'.<sup>88</sup> In Brezhnev's own words: 'the more the war years retreat from us into history, the fuller and clearer is the great heroic feat of the Soviet people, who courageously defended our country in the uniquely bitter struggle with fascism for socialism'.<sup>89</sup>

In this context, the poor state of the graves exposed in Kaliningrad during the early 1960s could no longer be left unaddressed. Their lop-sidedness, poor arrangement, inaccurate plaques and overgrown surroundings exposed the rushed and temporary nature of their erection. Thus, in the renewed campaign

to equate Kaliningrad with Soviet victory in the Great Patriotic War, the restoration of 'eternal glory to the Heroes who fell in battle with the enemy and gave their lives for the freedom and happiness of the Soviet people' became a priority. Whilst following the more general trend of reclaiming the memory of the war from its Stalin-centric discourse, however, in Kaliningrad this process further served to help instil a more local sense of place amongst the region's inhabitants. Indeed - by actively situating the feats of Red Army soldiers within the region's topography (and with new monuments upon which to anchor such memories) - a local sense of identity was finally able to be nurtured that, simultaneously, also served to confirm Kaliningrad's place as an integral part of the wider USSR.

Thus - despite the proclamation in 1946 that the region had 'great historical, international and educational value for our country'<sup>90</sup> - it had taken the Bolsheviks over two decades to finally find a workable means of moulding Kaliningrad's history into a usable historical narrative. Indeed, initial attempts had sought to follow the war-time rhetoric that Königsberg, historically speaking, had been '... ancient Slavic soil'.<sup>91</sup> The difficulties in finding substantive evidence to support this claim, however, quickly came to undermine its authority. Accordingly, unable to draw upon the region's pre-German heritage, the Soviets found themselves with little choice but to treat

the land as *terra nullius* instead. Both the subsequent renaming of the region to Kaliningrad and its incorporation into the RSFSR, however, also further dictated the construction of new foundational pillars upon which a new, ideologically-agreeable historical narrative could be anchored.

Yet, until such pillars had been constructed, efforts first had to be directed towards drawing the attention of the new settlers away from Kaliningrad's complicated regional history, and towards understanding the territory as an integral part of the wider USSR. As has been evidenced, this explicitly non-regional approach towards Kaliningrad's politicisation manifested itself in two ways. Firstly, through the prioritisation of new place names that reflected the origin cities of the new Soviet settlers; and, secondly, through the adoption of a new school curriculum almost completely devoid of regional content. In this way, it was envisaged that Kaliningrad's new settlers would, first and foremost, come to conceive of themselves as international citizens of the USSR - committed to '...the spirit of communism [...] the spirit of selfless devotion to the Lenin-Stalin party and to the great leader of the people, Comrade Stalin'.<sup>92</sup>

Meanwhile, with attention diverted away from Kaliningrad's former German past, the Bolsheviks had begun to construct new monuments in the region to

serve as foundational pillars for the new Soviet historical narrative. Once again taking cues from the names suggested by the new settlers, monument building in the region during the first years of Soviet Kaliningrad centred almost exclusively around the memorialisation of ‘... the historic victory won by the Soviet armed forces over fascist Germany in the Great Patriotic War’.<sup>93</sup> Yet, although many such monuments were indeed erected during the first post-war years, their construction was of poor quality, and, by the early 1960s, had already been deemed unfit for purpose.

Both the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the USSR and a more general reframing of the memory of the Great Patriotic War under Brezhnev, however, provided Kaliningrad’s regional authorities with renewed energy to revive the campaign to immortalise the memory of the region’s war dead. This time, however, efforts to instil the new Soviet historical narrative went further than just the restoration of dilapidated monuments. Indeed, for the first time, the feats undertaken by Red Army soldiers during the war effort were explicitly situated within Kaliningrad’s topography. Aided by the publication of propaganda literature, lectures and physical visits to local sites of victory, local Kaliningraders were actively encouraged to engage with the regional ‘history’ of the place they called home. That is, the ‘regional history’ as dictated by the new Soviet historical narrative - a history which began in 1945 and was almost

exclusively oriented around Soviet victory in the Great Patriotic War. Yet, what it may have lacked in terms of history, was soon to be eclipsed by the promise of its future. Kaliningrad, it was proclaimed, was to emerge from the ruins and ashes of war as a great new socialist utopia. Built by the hands of its citizens, it was to become a bastion of Soviet progress on the USSR's westernmost frontier.

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<sup>1</sup> GARF, A259.6.4949, l. 183.

<sup>2</sup> GAKO, R310.1.1.1-14, 23 November 1945. As cited in Eaton, Nicole, *Exclave: Politics, Ideology and Everyday Life in Königsberg-Kaliningrad, 1928-1948*, unpublished PhD thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 2013, p. 157.

<sup>3</sup> Hoppe, Bert, *Auf den Trümmern von Königsberg: Kaliningrad 1946-1970*, Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2000, pp. 26-7.

<sup>4</sup> GAKO, R310.1.1.1-14, 23 November 1945. As cited in Eaton, Nicole, *Exclave*, pp. 157-158.

<sup>5</sup> GARF, A150.2.182.2, 24 June 1946. As cited in *Ibid.*, p. 159.

<sup>6</sup> GAKO, R310.1.1.29, August 1946. As cited in *Ibid.*, pp. 159-163.

<sup>7</sup> Qualls, Karl, D., *From Ruins to Reconstruction - Urban Identity in Soviet Sevastopol after World War II*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009, p. 143.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 143 - 144.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Eaton, Nicole, *Exclave*, p. 117.

<sup>11</sup> GARF, A259.6.4950, l. 36.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, l. 68.

<sup>13</sup> GARF, A259.6.4960, l. 68 - 69.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, l. 69.

<sup>15</sup> GARF, A259.6.4950, l. 69.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* l. 40.

<sup>17</sup> GARF, A612.1.1, l. 8.

<sup>18</sup> GARF, A259.6.4950, l. 63-65.

<sup>19</sup> GARF, A612.1.1, l. 7.

<sup>20</sup> GARF, A259.6.4950, l. 40.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, l. 63.

<sup>22</sup> GARF, A612.1.1, l. 2.

<sup>23</sup> GARF, A259.6.4950, l. 63.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, l. 34.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, l. 63-65.

<sup>26</sup> GARF, A259.6.4949, l. 62-73.

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- <sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, l. 62-73.
- <sup>28</sup> Eaton, Nicole, *Exclave*, p. 175.
- <sup>29</sup> GARF A259.6.4950, l. 34-35.
- <sup>30</sup> Cheng, Yinghong, *Creating the 'New Man' - From Enlightenment Ideals to Socialist Realities*, Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009, p. 22.
- <sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.
- <sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 27-28.
- <sup>33</sup> Qualls, Karl, *From Ruins to Reconstruction*, p. 142.
- <sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>35</sup> GARF, A259.6.4950, l. 13-14.
- <sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>37</sup> GARF, A534.1.1656, l. 1.
- <sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, l. 11-12.
- <sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, l. 6.
- <sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, l. 8-9.
- <sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, l. 14-15.
- <sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, l. 24.
- <sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, l. 18.
- <sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, l. 14-15.
- <sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>48</sup> GARF, A534.1.1696, l. 25.
- <sup>49</sup> GARF, A534.1.1656, l. 28-29.
- <sup>50</sup> *Ibid.* l. 32
- <sup>51</sup> As inscribed on the Victory statue at the Monument to the 1,200 Guardsman, Kaliningrad, Russia.
- <sup>52</sup> GARF, A639.1.167, l. 12 - 13.
- <sup>53</sup> GAKO, R541.1.1, 27 December 1947. As cited in Eaton, Nicole, *Exclave*, p. 169.
- <sup>54</sup> Following significant Russian losses in the battle of Friedland, Napoleon and Alexander I met in Tilsit in July 1807 to agree the Treaty of Tilsit.
- <sup>55</sup> GARF, A639.1.167, l. 12 - 13.
- <sup>56</sup> <https://mamayevkurgan.wordpress.com/2013/05/18/monument-to-the-1200-guardsmen-kaliningrad-russia/> - accessed 11.01.2018.
- <sup>57</sup> Luchinina, A., *Goroda SSSR - Kaliningrad*, Moscow: Izdatel'stvo - Planeta, 1975.
- <sup>58</sup> GAKO, R-522.1.102, l. 1.
- <sup>59</sup> GAKO, R-297.8.2039, l. 7-9.
- <sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, l. 12.
- <sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>62</sup> GARF, A639.1.167, l. 1.
- <sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, l. 2.
- <sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, l. 5-8.
- <sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, l. 2.
- <sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, l. 9.

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- <sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, l. 10.
- <sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, l. 11.
- <sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, l. 2.
- <sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, l. 2-3.
- <sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, l. 14.
- <sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, l. 15-17.
- <sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, l. 15.
- <sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, l. 16.
- <sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, l. 16-17.
- <sup>78</sup> Crowley, David and Reid, Susan E., Socialist Spaces: Sites of Every Day Life in the Eastern Bloc, in Crowley, David and Reid, Susan E., (eds.), *Socialist Spaces: Sites of Everyday Life in Eastern Bloc*, Oxford: Bloomsbury, 2002, p. 11.
- <sup>79</sup> Stephen Bittner, Green Cities and Orderly Streets. Space and Culture in Moscow, 1928-1933, *Journal of Urban History*, vol. 25, no. 1, 1998, p. 24.
- <sup>80</sup> GARF, A639.1.167, l. 18.
- <sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, l. 19.
- <sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, l. 21.
- <sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, l. 19.
- <sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, l. 20.
- <sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, l. 17 - 18.
- <sup>86</sup> Fitzpatrick, Shelia, Late Stalinism in historical perspective, in Juliane Fürst, (ed.), *Late Stalinist Russia - Society between reconstruction and reinvention*, London: Routledge, 2006, p. 271.
- <sup>87</sup> Lovell, Stephen, *The Shadow of War - Russia and the USSR: 1941 to the Present*, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010, pp. 26-28.
- <sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>89</sup> *Pravda*, May 9, 1960.
- <sup>90</sup> GARF, A259.6.4949, l. 183.
- <sup>91</sup> Eaton, Nicole, *Exclave*, p. 117.
- <sup>92</sup> GARF, A534.1.1656, l. 32.
- <sup>93</sup> GARF, A639.1.167, l. 12 - 13.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Kaliningrad has been transformed beyond recognition

*Better and better with each passing year, our Kaliningrad has been transformed beyond recognition. Raised out of the ruins and ash by the dedicated labour of Soviet people, with the great help of the Central Committee of the Party and the Soviet administration, the city has become a major industrial and cultural centre over a span of 15 years... To make Kaliningrad one of the most beautiful cities - this is the next challenge for all Soviet Party organisations and for all workers of the city. Our cities, where Soviet people live, study, relax and work, should be worthy of the builders of communism.*

*Kaliningradskaia Pravda, May 25, 1961*<sup>1</sup>

Having at last bestowed upon Kaliningrad an ideologically-suitable historical narrative, attention turned towards the city's built environment. The above passage, published in a *Kaliningradskaia Pravda* article in May 1961 under the title, 'The Face of our City' alludes to how, from the outset, the cultivation of public space was deemed to be essential for the successful appropriation of place by the new Soviet settlers. As Navalikhin - the chief architect of the city - also explained in May 1948:

Our city is now the political, administrative and cultural centre of the new Soviet region. It will become one of the most beautiful and well-planned cities of our Homeland - on the ruins of Königsberg, we will construct socialist Kaliningrad... How soon and how well we cope with this task depends on the builders of the city. This means that the future of Kaliningrad is entrusted to builders, and so the profession is the most honourable in our city.<sup>2</sup>

Like elsewhere in the USSR, the process of replanning and rebuilding cities following the vast destruction caused by the Second World War was used as a means through which 'the Soviet party-state attempted to repair its image in the eyes of the population after nearly thirty years of disorientation'.<sup>3</sup>

Although the practical implication of this aim varied between the cities of the Soviet Union - from the careful restoration of the Peterhof and Pushkin palaces in Leningrad, to the erection of grand new 'people's palaces' across the Eastern Bloc - all post-war reconstruction was rooted in the Marxist premise that matter determines consciousness. Put simply, it was believed that 'to change how a person thought and behaved one must first change his or her material surroundings'. Thus, 'the architectural form of the city and planning of urban space were vested with a social-transformative role in the lives of its residents'.<sup>4</sup>

These principles of socialist urban planning had first been established during the 1920s and 1930s - most notably, with regard to the General Plan for the reconstruction of Moscow. Here, 'architects and ideologues debated the future face of Soviet urban space'. Opinions, however, had initially been divided. On the one hand, the creation of socialist spaces that 'met the population's needs through communal living, childcare, laundry and more'

were advocated. The other hand, conversely, favoured the implementation of monumental architecture that 'would serve as symbols of power and representations of the Soviet state and its institutions, with the names and statues of Marx, Engels and other socialist luminaries prominent throughout'. In the end, 'what transpired was a combination of pre-revolutionary and NEP-era utopian-idealist schemes for the new city, all bundled up in the latest verbiage about the socialist system's concern for the population's wellbeing'.<sup>5</sup>

Following the conclusion of the war, this model of socialist urban planning was implemented on a vast scale: 'Much as steel had become the trademark of progress in the 1930s, in the post-war decade officials used reconstructed buildings and revitalised cities as symbols of progress and economic strength'. Throughout the Soviet Union - regardless of the various architectural nuances that characterised the post-war replanning schemes of different cities - 'each new building was hailed as another 'victory' (rarely abandoning military terminology) for Soviet city building and for society in general. The delayed Pyrrhic victory over Nazi Germany left numerous cities ravaged; the 'victory' of construction sought to heal those wounds'.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, in Kaliningrad, this notion held particular weight, given that the new Soviet city was to be built from the ruins of a fallen fascist stronghold.

Yet, whilst there appears to have been a relatively clear and comprehensive understanding, at least conceptually, of what ultimately needed to be achieved through the manipulation of space in Kaliningrad - in order for the appropriation of place by local settlers to be successful, it simply could not wait until such aims had been realised in their entirety. Thus, whilst the ‘face’ of such a novel approach to city building was still yet to be realised, efforts had to be employed to encourage the new Kaliningraders to understand the physical manifestations of this procedure *during* the process of reconstruction. In line with the transition to a regionally-specific approach documented in Chapter One, a *Kaliningradskaja Pravda* article by L. Leonidov acknowledged that it was to be city guides who were the key to achieving this aim. As he explained, through their acquisition of the ‘freshest and most exhaustive data to transfer it from themselves to others’, they would be able to inform the local populace about the changes being enacted in the new socialist city:

... through the streets of Kaliningrad, the excursion buses will travel... From the right, questions will pour, and from the left, the guide will answer:

- ‘Tell us, what is this building for?’
- ‘Why is the name Sergeant Koloskov given to this street?’
- ‘How many days preceded the Storm[ing] of Königsberg?’
- ‘Where do Kaliningrad’s fishermen catch whales?’<sup>7</sup>

As Leonidov continued, 'Our city is great, and every day it becomes even more so.' Yet, although changes to the cityscape may have been noticeable in the '... identification marks of its growth - the building sites and cranes, the quarters of new houses and future shops...': For Kaliningrad's true significance to be realised, he argued, local inhabitants were also required to '... learn interesting information about the city, about this Western frontier...' so that they could aid in the appropriation of their homeland by becoming city guides and 'propagandists of knowledge.'<sup>8</sup>

To this end, lectures were arranged twice-weekly to '... give listeners the most interesting information about our remarkable frontier.' These included talks on the subjects: 'The Storm[ing] of Königsberg'; 'The Heroes whom we will not forget'; 'Socialist Kaliningrad'; and 'Prospects of our city'. Such lecturers, Leonidov contended, would help to promote '.... the past and the present of this amber earth', as well as 'the achievements of the people occupying its cities and villages'. What is more, they would also provide a glance as to what the 'frontier of the future' might look like. Indeed, as he concluded, Kaliningrad's future was to be built upon what had already been attained, '... and therefore promised to be [even] brighter'.<sup>9</sup>

Along similar lines, the popularity of the excursions related to military-patriotic education, (as discussed in Chapter One), had resulted in them becoming an increasingly valuable tool in the process of placemaking - serving not only to help perpetuate the memory of the Great Patriotic War, but also aiding in the promotion of new interventions in the urban environment. Indeed, such notions inspired both the Kaliningrad Regional Council of Tourism and the Kaliningrad Excursion Bureau to develop a series of thematic bus and walking tours, explicitly designed to physically engage local people with Soviet interventions in the region's topography. Each tour was meticulously planned, helping to ensure that the city guides - so valued by Leonidov - could effectively serve in their role as 'propagandists of knowledge'; in turn, enabling them to further cultivate Soviet placemaking practices in Kaliningrad.

Continuing to build upon the founding principles of the new Soviet historical narrative, three thematic routes were devised between 1966 and 1967: 'Historical and Memorable Places of Kaliningrad'; 'Socialist Kaliningrad'; and 'Kaliningrad-Kaunas'. The last of these excursions was by far the most ambitious in scope, lasting 48 hours in duration, and following the route: Kaliningrad - Gvardeysk - Znamensk - Chernyakhovsk - Gusev - Nesterov - Kybartai - Virbalis - Vilkaviškis - Kapsukas (nowadays Marijampolė) - Garliava - and Kaunas; covering approximately 600km in total. Its purpose, the Bureau

stated, was '... to acquaint tourists with the region's nature, its history and its cities... and to further acquaint them with the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic, [through] visiting its second most sizeable city, Kaunas'.<sup>10</sup>



*3. Photograph depicting citizens boarding a tour bus in Kaliningrad, 1971.<sup>11</sup>*

In order to achieve its aim, the Bureau provided a short synopsis as to the points to be conveyed at each stop on the route. In Chernyakhovsk, for instance, the tour was to congregate at the bust in the new square, at which the following points would be recited:

- Chernyakhovsk has a population of over 30,000 and serves as a significant railway link.

- The city has received its modern name in honour of the outstanding Soviet Commander, twice the Hero of the Soviet Union, General Ivan Danilovich Chernyakhovsk.
- On February 19, 1945, when the Soviet armies had already smashed Hitlerites on their approach to Königsberg, I. D. Chernyakhovsk was fatally wounded near Melzak and buried in Vilnius.
- The bust of the outstanding commander is placed at the Station Square in Chernyakovsk.
- In the city, approximately 20 industrial enterprises work. Among them ...car repairs, confectionary... meat-processing plants, milk plants and a cheese plant.
- The city is the cultural centre of the area. In the city there are three movie theatres, some recreation centres, ten red corners and libraries. Under construction is a new 600-seater movie theatre and new schools - both pedagogical and professional - for the study of music, art and sports.
- In 1966, construction began on many 6-storey houses and a hostel for pupils.
- Radical reconstruction of the water supply is due to be carried out, where two deep wells will become operational and a heating plant will be built.
- Redevelopment of the city stadium and the swimming pool on the river bank has also begun, and the city will soon be intensively planted with trees and shrubs.<sup>12</sup>

Likewise, at Gusev, historical material related to the events of the First World War in the territory of East Prussia - including the battle of Gumbinnen - as well as the heroism of Russian soldiers in the Great Patriotic War, (especially

the feats of the Hero of the Soviet Union, S. I. Gusev), were to be relayed. Expanding on the purely military-patriotic education offered formerly, the tour guides were, however, also to promote the economic achievements of the region: how it had been 'newly created through the work of the Soviet people and the will of the party and government'; and how enterprises in the region produced approximately 150 types of materials that were exported to forty-eight countries around the world. Indeed, deemed of particular noteworthiness was the lighting plant, which had become operational in 1956 and was considered to be the leading factory of its kind in the Soviet Union. Here, the guides were to emphasise, approximately 60 different types of lighting equipment were made that 'shine in factories, building sites, railway stations, ports, architectural complexes and sports stadiums in many countries throughout the world'.<sup>13</sup>

The tour also offered a revised account of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic's relationship to the Kaliningrad region, stopping at the border not to promote the Oblast's pre-Prussian Lithuanian heritage, but rather, more pragmatically, to note the 'general characteristics of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic'. Here, the guides were instructed to convey a number of facts about the region, including that: it 'takes the 11<sup>th</sup> place by size of the areas among the republics, the 9<sup>th</sup> by number of the population - 2.9 million

people'; and that '43 per cent of people live in cities'. In addition, the guides were also to provide information as to 'its borders, climatic conditions, soils, plant and animal life and natural resources', as well as 'brief historical information about the Republic: [including that the] first mention about Lithuania in the Russian chronicle [was] in 1040'; noting 'its Feudal system; and [recounting] the formation of the Lithuanian state'. Particular emphasis, furthermore, was to be placed on 'the German aggression towards Lithuania, the fight of the Lithuanian people against the development of capitalism' and 'the creation of the Lithuanian Social Democratic Party in 1896'.<sup>14</sup>

In addition to seeking to situate Kaliningrad in the wider Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the Bureau's other two excursions were aimed specifically at fostering engagement with the city itself. The first, 'Socialist Kaliningrad', had the explicit purpose of demonstrating '...the heroic labour of the Soviet people who have constructed the new socialist city on the ruins of the destroyed city ... [and] to tell about future prospects in the development of the city and oblast'. The second, 'On the Historical and Memorable Places of Kaliningrad' - split into both walking and bus routes - sought to further reinforce the Soviet historical narrative by providing a '... history of Königsberg as a citadel of Prussian militarism and Fascism' that documented the 'falling of the fortified city as the result of the heroic storm of the Soviet armies in April

1945'. These two excursions were much more meticulously planned, with extensive methodological instructions as to how to best convey the information provided:

- The story is to be concentrated at the stops. Whilst travelling brief information of objects separate to the tour that are passed can be given.
- At the stops, the statement begins with the description of the visible objects, followed by the story about the related events. The method of reconstruction (or restoration) of a scene of action is to be applied as much as possible, especially if the stop relates to such events as the storm[ing] of Königsberg, the condition of the post-war city, etc.
- The length of the routes and the considerable volume of material [to be conveyed] demands careful processing, statements need to be very exact, with detailed explanations.
- Guides are obliged to monitor constantly the periodical press and regularly update the material of excursions with particular attention given to the modern city, the achievements of its workers in the fight to implement the five-year-plan and to the prospects of development in the city.
- Before each excursion, the guide is to get acquainted with the group. He has to know from where they have arrived... what they have already seen and what they intend to see in the city. It is necessary to also consider the nationality and age of the groups, their professional features, educational levels, etc.
- It is recommended to read completely the texts and inscriptions on objects and memorial plates. These emphasise the importance of the object or event and also serve as the opportune moment for the transition from object observation to subject discussion.<sup>15</sup>

Following the same technique employed on the 'Kaliningrad - Kaunas' excursion, the Bureau again provided the tour guides with short synopses of information regarding notable points of interest across the city to be disseminated along the route. Beginning at Kalinin Square - the administrative and transport hub of the city - both tours began with a short introduction to the general character of the Kaliningrad Oblast, including local investment, the nature of its administration and its role as 'one of the largest industrial, scientific and cultural centres of the country'. Attendees were too informed of the solutions of the Potsdam conference and the Moscow session of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, as well as of the decrees of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the USSR, that had preceded the formation of the Kaliningrad Oblast. The tour groups were then invited to study the monument to M. I. Kalinin, before proceeding to Leninskii Prospekt.



4. Postcard depicting Leninskii Prospekt, 1975.<sup>16</sup>

Following the route of the central highway of the city, the excursions paid close attention to the *Prospekt's* characteristics - noting the vast destruction suffered in the area during the war and admiring the new principles in construction that had been applied in its redevelopment. To further highlight this notion, the tours then visited the ruins of the former Königsberg Castle - 'an architectural monument from the XIV century', used as a military fortress but unable to withstand the might of the Soviet army, (a point further reinforced by visits to Victory Square and the Monument to the 1,200 Guardsmen). The principles of socialist building were also the focus on

Proletarskaia Street - where the development of residential districts, including housing, schools, child care facilities and public service establishments were observed. Here, the guides were instructed to strongly emphasise the huge scope of housing construction, explaining that this was one of the basic provisions of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union programme, and '... a consequence of the care of the Communist Party and the Soviet government', who were, above all, concerned with 'the welfare of the people'.

Other stops on the route included the Baltic Stadium, the Zoo, the Port and Prospekt Mira, before culminating at the Drama Theatre - Kaliningrad's 'cultural centre'. Here, at 'the centre of the youngest, most western area of our country, created from ruins and ashes by the hands of Soviet people', the tours concluded, now stood a 'large, industrial, cultural city known for its production far outside the country'; a city that - for its 'achieved successes in the development of the national economy of workers in the city and oblast' - had been awarded by the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the USSR on April 14, 1966, 'the highest government award - the Order of Lenin'.<sup>17</sup>



5. Postcard depicting the Drama Theatre - Kaliningrad's 'cultural centre', 1975.<sup>18</sup>

Such excursions proved an effective means through which to further the appropriation of place amongst Kaliningraders whilst the promised utopia was still under construction. Indeed, as Filipa Wunderlich has noted, it is through walking that:

we sensorially and reflectively interact with the urban environment, firming up our relationship with urban places. Walking practices and our 'sense of (or for) place' are fundamentally related, the former affecting the latter and vice versa. Furthermore, walking and 'walkscapes' are rhythmical. Whilst walking in the city, we perform in space-time, becoming immersed in temporal continuums of social everyday life activities fused with spatial and natural rhythmical events.<sup>19</sup>

Thus, by physically traversing the city's streets, such tours enabled new connections to be '... made and remade, physically and conceptually over time and through space'. In Kaliningrad, this notion manifested as the ability of the new settlers to at once discover and transform the city.<sup>20</sup>

Likewise, the deployment of these placemaking techniques provided the new settlers with the opportunity to both learn and enhance their appreciation of Kaliningrad's urban landscape. Thematically designed, the tours also aided in further establishing the Soviet historical, social, economic, cultural and political characterisations of place. What is more - by framing the excursions around key Soviet interventions in the cityscape - they also provided interpretive triggers that both appealed to the visual sense, and allowed for a structured, 'clear, chronological logic' to be communicated.<sup>21</sup> By doing so, they served to 'provide reference points for the development and expression of local identities and for framing a sense of belonging'.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, it is:

... by moving about in urban space, [that] we strengthen our relationship with it and learn that social space is a rhythmically structured whole, made of synchronised time-space everyday life routines. Sensory impressions and social interactions derived from our everyday walking practices nurture a sense of belonging, familiarity, emotional attachment and thoughts for particular urban locations.<sup>23</sup>

## The city is looking better and better

*For those that didn't see Kaliningrad 10-15 years ago, it is difficult to judge what has become of it today. I have lived in Kaliningrad since 1952... during this relatively short period, a lot has been done to restore the city. The city is looking better and better, especially its main street - Leninskii Prospekt.<sup>24</sup>*

Throughout the 1960s, Kaliningraders became increasingly vocal about what changes they wanted to see enacted in their city. Thus, through their active engagement with the proposed city plans, the local populace began to demonstrate a growing attachment to their new homeland. In particular, the central district of the city proved especially significant to Kaliningrad's citizens - provoking extensive debates as to the nature of its reconstruction. A *Kaliningradskaja Pravda* article from September 1963 - entitled '*Through the eyes of Architects*' and detailing the proposed plans for the city centre - for instance, triggered a host of local citizens to respond with their alternative visions for the city centre. I. S. Zapukhlai, for instance, had the following suggestions:

What will Leninskii Prospekt look like? This issue worries the citizens of Kaliningrad, because we want to see our city increase in beauty. I therefore have a few suggestions... It seems to me that it is better to build five-storey buildings instead of the planned nine or fourteen-storey buildings. And that the area to the right on the hill, where it is planned to build a fourteen-storey building, is much better suited for a cinema. This part of the city is already very densely populated, and

besides - there are a lot of passengers at the railway and bus station, who currently spend their time waiting at the beer kiosk... [Nevertheless], I am sure that in the near future Leninskii Prospekt will become an exemplary avenue of our city.<sup>25</sup>

U. V. Kaluzhskaia - a local television mechanic - however, thought differently.

In her view:

The project of Leninskii Prospekt is very pleasing for every citizen of Kaliningrad because of its daring and its beauty. I, as a citizen of Kaliningrad since 1947, remember well Mayakovsky Street. When our family came, (from Kalinin), our first acquaintance with Kaliningrad was a trip in an open car from the train station to Ploshchad' Pobedy. All around us were the black gaps of empty windows and the bare chimneys of occasionally inhabited buildings. The heart really pained to see such ruination. My grandmother could not bear it and said 'No, let's go back!' But we did not go back, we stayed in Kaliningrad and restored it using the old books which were known only to the original citizens. It is a pity that my grandmother, Vavara Petrovna, did not survive to the present days and that she is not able to see modern day Leninskii Prospekt, she was buried in Kaliningrad in 1954.

Indeed, for Kaluzhskaia, walking through the city appeared to clearly highlight the success of Soviet reconstruction:

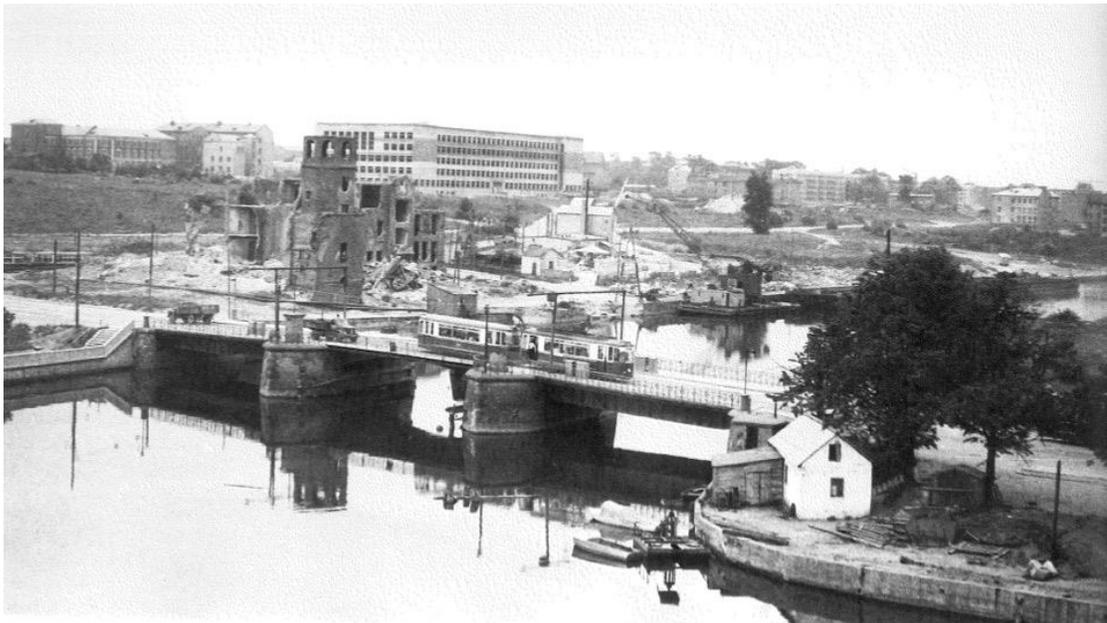
Now every day I go to work along Leninskii Prospekt. It is not enough for me to share my feelings of admiration and pride with the inhabitants of Kaliningrad. I would very much like for people from the

GDR and FDR to come and look at our city, as well as the former inhabitants of Königsberg.

This was not to say, however, that there was not still room for improvement:

But, there is one aspect that saddens me and my friends - that is when we take the route of tram number two. When the tram goes through the island in summer, you have to cover your nose with your sleeve, because through the windows you can smell sewage and ship waste.

It is doubtful that anybody would voluntarily agree to relax in this park in such a situation. Obviously, the design for the park was made either in the office using just a map, or in winter. We thus have to consider seriously if it is possible to clear the Pregel... [for], if it is not possible, then nobody is going to want to walk on the island.<sup>26</sup>



6. Photograph of a tram crossing Pregel Island, Undated.<sup>27</sup>

The fact that local residents were still able to offer their opinions as to *what was to become* of one of the central districts of Kaliningrad in the mid-1960s, however, alludes to something somewhat more problematic - the continued lack of a new city centre. Indeed, the first General Plan for Kaliningrad - jointly submitted in 1949 by the city's chief architect, Navalikhin, and the National Institute for City Planning in Moscow, *Gosudarstvenyi institut proektirovaniia gorodov (Giprogor)* - had placed significant emphasis on the symbolic transformation of the old centre; considering it key to the successful reconstruction of Kaliningrad:<sup>28</sup>

At its core, the General Plan of 1949 [had] envisaged a widening and straightening of the streets, the formation of extensive park areas on and around the Pregel Island - the old centre - and the construction of a gigantic monumental building, to be called the House of Soviets, to replace the castle. A vast thoroughfare called Stalin Prospekt<sup>29</sup> would slice through the old centre from north to south, connecting the main station to the south with the ancillary station to the north.<sup>30</sup>

In the intervening years, however, little progress had been made towards the plan's fruition. Rather, Khrushchev's visit to the region in 1957 - the first by a Soviet leader - had led instead towards a programme of residential development that prioritised the construction of a multitude of 'micro

districts'<sup>31</sup> (*microraion*) over the redevelopment of the city centre.<sup>32</sup> Indeed, following Khrushchev's proclamation that the housing shortage would be liquidated in just twelve years, 'between 1956 and 1963, per capita housing construction in the USSR was by far the highest in Europe, transforming the Soviet cityscape and improving the lives of tens of millions of citizens'.<sup>33</sup> In practical terms, this was manifested through the construction of vast stretches of uniform five-storey pre-fab apartment houses that were made to 'almost indistinguishable blueprints throughout the Bloc'.<sup>34</sup> Organised in terms of 'micro districts', services deemed important to daily life - day care centres, communal spaces for recreation and education, etc., - were situated in close proximity to the new housing blocks. In this way, 'Soviet urban planners [...] hoped to bring true Communism closer by facilitating collective action and the Communist way of life'.<sup>35</sup>

As a result, whilst much of the urban fabric of Kaliningrad - particularly in the southern and western districts of the city was replaced - the city centre remained unresolved. Indeed, nowhere did this notion manifest itself more clearly than in regard to the former Royal Castle of Königsberg. Despite having been heavily damaged during the war, the ruins of this Prussian landmark continued to stand at the very heart of Kaliningrad well into the 1960s.

Although, in part, this peculiarity can be explained due to the fact that

financial limitations prevented a swifter resolution to this issue, one also has to acknowledge the vastly conflicting ideas offered - both by city planners and local residents alike - as to how to approach this deeply symbolic space.

The proposal of a revised general plan in 1964, however, signified a renewed attempt to resolve this issue; not least, through its explicit inclusion of a competition to redesign the city centre. Seven projects were subsequently submitted by organisations and creative collectives from across the Soviet Union: including the Moscow Institute *Giprogor*; *Kaliningradgrazhdanproekt*; four projects by Lithuanian architects; and a submission from architectural planners in Kiev. In September 1965, a special meeting was called between the Kaliningrad Executive Committee of the City Soviet of People's Deputies and the Kaliningrad office of the Union of Architects of the USSR to discuss the entries. Notably, all of the submissions, with the exception of Moscow's *Giprogor*, advocated the preservation of the Royal Castle ruins.<sup>36</sup>

As a result, the question of the preservation of the castle ruins once again became the 'subject of consideration for a wide range of experts', as well as for '... representatives of creative and scientific organisations - including the Union of Architects of the USSR, the Moscow and Leningrad offices of the

Union of Architects of the USSR and representatives from Leningrad, Kiev and the Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian Soviet Socialist Republics'.<sup>37</sup> Many of these organisations also approved of the preservation of (at least fragments of) the Royal Castle.

Indeed, as Popov - the Minister of Culture of the RSFSR - noted in his summary of the meeting:

Participants of the meeting expressed the opinion that expediency in the organisation of the territory [of the castle] is necessary... [recommending] that work is carried out on the preservation of the remains of the site to some degree. First of all - to clear away blockages from the territory, and then to carry out some conservation work on the walls and towers; this will allow for the possible restoration of parts of the rooms, so that they can be used according to the needs of the city.

The Ministry of Culture of the RSFSR also agreed with the conclusions offered by the meeting's participants, going so far as to ask the Council of Ministers of the RSFSR to '... consider them as a solution to the question of building in the centre of Kaliningrad'.<sup>38</sup> To support this notion, Popov attached to the report a document entitled 'About the Historical and Architectural Importance of the Former Königsberg Castle'. Composed by the architect and participant of the

storming of Königsberg, L. Petrov, the document put forward a persuasive plea in defence of preserving the castle ruins:

The former Königsberg Castle is one of the largest and most interesting architectural complexes in the Baltic. Founded in 1255 by the Knights of the Teutonic Order, as a fort of the crusaders in the period of acquiring the lands of ancient Prussia, the castle served as the residence of the highest ranks of the Order, and further - the Grand Dukes and Kings of Prussia.

As Petrov continued, the castle had also been decorated with works and furniture made by 'outstanding craftsmen and artists of the time' and had repeatedly been 'witness to events connected with Russian history and with victories of the Russian military'. Not least, he argued, the castle was intimately connected '... with one of the most brilliant chapters in the history of the Great Patriotic War - the storm[ing] of Königsberg.' During these days, the castle had been '...the centre of defence for the fortress of Königsberg and one of the last strongholds of the Fascist armies'; only after artillery fire from Soviet infantry and the suppression of fascist resistance at the site of the castle, did General Lyash order the surrender of Königsberg. Thus, Petrov maintained, 'the castle was the finishing link of the storm[ing] of the city' and, as such, 'a symbol of the victory of Soviet soldiers'.<sup>39</sup>

B. L. Altshuller, the Chief Architect of the Project of Central Scientific and Restoration Work for the Ministry of Culture of the USSR, provided more practical reasons for the site's conservation. Indeed, following the completion of a preliminary survey of the ruins of the Royal Castle, he submitted the following four - point report on his findings:

*1. Historical and architectural value of the remaining ruins:*

Despite very considerable destruction which has caused the loss of many buildings ... the castle complex almost certainly has considerable historical and architectural value. In the northern wing, large fragments of the most ancient buildings and towers remain, and the western wing can be restored in its original shape.

It is necessary to consider that under the rubble, to some extent, some constructions of the castle could still remain, and its underground rooms - which are of special interest - until this moment have not been completely surveyed.

It is necessary also to pay attention to the city-forming role of the castle, which, even if in a ruined state, dominates the surrounding district. The peculiar silhouette of the castle has an important value in creating a memorable image of the city. In our opinion, the Royal Castle in Kaliningrad thus should, without question, be entered on to the list of monuments and architecture protected by the state.

## *2. Preservation and restoration of the ruins of the castle:*

The majority of the remaining parts of the castle can be protected from further destruction through the installation of simple roofing coverings, etc.

It is expedient to restore the western wing through reconstructing it with reinforced concrete and vaulted overlaying... this will provide the opportunity to use the building for whatever purposes the city deems necessary.

It is necessary to leave the northern wing in its existing ruined look, after taking necessary measures for its preservation... The relevant proposals will have to be specified after the dismantling of debris.

... Once again, we emphasise that the preservation and restoration of the remaining parts of the Royal Castle are technically feasible and, with the corresponding supervision of experts, can be executed by any construction organisation!

## *3. Scientific research at the site of the castle:*

In recent years there have been opportunities to investigate many parts of the castle, which had been previously hidden by later revisions. For the first time, it is now possible to survey the underground floors of the building carefully, therefore all works on the castle have to be accompanied by architectural and archaeological measures - the drilling of holes and soundings, etc. The excavation of debris has to be conducted under the supervision of the archaeologist or the architect. Drawings for the adaptation of the site have to be coordinated with bodies associated with the protection of monuments and architecture.

#### *4. Use of buildings and castle territory:*

The adaptation of the western wing of the castle, under the supervision of the city museum, to house a display of materials related to the heroic storm[ing] of Königsberg by the Soviet armies, would be the most correct in our opinion. After improving the territory of the castle in the centre of the former castle yard, a monumental monument to the Heroes of the storm[ing of the city] could serve as an expressive background for the preserved ruins of the northern wing.

It is possible not to doubt that, after carrying out all work on the preservation of buildings and the territory improvements to the former Royal castle, it will become a decoration of the young Soviet city of Kaliningrad.<sup>40</sup>

Indeed, even the chief architect in Kaliningrad, Chodakovskii, voiced his support for the preservation of the castle site - albeit, for slightly more idealistic reasons:

It would seem sensible to convert the ruins of the castle into a simple memorial, to draw attention to the devastating effects of war, while at the same time appealing to friendship between nations. Using a few simple figurines, against the backdrop of the ruin - such as an illuminated silhouette of a dove, or a sculpture of a blacksmith forging a sword into a plough - we could create a unique and impressive piece of architecture and art.<sup>41</sup>

For advocates of the preservation of the castle, then, the argument appeared clear: here was a ruin that represented *the* ultimate corporeal paradigm of the

triumph of socialism over capitalism; a physical, tangible reminder of the Red Army's victory in the Great Patriotic War that should remain in the Soviet landscape. Indeed, such views were not only articulated in official correspondence; local citizens in Kaliningrad, too, took it upon themselves to promote the continued existence of the castle ruins. As the following passage from an unsigned collective letter to the *Izvestiia* editorial office makes clear:

It was mentioned that soon the remains of the Royal Castle will be demolished and that, in its place, houses will be constructed. We were surprised by this message.... The fortress was constructed in the XIII century, and it is connected not only with the history of the Prussian state, but also that of Russia... think how much heroism was required from our soldiers to seize Königsberg and its fortress! It seems to us that it is necessary to leave the remains of the castle, even if only for the education of future generations. After all, our children learn history. Why wipe out its monuments? ... If a boy reads in his textbook about the storm[ing] of Königsberg, and if he sometimes sees this fortress, (or at least its ruins), speckled with the names of our soldiers and with the date 1945 ... it will leave a lasting impression! [...] Can Kaliningrad really not do without the several hectares of space which are occupied by the castle? After all, in Lutsk there is the castle of Prince Lyubart, and that is carefully protected. The same cannot be said about the Royal Castle, nor about the Cathedral remains... If all the remains of old Königsberg are destroyed, then this city will no longer be interesting as a historical monument.<sup>42</sup>

On the other hand, however, the very reason that the former Royal Castle provoked such an emotional response amongst its citizens was precisely

because it had been the central symbol of Königsberg. Consequently, for others, its continued presence represented not just a seemingly contradictory preservation of a fascist and capitalist monument - in a city that was supposed to define itself against such values - but also a stark reminder of the history of this region prior to the arrival of the new Soviet settlers. More importantly still, however, was the fact that the ruins stood at the very centre of the city; a place understood by the Bolshevik city planners to be both pivotal in the successful manipulation of public space, as well as in the successful creation of the 'New Soviet Man.' Indeed, as Pruyanskii - the Chairman of the Kaliningrad Regional Executive Committee - explained in a letter to the Council of Ministers of the RSFSR on November 5, 1965:

The Kaliningrad Regional Executive Committee has attentively considered the proposal of the Ministry of Culture of the RSFSR and the board of the Union of Architects of the USSR regarding the preservation of the ruins of the Royal Castle in the city of Kaliningrad, and the organisation of this territory as a museum to Russian military glory and the storm[ing] of Königsberg.

The former Royal Castle very strongly suffered during military operations, especially during the storm[ing] of the city and fortress of Königsberg. The northern wing of the castle represents continuous ruins, where the cellars have filled up with rubble. In the east wing, only a small angular building remains... the southern wing is also almost completely destroyed. In the western wing... only the wine cellars have remained.

As a result, the site of the former castle represents the most uncomfortable part of the city. As, for a long time, there have been disputes as to its future destiny, rubble has not been cleared away, and separate parts of the building are at risk of collapse.

Certainly, if to keep the castle ruins such as they look now, it will make an impression on tourists and visually remind them of war.

The city is now well developed with new, modern buildings, and [so] the preservation of disorganisation in its centre whilst the Royal Castle is restored, as well as the vast capital investment required, is not justified. According to the most conservative estimates, the restoration of the castle requires more than one million rubles.

... We propose that the remains of the Royal Castle, built by the Knights of the Teutonic Order as a bastion of aggressive campaigns against Lithuanians, Poles and Russians, be destroyed. The castle has always been an embodiment of the predatory aspirations - first of the Knights, and then of the Fascists against the Slavic people.

Revanchists in Western Germany write scientific treatises devoted to the role of the castle in the history of the creation of Prussia, and only they will be grateful to us for its restoration. This is why we consider that the destruction of the ruins of the castle will mean a final celebration of historical justice.

In Kaliningrad, many buildings of historical and architectural value remain. The former building of the Königsberg University is restored, on the place of the old theatre, the new building of the Regional Drama Theatre is erected. Kant's mausoleum is protected by the state, the monument to Schiller etc., are restored and tens of other buildings, which are of great value, remain...

We understand the great value of all these buildings. But to restore what is not present, and to put huge capital investment towards the

construction of a restored castle, we consider inappropriate. On the site of the ruins of the Royal Castle, it is proposed to construct a new, modern office building which, unlike the Teutonic child, will really decorate the Soviet city of Kaliningrad.

As for the museum, the building of the former Imperial Bank - which is located near the castle - has been allocated, as it has remained relatively intact.<sup>43</sup>

Thus, to others, it seemed simply unthinkable to allow the former heart of the fascist city to remain, even taking into consideration the powerful symbolism it invoked. Indeed, as Konovalov - the first secretary of the Communist Party's Regional Committee - put it:

Comrades, this in my hands is a collective letter recently received by the Central Committee of the Party. In it are more than fifty signatures. I see the names of our esteemed intellectuals: writers, architects and journalists. What do they write to the esteemed comrades in the Central Committee? They write that we need to preserve the Royal Castle! That's what they write! Who, one must ask, needs it? Root out the nest of German Imperialism!<sup>44</sup>

Consequently - despite local protestations - the castle's fate was sealed; as the *Izvestiia* editorial office explained in their reply to the collective letter, (somewhat more tactfully than Konovalov):

In response to your letter concerning the preservation of the ruins of the Royal Castle in Kaliningrad, it is reported that this question was

considered by the Regional Executive Committee attentively and repeatedly. The problem is that, during the military operations, and especially during the storming of the city of Königsberg, the Royal Castle suffered considerably. The remainder of the building is at risk of collapse, and, as such, poses a threat to residents. Now the city of Kaliningrad is filled with new buildings, preservation of ruins in the city centre is not justified.<sup>45</sup>

Ultimately, the centre of the city proved too valuable and too important to be left untouched by Soviet influence. As the above response suggests, the construction of a city worthy of the builders of communism simply could not allow for ruins to lie at its centre. Rather, the city planners believed, it was essential for the centre of Kaliningrad to be totally and drastically manipulated.

Yet, deeming the restoration of the castle ruins as 'inexpedient' only fuelled new ideas as to what should be built in its place. V. I. Pankov, for instance, wrote to *Kaliningradskaia Pravda* with the following suggestion:

... in the place of the former Royal Castle, it would be good to build a big shopping/ trade centre, where all the management can be housed. Considering that this district is already very densely populated - as is the whole city - this would be very convenient for tourists, and Kaliningraders themselves. Visitors to the centre would be able to buy not only stationery and clothes, but also literature and groceries, as

well as stop for some hot lunch. It could become the flagship centre of Leninskii Prospekt.<sup>46</sup>

The competition entries accompanying the General Plan of 1964, as a result of having largely advocated for the retention of the castle ruins, also offered little indication as to what should become of the site. Nonetheless, direct orders from Brezhnev in 1968 to raze the castle ruins, proved decisive. The castle was finally levelled one year later, 'in a final act of antagonism towards [Königsberg's] cultural heritage'.<sup>47</sup>



*7. The final remains of the former Royal Castle being demolished, 1969.<sup>48</sup>*

## A Symbol of the Times

The castle has to go. We must erect a bright and cheerful building in its place, a symbol of the times. The people can sense the sinister force of this fortress and they will say: How relieved we are, that it is gone. Instead, we can set our eyes on the House of Soviets! <sup>49</sup>

The razing of the former Royal Castle ruins finally paved the way for more concrete action to be taken in the reconstruction of the city centre. Indeed, a new General Plan for Kaliningrad, put forward in 1974, was able to at last incorporate the construction of the House of Soviets. Having first been proposed by the 1949 General Plan, plans for the House of Soviets were subsequently reworked by *Giproppgor* to meet the city's changing requirements. As a result, the revised architectural plan sought to not only make the city centre aesthetically beautiful; it also sought to make it the central hub of the city's transportation network. Indeed, in the intervening years, much focus had been paid to the overwhelming growth in traffic flow in the city. The 1974 General Plan thus also proposed the 'complete dissolution of the former street pattern of Königsberg, that had so far served as an approximate basis for the new roads in the centre'. Instead, the city was now '... to be dissected by two thoroughfares, resembling motorways in magnitude, one running north-south - the Stalin Prospekt - and the other east-west. They would meet just north of the Pregel Island to form an enormous intersection. In order to achieve this, an 8-lane flyover was constructed spanning both

branches of the Pregel river and right over the island. The intention of disengaging the road from the ground was [also] to serve in the composition of three large open spaces adjacent to the main intersection: Central Square (*Central'naja ploshchad'*) [sic]; Sports Palace of Youth (*Sportivnyj kompleks junost'*) [sic]; and Central Island or Pregel Island (*Central'nyj ostrov*) [sic].<sup>50</sup>

Consequently, the Soviet manipulation of this space was intended to completely change the way in which Kaliningrad's residents were to interact, engage and physically *move* through the city. What is more, the decision to keep the site of the former Royal Castle at the heart of the new city plans indicated a continued commitment to this symbolic space. Certainly, the area was not simply to be paved over and forgotten about; although the city planners could not justify the preservation of the castle ruins, they nonetheless understood the importance of the site itself. Thus, they intended to build in its place a pinnacle 'trophy' of the Bolshevik manipulation of space. A building that alone was envisaged to eclipse 700 years of Prussian heritage with the ultimate demonstration of the social, political and cultural superiority of Soviet progress - the House of Soviets. Like the decision to use the city centre as the central hub for transportation, the choice to use this deeply symbolic and historic site to build a new administrative headquarters for the Party - as well as a space for public ceremonies and events to occur - was also

born out of the desire not just to change how people were to move through the city, but also how they were to interact *within* it:

Moskovskii Prospekt will, in the next 10-15 years, take on the main burden of transportation, so the reconstruction project has taken modern requirements into account... Beautiful, modern buildings will create a sense of space, of perspective. Many office buildings will be built along the street and its near vicinity. These will be the House of Soviets and the Communication Building, a Construction Design Institute, a hotel and a cinema. Given the high traffic on the street, three underground pedestrian crossings will be constructed. One of them will be where Moskovskii Prospekt meets ulitsa Grieg, near the future school building, the second, near the Construction Design Institute and the third, at the intersection with Leninskii Prospekt. Here, moreover, a transportation interchange is planned, which will allow drivers of all vehicles to change directions without delay.<sup>51</sup>

Supervised by Yuri Pokrovskii, construction began on the House of Soviets in the late 1970s. Situated adjacent to the site of the razed castle and built in part upon the castle's foundations, the nineteen-storey high shell of the building - composed of reinforced concrete and prefabricated concrete cladding - was completed in the early 1980s. However, towards the end of the decade, 'increasing insolvency and the detection of some major structural defects' meant that this bold and drastic undertaking was ultimately never accomplished.<sup>52</sup> Indeed, A. G. Zhavova had warned of the risks of such a

development as early as 1963, in an article entitled *Through the eyes of a pedestrian*:

... the actual construction of many of the buildings is not going to take place in the near future. This means that for a long time the centre will still remain unfinished. In reality, it may not be possible to build all the buildings designed around the square, not only in the near future but even in the distant future. And what is it, after all, this Communist life (*byt*)?<sup>53</sup> I can understand what Communist relations are, but what is Communist life?<sup>54</sup>

Yet, one should not dismiss the lasting influence of this conscious attempt to manipulate public space. Even as early as January 1988, the decision to re-orientate so many aspects of city life towards this centre, without actually realising the 'central point' itself - namely the House of Soviets - began to provoke stark criticism. As an article co-authored by two architects from the Leningrad State Institute of Design, O. Krasovskaia and I. Maizel, entitled, *The Centre of Kaliningrad - What is to become of it?* reflected:

In Kaliningrad, it happens to us several times a year. Nearly every day we follow the same route - the hotel, the new area, the under-construction House of Soviets - to be completed within a decade - and, at last, Moskovskii Prospekt... Every time one has the same desire - to pass this uncomfortable huge space somewhat quicker. It seems a short route, but it provokes rather serious and sad reflections.

...Architecture is the materialised reflection of a spiritual condition of society, a measure of its consciousness. The aggravated attention to

town planning and architectural questions are explained now by it. At last, public understanding of the huge influence of the architectural environment has come to be formative of the personality, of the social activity of the person inhabiting it... But yet the creation of an expressive relief in the centre of Kaliningrad has been unsuccessful. This is especially obvious in the example of the new main square. In this case, it is impossible because of a lack of funds, because of our poverty - we lack the qualified construction workers and other necessary tools. All construction resources in the city have been thrown towards this project and failed. In the opinion of many residents of Kaliningrad whom we happened to meet, as well as professionals, the architecture is viewed very negatively.

[...] The building is under construction on one of the most architecturally dominant and extremely primitive silhouettes of an incommensurably huge space...Time has proved the fragility of fractional, callous and hypertrophied spaces.

As a result of the general shortcomings in planning, the new area, in essence, has remained outside of city life, rather than becoming the centre of it.<sup>55</sup>

The notion of 're-orientation' was also acknowledged in a response to the article two months later. Co-authored by I. Yeremeiev - the Chief Architect of the Project of Central Kaliningrad - and Y. Vaganov - the Chief Architect of the *Kaliningradgrazhdanproekt* Institute - it offered a slightly more optimistic reflection on the re-development of the city centre:

...Having oriented... Kaliningrad towards the direction of the centre, we have now defined a place of statement on that main ascent. You have

to pay attention to it, the main square at the House of Soviets is not conventional. From here, there is a wide panorama of the river and of the city's skeleton - the former Cathedral, the complex of sports buildings, the building of the Palace of Culture of Seamen, the new residential districts of the centre. On the main square, fountains beat and roses blossom. The paving is limited to the minimum necessary for holding ceremonies. The architecture of the building of the House of Soviets is also nonconventional. Although it is still too early to judge its final look ...<sup>56</sup>

Yet, this sense of enthusiasm and belief that the project would eventually be completed was misplaced, and the collapse of the Soviet Union three years later ensured that such thinking was lost to the ensuing turbulence. As a result, the House of Soviets became the last Soviet project 'ever embarked upon in the desolate topography of the city centre'. Indeed, even today it continues to stand 'uncompleted, defunct [and] uninhabitable' at the heart of the city.<sup>57</sup>



*8. Photograph depicting the construction of the House of Soviets, Undated.<sup>58</sup>*

Conversely, Königsberg Cathedral - situated parallel to the site of the former Royal Castle on Pregel Island - shared a very different fate. Indeed, whilst preparations were underway to destroy the former castle ruins, accompanying correspondence offered a much more sympathetic view as to what should become of the remnants of the former cathedral - and, in particular, the tomb of Immanuel Kant that was located there. As V. Salenkova - the secretary of the Kaliningrad city office of the Society of the Protection of Monuments of History and Culture - reported in February 1968:

The Central Committee of the CPSU and the Soviet Government pays much attention to the business of the preservation, restoration and promotion of monuments of history and culture. One of the most

interesting historical monuments in our area... is the tomb of the world-famous scientist and philosopher Immanuel Kant. This monument is part of the excursion route 'historical places of the city'. The monument causes a great interest to the people in our city and it is clear, after all, that Kant's philosophy became one of the cornerstones of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine.<sup>59</sup>

Indeed, as the deputy directors of the Kaliningrad Regional Museum of Local Folklore added:

... To keep the cathedral is a means to rescue and preserve the place of burial of Immanuel Kant. To demolish the cathedral ruins would mean to take down and destroy the tomb of the philosopher - as well as the gravestone above it - which are historically and architecturally connected with the cathedral.<sup>60</sup>

Thus, whilst the 1974 General Plan proposed to completely transform the site of the former Royal Castle, the ruins of Königsberg Cathedral were left virtually untouched; not least, due to the fact that the submission of the General Plan coincided with the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Kant's birth. Rather, somewhat counterintuitively, it was deemed pertinent to preserve the cathedral remains as a means to '... emphasise and celebrate the constructive labour of the Soviet people who have created on a place of ruins the city of Kaliningrad'.<sup>61</sup> Indeed, through similar logic, a memorial to the Heroes of the Storm[ing] of Königsberg, also placed on Pregel Island, was considered not to contradict the

site's preservation - but rather to 'emphasise the historical value of the feat of the Soviet soldiers who have rescued world culture from its destruction by fascism'.<sup>62</sup>

The irony of 'rescuing' this site of world culture from its projected destruction by fascism - whilst simultaneously opting to raze the site of the former Royal Castle in favour of a new Soviet Headquarters - underpins one of the fundamental paradoxes of the Soviet vision to reconstruct Kaliningrad's city centre; one that continues to afflict this area of the city today. Whilst the cathedral - standing as a solitary witness to the region's 750-year history - has since undergone significant renovation during the early 1990s, the House of Soviets continues to stand incomplete.<sup>63</sup>

As McKenzie Wark has noted, the centre of a city serves both as an emotional energy field and as a transmitter; 'tuned to the frequencies of monumental time, to the long duration.' Put simply, it is '*built to last*'.<sup>64</sup> Thus, the decision to raze the Royal Castle in the late 1960s and reshape this pivotal monumental space marked a conscious attempt to 'retune' the frequencies of the Royal Castle's 'monumental time'. The manipulation of this space, embodied most clearly by the plans for the House of Soviets - the building that was to serve as

the new beating heart of the city - was, furthermore, an attempt 'to use to its benefit the ancient imperial planning of that space, to take over to the monument's advantage that mystical current'.<sup>65</sup> Yet, this bold and ambitious attempt to manipulate space was never completed - time continued to prove, in O. Krasovskaia and I. Maizel's words, the 'fragility of fractional, callous and hypertrophied spaces'. As a result, as the Soviet Union began to collapse, Kaliningrad found the heart of its city still tuned to static. Far from becoming *the* orientating point of the city, the uncompleted centre instead proved a suitable metaphor for the USSR's ensuing disintegration.

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<sup>1</sup> *Kaliningradskaja Pravda*, May 25, 1961.

<sup>2</sup> *Kaliningradskaja Pravda*, May 15, 1948.

<sup>3</sup> Qualls, Karl D., Accommodation and Agitation in Sevastopol: Redefining Socialist Space in the Post-war 'City of Glory', in Crowley, David and Reid, Susan E., (eds.), *Socialist Spaces - Sites of Everyday Life in the Eastern Bloc*, Oxford: Bloomsbury, 2002, p. 23.

<sup>4</sup> Crowley, David and Reid, Susan E., Socialist Spaces: Sites of Every Day Life in the Eastern Bloc, in Crowley, David and Reid, Susan E., (eds.), *Socialist Spaces*, p. 10.

<sup>5</sup> Qualls, Karl D., Accommodation and Agitation in Sevastopol, in Crowley, David and Reid, Susan E., (eds.), *Socialist Spaces*, p. 23.

<sup>6</sup> The non-martial use of military terminology was not an invention of the post-war years. After the civil war and especially during the 1930s, every campaign for production, whether industrial or agricultural, was couched in similar terms. See Kuromiya, Hirokai, *Stalin's Industrial Revolution: Politics and Workers, 1928-1932*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988; Siegelbaum, Lewis H., *Stakhanovism and the Politics of Productivity in the USSR, 1935-1941*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988; Fitzpatrick, Shelia, *Stalin's Peasants: Resistance and Survival in the Russian Village after Collectivisation*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1994; Viola, Lynne, *The Best Sons of the Fatherland: Workers in the Vanguard of Soviet Collectivisation*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1987.

<sup>7</sup> *Kaliningradskaja Pravda*, 13 November, 1969.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> GARF, A639.1.167, l. 24.

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- <sup>11</sup> Mikhailova, A., *Kaliningrad*, Kaliningrad: Knizhnoi Izdatel'stvo, 1971.
- <sup>12</sup> GARF, A639.1.167, l. 25-26.
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, l. 27.
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, l. 55.
- <sup>16</sup> Luchinina, A., *Goroda SSSR - Kaliningrad*, Moscow: Izdatel'stvo - Planeta, 1975.
- <sup>17</sup> GARF, A639.1.167, l. 41-63.
- <sup>18</sup> Luchinina, A., *Goroda SSSR - Kaliningrad*.
- <sup>19</sup> Wunderlich, Filipa Matos, Walking and Rhythmicity: Sensing Urban Space, *Journal of Urban Design*, vol. 13. no. 1, 2008, pp. 125-126.
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 127.
- <sup>21</sup> Markwell, Kevin; Stevenson, Deborah; & Rowe, David., Footsteps and memories: interpreting an Australian urban landscape through thematic walking tours, *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, vol. 10, no. 5, 2004, pp. 458 - 460.
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 458.
- <sup>23</sup> Wunderlich, Filipa Matos, Walking and Rhythmicity: Sensing Urban Space, p. 136.
- <sup>24</sup> GAKO, R-522.1.100, l. 12.
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, l. 8.
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, l. 10-11.
- <sup>27</sup> Maksimov Oleg, *Kaliningrad - Epizody Istorii*, Kaliningrad: Zhivem, 2009, p. 14.
- <sup>28</sup> Kettenacker, Max, *Appropriating a Fractured Past: Identity and Place-making in Kaliningrad, 1945-2000*, unpublished MA thesis, University of Cambridge, 2004, pp. 37-38.
- <sup>29</sup> Along its entire length, the new name Stalin Prospekt was to replace eight German streets, thus becoming the longest road in the city.
- <sup>30</sup> Kettenacker, Max, *Appropriating a Fractured Past*, p. 38.
- <sup>31</sup> Indeed, residential construction came to dominate Soviet urban planning during the 1950s and early 1960s throughout the Soviet Union, and the implementation of the drive to construct pre-fab apartment houses now represents one of Khrushchev's signature initiatives. See also Smith, Mark B., Khrushchev's promise to eliminate the urban housing shortage: rights, rationality and the communist future, in Ilic, Melanie and Smith Jeremy, (eds.), *Soviet State and Society Under Nikita Khrushchev*, London: Routledge, 2009.
- <sup>32</sup> Kettenacker, Max, *Appropriating a Fractured Past*, p. 41.
- <sup>33</sup> Johnson, Emily D., Review, Property of Communists: The Urban Housing Program from Stalin to Khrushchev by Mark B. Smith, *The Slavic and East European Journal*, vol. 56, no. 2, 2012, p. 314.
- <sup>34</sup> Crowley, David and Reid, Susan E., Socialist Spaces - Sites of Everyday Life in the Eastern Bloc, in Crowley, David and Reid, Susan E., (eds.), *Socialist Spaces - Sites of Everyday Life in the Eastern Bloc*, p. 14.
- <sup>35</sup> Johnson, Emily D., Review, Property of Communists: The Urban Housing Program from Stalin to Khrushchev by Mark B. Smith, p. 315.
- <sup>36</sup> GAKO, R-297.8.1780, l. 5.
- <sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, l. 6-8.
- <sup>39</sup> GAKO, R-297.8.1780, l. 8-10.

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- <sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, l. 13-16.
- <sup>41</sup> Matthes, Eckhard, *Als Russe in Ostpreußen - Sowjetische Umsiedler über ihren Neubeginn in Königsberg / Kaliningrad nach 1945*, Stuttgart: Finken & Bumiller, 1999, p. 264.
- <sup>42</sup> GAKO, R-297.8.2039, l. 3.
- <sup>43</sup> GAKO, R-297.8.1780, l. 17-18.
- <sup>44</sup> Maksimov Oleg, *Kaliningrad - Epizody Istorii*, p. 34.
- <sup>45</sup> GAKO, R-297.8.2039, l. 4.
- <sup>46</sup> GAKO, R-522.1.100, l. 18.
- <sup>47</sup> Kettenacker, Max, *Appropriating a Fractured Past*, pp. 44-45.
- <sup>48</sup> <https://europebetweeneastandwest.files.wordpress.com/2015/07/the-final-remains-of-konigsberg-castle-being-demolished-in-1968.jpg> - accessed 14.05.2018.
- <sup>49</sup> Hoppe, *Auf den Trümmern von Königsberg*, p. 129.
- <sup>50</sup> Kettenacker, Max, *Appropriating a Fractured Past*, pp. 44-45. (Transliterations as in the original document).
- <sup>51</sup> Maksimov Oleg, *Kaliningrad - Epizody Istorii*, p. 62.
- <sup>52</sup> Kettenacker, Max, *Appropriating a Fractured Past*, p. 45.
- <sup>53</sup> As Andy Willimott has noted of the word *byt*: 'Frequently translated as 'the everyday' or 'way of life', the English language can scarcely portray the daily grind or the sense of manifest banality with which this Russian word was associated... In essence, it came to refer to 'the established order of things' - those inherited and inescapable assumptions about what is natural life. One of Russia's greatest modern poets, Vladimir Mayakovsky, expressed it best when he said: 'Everything stands as it has been for ages. *Byt* is like a horse that can't be spurred and stands still.' For a revolutionary, *byt* was the feeling that 'One foot has not yet reached the next street', and maybe it never will. Encompassing morality, habit, custom, and convention, all efforts to escape the pervasive spectre of *byt*, claimed Mayakovsky, were like 'attempts to heat up ice cream': you might attempt to alter its structure, but you would always be left with a sticky mess.' Willimott, Andy, *Living the Revolution: Urban Communes & Soviet Socialism, 1917 - 1932*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017, p. 15.
- <sup>54</sup> GAKO, R-522.1.110, l. 19.
- <sup>55</sup> *Kaliningradskaia Pravda*, January 31, 1988.
- <sup>56</sup> *Kaliningradskaia Pravda*, March 5, 1988.
- <sup>57</sup> Kettenacker, Max, *Appropriating a Fractured Past*, p.45; p.14.
- <sup>58</sup> Maksimov Oleg, *Kaliningrad - Epizody Istorii*, p. 62.
- <sup>59</sup> GAKO, R-522.1.170, l. 7.
- <sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, l. 10.
- <sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, l. 5.
- <sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, l. 10.
- <sup>63</sup> Berger, Stefan and Holtom, Paul, Locating Kaliningrad and Königsberg in Russian and German Collective Identity Discourses and Political Symbolism in the 750<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations of 2005, *Journal of Baltic Studies*, vol. 39, no. 1, 2008, p. 16.
- <sup>64</sup> McKenzie Wark, Vectors of Memory... Seeds of Fire - The Western Media and the Beijing Demonstrations, in Carter, Erica., Donald, James., and Squires, Judith., (eds.),

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*Space and Place - Theories of Identity and Location*, London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1993, pp. 130-132.

<sup>65</sup> Simon Leys, *Chinese Shadows*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977, pp. 53-54.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Cataclysms or a political crisis

*The better quality of life people have, the less they want cataclysms or a political crisis. It's an axiom of Marx: poverty is the cause of instability. The cause of stability is wealth.*

*Georgi Boos, Governor of Kaliningrad, 2004*<sup>1</sup>

Kaliningrad's experience of *glasnost*' and *perestroika* was unique. As was the case elsewhere in the Soviet Union, in Kaliningrad the general re-evaluation of history that accompanied these processes was oriented towards those aspects of its past that had been manipulated by the Soviet historical narrative. In Kaliningrad, however, the quest to 'correct' this history quickly became entangled in confronting a 'historical truth' that the Bolsheviks had spent nearly half a century trying to erase - namely, the existence and heritage of Königsberg.

Beginning in the early 1980s, underground societies started to emerge in the region seeking to preserve the fragments of German heritage left in the city. 'Prussian club' (*Prusskii klub*), for instance, professed its goals as to 'compile an inventory of the objects of German architecture; to popularise the heraldry and symbols of East Prussia; and to establish contacts with former residents of

Königsberg'.<sup>2</sup> Likewise, 'writers such as Juri Ivanov [sic] or Aleksandr Popadin, artists such as Wiktor Ryabinin [sic] and the photographer Anatoly Bachtin [sic] tirelessly campaigned to save cultural remnants of a German past, which, under the Soviet Union, had been neglected to the point where it was about to vanish forever'.<sup>3</sup> In this context, Gorbachev's reforms enabled such campaigns to more openly enter the public sphere. And, aided by Yuri Kostiashev's major oral history project, Kaliningraders thus began to confront 'the myth of the heroic re-building of the region and the city, and the silence on the ethnic cleansing of Germans'.<sup>4</sup>

Contentiously, however, Kaliningrad's pre-Soviet, German 'past' became increasingly utilised as a means of coping with the Soviet collapse of the present. 'Many of the younger inhabitants [...] began to refer to their city as 'Kenig', indicating an awareness of a non-Soviet past and a promise of a better, less grey and *triste* future'.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, unable to revive a pre-Soviet history of their own, Kaliningraders began to re-appropriate the former history of Königsberg: 'What was deemed negatively as 'alien' before, including the pre-war past and its traces, turned into a positively valued source of socio-spatial distinction, the 'different'. Emotional attachment to the place went hand-in-hand with the revival of the past of a, literally, foreign country'.<sup>6</sup>

In addition, though lacking the ethno-territorial rights that had helped drive the independence movements elsewhere in the Baltics, 'ambitions in Kaliningrad also went in the direction of acquiring more political power vis-à-vis Moscow'. In 1993, both Matochkin - the representative of the Kaliningrad Oblast in the former Supreme Soviet - and Semenov - the Chair of the former regional Soviet - 'proposed a referendum on making the oblast a republic within the Russian Federation, with similar rights as the ethnic republics'. Some political groups went further still, proposing an autonomous Baltic (or else West Russian) republic.<sup>7</sup> Yet, although neither proposal ultimately came to fruition, 'Kaliningrad's new exclave status promoted the emergence of the region as an economic and political entity, separate but still part of Russia, in the minds of both leaders and citizens'.<sup>8</sup>

Such an understanding, of course, was not dissimilar to that of which Soviet nationality policy had intended to instil into its citizens. The geopolitical repercussions of *glasnost'* and *perestroika* provided the citizens of Kaliningrad with a clearly designated territorial boundary. But, in doing so, they also simultaneously exposed other identity markers that were lacking in the region. Whilst its Soviet-era designation as part of the RSFSR constituted its seemingly

natural association with the post-Soviet Russian Federation, in many ways Kaliningrad shared neither a national identity nor a national culture with Russia proper. Indeed, it certainly did not share its history. Rather, with no common basis of origin with one another before their arrival in Kaliningrad, nor necessarily affiliated with pre-Soviet 'Russian' traditions, Kaliningraders - more so than any other citizens of the USSR - embodied the traits of true 'Soviet' citizens.

Thus, whilst taking cue from their Baltic neighbours, the effort to 'unify' history did not manifest in the emergence of a national unity in the same way as it did in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Indeed, although Kaliningrad's past too had been manipulated, it was not 'their' history that had been oppressed. What is more, the notion that the arrival of Soviet settlers to the region had enabled the deportation and erasure of others was further reinforced through an influx of Germans - both from elsewhere in the Soviet Union as well as visitors from the West - seeking to revisit the lands of their forefathers.<sup>9</sup>

Meanwhile, Kaliningrad's exclave status and Western coordinates simultaneously encouraged a sense of distinctiveness from Russia proper. Notably, it became the only Russian region to convert from the Moscow to

Baltic time zone - a process that too opened up the conception that the region was in fact situated west of the geographical centre of Europe.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, this notion was further exacerbated in 1995 when the region's representative of the Russian Foreign Ministry (MID), Artur Kuznetsov, proclaimed that there was, in fact, nothing 'Russian' in Kaliningrad at all:

Fragments of old, pre-war construction and many faceless buildings from the Soviet period have been preserved here. But not a single one representing Russian architecture [...] in Kaliningrad one can find only one 'exclamation mark' - the spire of the cathedral. [...] It is repeated in the architecture of new houses adorned with towers as an aesthetic addition. In my view, this reveals that a 'Latinization' of this society goes on. How the local identity will develop depends on how the face of Kaliningrad will develop.<sup>11</sup>

Yet, if the spire of the cathedral came to represent the city's symbolic 'exclamation mark', 'in [the context of] an environment where all the certainties of Soviet society had collapsed' it also served to punctuate a more general process of establishing a new sense of civic identity.<sup>12</sup> Envisioned as forming 'the centre of spiritual and cultural life in the city and region [...] its most important historical site [and] a materialisation of the spirit of centuries past',<sup>13</sup> the reconstruction of the former German cathedral followed a wider trend of co-opting the region's former heritage. Both Kaliningrad's unique geostrategic position and the great interest of Germans and Poles of East

Prussian origin in the region were employed as a means of redefining itself in relation to the wider world. Fundamental to this process was the reframing of its pre-Soviet history - away from 'an ideologically embarrassing relic into a major economic asset'.<sup>14</sup> As one local resident put it:

O.D. [interviewee]: Too many antagonisms came together in this territory. Maybe not as much as from the German side as from ours. Germans, perhaps, did not object much to our actions here. We, however, treated everything as 'fascist'. For instance, the drainage system. They named it 'fascist' and eliminated it. Or take the cemeteries. What did we do to them? Broke everything, spoiled them, opened the graves. Did you see the Jewish cemetery? Tombstones removed. You can still read German names on them... I like that park so much!

O.S. [interviewer]: Even after such acts of destruction?

O.D.: No, I don't see it as a destroyed cemetery. When I am there, I try to imagine how it looked before. Or as one would think of ancient ruins. I don't like to think of its reality.<sup>15</sup>

Consequently, the 1992 reconstruction of the cathedral, (funded by joint support from Germany and the regional administration), was accompanied by the restoration of the graves of German soldiers from the First and Second World Wars - allowing for more open discussions regarding the atrocities committed by the Red Army. In addition, excavations were carried out at the site of the former Königsberg castle. Indeed, 'interest in the region's history

extended further than to just Germans... Lithuanian memorials, too, were erected and archaeological excavations carried out in cooperation with Lithuania'.<sup>16</sup> The physical restoration and excavation of historical sites was also accompanied by more emblematic changes with regards to how the region's pre-Soviet past was approached. Most notably, the restoration of the cathedral - alongside the tomb of Immanuel Kant - led to an intensification of interest in the region's most famous son; with his grave becoming 'a popular spot for wedding photographs and tourists'.<sup>17</sup> Likewise, Countess Marion von Dönhoff - editor of *Die Zeit* in Germany - was granted permission to erect a copy of Kant's original statue in 1991, replacing that of Ernst Thälmann outside of the university.<sup>18</sup> In addition, there was also 'common talk of renaming the city 'Kantgrad''.<sup>19</sup> Discussions also centred around returning the city to its pre-war title, Königsberg - with the name becoming 'widely used on maps and in brochures for tourists'.<sup>20</sup> Along similar lines, the coat of arms of German Königsberg was also revived, and considerable space devoted to the region's German past in the city museum.



*9. Photograph taken during the reconstruction of Königsberg Cathedral, 1992.<sup>21</sup>*

Yet, whilst the focus on architectural reconstruction and renaming processes may have mirrored the appropriation methods used by the Soviets half a century earlier, the attempt to implement such changes the second time around was met with significant resistance from Moscow. Indeed, seeking to suppress the growing calls for autonomy and exposure to the West, Moscow became increasingly suspicious of foreign involvement in Kaliningrad and, as a result, it sought to reaffirm the territorial integrity of the region as part of Russia.<sup>22</sup> In 1994, for instance, the regional Duma ‘banned the use of foreign languages in the names of official institutions and in advertisements, as well as

any return to old (German) names, in order to protect the Russian language. No German consulate was allowed, but Lithuanian and Polish consulates were'. Even the Republican party leader, Pasko, 'felt obliged to declare that he would take to arms in case of a German take-over'.<sup>23</sup>

As well as restricting foreign influence, efforts were also taken to reaffirm Kaliningrad's Russian integrity in the post-Soviet federation. Both the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Russian navy and the anniversary of Tsar Peter the Great's 'Great Embassy' to Western Europe were marked throughout the region to great fanfare, with international festivals and memorials erected in the oblast to mark the events.<sup>24</sup> What is more, by reinstating Kaliningrad's ties with Russia proper, Moscow was too able to quell questions of the region's status on the international stage. The association of the oblast with Russian military force was further echoed through Moscow's attempts to 'exploit the issue of Russian military transit to/from Kaliningrad via Lithuanian territory'.<sup>25</sup> In this way, Kaliningrad's ambiguous status was employed as a geopolitical tool capable not only of disrupting Lithuania's integration into NATO, but also as a means of limiting the expansion of Western structures eastward.<sup>26</sup>

As had been the case in the 'Sovietisation' of the region, the reinstatement of Russianness again relied extensively on establishing historical ties between Kaliningrad and Russia proper through the education of the region's young. Beginning in the mid-1990s, a revised school curriculum was introduced in the region, including a new subject, the 'History of the Region' - currently taught from the sixth to the ninth grade. Indeed, as Stefan Berger has noted:

... the guidelines for teaching the subject are unequivocal: the lessons concentrate on the historical links with Russia. The history of the region is portrayed as part and parcel of Russian national history. There is much on the Slavic tribes which occupied the territory in the Middle Ages, the travels of Peter the Great through Eastern Prussia, the Russian occupation during the Seven Years' War, the Napoleonic Wars, and then again the period after 1945.<sup>27</sup>

Likewise, state-organised free trips to Moscow were made compulsory for all children in the oblast and passport fees were waived exclusively for Kaliningraders so as to help encourage visits to the motherland.

Yet, whilst Russian authorities put great effort into politicising the curricula of Kaliningrad's schools, the oblast's universities found themselves able to enjoy far greater freedoms regarding the content of their courses. From the outset, significant focus was directed towards stressing the academic heritage of the

region - with efforts made to emphasise the vast numbers of German intellectual figures who had been amongst the alumni of Königsberg's famous Albertina University - including: Johan Georg Hamann, Johann Gottfried Herder, Friedrich Wilhelm Bessel, Hermann Helmholtz and David Hilbert.<sup>28</sup> By the mid-1990s, an embrace of the pre-Soviet past had come to reshape almost every academic department of the university.<sup>29</sup> Reflecting broader cultural changes taking place in the region, courses such as architecture, urban planning, law, politics and history began to take on an increasingly regional focus, with 'courses with such titles as *Immanuel Kant's Philosophy and Modernity* or *European Union Law* [occupying] as prominent a role as Russian-oriented subject matter'.<sup>30</sup>

The promotion of the region's pre-Soviet past also quickly helped to place Kaliningrad's universities in a favourable position with regard to research grants and support funding from western academic institutions - particularly in Germany and Poland. Indeed:

... in a context where educational institutions were being starved of funding by a financially strapped Russian state, focusing on links with German and Polish universities and funding bodies that could provide crucial training and grants was of existential importance for local higher education institutions that were coming under heavy pressure.<sup>31</sup>

By 1999, the promotion of a specific regional identity - encompassing Kaliningrad's exclave status and pre-war German heritage - had become well refined; serving both to enable closer engagement with and access to German and EU cultural institutions that remained less feasible in Russia proper. Indeed, Kaliningrad's universities continue to maintain a number of bilateral contacts with universities in Germany, far more, in fact, than with any other country.<sup>32</sup>

The great lengths that Kaliningrad's universities went to in establishing networks with political elites, academics and cultural figures in the West thus served to provide a framework for the region's wider development - one that went far beyond that of other higher education institutions elsewhere in the Russian Federation.<sup>33</sup> Through the promotion of the region's unique geopolitical and historical position, the universities were able to integrate themselves into wider European research and economic structures overseen by the European Union. This model, in turn, 'became a focal point of those elements within the elite and parts of the population that came to see themselves as part of a culturally distinct part of Russia, as well as the European cultural worlds'.<sup>34</sup>

In addition, this notion was further cultivated through a broader engagement with the region's German past by other cultural, economic and political institutions. Most notably, Dmitrii Medvedev's accession to the presidency in 2008 signified a dramatic change in Moscow's approach towards Kaliningrad - seeing it as a potential tool capable of demonstrating to Europe 'the emergence of a truly modern Russia'. To this end, Medvedev gave his full support to negotiations with the EU to ease visa restrictions for the region's residents, and, by 2010, Kaliningraders had gained access to a special visa regime. This allowed them free day-access to neighbouring Polish regions and eased the processes and procedures necessary for Kaliningraders to gain work and tourist visas across the Schengen area.<sup>35</sup>

In this context, it has become increasingly possible for Kaliningraders to assert a sense of being 'European as well as Russian' - without provoking fears of Kaliningrad separatism in Moscow. As Kaliningrad State University articulated in its 2005 mission statement:

The main symbols of the University, shown in its logo, are a sea wave and a bridge. The Kaliningrad region is developing as one of Russia's zones of integration into the European socio-cultural space. The region bridges the economy, politics, culture, education and science of Russia and the European Union. The rising sea wave symbolises the coastal location of the University, its progress and sustainable development.

The waves create the image of university life as a vast space of knowledge and a constant striving for socio-cultural understanding in the Baltic Sea region - one of the most successful macro-regions in the world, which brings together countries with the highest global competitiveness ranking. A symbol of connection and integration, the bridge represents increasing academic mobility and promotion of Russian higher education and innovative technologies abroad, offering the benefits of both European and Russian academic traditions.

The bridge also shows a historical tie between the once-famous Albertina University and the University of today.<sup>36</sup>

Indeed, in October 2010, this notion was further reinforced through the renaming of the university as the 'Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University'(IKBFU).<sup>37</sup>



*10. Logo of the Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University.<sup>38</sup>*

## Königsberg means a Prussia that no longer exists

*The genius of this place says something personal to everyone, that's its peculiarity, but it seems to be saying something very serious, something that can be revealed on the brink, at the moment of disappearance. About something lost... The decay of the Order - I am always sorry for the Order. 1806: all my compassion is on the side of the meek king. 1871: the spiritual and political end of a Prussian project independent of Imperial Germany. 1933: the disappearance of intellectual Königsberg. 1945: the catastrophe of Germany, the beginning of the end of European culture. Our present day: the end of Kaliningrad, mutation, the town shrinking into its shell, the town going outside itself, turning its face to the problem of identity and, finally, into an object of research. What does the word Königsberg mean for me now? What does it primarily mean in a historical sense?*

*A crush, a defeat, a sacrifice, a victim. A posthumous and virtual being. The disappearance of Europe in the ultimate exertion of European thought. The new European question of metaphysics, of God, not just of Enlightenment. This word also means an uncertainty of symmetry in the mutual understanding of East and West. Just as Tannenberg (Grunwald) has two meanings (those of victory and defeat, reaction and pseudo-progress), in the same way, Königsberg means both the victory and the defeat of the European idea, not just the funeral of the Enlightenment. Watch the sunset of Europe in Kaliningrad. There, the view of this very place is both a memory and a struggle with memory, that is, the meaninglessness irreversibility of the conquer, the inevitability of defeat. Königsberg means a Prussia that no longer exists. Königsberg means a virtual Germany. Königsberg means a gaping truth: the main word in this town, not the term coined by specialists in epistemology but the question sounding above its planes. Königsberg means controversy: between trade and university, between nature and liberty, and, most importantly, between liberty and liberty.*

*Ivan Chechot - Translation by A. Matveieva* <sup>39</sup>

The impact of both the IKBFU's mission statement and the programme of special visa access to neighbouring states for residents of Kaliningrad has been

the subject of numerous reports, interviews, surveys and questionnaires. All of these have sought to quantify 'identity trends' in the region - and all have produced wide-ranging and conflicting results. Indeed, explicitly seeking to address how the expansion of cooperation with the European Union has impacted the region, in 2012, V. Kolosov and O. Vendina surveyed 675 senior humanities students across the IKBFU and the universities of Gdansk and Klaipeda: 252 in Kaliningrad; 217 in Gdansk; and 206 in Klaipeda respectively.<sup>40</sup> The survey comprised of 'questions about the personal experience of foreign travel - including visits to the neighbouring countries (Poland and Lithuania for students from Kaliningrad, the Kaliningrad region and Lithuania for those from Gdansk, etc.); command of foreign languages; identity; and associations with the word 'Kaliningrad''. In addition, it posed questions 'aimed at identifying the geopolitical image of the world as seen by students: their assessment of the attractiveness of different countries of the world and priorities of economic ties with different countries and regions'.<sup>41</sup>

Notably - despite the IKBFU's efforts to promote Kaliningrad's European heritage and integrate it into European academic circles through its exchange and research programmes - 88 per cent of the Gdansk and 68 per cent of the Klaipeda respondents had never visited the region.<sup>42</sup> Identified as contributing

to the lack of interest towards Kaliningrad demonstrated by the Polish and Lithuanian students, was the continued existence of a number of 'clichés - relating the region with a general image of Russia, rather than a specific entity of its own. These included: 'vodka'; 'alcoholism'; 'AIDS'; 'Stalin'; 'Putin'; 'cold'; 'lack of freedom'; 'communism'; 'USSR'; 'mafia'; and 'labour camps' (mentioned by 11 per cent of students)<sup>.43</sup> Those who did hold specific understandings of the city itself, (separate to Russia more broadly), further associated it with: 'poverty'; 'underdevelopment'; 'low standards of living'; 'a forsaken region'; 'shadow economy'; 'smuggling'; 'war'; and a 'Russian outpost'.<sup>44</sup> Indeed, just a few respondents remembered such components of the city brand, (as promoted by the IKBFU), namely: 'Kant'; 'amber'; 'the Amber room'; and 'the Amber road'. Six per cent of Polish students surveyed had no associations with the word 'Kaliningrad' whatsoever.<sup>45</sup>

In Lithuania, the number of students for whom the word evoked no reaction was even higher still - 21 per cent; with the majority of Lithuanian students surveyed (61 per cent) holding negative associations with the city. These included: 'political instability'; 'absence of freedom'; 'corruption'; 'unwillingness to live and go there'; 'dangerous place'; 'high crime rate'; 'lawlessness'; 'bandits'; 'cheap drugs'; 'shadow economy'; 'smuggling';

'cigarettes'; 'underdeveloped infrastructure'; 'poverty'; 'low standards of living'; 'a plundered city'; 'poor marketplace'; 'social problems'; 'unfriendly people'; 'a city unattractive for tourists'; 'a threat'; 'military base'; 'army'; 'Soviet city'; 'Soviet rules'; 'border area'; 'transit territory'; 'visa complications'; 'time lost at the border'; 'closed city'; 'isolated city'; 'exclave'; 'periphery'; and 'economically backward city'. Only a few respondents identified Kaliningrad as a neighbouring city and linked it with the idea of cooperation.<sup>46</sup>

Conversely, students at the IKBFU were found to be much more familiar with life in their neighbouring countries - not just than their Polish and Lithuanian counterparts, but also than their peers in other Russian regions. Eighty-three per cent of them had been abroad, most of them more than once. By comparison, out of 830 surveyed in Moscow, Yekaterinburg, Khabarovsk and Stavropol two years earlier, only 44 per cent had been abroad.<sup>47</sup> In addition, 18 per cent of IKBFU respondents had never visited another region of Russia - with the majority of those that had having only ever visited Moscow (73 per cent) and St. Petersburg (57 per cent). Indeed, in line with state initiatives to make visits to the motherland compulsory for Kaliningrad's young, 'short-term excursions account[ed] for most trips to the two Russian capitals'.<sup>48</sup>

The greater familiarity with the cities of their European neighbours than with those of their own country was also symptomatic of the fact that 'Kaliningrad students differ[ed] from their peers from Gdansk and Klaipeda in that they identi[fied] themselves with their country to a lesser degree - 22 per cent as compared to 30 per cent and 49 per cent respectively'.<sup>49</sup> Rather, respondents from Kaliningrad were much more likely to identify themselves primarily with their city, district, or region - if they were to consider identity at all. Indeed, a number of IKBFU students did not see themselves as in possession of a clear identity, 'being unwilling or perplexed about associating themselves with their country, region, or city', and instead choosing to define themselves in terms of 'a world citizen', 'a European', 'a student' etc.

As such, 'the relative weakness of national identity' in Kaliningrad, Kolosov and Vendina conclude, corresponds with 'a lack of confidence in the possibility of self-fulfilment in the region':

A small area of the Russian island in 'big Europe - the EU', which does not include Russia by default, a long-term denial of the Prussian-German period, a lack of significant symbols and events associated with the Soviet era and relative isolation from mainland Russia - all

these result in the complications and contradictions in the formation of a regional identity in young people. Its uniqueness lies in a combination of heterogeneous elements: Soviet legacy, German past... cultures of different Soviet regions - homelands of the parents' generation and experience of living in modern Russia.<sup>50</sup>

However, if the answer to these problems for students at IKBFU has been to seek a strong affiliation to Europe and to promote themselves as 'Europeans', the lack of reciprocation of these notions by their Polish and Lithuanian counterparts has meant that this perception is in fact 'a myth in practice'. Rather, as Kolosov and Vendina continue, there appears to be 'no common symbolic capital with the neighbours... [and] in most cases, Russia is perceived negatively'. Indeed 'the exclave proves to be as far from Europe as mainland Russia'.<sup>51</sup>

Nevertheless, despite such conclusions, 55 per cent of IKBFU students surveyed envisaged themselves moving abroad following their graduation - well above the Russian average for people aged 18-24, (39 per cent).<sup>52</sup> Indeed, the migratory tendencies of Kaliningraders have also been noted in a 2017 study by A. Klemeshev, G. Fedorov and E. Fidrya - both in terms of those wishing to emigrate from the region and those moving to it from elsewhere. According to their estimations, 'local natives ... [currently] ... account for only

40 per cent of the population. Of these, 20 per cent represent the first generation and 20 per cent the second'. Put simply, even today, the population of the region has a predominantly migrant character.<sup>53</sup>

As of the 2010 census, Russians continue to account for 82 per cent of Kaliningrad's population. However, the region's demographic also comprises of Belarusians - 3.5 per cent; Ukrainians - 1 per cent; Lithuanians and Armenians - 0.8 per cent; and Germans - 0.5 per cent; as well as Poles, Azerbaijani, Chuvash, Mordvinians and Tatars. As such:

... some particular features of culture and mentality of different nationalities are more visible in the region than in the Russian regions with an evident predominance of the Russian population. Besides, Russian people come from different regions of Russia and the CIS [Commonwealth of Independent States] and bring certain ethnographic and mental differences, diverse in different parts of the country'<sup>54</sup>

Like Kolosov and Vendina, Klemeshev, Fedorov and Fidya attribute the migratory nature of Kaliningrad's populace as a limiting factor in the formation of a stable and social territorial community in the region; making it difficult 'to formulate common interests of the region's population and regional

development objectives' whilst simultaneously weakening the notion of a native population.<sup>55</sup>

Local graduate and Professor of political science and sociology at IKBFU, Mikhail Vladimirovich Berendiev - following a series of twenty interviews with local inhabitants for the paper, "Who are we?": Residents of Kaliningrad in search of their own identity' - has also reached similar conclusions. In his research, Berendiev identifies distinct yet contradicting forms of identity existing simultaneously within the region, including: 'I am a European'; 'I am a Russian'; a 'European and resident of Kaliningrad', a 'resident of Kaliningrad and Russian'; and a 'resident of Kaliningrad, Russian and European'.

Of those identifying themselves with the notion of 'Europeanness', three general 'identity markers' appeared prevalent: 'I am a European, since I live in the region located in the centre of Europe' (estimating itself from a position of pure geography, instead of geo-cultural participation); 'I am a European as the communicative relationship with Europe is more readily available in Kaliningrad'; and 'I am a European as the level of my salary is characteristic of many EU countries'. Similar justifications, however, also constituted the

reasons why others had chosen to identify themselves as 'Russian'. As Berendiev notes, one 'Russian' classified himself using a political source: 'I am a Russian - as the Kaliningrad region is a subject of the Russian Federation and I have a Russian nationality'. A second interviewee used a social source of identity: 'I am a Russian since the level of education, other social services and salary here are typical of Russia, it is impossible to call it special, and anyway it does not correspond to the EU level'. To a third respondent, identification was only an ascriptive source as, apparently, he did not possess sufficient social practice, and other sources were not yet put before him as a conscious problem: 'I am a Russian as I belong to the Russian-speaking nation...'<sup>56</sup>

With similar identity markers provoking vastly contradicting forms of self-determination amongst Berendiev's respondents, it is perhaps not surprising that local resident Aleksandr Sologubov has concluded that, in Kaliningrad, '...there is no such thing as identity [...] there is only a mental construct, an idea, but there is no real object'.<sup>57</sup> Reflecting on 'the desperate search for a sense of belonging and the problem of identity' in the region, Sologubov draws from a range of local contemporary texts to illustrate the vast range of opinions held in the region regarding identity - 'from a complete refusal of

specificity, to an assertion of the complete difference of local citizens from the rest of Russian citizens’:

... Here we are all just a rabble without roots

... Just as the citizens of Eastern Prussia were called a new German tribe, citizens living in Kaliningrad may be called a new Russian tribe...

... During the half-century [following the] post-war period, there have grown up three generations of people, who represent a new Prussian ethnos. Soon, natural territorial identification will settle in the minds of those who were born in this land after the war, and it will be at the mercy of those who are proud of and love their Motherland - Eastern Prussia...

... New ethnos? There is no such ethnos. We are just Russians, ordinary Russians, living in Russia...

This is a very strange region... an absolutely German landscape greets us with real German roads... BMWs and Volkswagens rush along these roads, cottages are being gradually built along them, but the cars are driven by Russian ‘Ivans’. And they live in cottages as well. It’s as if a strange experiment is being conducted in Kaliningrad. Who will have the upper hand - genes or the landscape?<sup>58</sup>

In this context, the definition of what it means to be considered a ‘native Kaliningradian’ in contemporary Kaliningrad has too become increasingly complex:

To become a native citizen, it is not enough to simply be born here. It is requisite that your grandfather came to Kaliningrad in the heroic

1940s. Or at least that your ancestors claimed a new Soviet territory and didn't just arrive with everything provided for them. It's necessary that, in the stories of the eldest, their former so-called Motherland is not mentioned. So, a branchy root system, [sic] both deep and broad is necessary. The self-consciousness of the 'natives' is under threat, not only from Moscow and foreign countries, but also by new migrants.

... The native citizens of Kaliningrad have been diluted by thousands of emigrants from Kazakhstan, Central Asia, and God knows where else. I am not sure of the statistics, but judging by what is visible all around, I can state with confidence that more than half of my contemporary countrymen didn't live here just 15 years ago...<sup>59</sup>

## Buildings, buildings, buildings...

*We follow history step by step. On the left there is a stadium, on the right, there is a zoo set in a frame of mature trees. Further on the left, there is a hotel, 'Moskva', (... if you look carefully, then at the level of the fourth floor you will be able to see the coats of arms of Berlin and Gdansk), on the right there is a town-building college [sic] and an art school.*

*Further down the street, on the left-hand side, there is a long irregularly shaped building, which housed a Soviet Consulate before the war - another witness of Russian-German cooperation. Here, time and space merged in a single move from war to peace, from nature to technology, from history of humanity to history of space exploration. Next to the cinema, there is a monument to astronauts. And again - rephrasing a quotation from Hamlet - what can you see? Buildings, buildings, buildings...*

*Ilya Dementiev, 2008*<sup>60</sup>

Of course, Kaliningrad was not the only region of the former Soviet Union that emerged from its collapse lacking a symbolic recourse of its own, (or, at least, one separate to that of its socialist heritage). The planned socialist towns of the wider Eastern bloc - conceived of as 'projects of social engineering designed to develop a new type of community and personality' - too faced a particularly complex process of re-orientation following the disintegration of the USSR's hegemony.<sup>61</sup> As in Kaliningrad, 'a common feature of planned socialist towns [was] their absence of (almost) any history prior to the socialist period'. What is more, 'they were usually populated by migrant communities, which also implied the absence of any collective memory with regards to any

form of shared past except the socialist one'.<sup>62</sup> Indeed, as Kate Brown has argued, 'these were the towns where communism had already been built.'<sup>63</sup>

The development of both forms of self-representation and strategies of coping with the socialist past - when the more common recourses, namely: 'decommunization; a return to a pre-Socialist 'Golden age'; and Westernisation/ Europeanisation of the place' - are not available, has been the theme of Rasa Balockaite's research.<sup>64</sup> Taking Visaginas (Lithuania), Tychy (Poland) and Nowa Huta (Poland) as her case studies, Balockaite has analysed the different approaches employed by planned socialist towns in the formation of a post-Soviet 'place identity' - defined as 'an institutionally produced and/or institutionally supported discourse about a place, which, unlike individual opinions or group interests, is constructed on the basis of historical heritage.'<sup>65</sup> As she convincingly argues, the institutionally produced media in such towns - municipality websites, brochures, photo albums, tourism booklets, guided tours etc., - adopt one of four different strategies in their redefinition of place: 'i) active forgetting of the socialist past; ii) commercialisation of the socialist past via tourism; iii) ironic imitation of the West, vis-à-vis de-ideologized images of 'green and young' towns; and iv) bifurcation of consciousness into private remembrance and public forgetting of the past'.<sup>66</sup>

When one applies Balockaite's framework to the institutionally produced markers of 'place identity' available in contemporary Kaliningrad, however, it becomes clear that all four strategies are employed simultaneously. Indeed, Kaliningrad's Regional Tourism Information Centre itself provides a number of tours that offer conflicting narratives about the city - whilst simultaneously projecting multiple notions of its 'identity'. Take, for example, the tourist route, 'Good Bye Lenin!'. Pitched as 'a route to cultural, historical and architectural objects of the Soviet period, full of Soviet aesthetics and stylised events', the route signifies both an active forgetting of the socialist past and its concurrent commercialisation. Beginning at the main 'Southern' railway station, stops on the route include: The Monument to Kalinin; the House of Arts; the Monument to V. Lenin (moved from Victory Square to the House of Arts in 2007); and the House of Soviets. In stark contradiction to the tours provided during the Soviet period, little information or context is offered about any of the sites. The entry for the House of Soviets, for instance, simply states:

One of the city's symbols of the Soviet era is the House of Soviets. Construction of the building began in 1970, but in the second half of the 1980s, due to the low strength of the soil, the work was suspended. Now the city community discusses the further destiny of the building.

Possibly, it will become a part of the restored 'Königsberg Castle' complex.<sup>67</sup>

By contrast, the tourist routes grounded in the 'ironic imitation of the West' are noticeably richer in their descriptions. Take for instance the blurb for the tour, *Königsberg Treasures: Amalienau*:

There is nothing more exciting for a traveller than strolling for hours about the historic old town, admiring its architectural wonders that are over a century old. We invite you to visit Amalienau - [an] old German area of luxurious villas, where you will be able to fully experience the atmosphere of pre-war Königsberg, walk a stone-block [sic] pavement in the shade of ancient trees, and see the well preserved and verdure-covered houses of wealthy Königsberg settlers.

Tellingly, this tour provides a much more descriptive account of the House of Soviet's predecessor, Königsberg Castle - indeed offering no mention of the former whatsoever:

Königsberg Castle was founded in 1255 by Czech King, Przhemysl Ottokar II. In 1525, the castle was the residence of the first Duke of Prussia - Albrecht of Brandenburg. In 1697, the Grand Embassy of Peter I passed through here. In the period from 1758 to 1762, during the Seven Years War, the castle became the residence of Russian governors, including Governor-General Vasilii Suvorov. In 1807, during Napoleon's campaign, Napoleon stayed here and later Alexander II. Since 1925, the castle housed a famous museum, 'Prussia'. The archive, library and art gallery were here, and the world-known Amber Room

was situated in the southern wing of the castle. During World War Two, the castle was severely damaged, and in 1968-1969 it was completely destroyed. Today, at the site of the archaeological excavations, 'Königsberg Castle', you can see the excavated cellars of the western wing, the foundation of the castle tower, the exhibits found during the excavation and so forth.<sup>68</sup>

By far the most interesting of Balockaite's strategies with regard to Kaliningrad's institutional redefinition of place, however, is the 'bifurcation of consciousness into private remembrance and public forgetting of the past'. Indeed, these notions are clearly inversed in the tourist route 'Königsgrad or Kalininberg' - towards a public remembrance and personal forgetting of the past. As the introductory blurb states, 'Kaliningrad is a unique city. It is a city of three ports at the Pregel River, a city of two names - Königsberg and Kaliningrad; a city-garden with the tomb of the great philosopher Immanuel Kant at the walls of the Cathedral Church; [and] a city of centuries-old history'. In its attempt to demonstrate this point, the route seeks to incorporate Soviet, Russian and German sites of the city. Beginning at Ploshchad' Pobedy (Victory Square), the guide explains that 'previously it was called Hansaplatz, as Königsberg was the member of the Hansa commercial union, together with such cities as Hamburg, Lubeck, Gdansk, Klaipeda, Riga and others. After 1930 an annual fair took place on the square. Later, the Soviet Union also participated in such fairs, presenting its tanks. There are numerous objects for

sightseeing in the square'. Continuing to the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour, the City Hall, the Business Centre, the FSB administration and the Kaliningrad State Technical University, the route then reaches two monuments - that of Peter the Great and of Friedrich Schiller. Here, both the Russian and German heritage of the city is promoted side by side:

Peter the Great, founder of the Baltic Fleet, had repeatedly visited Königsberg. His first visit was during the Grand Embassy in 1697. The official visit was in 1711 in Pillau (now Baltiisk), where Peter studied shipbuilding. The Baltic Fleet is now situated in Baltiisk.

The monument was designed in 1910. Famous German poet and writer Friedrich Schiller had never been in Königsberg, but he always was close to his ideological teacher - Immanuel Kant, who had lived all his life here.

Indeed, the promotion of Immanuel Kant stands out as the most prevalent feature of the tour, also dominating the descriptions of both the cathedral and (unsurprisingly) his tomb:

The Cathedral was built in the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> century in brick gothic style. During World War Two the cathedral was totally burned out and all the headwork, towers and part of the walls were destroyed. It's a miracle that the cathedral remained intact after the war, as the Soviet regime strived to destroy everything connected with the pre-Soviet era. It survived thanks to the tomb of the worldwide philosopher I. Kant. In the 90s, the renovation of the cathedral was started. Now,

there are Orthodox and Protestant chapels in the cathedral, and a museum in its tower.

Worldwide famous philosopher and scientist Immanuel Kant was born, lived, studied and died in Königsberg. His family wasn't wealthy, and he was the fourth child. He studied in a gymnasium and later in Albertina. He worked as a home tutor. Kant was a professor in Albertina. He died at the age of 79. His tomb miraculously survived the war. To preserve the Cathedral, Soviet intelligentsia wrote a petition, where they explained the significance of the tomb of the founder of German classical philosophy.<sup>69</sup>

Notably, despite its proximity to the cathedral and Kant's tomb, the tour offers no mention of the House of Soviets, nor the former Königsberg Castle.

Indeed, the contradiction inherent in such tours has not gone unnoticed by Kaliningrad's locals. As Ilya Dementiev has recalled, 'once someone was retelling me the tour guide's commentary - 'Starting from our aerodrome the Nazi planes went to bomb the Soviet cities''. As he continued to reflect:

... from whose position is this story told? There is a monument in the Kaliningrad zoo dedicated to setting this place free at the end of the storm[ing of the city]. The question is - who did the Red Army soldiers liberate in the zoo and from whom? Several years ago, when the President of Croatia was granted the title of Honorary Doctor of our university, the Governor of the Region (who moved here from

Moscow) was giving a speech at the ceremony and he proudly announced, 'For the first time since Duke Albrecht's times our university hosts the head of a foreign state'.<sup>70</sup>

Dementiev defines such juxtapositions as 'the duality of the narrative'. As he explains, 'On the discourse level you can view this in some elementary speech constructions like 'going to Russia'. If Kaliningrad is part of Russia, how is it possible to go to Russia from it? And still practically everyone here says so?'.<sup>71</sup> Yet, such contradictions are not solely the preserve of locals. The ambiguous, institutionally produced 'place identity' narratives - provided by Kaliningrad's cultural and tourism centres - have also facilitated misconceptions about the region elsewhere in Russia as well. As Dementiev further explains: 'Some years ago I visited Arkhangelsk, a city in the north of Russia where some people earnestly inquired 'where did you learn to speak Russian so well? German is your mother tongue, right?'. Indeed, such experiences have led Ilya Dementiev to have 'nothing to wonder at [during times such as when] the announcer at the federal *Kultura* channel was narrating about the destruction of the Cathedral in Kaliningrad at the end of World War Two by the German air force'.<sup>72</sup> As he concludes, 'it is not that we are a bit German in the Kaliningrad Region. Now all who come from former East Prussia are a little Russian. That's

the heroic past of our country, and it needs the future not less than the future needs the past'.<sup>73</sup>

More recently, such sentiments have begun to inform attempts at forging a new 'place identity' amongst Kaliningrad's cultural institutions. The 2005 *Art-Guide: Königsberg/ Kaliningrad Now*, for instance, explicitly seeks to exploit both the peculiarity of the region and its ambivalent identity as reasons in and of themselves to visit the city. Indeed, as its foreword explains:

We are not proceeding from the past but from the present... The city has a profound impact on many. While it is sometimes negative, this impact stimulates arguments, makes people think, dream and search. It excites reflection about politics, history, existence, personal matters and so forth.

At the same time, we would like to give due attention to monuments of the past. By the latter, we mean not only architecture and sculpture, but the city environment itself. It is hard to determine where history ends and contemporaneity begins in Kaliningrad. In the same way, it is almost impossible to divide between what should be deemed aesthetic and artistic, and what lies beyond it. Prefabricated sectional buildings and the House of Soviets are also the art, architecture and design of a certain period. This is obviously a matter of aesthetics, even though it may be 'the aesthetics of the ugly' (the title of a work by the famous 19<sup>th</sup> century Königsberg philosopher K. Rosenkrantz). This book begins with several introductory texts. Like the entire guide, they are manifold and contradictory, reflecting the multi-layered and disharmonious character of the 'Königsberg/ Kaliningrad' phenomenon.<sup>74</sup>

Likewise, rather than taking the lead of the Regional Tourism Information Centre, the *Art-Guide* instead follows a very simple path. It does not seek to provide a variety of contradicting and conflicting routes, catering to multiple different strategies of place redefinition. Instead, it is explicitly designed 'to be read by potential guests of the city, who will no doubt have some difficulty in orienting themselves in both the Kaliningrad wastelands and in the Königsberg wilderness':

It begins at the Kalinin Monument at the Railway Station and sets off down Leninskii Prospekt, as if we are walking with a guest towards the ancient centre of Königsberg. We pass the Island, the Cathedral, and Kant. We climb the Castle Hill, where the city was founded in 1255, near the House of Soviets. From here we have a clear view of the empty centre of Kaliningrad, of imaginary Königsberg. Some prefabricated sectional buildings on Moskovskii Prospekt catch our eye, and we go there. Having reached the city exit road at the Zakheim Gates, we turn along Litovskii Val to the left and soon, after passing the Royal Gates, we find ourselves in the inner yard of the Kronprinz Barracks. The new residence of the National Centre for Contemporary Art will be located here soon. From here we head towards Vasilevskii Square and the Amber Museum, then to the Victory Square in the centre. Past the House of Technology and the new Orthodox Cathedral, we walk down Prospekt Mira, going as far as Kalinin Park. The route conventionally finishes at the port, at the city's sea gates.<sup>75</sup>

Departing from Balockaite's four different strategies for redefining 'place identity', then, *Art-Guide: Königsberg/ Kaliningrad Now* thus represents a new approach towards embracing the region's complex history. Kaliningrad's heritage is neither forgotten nor commercialised; there is no ironic imitation of the West and no bifurcation of consciousness into private remembrance and public forgetting of the past. Rather, as Aleksandr Sologubov acknowledges in its introduction, Kaliningrad is presented as a place 'of interest to everyone'; as a territory that has experienced 'a great variety of cases when a culture has found itself in a 'foreign' space'; as a land whose citizens are from '... numerous places of origin and [that has] hundreds of nationalities amongst the local population'. Reframing the city in this way, the guide is able to posit the notion that:

Today's Kaliningrad is an exceptional place for the thoughtful tourist, who is sincerely interested in culture and not just seeking something extraordinary or entertaining. Even if it is not always beautiful, comfortable, easy, cheap, safe, clean, quick, tasty, or pleasant here.... It is a contemporary, existing, live laboratory.<sup>76</sup>

What is more, the success of *Art-Guide: Königsberg/ Kaliningrad Now*, has provided a framework for other institutional resources to also build upon this

approach to Kaliningrad's 'place identity'. Indeed, as the 2008, *Atlas of Cultural Resources - Kaliningrad Region*, states in its introduction:

There have been several reasons provoking the appearance of the *Atlas of Cultural Resources*... [one being] ... the project *Art-Guide: Kaliningrad/ Königsberg now* that, three years ago, allowed us to rethink many places and events in Kaliningrad and set an inventive format for describing cultural objects and events... Following the example of the *Art-Guide*, we have tried to avoid dry historical descriptions. Much more important for us were strong impressions gained by experts after encounters with objects, which are presented as 'cultural resources' in this publication. Supposedly, experts are experienced people, and it's not easy to impress them with a superficial tourist routine. So, the presence of a strong impression to a certain extent guaranteed the quality of objects being chosen for the *Atlas*.... By 'a guide' we mean a person, who knows or sees something which is not on the surface. For many people, without guiding narrative, without contaminating personal impression and fascination, the meeting with the place is beyond their strength. And it makes sense to lighten this task for these many people.<sup>77</sup>

The reorientation of Kaliningrad in this way thus at last marks a change of direction in the formation of its 'place identity'. It moves away from utilisation of the pre-Soviet, German past towards the adoption of a more stable form of territorial community rooted in the present. Having emerged from the collapse of the Soviet Union as an exclave of Russia - stranded in the amorphous space previously attributed to the RSFSR - the lack of a common ethnic origin

amongst Kaliningrad's settlers has enabled new forms of territorial identity to prosper. Adopting the placemaking techniques first used in the region by the Soviets, (as discussed in Chapter Two), city tours have aided in the redefining of the region's historical, social, economic, cultural and political characterisations of place. Rather than seeking to promote a clear, chronological logic, however, Kaliningrad has begun to embrace the duality of its narrative. Drawing on reference points in the city's urban fabric of German, Soviet and post-Soviet origin, the development and expression of local identity now promotes 'regionality' - rather than 'nationality' - as the common denominator upon which the idea of a new 'native population' can be built. Put simply, an identity is emerging amongst some aspects of society that is reflective of the fact that the Soviet project - although left unfinished - has had a significant and lasting impact on the region and its inhabitants. Indeed, as local author Max Popov reflected in the introduction to his book, *Parallel Memory, 150 years of Königsberg and Kaliningrad History in Photographs*:

Kaliningrad itself, as a product of its time, is the answer to all questions about the Soviet Union - as some kind of geographical space where all methods of creating reality reached an absurd level, the absurd itself became the method of creating reality.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Rettman, Andrew, Visas and Trade to Dominate 'Yet Another' Eu-Russia Summit, *EUObserver*, December 13, 2011 - <https://euobserver.com/foreign/114627> - accessed 09.08.2019.

<sup>2</sup> Regulations of the Prussian Club, 1985, oral version. New regulations, adopted in 1991, include: the study of the original names of the city's districts and streets; popularization of the history of Prussia among school students; opening the Museum of Prussia. As noted by Sezneva, Olga in *Living in the Russian Present with a German Past: The Problems of Identity in the City of Kaliningrad*, pp. 47-64, in Crowley, David and Reid, Susan E., (eds.), *Socialist Spaces - Sites of Everyday Life in the Eastern Bloc*, Oxford: Bloomsbury, 2002, p. 55.

<sup>3</sup> Berger, Stefan, How to be Russian with a Difference? Kaliningrad and its German past, *Geopolitics*, vol. 15, no. 2, 2010, p. 350. (Transliterations as in the original document).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Sezneva, Olga, *Living in the Russian Present with a German Past*.

<sup>6</sup> Sezneva, Olga, Architecture of Descent: Historical Reconstructions and the Politics of Belonging in Kaliningrad, the Former Königsberg, *Journal of Urban History*, vol. 39, no. 4, 2013, p. 773.

<sup>7</sup> Oldberg, I., The Emergence of a Regional Identity in the Kaliningrad Oblast, *Cooperation and Conflict*, vol. 35, no. 3, 2000., pp. 274-275.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 275.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 273.

<sup>10</sup> G. M. Federov and Iu. M. Zverev, *Kaliningradskie alternativy*, Kaliningrad, 1995, p. 96., as cited in *Ibid.*, p. 275.

<sup>11</sup> Kuznetsov, Artur, Osobyie primety, *Kaliningradskaia Pravda*, November 1, 1995.

<sup>12</sup> Clarkson, Alexander, Russian dreams and Prussian ghosts: Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University and debates over historical memory and identity in Kaliningrad, *History of Education*, vol. 46, no. 2, 2017, p. 262.

<sup>13</sup> Nicolaus Ehlert, *Katedralnyi sobor - Der Königsberger Dom*, Kaliningrad, 1996, p. 65. As cited in Oldberg, I., *The Emergence of a Regional Identity in the Kaliningrad Oblast*, p. 277.

<sup>14</sup> Raymond A. Smith, The Kaliningrad Region: Applications of the Civic and Ethnic Models of Nationhood, *Journal of Baltic Studies*, vol. 24, no. 3, 2007, p. 236.

<sup>15</sup> Sezneva, Olga, *Living in the Russian Present with a German Past*, p. 56.

<sup>16</sup> Oldberg, I., *The Emergence of a Regional Identity in the Kaliningrad Oblast*, pp. 276-277.

<sup>17</sup> See. I. S. Kuznetsova's monograph, *Immanuel Kant*, Kaliningrad: Izdatel'stvo Kaliningradskogo gosuniversiteta, 1998. She not only connects Kant's name with the city, she sees it also as a 'symbol of wisdom on all continents', p. 59.

<sup>18</sup> During the War, after the bombing of Königsberg by the Royal Air Force, Marion Countess Dönhoff asked the city magistrate for the permission to take the sculpture to her family estate for safe-keeping, far from napalm. She took it, and before the Red Army's arrival, the Countess buried the statue in the park and then rode away from the Soviet soldiers on a white horse (!). She returned to her native land in 1991, but she found neither the sculpture nor the estate. She collected some money from here

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and there for a new monument, added some of her own money and returned to the city what she took for safe-keeping 50 years before'. Popadin, Aleksandr, Binary States of 'K' City: On the Symbolic Typography of the City in Tsvetaeva, Elena, (ed.), *Art-Guide: Königsberg / Kaliningrad Now*, Kaliningrad: Agency for Support of Cultural Initiatives, Tranzit, 2005 - <http://art-guide.ncca-kaliningrad.ru/?by=p&aglang=eng&au=000pervajastr> - accessed 24.09.2015.

<sup>19</sup> Oldberg, I., *The Emergence of a Regional Identity in the Kaliningrad Oblast*, p. 276.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/f5/Krysha2.jpg> - accessed 11.03.2018.

<sup>22</sup> Oldberg, I., *The Emergence of a Regional Identity in the Kaliningrad Oblast*, p. 278.

<sup>23</sup> Oldberg, I., *Kaliningrad: Problems and Prospects*, in Pertti Joenniemi and Jan Prawitz, (eds.), *Kaliningrad: The European Amber Region*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998, p. 11; *Svobodnaia zona*, May 30, 1996; Botschafter Artur Kuznetsov, in *Zehn Jahre Ostsee-Akademie*, Lübeck: Dietmar Albrecht and Martin Thoemmes, Hrsg, 1998, p. 87. As cited in *Ibid.*, p. 279.

<sup>24</sup> Kuznetsov, S., *Immanuel Kant*, p. 89.

<sup>25</sup> Jokubaitis, Alvydas, and Lopata, Raimundas, Geopolitical Transformation of the Kaliningrad Oblast of the Russian Federation, (Strategies for the development of the Baltic Region), *The Baltic Region*, vol. 4, no. 2., 2010, p. 33.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> Interview with the Kaliningrad-based writer Elena Emil'janova [sic], September 12, 2006; interview with the Kaliningrad historian Yuri Kostiashev, September 14, 2006. As cited by Berger, Stefan in German Pasts in a Russian City - Kaliningrad between 1946 and 2006, in Tamm, Marek, (ed.), *Afterlife of Events - Perspectives on Mnemohistory*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan Memory Studies, 2015, pp. 203-204.

<sup>28</sup> Berger, Stefan, German Pasts in a Russian City, p. 205.

<sup>29</sup> Clarkson, Alexander, Russian dreams and Prussian ghosts, p. 262.

<sup>30</sup> 'Course Guide', Department for Study Programmes and Education Policy, Kaliningrad State University, 2002. As cited in *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> Gänzle, Stefan; Meister Stefan; and King, Conrad, The Bologna Process and its Impact on Higher Education at Russia's Margins: The Case of Kaliningrad, *Higher Education*, vol. 57, no. 4 2009, p. 537.

<sup>32</sup> Berger, Stefan, German Pasts in a Russian City, p. 205; Clarkson, Alexander, Russian dreams and Prussian ghosts, p. 263.

<sup>33</sup> Clarkson, Alexander, Russian dreams and Prussian ghosts, p. 265.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> Rettman, Andrew, Visas and Trade to Dominate 'Yet Another' Eu-Russia Summit, *EUObserver*, December 13, 2011; Stanislaw Domaniewski and Dominika Studzińska, The Small Border Traffic Zone between Poland and Kaliningrad Region (Russia): The Impact of a Local Visa-Free Border Regime, *Geopolitics* vol. 21, no. 3, 2016, p. 4.

<sup>36</sup> Symbols, *Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University*, <https://eng.kantiana.ru/about/symbols/> accessed 09.04.2016.

<sup>37</sup> Berger, Stefan, German Pasts in a Russian City, p. 205.

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.helpgoabroad.com/community/3450-ikbfu/timeline/> - accessed 11.05.2018.

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- <sup>39</sup> Chechot, Ivan, To Genius Loci Kaliningrad and Königsberg, (trans A. Matveieva), in Tsvetaeva, Elena, (ed.), *Art-Guide: Königsberg / Kaliningrad Now*.
- <sup>40</sup> Kolosov, V., and Vendina, O., The Youth in Kaliningrad, Gdansk and Klaipeda: Geopolitical Vision of the World, Identity and Images of the Other, *Baltic Region*, vol.22, no. 4, 2014, pp. 9-10.
- <sup>41</sup> *Ibid.* p. 10.
- <sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.
- <sup>43</sup> The percentage does not total 100 due to multiple responses. As noted in *Ibid.*, p. 17.
- <sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.
- <sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.
- <sup>47</sup> Kosov, V. A., Zotova, M. V., 2011, Geopoliticheskoi videniie mira rossiiskimi grazhdanami: opyt primeneniia metodov 'kriticheskoi geopolitiki'. 'Kriticheskoi' napravleniie v geopolitike: stala li, nakonets, geopolitika naukoii? in Kaledin, N. V., Chistobaiev, A. I. (eds.), *Geograficheskoi prostranstvo Rossii: obraz i modernizatsiia*, St. Petersburg, pp. 92-114. As cited in *Ibid.*, p. 12.
- <sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.
- <sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.
- <sup>50</sup> *Ibid.* p. 21.
- <sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.
- <sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.
- <sup>53</sup> Klemeshev, A., Fedorov, G., and Fidrya, E., Specific Kaliningrad character of the Russian identity, in: Biegańska, J. and Szymańska, D. (eds.), *Bulletin of Geography. Socio-economic Series*, Toruń: Nicolaus Copernicus University, 2017, p. 49.
- <sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>56</sup> Berendeiev, M.V., 'Kto moi?': Kaliningrad v poiske sootvetstvuiushei informatsii *Sotsiologicheskiiie issledovaniia* - <http://2008.isras.ru/files/File/Socis/2007-04/Berendeev.pdf> pp.3-5 - accessed 12.05.2018.
- <sup>57</sup> Sologubov, Aleksandr, From Kaliningrad Dictionary (Phrasebook), (trans. N. Shtock), in Tsvetaeva, Elena, (ed.), *Art-Guide: Königsberg / Kaliningrad Now*.
- <sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>60</sup> Dementiev, Ilya, Itinerary: 'The square - park' (Hansaring - Luisenwahl), in Popadin, Aleksandr, *Atlas kul'turnykh resursov - Kaliningradskaiia Oblast*, Kaliningrad: Agentstvo podderzhki kul'turnykh initsiativ Tranzit, 2008, p. 11.
- <sup>61</sup> Balockaite, Rasa, Coping with the Unwanted Past in Planned Socialist Towns: Visaginas, Tychy, and Nowa Huta, *SLOVO*, vol. 24, no. 1, 2012, pp. 41-46.
- <sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 46-47.
- <sup>63</sup> Kate Brown, Lethal Landscapes: The Soviet-American history of plutonium radiation and the communities that learned to love and then fight over the bomb, Seminar held at University of Maryland, October 21, 2009. As cited in *Ibid.* See also Brown, Kate, *Plutopia: Nuclear Families, Atomic Cities and the Great Soviet and American Disasters*, London: Oxford University Press, 2013.

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<sup>64</sup> See also Young, Craig, and Kaczmarek, Sylvia, The Socialist Past and Post-socialist Urban Identity in Central and Eastern Europe, *European Urban and Regional Studies*, vol. 15, no. 1, pp. 53-70.

<sup>65</sup> Balockaite, Rasa, Coping with the Unwanted Past in Planned Socialist Towns: Visaginas, Tychy, and Nowa Huta, p. 41.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 41-57.

<sup>67</sup> <http://old.visit-kaliningrad.ru/en/brochure/> - accessed 12.03.18.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> Dementiev, Ilya, Bridges to nowhere? Identity of the residents of the Kaliningrad region in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, in Henningsen, Bernd, (ed.), *Facets of Identity - the Baltic Sea Region and Beyond*, Copenhagen: Baltic Development Forum, 2013, pp. 63-64.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 64.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> Tsvetaeva, Elena, (ed.), *Art-Guide: Königsberg / Kaliningrad Now*.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> Sologubov, Aleksandr, Culture in a 'Foreign' Space: An Introduction, in *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> Popadin, Alexandr, Introduction, in Popadin, Aleksandr, *Atlas kul'turnykh resursov - Kaliningradskaia Oblast*, p. 7.

<sup>78</sup> Popov, Maks, *Parallel'naia pamyat' - 150 let, istorii Kenigsberga i Kaliningrada v fotografiakh*, Kaliningrad: Piktorika 2012, p. 27.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Words are articulated from afar

*There again, August 23 comes around and, from both sides, words are articulated from afar which keep disseminating needless enmity. Gentlemen [sic], maybe the time has come to stop and insert the ellipsis in this issue...*

*Aleksandr Vidiakin, Telegraf, August 24, 2009.<sup>1</sup>*

Kaliningrad's geography on the southern shore of the Baltic invites comparisons with the post-Soviet Baltic states further along the Baltic littoral. Indeed, the Baltic states' successful integration into the West has also relied significantly on the redefinition of their respective 'place identities', but in very different ways to Kaliningrad's evolution. With the fierce Baltic nationalism that manifested itself during the dissolution of the USSR being quickly confronted by the sudden availability of international culture, the region has faced a much more diversified and challenging cultural landscape.<sup>2</sup> This, in turn, has fostered an intricate juxtaposition in the Baltic states. On the one hand, they have been forced to redefine themselves through an ethnically oriented 'inward turn'.<sup>3</sup> On the other - no longer protected by Soviet nationality policy - the Baltic states have also had to establish themselves as part of the international global community. Thus, this 'inward turn' has had to run parallel to their increasing exposure to a homogenised culture that is

characteristic of globalisation and commodified capitalism. Put simply, it has been accompanied by a simultaneous 'outward turn' as well.<sup>4</sup>

The difficulties and contradictions caused by these two 'turns' are significant. In particular, the stark contrast between the Baltic and Western historical narratives of World War Two have proved especially antagonistic: the former rooted in the Baltic region's collective suffering during the Second World War and the absolute prioritisation of patriotism over the more contentious issue of Nazi collaboration; the latter centred on collective mourning for the Holocaust and written in a deliberately post-national tone.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, nowhere has this notion manifested itself more explicitly than in the western response to the unveiling of the Estonian 'Lihula' monument in 2004.

The monument's erection was directly linked to the redefinition of Estonia's pre-war history during the *perestroika* years. With the advent of Estonian independence, surviving Estonians who had fought under the Germans - and whose public remembrance during Soviet times had thus been unthinkable - began to organise various commemorative gatherings. Quickly gaining popular support, the veterans - who became known as 'freedom fighters'<sup>6</sup> - began to

seek official recognition of the fact that they had fought for Estonia's independence in 1944. Towards this aim, donations were gathered by the Association of Freedom Fighters for a monument that would allow the veterans to obtain public acknowledgement of their 'rightful place' in the nation's history.<sup>7</sup>

In 2002, once enough money had been raised, the monument was erected in the city of Pärnu. 'The monument featured a relief of an Estonian soldier in a German uniform with a Mauer sub-machinegun in his hands'. And bore '... an uncanny resemblance to a wartime German recruitment poster'. The relief was accompanied by the text: 'To all Estonian soldiers who fell in the Second War of Liberation and for a free Europe 1940-1945'. Unsurprisingly, the monument immediately attracted fierce international criticism, and was removed by the city authorities before its official unveiling ceremony.<sup>8</sup>

Having failed to have their monument erected in Pärnu, the Association of Freedom Fighters sourced a new site in the provincial town of Lihula, in western Estonia. Here, the same relief of an Estonian soldier in German uniform was erected. However, this time accompanied by a revised text,

reading: 'To the Estonian men who fought against Bolshevism in 1940-1945 and for the restoration of Estonian independence'. The unveiling ceremony was held on August 20, 2004 and was attended by approximately 2,000 veterans and local people.<sup>9</sup> Whilst invitations were sent to state representations across Europe, all were declined. As the Estonian Prime Minister, Juhan Parts, had rightly foreseen, although he himself understood the importance of honouring 'those veterans who fought to restore Estonian independence', the monument itself was likely to be a 'provocation'.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, the unveiling of the monument was again met with sharp international criticism - with the BBC running the headline 'Estonia Unveils Nazi War Monument'.<sup>11</sup> As a result, on September 2, under the cover of darkness, the Ministry of the Interior once again had the monument removed.<sup>12</sup>

The government's actions in Lihula were met with disbelief and anger amongst the domestic populace. And, despite his attempts to justify the removal of the monument - both on legal grounds and in terms of defending 'national security' - Parts' popularity plummeted. His heavy-handed and poorly communicated decision to remove the monument had created the impression of an 'incompetent and arrogant leader, who did not consider public

sentiment'. Rather, it was believed, his actions had been motivated by a desire to appease the West. Just seven months later, he resigned.<sup>13</sup>

Certainly, the accusation that Parts had acted in western rather than Estonian interests is not ill-founded; 'Estonian diplomats privately made reference to the imminent convening of the new session of the US Congress and the desire to avoid having the Lihula monument brought up in Washington'. What is more, it was the Foreign Minister, Kristiina Ojuland, who had put pressure on the government to act - not the Minister of the Interior under whose jurisdiction the matter fell. As such, 'when Prime Minister Parts spoke laconically of 'national security', he [had in fact] meant that he expected the international criticism would harm Estonia's image among its Western allies, particularly the US'.<sup>14</sup>

Such mistakes were not repeated by the other Baltic states. In June 2009, the University of Latvia hosted a week-long conference in commemoration of the centenary of the noted Oxford University scholar, Sir Isaiah Berlin. In her opening speech, former president, Vaira Vīke-Freiberga, proclaimed that Isaiah was 'a son of Riga... who does belong to this city and was shaped by his stay in

Riga.’ She went on to state that Berlin had finally ‘returned home’ to Latvia and that, ‘although he did not live here long, we [Latvians] lay claim to him.’ Mārcis Auziņš, the Rector of the University, further emphasised that Berlin was ‘... a great son of Latvia’, and news reports that evening continued to broadcast that Berlin had ‘... finally returned to the homeland [*dzimtenie*] that he was forced to leave.’<sup>15</sup>

Although indeed linked to Latvia by birth, Berlin had left Latvian territory before the formation of an independent state in 1918 and neither spoke Latvian, nor appears to have ever personally acknowledged his Latvian heritage. Indeed, at the same conference, Isaiah’s biographer, Henry Hardy, presented a clip from a 1981 television interview with Berlin ‘in which the only reference the philosopher made to his Latvian past was the statement: ‘the Baltic, where I come from.’’<sup>16</sup>

This seemingly bizarre ‘capture’ of Isaiah Berlin can thus be seen as a direct response by the Latvian authorities to the international criticism that surrounded the Estonian erection of the Lihula monument. Indeed, on the one hand, the EU’s support of Estonia at the Samara summit in May 2007,

encouraged the Baltic leaders to try and integrate themselves more fully into the western world. On the other, however, the EU's fierce disapproval regarding the erection of the monument also signified that further Baltic integration could only continue asymmetrically. Pressure was placed on the littoral states to adhere to established norms, most obviously, to the western historical narrative of World War Two - 'a discourse that categorically denies any form of honour to persons who fought in the uniforms of the Third Reich'.<sup>17</sup>

Accordingly, the instrumentalisation of Isaiah Berlin was employed to emphasise Latvia's multi-cultural past and long-standing Jewish community to the outside world. In doing so, Latvia sought to deflect from both the shame of Latvian collaboration with the Nazis during World War Two and the controversial nature of the new nationalistic historical narratives of the Baltic states. Indeed, as Vaira Vike-Freiberga reflected in a speech to the American Jewish Community in May 2007, Jews had made significant contributions to humanity, 'including... the Riga-born philosopher Isaiah Berlin'. As she continued, '...these men are famous around the world. They make up part of the rich cultural inheritance that unites the Latvian and Jewish nations'.<sup>18</sup>

By stressing that Berlin's political liberalism was somehow influenced by his childhood in Latvia - albeit a Latvia that did not politically exist at the time - the government actively sought to portray itself as a state not simply 'mimicking' established Western norms, but, rather, as one intricately linked to their conception. Put simply, Latvia presented itself as 'being part of the mainstream of European thought and culture, not just in the present, but over the course of the previous century [as well], when Latvia was occupied and prevented from taking up a place in the Western group of nations'. Therefore - so the projection goes - despite inconsistencies between the Western and Baltic historical narratives, its place among the nations of the West is undeniable.<sup>19</sup>

Yet, although successfully avoiding Estonia's confrontation with the West, this projection of Latvian identity nevertheless remains in stark contrast to the ethnically orientated reality of its 'inward turn'. Latvia still distinguishes between citizenship (belonging to the state) and nationality (belonging to the nation). For instance, in Latvian passports, whilst citizenship is Latvian by default, nationality can be Latvian, Russian, Jewish, etc. As such, 'those individuals holding Latvian citizenship, but [who are] from a different ethnic background, are not held to be authentically Latvian'. This is particularly true

with regard to Latvia's Jewish population. Latent antisemitism in the country has led to Latvian Jews facing criticism from both mainstream and radical right populist parties and individual politicians. Indeed, as a member of the radical right, populist National Alliance Party proclaimed ahead of the 2010 parliamentary election, 'there was [still] a place for 'intelligent antisemitism' in the public discourse'. The party gained enough support to enter the government coalition in October 2011.<sup>20</sup>

Thus, whilst Latvia's western-oriented elite has attempted to capture and utilise the cultural legacy of Berlin for foreign political gain, the domestic response has been much more ambivalent. Indeed, Isaiah Berlin appears only marginally in the domestic discourse; the annual Isaiah Berlin Day is sparsely attended and 'only marginally impinge[s] on the Latvian consciousness' - not least because of the fact that 'the Latvian ethnic conception of nationality means that the very classification of ... [Isaiah Berlin] as 'Latvian' ... [remains] ... internally disputed'.<sup>21</sup>

The Latvian ambivalence towards Isaiah Berlin is thus indicative of a wider post-Soviet identity crisis that extends beyond simply that experienced in

Kaliningrad and, indeed, is one that continues to haunt the Baltic peoples as well. Externally, the firm, western-oriented stance adopted by Baltic leaders has forced the Baltic historical narrative to be sidelined. In its place, less internationally contentious means of furthering European integration have been promoted - such as the 'capture' of internationally renowned cultural figures like Berlin. Yet, in the domestic sphere, the premise of collective-victimhood in World War Two and the illegality of Soviet rule during the years of occupation have continued to serve as vital pillars of these states' collective identities. The inconsistencies between the 'external' and 'internal' projections of identity have thus continued to prove profoundly damaging to the domestic acceptance of the national story, and, more specifically, to the process of simultaneously remembering and forgetting.<sup>22</sup>

However, 2009 also marked the anniversaries of two other events; namely, that of the seventieth anniversary of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and the twentieth anniversary of the Baltic Way. Both provided new opportunities to resolve the Baltic identity crisis - if not Kaliningrad's. Seen by many as the epitome of Baltic unity in its calls for independence in 1989 - as well as the event that pressured the Gorbachev government to admit the secret clauses of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact - the Baltic Way had long served as a bridge

between the historical narratives of World War Two and those of the opposition period. Yet, as preparations for its twentieth anniversary began, the above-mentioned growing disillusionment in society was becoming increasingly prevalent. It became clear to the Baltic leaders that their elite capital in the field of memory was being replaced by a new popular desire to disassociate entirely from the memories of the Soviet past.<sup>23</sup>

As a result, rather than using the twentieth anniversary of the Baltic Way as a means to celebrate triumphantly the re-emergence of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania as independent nations following nearly half a century of collective suffering, the political elite instead consciously sought to 'imbue the past... with ambiguity rather than grand narrative'.<sup>24</sup> This was to be done through commemorating the anniversary by hosting a tri-state-sponsored unity-run. Three weeks before the anniversary, the Latvian Orienteering Federation and the President's Chancery commissioned the public relations agency, Deep White - in collaboration with their corresponding agencies in Estonia (Alfa-Omega Communications) and Lithuania (KMPS) - to work out 'an appealing and powerful public relations campaign' for the commemoration.<sup>25</sup> The spectacle was coined 'Heartbeats for Baltics', and, at the Latvian press conference for the event, an online registration was unveiled at which the President of Latvia publicly pledged his participation. In the advertising

campaign that followed, a group of popular celebrities and twenty-year-olds born on the historical day also registered for the run.

With comparable press conferences and publicity campaigns also underway in Estonia and Lithuania, the 'Heartbeats for the Baltics' website proclaimed that the Baltic Way was, 'a historical symbol that is alive in the collective memory, enriching the understanding of the sense of values of solidarity and freedom of expression'.<sup>26</sup> Likewise, an editorial - published five days ahead of the run in the English-language *Baltic Times* and prepared by the Latvian Foreign Ministry - added that the run was a 'living history lesson for those who were born after the Baltic Way or do not remember it because they were too young'.<sup>27</sup>

However, this 'living history lesson' did not impart the grand narrative of what had compelled nearly twenty-five per cent of the Baltic population to unite on August 23, 1989. Rather, the grand narrative was replaced with intentionally fragmented and diverse 'mini-narratives', 'ranging from discussions of running practices and health, to modest (or banal) political calls for a 'new Baltic Way' that would 'confirm unity' ... although no substantive steps towards such an end were offered'.<sup>28</sup>

The event itself commenced on August 22, 2009 and adhered to the historical route of the Baltic Way. Taking the form of a grandiose thirty-one-hour unity run, it was completed, like a relay, in segments. Opening with an introductory speech by the Lithuanian President, Dalia Grybauskaite, in Vilnius, the run proceeded north with a further introduction by Estonian President, Toomas Hendrik Ilves, in Tallinn, before culminating at the Freedom Monument in central Riga. The Latvian President, Valdis Zatlers, partook in the last kilometre of the run. In keeping with the emphasis on Baltic unity, the Mayor of Riga, Nils Ušakovs - an ethnic Russian - accompanied President Zatlers on the last kilometre of the route and was asked to address the gathering at the Freedom Monument. The event drew more than 60,000 participants from across all three Baltic states.<sup>29</sup>

Both in the press and in the public, the unity run was met with mixed emotion. Some voiced their support for the event - praising its efforts to revive the unity and hope of the Baltic Way. For example, Pauls Raudseps, a critic from the Latvian daily newspaper *Diena*, reported that: 'Sunday demonstrated that, irrespective of all difficulties, there still are huge resources of goodness that are being broadened for the formation of a brighter future'. Likewise, a woman from Riga was so stirred by the event that she felt the need to ring the *Latvijas Avīve's* editorial office to voice the 'inexpressible gladness and

excitement' she had experienced, and that had brought her '... to tears watching the marathon of unity'.<sup>30</sup>

Yet, such enthusiasm was not universally shared. Others expressed scepticism about the event and its intentions. Viktors Avotiņš, an analyst from the Latvian national newspaper *Neatkarīga Rīta Avīze*, for example, remained explicitly unconvinced by the event:

Of course, patriotic events are needed ... I am also in favour of unity. Alas - for a unity which is demonstrated not in concert with the appeals and invitations of some 'ministry of propaganda', but for [a unity] which does not have to be specially planned, [and] which emanates from current practices (of society, of power structures). [...] In the Soviet period, it was common to demonstrate for that which did not exist. But for that [a unity] which at this time is absent, I will not run. [...] I see as deceptive such official or semi-official actions that do not represent existing circumstances, but that are used as a curtain to obscure those circumstances.<sup>31</sup>

Indeed, the very attempt to stress a show of Baltic unity by the political elite actually encouraged some to realise the lack of unity in the littoral states. In particular, Avotiņš' scepticism resonated especially loudly with those who were still bitter about the domestic consequences of the Baltic leaders'

western-oriented outlook. On *Neatkarīga Rīta Avīze's* online forum, for example, Avotīnš' article was supplemented with the following comments:

...Does [President] Zatlers have no shame!? In order to divert attention from the [troubles] that he and other politicians have cooked up, he intends to manipulate people's emotions with an event to commemorate the Baltic Way. Leave this amazing historical event alone!<sup>32</sup>

I hurt for my nation, today I cried, I watched TV, remembered how unified we were twenty years ago, but today it seemed to me that the event [Heartbeats for the Baltics] was devoted to burnishing the image of [President] Zatlers, and I wait with trepidation about what tomorrow will bring, what new taxes await us, how many people will be left unemployed, how many hungry children will not be able to go to school on the first of September.<sup>33</sup>

Of all the media coverage 'Heartbeats for the Baltics' received, however, it was the remarkably neutral reportage of the Russian-language newspapers that was most surprising. In stark contrast to the traditionally bias and contemptuous reports of previous years, little reference was made to the historical meaning behind the Baltic Way, nor the contradictions between the Russian and Baltic historical narratives of the era of occupation. Indeed, the newspaper *Chas* was the only one to adopt a mocking tone in its review, remarking that: 'Despite the fact that the President of Latvia, Valdis Zatlers, only joined Sunday's run, 'Heartbeats for the Baltics', at the final kilometre,

which is none too correct from the sports viewpoint, his participation became the centre of the whole event'.<sup>34</sup>

Nevertheless, the organisers hailed the event as a stunning success, proclaiming that it had exceeded the record for the number of participants in comparable marathons previously held in the Baltic countries. Certainly, assembling more than 60,000 participants - in addition to spectators - for the event dedicated to the Baltic Way was no mean feat. Not least, due to the fact that any discussion of the extraordinary and unique experiences of the Baltic peoples that resulted in the Baltic Way were deliberately left out of the commemoration. Indeed, the success with which 'Heartbeats for the Baltics' was able to reproduce the Baltic Way whilst draining it of its wider meaning is perhaps its most victorious attribute.

The seventieth anniversary of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and the twentieth anniversary of the Baltic Way have thus both paved the way for a stable national identity to grow alongside the littoral states' integration into the western world. As in Kaliningrad, the Baltic states' entry into the post-Soviet sphere has entailed a reorientation in both the concept of ownership and in government. However, the existence in each Baltic state of a historical ethnic

base - something Soviet nationality policy, as enacted in Kaliningrad, ensured the latter did not have - has meant that overcoming the resulting identity crisis in the Baltic states has proved significantly easier than in neighbouring Kaliningrad. Indeed, with the Baltic Way serving for two decades to epitomise the grand narrative of the Baltic states' triumph over half a century of suffering under Soviet rule - hitherto a foundational pillar in the 'internal' projection of national identity and the official historical narratives of these states - its role in society is now changing. The grand narrative it has previously represented is being replaced by 'mini-narratives'. These 'mini-narratives' articulate themselves as purposely disengaged, not only from the politics of the memory of 1989, but also from the wider Baltic historical narrative at large. Put simply, old memories are beginning to make way for new memories. Indeed, as one account has noted: 'Just as [people] remembered where they stood in the Baltic Way, now [they] will remember the section which they ran [in the unity-run].'<sup>35</sup>

## A certain pairing of the whole

*First of all, the city itself, its status and name have a certain symbolic nature, a certain pairing of the whole that apologists for the city's renaming are attempting to address. For them, Königsberg is a symbol, the historical and social phenomenon of a vanished city that combines in itself an idealised version of the European city with the typical everyday human psychological phenomenon of the idealisation of the past.*

*Aleksandr Popadin, 2005* <sup>36</sup>

Both the appropriation of cultural figures and the use of anniversary events to appease contradicting historical narratives have also been used in Kaliningrad. Yet, whilst in the Baltics, this has - in general terms - enabled the littoral states' largely successful integration into the West; in Kaliningrad, the adoption of such practices has produced markedly differing results.

Take, for instance, the events surrounding the memorialisation of Professor Nikolai Arseniev. Following the Russian Revolution, Arseniev had emigrated to Königsberg in fear of being persecuted for his Orthodox beliefs. Having established himself as a Professor of History and Culture at the famous Albertina University, however, in the autumn of 1944, Arseniev was again forced to flee westward - once more, in fear of Soviet persecution. He eventually found refuge in America, where he died an American citizen.<sup>37</sup> Arseniev's story gained popularity in Kaliningrad during the 1990s. Indeed, 'for

those who appreciated the German past, Arseniev was a genuine citizen of Königsberg, for the Russian nationalists [on the other hand] he embodied an Orthodox person who suffered at the hands of the Bolsheviks'. As a result of the broad support for Arseniev's story - as well as the fact that it seemed to provide further evidence of Russian presence in the region prior to World War Two - in 2010, it was agreed to erect a memorial plaque marking the house in Kaliningrad in which he used to live.<sup>38</sup>

As the press began to publicise the unveiling ceremony of the plaque, however, contentious material relating to Arseniev's actions during World War Two began to surface on local media forums. Indeed, as Ilya Dementiev recalls: 'it was found out that, in autumn 1941, [Arseniev had] started serving in the Wehrmacht as 'Sonderführer' and was working as an interpreter in the captives' camp near Leningrad, where Soviet soldiers were kept'. Whilst there was no evidence that he was guilty of war crimes, 'the fact of Arseniev serving in the Nazi forces [was] indisputable'.<sup>39</sup> As a result of the ensuing public outcry, the installation of the memorial plaque was cancelled.

There is, of course, another of the Albertina University's staff whose appropriation has proved less controversial - Immanuel Kant. Universally

regarded as one of the most influential thinkers of modern Western philosophy, the fact that Kant remains buried in Kaliningrad is significant. Much like the Latvian 'capture' of Isaiah Berlin, the presence of Kant's tomb in Kaliningrad provides - for Kaliningrad's 'westernisers' - explicit, tangible evidence of the role of this region in the development of mainstream European thought and culture. Indeed, as Ivan Chechot - Associate Professor of Art History at the State University of St. Petersburg - observed during his time in Kaliningrad:

The most beautiful element of the Cathedral is Immanuel Kant's Portico... No other philosopher has a tomb like this. Why Kant was thus honoured may be explained by several factors: local patriotism, the pride of educated people... Kant's role in the philosophic debates of the first decades of the twentieth century, and the significance of his political philosophy for liberal ideology and the Weimar Republic's intelligentsia in general.

Yet - although certainly not sharing the fate of Arseniev - the appropriation of Kant still highlights the difficulties of such practices of appropriation. Indeed, as Chechot continues: 'Today, Kant's tomb faces the House of Soviets across the river, confront[ing] the numerous empty eye sockets of its windows, the skeleton of the building, the cube'.<sup>40</sup> Likewise, Aleksandr Sologubov has made similar observations, noting that:

Kant is one of Kaliningrad's symbols. The name of this symbol is remarkably connected with the name of the deceased Königsberg philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724 - 1804). However [...] this Kant is not present in the city; he died 200 years ago. Those who wish to learn more about him may read about his life and works in specialised books. The symbol 'Kant' has become familiar to citizens of Kaliningrad, they use it almost automatically ... [Yet] ... How many people in the country have ever read Kant's works? Possibly six or even fifty, but even they did it at gunpoint. And, suddenly, an entire city is dedicated to this rather inexplicable Kant. Excursions, streets and institutes named after him. [...] Kant is everywhere again - a bust, first editions... I open a visitor's comment book: 'We enjoyed everything very much. We went swimming and sunbathing in the morning, and now we are getting acquainted with Kant - we donned him a cap and took photographs with him'... What a catastrophe!<sup>41</sup>

The complicated nature of Kant's 'capture' by Kaliningrad was too further reflected in July 2005, when Kaliningrad celebrated its 750<sup>th</sup> anniversary - despite the fact that 'a city occupying Kaliningrad's spatial coordinates has carried this particular name only since July 4, 1946'.<sup>42</sup>

The idea to mark the 750<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the city was originally proposed in July 2001 by the local writer and cultural figure, Aleksandr Popadin - just three weeks after the city had celebrated its 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary of becoming Kaliningrad.<sup>43</sup> Less than a year later, discussions as to how to mark the

anniversary were already taking place amongst the city's authorities. Mirroring the principles that were to inform the anniversary of the Baltic Way half a decade later, Yuri Savenko - the then Mayor of Kaliningrad - explained that '...the 750<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations offered an opportunity to change the region's poor (international) image...'. Instead, he proclaimed, 'Kaliningrad, former Königsberg' would be seen as '... one city, [that] has one history'.<sup>44</sup>

Once again, the anniversary celebrations sparked renewed calls for the renaming of the city, with the local press going so far as to launch a competition for a new name for the city. Indeed, as Aleksandr Sologubov recalls:

... readers submitted numerous variants: Koenigrad, Westberg, Zapadburg, Eurograd, Zagranburg, Rusberg, Baltburg, Iantarograd, Pribaltiisk, Vladibaltiisk, Tsaregorsk, Korolevskii Gora (a literal translation from the German name), and Ottokargrad (after the king who founded the city). There was also a proposal to reinterpret the present name: to leave the name as it is, but to dedicate it not to a person, but to a plant - the guelder rose (kalinin in Russian), and to cultivate this plant in the square near the Southern Railway Station, where the monument to Kalinin is located.<sup>45</sup>

Just as before, however, none of the suggestions were implemented.

As well as providing an opportunity to appeal to the West, however, the 750<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the city also followed a broader trend taking place across Russia. Indeed this was indicative of the revival of history that accompanied the collapse of the Soviet Union across all its respective former territories - St. Petersburg had held its tercentenary celebrations in 2003; Tomsk its 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2004; and Pskov its 1,100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2003. All had received significant federal funding, and all '... had been attended by representatives from the Kaliningrad region'.<sup>46</sup>

Yet, attempts to attain federal funding for celebrations in Kaliningrad proved more fraught. In its first official response to the proposed celebrations, for instance, the presidential administration explained that: '... the federal centre could not support the anniversary date being proposed as it did not correspond with the traditional date for the foundation of the city of Kaliningrad, which was July 4, 1946'.<sup>47</sup> Russian national media reports further highlighted other reasons for the proposal's rejection, including: 'federal concerns that the funding scandals of St. Petersburg's tercentenary could be repeated'; 'identity-related fears among Russia's leadership'; and 'opposition from veterans' associations'.<sup>48</sup> Indeed, the last was significant. As Yuri Zamiatin, the Head of the Kaliningrad Veterans' Council, proclaimed: 'It is

impossible to have a more humiliating celebration for us, for Russians'<sup>49</sup> - further stating that, 'Königsberg being 750 years old is not our history'<sup>50</sup> and that 'Kaliningrad has existed only since 1946, whereas Königsberg belonged firmly to the memory culture of a different nation'.<sup>51</sup>

In response to the proposal's rejection, well-known Kaliningraders - such as the cosmonaut Aleksei Leonov; the singer Oleg Gazmonov; and even Vladimir Putin's wife, Lyudmila Putina - began to articulate their support for the anniversary celebrations. In particular, they sought to reinforce the argument that 'Kaliningrad's 750<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations could be an opportunity for improving Russian-EU relations'. Indeed, such efforts ultimately proved persuasive and, in June 2003, during a visit to Kaliningrad, Vladimir Putin proclaimed:

...We will, of course, do everything that depends on us to ensure that there are celebrations and events worthy of the city, and that this anniversary becomes an event that unites us with our neighbours, rather than driving a wedge between us.<sup>52</sup>

The allocation of federal funding, however, also meant significant federal control over how the proceedings were to unfold. In particular, the federal authorities began to exert substantial influence over which 'anniversary objects' were to be either reconstructed, or else built from scratch. As a result,

it quickly became clear that Moscow was keen to use the celebrations for its own political gain - not least, to 'show the West that Kaliningrad was Russian'.<sup>53</sup> Such notions were clearly expressed in the decision to use federal funding to restore Königsberg's Royal Gate - which was then subsequently overlaid with the Russian tricolour and used as the official symbol of the anniversary. Indeed, as Stefan Berger and Paul Holtom have noted, the symbol '... endorsed the adoption of Königsberg's material and symbolic heritage in Kaliningrad today, but linked it to the Russian present and implied a Russian future'.<sup>54</sup>

This process further necessitated a rejection of the Baltic attempt to use the twentieth anniversary of the Baltic Way to imbue the past with ambiguity rather than a grand narrative. Instead, a clear link between Königsberg and Kaliningrad - 'one city, one history' - had to be made explicit. At the opening of the reconstructed Royal Gate on July 1, 2005, for instance, a theatrical performance accompanied the proceedings. In it, 'pride of place was given to the arrival of Peter I and his 'Great Embassy' to present Savenko with the key to St. Petersburg' - clearly demonstrating Moscow's attempts to overlay Königsberg's past with a contemporary Russian narrative.<sup>55</sup>

The link between Kaliningrad and Russia proper was made even more emphatic through the erection of the Orthodox Church of Christ the Saviour in Kaliningrad's Victory Square. Also the site of the statue to Lenin, the two symbols stood side by side during the former's construction. As the anniversary drew closer, however, Lenin was relocated - and the new cathedral categorically displaced the former Soviet icon. In this way, Moscow followed 'the Tsarist tradition of forcing roots through [the] erection of grand and visible religious affirmations of a Russian presence in non-Russian marshes of the empire'.<sup>56</sup> Indeed, one such example being the 1894 Alexander Nevskii Cathedral, built just over 700km north of Kaliningrad in Tallinn.



11. Statue of Lenin in front of the construction site of the Church of Christ Our Saviour, 2005.<sup>57</sup>

As a result of federal control over proceedings, the anniversary celebrations fell markedly short of the successes enjoyed by the twentieth anniversary of the Baltic Way. As Aleksandr Popadin reflected in 2008 - seven years after his initial idea to mark the event:

... The Royal Gates have been lucky: they became a symbol of the Kaliningrad/ Königsberg anniversary and were quickly restored on this occasion without any financial restrictions. [Yet] there is a recurrent joke among local wits: how could it possibly be that the Gates were restored for the anniversary, yet, as a symbol of the 750<sup>th</sup> anniversary, which was hastily accepted, they still appear in a half-ruined state and without towers?<sup>58</sup>

Indeed, having been originally conceived as an attempt to emphasise the region's European character, the allocation of federal funds to the celebrations drastically altered the anniversary's purpose. Rather, '... the nationalist symbolism and rhetoric during the festivities all testi[fied], [instead], to the prevalence of Russifying the city's past'.<sup>59</sup>

Conversely, however, it is worth noting that the anniversary of '750 years of Kaliningrad' nonetheless served to situate the region into the western, and specifically German, historical narrative. As Stefan Berger and Paul Holtom have further observed of the German response to the celebrations:

Historical reviews of the city's past talked about 'Germanness' and 'German', even when referring to the medieval and early modern history of the city. Hence, the focus of the German memory discourse was not so much on the city and the region, but on the nation. As a consequence, the Russian city after 1945 received little attention in German commentaries on the anniversary celebrations. The overwhelming German perspective on Königsberg is one of a history of irredeemable loss: due to German responsibility, the city disappeared for good in 1945, with a new city emerging, whose belonging to the Russian Federation is not seriously questioned.<sup>60</sup>

Yet, whilst the anniversary celebrations confirmed Kaliningrad's Russian future in geopolitical terms, what this meant on a local level appeared more ambiguous. Indeed, as Ivan Chechot pessimistically predicted in 2005:

When the jubilee celebration is over, and the wind tosses up trash, ordinary life will go on and the grim reality of a provincial life will be back. This is the provincial town called Kaliningrad: a mass of problems, bad roads, unemployment, terrific pollution, the desperate struggle of the old order with the new. Talks about the prospect of the Russian exclave's capital, separated from the mainland, will renew: nervous or desperate talk about the future and when the future is going to begin. Questions will arise again: Along which path should culture go? What about the global and the local should it contain? How much of the Russian and how much of the European? This is what everybody is thinking, if not arguing about - not only the inhabitants, but all who love this town and even those who are just curious about it, guests visiting the town. In summer they will come again for a seaside vacation: solitary tourists or groups, mostly German.<sup>61</sup>

Ultimately, despite its positive intentions, the celebration of '750 years of Kaliningrad' served to reinforce the difficulties of constructing a post-Soviet place identity in the absence of natural inheritance. Whilst the symbolic importance of Königsberg remained clear, this attempt to memorialise the former German city enabled its memory to become increasingly separated from the historical reality. On the one hand, the anniversary events allowed Moscow to tint the founding myths of Königsberg with a Russian hue. On the

other, despite Moscow's interventions, an idealised version of the city has continued to flourish. Like so much else in Kaliningrad, this contradiction in historical memory has had a significant impact on the region's self-understanding. Indeed, as Aleksandr Popadin has noted of his fellow Kaliningraders, whilst they 'acknowledge that they have acquired much from the heritage of Königsberg: the structure of the city streets and urban scale; a few almost intact districts that were built in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century; a number of historical buildings.... this is not enough to feel like the true successors of the cultural and historical rights to Königsberg'. As he continues, 'with the passage of time this perception increasingly loses touch with the specific historical reality of the existence of a concrete city; instead, it becomes more and more mythologised in the public consciousness'.<sup>62</sup>

Just a year after the anniversary celebrations, work began on the 'Fishing Village' - a complex that perfectly embodies Popadin's observations. Billed as a 'modern ethnographic, craft and trade centre', the site encompasses a set of buildings designed to resemble a historical German-style neighbourhood.<sup>63</sup> Built on the site of a former German fishing settlement, the complex seeks to mimic a small neighbourhood of north or central European origin. Tourists and locals visiting the site are able to 'climb to the top of the 'Lighthouse' lookout tower; dine in the building of the 'River Station', stay in a hotel called 'Skipper',

hold talks in the 'Fish Market' centre, or take a stroll across the 'Jubilee' pedestrian drawbridge'.<sup>64</sup> Indeed, echoing Popadin's remarks, Max Kettenacker has concluded that the Fishing Village represents something '... between a historic reconstruction of the city fabric and the consummation of a fantasy, akin to Disneyland's *mélange* of the past'.<sup>65</sup>



12. *The Fishing Village*, (Image taken by Author), 2016.

## What will Kaliningrad look like in the year 2020?

*Everybody's thoughts are centred on the city. What will Kaliningrad look like in the year 2020, what place in Europe will it occupy? By then, an entire generation will have passed since its opening to the West in 1991. Taking stock 'at halftime', as it were, it is obvious that things aren't so bad; the changes from year to year are tangible. There can be no talk of standstill. Yet, my friends gathered in this café - artists, historians, observers of life in Kaliningrad - hesitate to shrug off their doubts, while simultaneously refusing to give up hope.*

*Wolfgang Eichwede, 2005* <sup>66</sup>

Although the 2005 celebrations failed in their goal to establish a firm narrative of 'one city - one history', it did not diminish local hopes for a more stable future. Indeed, the 750<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Kaliningrad encouraged many - like Wolfgang Eichwede - to muse over what the future might hold for the region. Olga - a local resident of Kaliningrad - for instance, envisaged a city that had 'overcome foreignness at home'. In an attempt to realise this vision, Olga further professed her commitment to motivate her fellow citizens, so that they could "ground' themselves in Kaliningrad... accept[ing] history without any nostalgia'; and so that history could be used as a "turning' point that [at last] provide[d] the city an identity and a profile'. Yet, the ambitious nature of Olga's vision quickly became apparent. As Boris - a resident of Moscow who had too found himself contemplating as to what would become of Kaliningrad - countered, 'taking the road via the past is tantamount to a detour'.<sup>67</sup>

Such polarised opinions as to the direction in which Kaliningrad's future might lead are, in part, the result of similar contradictions in the city's architecture. The erection of the Church of Christ Our Saviour in Victory Square in 2005, for instance - whilst indicating the 'Russianness' of the territory - sits at odds with both the previously restored Königsberg cathedral and the still incomplete House of Soviets. As Eichwede has further reflected:

Kaliningrad has a new symbol, which as yet does not fit into the cityscape of pre-war and Soviet times... The old 14<sup>th</sup> century medieval cathedral appears fragile in comparison to this mighty edifice of post-communist Russia... [and] ... the concrete tower-blocks still need to get used to the new magnificence.<sup>68</sup>

In this context, the 2012 announcement that Kaliningrad would be one of eleven host cities for the 2018 Russian Football World Cup, provided new opportunities to build on the failings of the past. As Governor Nikolai Tsukanov proclaimed:

Kaliningradians, of course, remember the rapid development and improvement of the regional centre on the eve of the 750<sup>th</sup> anniversary. So, over the next five years, even by the most conservative estimates, the changes will be much greater...<sup>69</sup>

Indeed - alongside the obvious construction of a new stadium, hotels and infrastructure connecting them to the rest of the city - Tsukanov boasted that just shy of 200 hectares of empty land in the centre of the city would 'change beyond recognition'. As he continued, 'in the end, we need to confirm the worldwide status of Russian cities in Europe'.<sup>70</sup>

Such transformations, it was promised, would include new bridges, roads, footpaths and facades; new and improved public transport; as well as the modernisation of Kaliningrad's airport to bring it into compliance with international regulations. Furthermore, English tuition would be provided for volunteers, doctors, policemen and taxi drivers, and renewed efforts directed towards the restoration of heritage monuments and the development of tourism. What is more, such transformations to the city would, Tsukanov reassured, result in the creation of several thousands of new jobs.<sup>71</sup>

Yet, despite the seemingly endless benefits of its nomination as a World Cup host city, there nonetheless remained those in Kaliningrad who questioned the motivations behind Moscow's decision. Notably, however - when questioned directly about this in an interview with *Klops.ru* on December 21, 2012 - Tsukanov was markedly honest in his response:

I recognise your right to a certain scepticism, but let's face it. Before the collapse of the Soviet Union, Kaliningrad was a region with a very clear and distinct specialisation... there was the base of the navy, the 11<sup>th</sup> Guards army, well-developed agriculture, fisheries and processing industry. Unfortunately, owing generally to geographical reasons, we lost a lot of these things. And the debate for two decades was, and still is - both inside and outside of the Kaliningrad Oblast - a discussion in which the terms 'unsinkable aircraft carrier'; 'outpost of Russia'; 'cooperation region'; and 'pilot region' have been born, even 'a suitcase without a handle'. It has reached a stage where it is necessary to put this to an end.

... The state programme is [thus] a recognition of the strategic importance of the region... The Kaliningrad Oblast has to stop being a parasite of the federal centre, and, following the results of the implementation of the state programme, [its designation as a World Cup host city] will allow it to become a strong subject of a strong country.<sup>72</sup>

Indeed, as Tsukanov concluded, '... It is we, Kaliningradians, that today define the future of our region, and we should not miss this unique chance to make it one of the best regions of Russia!'<sup>73</sup>

Six years later, Tsukanov's proclamations were at last put to the test. And on June 16, 2018 Kaliningrad's new purpose-built stadium, Arena Baltika, opened its doors - to 31,136 international spectators.<sup>74</sup> Following an own goal from Ohhenekaro Etebo and a penalty from Luka Modrić, the region's first World

Cup match - Croatia vs. Nigeria - ended in an undramatic 2-0 victory for the Croatians. Yet, with the world's press focussed on the region, it was not long before Kaliningrad, too, scored a metaphorical 'own goal' of its own. Hundreds of Nigerian fans, whilst attempting to board the free train back to Moscow, promptly found themselves unable to travel due to not possessing the correct visa documents to travel through Lithuania, EU territory. Indeed, if it had been Tsukanov's intention to present the region as a 'strong subject of a strong country', for these fans, at least, Kaliningrad had been presumed to be a connected part of Russia proper. Whilst the Russian administration promptly stepped in to provide additional flights for the stranded fans, these were not free - and in some cases were found to be much more expensive than fares independently booked.<sup>75</sup>

The arrival of the England team in the region twelve days later - ahead of their match with Belgium - again attracted significant media attention. Yet, whilst Nigerian fans had assumed the region's connection with Russia proper, Western media reports were notably more sceptical about the exclave's relationship with Moscow. *The Daily Telegraph*, for instance, ran an article with the headline, 'England fans at the World Cup 2018 will find the outpost of Kaliningrad is a curious mix of East and West'.<sup>76</sup> On the one hand, the article acknowledged the region's proximity to Europe - noting that '... for England

fans heading over for the final game against Belgium, it is nothing a budget flight to Gdansk and a short bus ride cannot solve' - as well as the 'westward leanings' of the new Khrabovo airport. On the other, however, its portrayal of Kaliningrad - despite its geographical location - as firmly under Russian influence was resolute. As Oliver Brown - *The Daily Telegraph's* chief sports feature writer - put it:

To the Germans, Königsberg, as this place used to be, was the beating cultural and economic heart of Prussia. To the Soviets, it was, after its devastation in the Second World War, a military necessity, furnishing them with their only ice-free European port. At the 2018 World Cup, the city has again become integral to a strategic power play, enabling Vladimir Putin to thrust his controversial tournament to the very centre of Europe. He has approved the staging of four matches here on Russia's western extremity, the one location where his grand project is least likely to be ignored.<sup>77</sup>

The BBC, conversely, took a different approach. Running with the title, 'Kaliningrad - the venue next door to the West', its article on the region instead sought to present Kaliningrad as a city well suited to '... European football fans wary of Russia'.<sup>78</sup> Noting its proximity to the EU - as well as the fact that six of the eight teams programmed to play at the 'Arena Baltika' stadium were from Europe - the article declared that, by visiting Kaliningrad, many fans would be able to experience the World Cup 2018 whilst '... bypass[ing] Moscow altogether'.<sup>79</sup> Further seeking to reiterate this point, the

commentary also featured an interview with the director of the city's new airport, Aleksandr Koritnii, in which he proclaimed: '... the mentality in Kaliningrad is different to the rest of Russia. People are more smiley, open and friendly here...'.<sup>80</sup>

In this context - of the Moscow-controlled portrayal offered in *The Daily Telegraph* and the romanticised account of Kaliningrad's relationship with its western counterparts put forth by the BBC - *The Guardian's* portrayal of the region appeared somewhat more nuanced. Leading with the title, 'Kaliningrad: The Russian exclave with a taste for Europe', the article questioned whether '... recent moves to focus on Kaliningrad's Prussian past [... might be...] a step too far for the Kremlin?'<sup>81</sup> Providing a broad brush account of the region's history - as well as a bemused observation of the souvenir stalls selling fridge magnets reading, 'Kant touch it', and, 'Yes, I Kant', alongside miniature busts of Putin and Stalin decorated with amber - the article made some attempt to address the redefinition of place identity taking place in the region. As it stated:

As the Soviet past recedes, Kaliningrad is discovering its Prussian history: there are calls for the use of alternative Prussian street names and to reconstruct Königsberg Castle.

The phenomenon has been condemned by local Kremlin supporters as a sign of 'Germanisation'. 'It's infantile', says a state-media journalist, Nikolay Dolgachev [sic], of the interest in Prussian heritage. 'It would

be like today's Americans feeling nostalgic about Native American culture'. Pro-Putin analysts in Moscow have gone further, suggesting that growing enthusiasm for the city's Prussian past is a sign of creeping separatism.

Critics say the accusations of 'Germanisation' are ludicrous. 'The term has no basis in reality', says Dmitry Selin [sic], a former gallery curator.

There have been consequences, though. In 2016, the German-Russian House, a local cultural and educational centre, was forced to close down after being declared a 'foreign agent'. And earlier this year, an Aeroflot steward was fired after referring to Kaliningrad as Königsberg ahead of a flight from Moscow.

'Sometimes,' sighs Selin, 'I can't help but get the feeling that the authorities want to fence us off from Europe'.<sup>82</sup>

Of course, the confused nature of the region's identity discourse, (reflected in the disparate World Cup coverage of Kaliningrad provided by western media outlets), is precisely the narrative that both the 2005 *Art-Guide: Königsberg/ Kaliningrad Now* and the 2008 *Atlas of Cultural Resources - Kaliningrad Region* have sought to embrace. However, rather than replicating the model offered by these publications, the official World Cup tourist guides instead chose to promote an explicitly European-oriented representation of the city. On FIFA's website, for instance, no reference to the region's Soviet history was provided whatsoever - rather, Kaliningrad was presented as Russia's 'gateway to Europe':

Founded in the 13<sup>th</sup> century by knights of the Teutonic Order and formerly known as Königsberg, the capital of East Prussia, Kaliningrad is home to over 450,000 people and an important Russian Baltic seaport and gateway to Europe.

Throughout its dramatic history, the ancient European city was home to a myriad of thinkers and artists including the philosopher Immanuel Kant, a life-long resident who taught at the local university, the iconic composer Richard Wagner and the romantic writer E.T.A Hoffmann.

Kaliningrad's pride is the reconstructed Königsberg Cathedral of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. With its two chapels, Orthodox and Protestant, the cathedral is a symbol of peace and reconciliation.

The region has been known from classical antiquity as a main source of amber in Europe. Around 90 per cent of the world's amber deposits are located here. The amber industry is still a key business in the city and attracts thousands of visitors every year.

The Kaliningrad region is blessed with pristine beaches and pine sand dunes. It features the beautiful nature reserve of Kurshskaya [sic] Spit, which was included in the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2000.<sup>83</sup>

Likewise, even in the official 2018 World Cup Tourist Guide, the only reference to the founding pillar of Soviet Kaliningrad, the House of Soviets - despite its dominance over the Kaliningrad skyline and its role during the competition as the designated 'fan zone' - was as a point from which to direct visitors to the city to a plaque located on the rear wall of the former castle ruins. On the plaque, tourists could read one of Kant's most famous quotes: 'Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and are, the more often

and steadily we reflect upon them: the starry heavens above and the moral law within'.<sup>84</sup> Instead, far greater focus was devoted to directing foreign visitors towards those landmarks representative of the region's former German heritage: to the Royal Gate; Kant Island; the restored Königsberg Cathedral; and even the Fishing Village - proclaimed to represent what the future centre of Kaliningrad would look like, following its eventual, (and currently unconfirmed), reconstruction.<sup>85</sup>

Thus, despite Tsukanov's desire to use Kaliningrad's status as a host city for the 2018 Football World Cup to provide the region with a firm identity narrative - 'a strong subject of a strong country' - the competition once again highlighted the difficulties of constructing a post-Soviet place identity in the absence of natural inheritance. Certainly, the erection of the 35,000 capacity 'Arena Baltika' - in a city where the local team, FC Baltika, typically only attracts 4,000 fans - marked yet another attempt to once again use bold architectural statements as a means of shifting the region's focus eastward. Yet - as in the construction of the House of Soviets and the Church of Christ our Saviour before it - inconsistencies in the promotion of Kaliningrad's place identity has limited the success of such projects. Indeed, if the 750<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of Königsberg suffered due to the aggressive Russification of festivities; the use of Kaliningrad as a host city for the 2018

World Cup to demonstrate Putin's exclave in the heart of Russia was compromised by the over-zealous promotion of the region's pre-Soviet German heritage. As a result, it is clear that today Kaliningrad remains no closer to gaining an established identity narrative than it did with the arrival of the Red Army seventy-two years ago.

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<sup>2</sup> Raun, Toivo U., Estonia after 1991: Identity and Integration, *East European Politics and Societies*, vol. 23, no. 4, 2009, p. 528.

<sup>3</sup> Reinelt, Janelle, National signs: Estonian identity in performance, *Sign System Studies*, no. 33, vol. 2, 2005, p. 370.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 376.

<sup>5</sup> Kuljić, T., Revised History and New Identity in East Europe, *Identities - Journal for Politics, Gender and Culture*, vol. 4, no. 1, 2005, pp. 63-86.

<sup>6</sup> The re-arrival of Red Army troops to the Baltic borders in 1944 led vast numbers of Baltic citizens to equate the German efforts to prevent the Soviet reoccupation of the Baltics as a fight for their own national survival.

<sup>7</sup> Brüggemann, Karsten & Kasekamp, Andres: The Politics of History and the 'War of Monuments' in Estonia, *Nationalities Papers: Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity*, vol. 36, no. 3, 2008, p. 431.

<sup>8</sup> Bransten, Jeremy, Estonia: The Search for Heroes Leads to a Minefield, *RFE/RL*, July 26, 2002 - <https://www.rferl.org/a/1100380.html> - accessed 11.08.2018.

<sup>9</sup> Puidet, Asso, Lihula mälestusmärki avas paar tuhat inimest, *Pärnu Postimees*, August 21, 2004. As cited in Brüggemann and Kasekamp, The Politics of History and the 'War of Monuments' in Estonia, p. 431.

<sup>10</sup> Brüggemann and Kasekamp, The Politics of History and the 'War of Monuments' in Estonia, p. 432.

<sup>11</sup> <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/3585272.stm> - accessed 04.08.2013.

<sup>12</sup> Brüggemann and Kasekamp, The Politics of History and the 'War of Monuments' in Estonia, p. 425.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 432.

<sup>14</sup> Interviews with Estonian diplomats in Tallinn, September 2004 as cited in *ibid.*, p. 432. See also, Kolb, Matthias, Looking for the Truth Behind Lihula, *The Baltic Times*, April 27, 2005 - <https://www.baltictimes.com/news/articles/12586/> - accessed 11.08.2018.

<sup>15</sup> Vīksne, A., June 1, 2009, TV3 news. Riga: TV3. As cited by Auers, Daunis in 'We Lay Claim to Him!' Berlin, Rothko, Eisenstein, and the Reorientation of Latvian National Identity, *National Identities*, vol. 15, no. 2, 2013, p. 125.

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- <sup>17</sup> Gillis, J. R., *Memory and Identity: The History of a Relationship*, Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1994, p. 19.
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- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 133 -134.
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 131.
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 135.
- <sup>22</sup> Hinrikus Rutt, (compiled by), and Kirss, Tiina (ed. and trans.), *Estonian Life Stories*, Budapest: Central European University Press, 2009, pp. 30-31.
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- <sup>25</sup> Eglitis, Daina S., and Ardava, Laura in The Politics of Memory, p. 1050.
- <sup>26</sup> <http://www.balticway.net> - accessed 19.08.2013.
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- <sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1054.
- <sup>31</sup> Viktors Avotinš, Baltijas cela čaumala, *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze*, August 22, 2009. As cited in *Ibid.*, p. 1054.
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- <sup>50</sup> *Ekho Moskvyy*, May 5, 2003.
- <sup>51</sup> *Novyie Izvestiia*, November 15, 2004.
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- <sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.
- <sup>61</sup> Chechot, Ivan, To Genius Loci Kaliningrad and Königsberg, in Tsvetaeva, Elena, (ed.), *Art-Guide: Königsberg / Kaliningrad Now*.
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<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> Kettenacker, Max, *Appropriating a Fractured Past: Identity and Place-making in Kaliningrad, 1945-2000*, unpublished MA thesis, University of Cambridge, 2004, p. 66.

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<sup>69</sup> Nikolai Tsukanov: 'In Five Years We Will Live in a Different Kaliningrad', (21.12.2012), <http://gubernator.gov39.ru/detail/view/47040> - accessed 11.04.2018; the full interview is available at <https://klops.ru/news/Politika/63619/Nikolaj-Cukanov:-Cerez-pjtj-let-my-budem-zitj-v-drugom-Kaliningrade.html>.

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<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> <https://klops.ru/news/Politika/63619/Nikolaj-Cukanov:-Cerez-pjtj-let-my-budem-zitj-v-drugom-Kaliningrade.html> - accessed 10.04.2018.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> <https://resources.fifa.com/image/upload/eng-08-0616-cro-nga-fulltime-pdf-2958863.pdf?cloudid=ysbfmfm3zpbjsi8lftkh> - accessed 20.06.2018.

<sup>75</sup> <https://chelorg.com/2018/06/18/stuck-in-the-kaliningrad-nigerian-fans-flew-to-moscow/>; <https://af.reuters.com/article/africaSoccerNews/idAFL8N1TK56P> - accessed 20.06.2018.

<sup>76</sup> <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/world-cup/2018/06/15/england-fans-world-cup-2018-will-find-outpost-kaliningrad-curious/> - accessed 20.06.2018.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-44438504> - accessed 20.06.2018.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2018/may/31/kaliningrad-the-russian-enclave-with-a-taste-for-europe> - accessed 20.06.2018.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> <https://www.fifa.com/worldcup/destination/cities/city=35137/index.html> - accessed 20.06.2018.

<sup>84</sup> <http://welcome2018.com/en/cities/kaliningrad/luchsheevgorode/> - accessed 20.06.2018.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

## CONCLUSION

### Genes or the landscape?

*...It's as if a strange experiment is being conducted in Kaliningrad. Who will have the upper hand - genes or the landscape?*

*Alexsandr Sologubov, 2005 <sup>1</sup>*

Fundamental to both the Soviet and contemporary failures to orientate Kaliningrad's inhabitants towards a clear place identity has been the inability to provide a central 'heart' to the city. Indeed, from the very first days of revolution in 1917, the Bolsheviks had understood that, in order to manipulate mass consciousness, it was first necessary to destroy the founding pillars of the former culture. Only once these previous markers of identity had been uprooted would citizens become amenable to being reoriented towards a different ideological outlook. In Soviet Kaliningrad, this notion manifested itself most clearly through changes to the urban fabric: first through the ideological condemnation of the German city's layout and topography; then - once finances allowed - through the physical destruction of its most symbolic markers, (most notably the former Königsberg Castle). Yet - despite the employment of city guides and other methods to actively educate its citizens as to the progress being made towards the creation of the new socialist utopia - the Bolsheviks were, of course, never able to realise the central 'anchor-

point' of its attempt to use the manipulation of public space in the promotion of Soviet ideology; namely, the House of Soviets.

Indeed, with the arrival of the Red Army in the former East Prussian capital in the summer of 1945, how best to bestow upon the region an ideologically-suitable historical narrative became of utmost concern. The focus was initially oriented towards the establishment of a historical link between Russia and the newly acquired territory. However, the lack of evidence to support this claim meant that there was little choice but to treat the land as *terra nullius* instead. As a result, in Kaliningrad, it had not just been the founding pillars of the former culture that needed to be erased, but, rather, the entire concept of its former existence.

This notion manifested itself most clearly through the renaming of the territory from Königsberg to Kaliningrad in July 1946. But it also encompassed a wider policy of renaming, as well as the region's incorporation into the RSFSR. Both of these policies, coupled with the provision of a new Soviet school curriculum for the region, signified the Bolsheviks' desire to firmly redirect the attention of the newly arriving Soviet settlers - away from

Kaliningrad's complicated regional history, and towards the conception of the territory as an integral part of the wider USSR.

Meanwhile, whilst attention was diverted away from Kaliningrad's former-German past - and thus from its former markers of identity - the Soviets were able to begin the process of constructing new monuments in the region, to serve as foundational pillars for the new historical narrative. Such monuments - so the decision to treat the land as *terra nullius* had dictated - centred almost exclusively around the promotion of Soviet victory in the Great Patriotic War. Indeed, only once such markers had been successfully erected could the Sovietisation of the region begin in earnest.

Despite understanding the necessity of uprooting Königsberg's former markers of identity, as well as the importance of replacing them with symbols of the new ideological outlook, however, both processes were carried out haphazardly in the region. With regard to the latter, the new monuments were hastily constructed during the first years of Soviet Kaliningrad and were thus of poor quality. As a result, by the early 1960s, they had already been deemed unfit for purpose. Conversely, by the time the new monuments were already

falling apart, discussions as to how to rid the city centre of the old vestiges of former Königsberg were only just beginning.

Although, from the outset, the manipulation of the city's built environment had been understood by the Bolsheviks to be essential for the successful appropriation of place by the new settlers, the fact that Kaliningrad was to be built from the ruins of a fallen fascist stronghold, meant that special care had needed to be taken in its redevelopment. Not only did Kaliningrad's city planners have to ensure the cohesion between this westernmost periphery and the central state, but the restructuring of Kaliningrad also had to be employed to condemn the pre-war city of Königsberg. The dual focus of the restoration project meant that the architecture and urbanism of Soviet Kaliningrad had to further represent the 'physical manifestation of the societal transformation brought about by communism'. Put simply, it had to simultaneously become both a 'corporeal paradigm of the triumph of socialism over capitalism', and 'a laboratory and home for the new Soviet man'.<sup>2</sup>

With such weight given to the city's transformation, however, how to actually realise these aims, unsurprisingly, provoked substantial debate, as well as numerous conflicting visions as to what Kaliningrad's future city centre should

look like. What is more, Khrushchev's prioritisation of a programme of residential development had further delayed the process of the centre's redevelopment. Indeed, Brezhnev's final decision to raze the old castle ruins did not come until 1968 - over two decades after the Red Army had first set foot in the region. Although the demolition of the former castle ruins did indeed, at last, signify a decisive step by the Bolsheviks towards the reconstruction of the city centre, however, it proved to be too little too late. The House of Soviets that was to replace the former castle ruins and that was envisaged to, at last, eclipse 700 years of Prussian heritage with the ultimate demonstration of the social, political and cultural superiority of the Soviet project, was never completed. In the end, this bold and ambitious attempt to manipulate the city's urban fabric became, instead, a suitable metaphor for the USSR's disintegration.

Likewise, in contemporary Kaliningrad, the city's urban fabric has again borne the brunt of the region's attempts to redefine its place identity. In many ways echoing the techniques employed by the Bolsheviks half a century earlier, efforts to distance Kaliningrad from its Soviet heritage have, once again, consisted of campaigns to both redraw the region's topography and re-appropriate its symbolism. Yet, whilst new architectural projects - most notably the restoration of the former Königsberg Cathedral and the erection of

the 'Fishing Village' - are readily promoted by contemporary city guides as new markers of place identity, the city centre still stands incomplete. Indeed, as

Ivan Chechot has complained:

The town centre is empty. A boring long bridge crosses the place where the old town was once located and leads to the place where the Royal Castle once stood... On this ancient hill, another ghost castle has been erected: the huge cubic *Dom Sovetov* - an expressive monument to prolonged construction, neither a ruin nor a Futurist project but an object of meditation, mysterious in its opacity... There is no town, old or new, there is only a draft, the rage of the steel winds of history, the mocking faces of destruction and the useless, poor, miserable self-assertion of another life, the impudent glitter and ringing of cell phones, and the already familiar gush of waterfalls of beer flowing from commercial ads.

Nowadays, there is a void at its centre, and its outlying blocks blend with wastelands and abstractly perfect comfortable oases of a new life: all those cultural centres, shopping malls and mansions. It appears flexible, ready for any transformation you like. However, history proves to be wrong. Out of that peaceful, happy town of the 1920s and 1930s, a place for manslaughter developed, a place for the slaughter of culture and heritage. Its ruins did not give rise either to a real socialist town or a new stronghold. All that remained was long-lasting, protracted building activity; new shoots spring through its slabs, capable of becoming both the truth and a treacherous illusion.<sup>3</sup>

Along similar lines, Aleksandr Popadin has too reflected that:

The main metaphysical pair of our city still awaits awakening. A robot is going to arise from the King's Mountain... It will turn its head towards each of us - Godzilla will seem like a chicken in comparison with it!!! It is going to wake up, it is going to show us...

The Königsberg Castle emerged as a material embodiment of power, of possession (of the land). The idea of power is central to metaphysics, the idea of protection (fortification) was central to its physics. Any castle of that era was an expansion, a fortification of the colonised area, a fort. The Teutonic Order Castle on the Pregel River was not an exception. When the city around it grew, the Castle, having transferred the name to the city, became the symbolic and administrative container of power over this land, an architectural embodiment of this power.

The House of Soviets is the brother-enemy to the Castle. It is an anti-castle, the forced reaction of Soviet power to the Castle that stood in its place. A stone flower, a symbolic building for an ideal power... And that is why the real power was unable to live in it: it did not want to. As a symbol, it is unpleasant and poorly designed for living. At the same time, the genome of power remained in both the architecture of the Soviet building and in the spirit of the place. This building is a flag that denotes an area of possession.<sup>4</sup>

Put simply, it still remains unclear who will have the upper hand - 'genes or the landscape?'<sup>5</sup>

What is clear, however, is that, in its current form, far from being *the* orienting point of Kaliningrad - both in physical and ideological terms - the city centre

exists almost as an 'elephant in the room'. It is both literally removed from public interaction due to it being physically cordoned off, but is also subconsciously absent from the tours, the guidebooks, and the acknowledgement of those who live there.

Indeed, as Smithson has argued:

... just as our mental process needs relatively fixed points to enable it to remain clear and sane while classifying and evaluating transient information, so the city needs identifying points, which have a long cycle of change, and by means of which things changing on a shorter cycle can be valued and identified. With a few fixed and clear things, transient elements - housing, drug stores, advertising, signs, shops, and of course, people and their extensions, clothes, cars, and so on - are no longer a menace to the sanity and sense of the urban structure, but can uninhibitedly reflect short-term mood and need.<sup>6</sup>

Yet, Smithson's assertion is equally true in reverse; without clear landmarks, a city's transient elements become far more ambiguous indicators of the mood and need of both the city itself, and, by extension, its inhabitants.<sup>7</sup> Take for instance the recent accusations by the federal state TV channel, *Russia 24*, that Kaliningrad's university - the Baltic Federal University of Immanuel Kant - teaches its students to 'criticise the authorities in power; propagandise

homosexuality; and even hint that it would be a positive scenario for the Kaliningrad region to leave the structure of Russia'.<sup>8</sup> Such claims - despite the seemingly tenuous evidence - are, of course, symptomatic of the broader nuances surrounding Kaliningrad's place between 'East' and 'West'.

Things, however, may be about to change. A recent architectural project, operating under the name 'Post-Castle', seems indicative of what the future may hold for Kaliningrad:

The International Competition for the Historic and Cultural Complex on the grounds of the former castle Königsberg, 'Post-Castle', has continued the tradition of creative competitions among architects and a number of architectural forums addressing the problem of the historical centre of our city... The next link in this chain has become the competition for the central facility of the main historic place of Kaliningrad, which is named 'Post-Castle'. We have had long discussions with the general public and professionals about the new functions of the future buildings at the site of the King's castle that was completely destroyed in the 1960s. As a result, we agreed that this will be the Historic and Cultural Complex, the largest facility in the region that will incorporate a museum, the tourist function, as well as the function of the main universal hall of the Kaliningrad Region - the basis of the 'capital nucleus' of Kaliningrad.<sup>9</sup>

Thus, presently the city appears to exist in a state of flux - lacking a clear orientation or affirmation of its character, its 'identification'. This is precisely

because it is a city defined by its unique experience of post-war displacement, of the multiple discontinuities that mark Kaliningrad as a place. It is the consequence - the physical, tangible manifestation of a conscious attempt to manipulate space left unfinished. Kaliningrad is a city just seventy years old, but which has already come to outlive its creators. It is a city only now starting to find its feet, starting to question how to reconcile and orientate itself on its own terms - projects such as 'Post-Castle' may well be the answer.



13. Competition entry for the 'Post-Castle' competition by the Architectural Bureau, 'Studio 44', 2015.<sup>10</sup>

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- <sup>1</sup> Sologubov, Aleksandr, From Kaliningrad Dictionary (Phrasebook), (trans. N. Shtock), in Tsvetaeva, Elena, (ed.), *Art-Guide: Königsberg / Kaliningrad Now*, Kaliningrad: Agency for Support of Cultural Initiatives Tranzit, 2005 - <http://art-guide.ncca-kaliningrad.ru/?by=p&aglang=eng&au=000pervajastr> - accessed 24.09.2015.
- <sup>2</sup> Kettenacker, Max, The Castle, the Cathedral, the Monster and the Fishing Village - A History of Königsberg and Kaliningrad, *Cambridge Architectural Journal*, vol. 17, 2005 p. 58.
- <sup>3</sup> Checot, Ivan, To Genius Loci Kaliningrad and Königsberg, in Tsvetaeva, Elena, (ed.), *Art-Guide: Königsberg / Kaliningrad Now*.
- <sup>4</sup> Popadin, Aleksandr, Binary States of 'K' City: On the Symbolic Typography of the City, (trans N. Andreeva), in *Ibid*.
- <sup>5</sup> Sologubov, Aleksandr, From Kaliningrad Dictionary (Phrasebook), in *Ibid*.
- <sup>6</sup> Smithson, A., and P., (Team 10), The Role of the Architect in Community Building, in Bell, Gwen, and Tyrwhitt, Jaqueline, (eds.), *Human Identity in the Urban Environment*, London: Penguin, 1972, p. 383.
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>8</sup> <https://www.newkaliningrad.ru/news/community/15110393-na-obychnykh-listakh-v-kletku-podrobnosti-skandala-vokrug-bfu-im-i-kanta.html> - accessed 18.10.2017.
- <sup>9</sup> *Final Catalogue of the Open International Architectural Competition for an Architectural Design of the Historic and Cultural Complex on the Grounds of the Former Order Castle Königsberg in Kaliningrad*, (May-September 2015) - accessible at <http://sg39.ru/en/publications/>, p. 8 -accessed 10.11.2016.
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52.

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