

Survival against the Odds: The Baltic states at 100

ANDRES KASEKAMP

This essay examines how Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have managed to secure their independence and analyzes how they have dealt with the internal and external challenges to their state-building efforts. It compares the first period of statehood between the two world wars with the current period of independence beginning with the collapse of the Soviet Union. Among the critical external tasks they have faced were deterring former imperial powers, fostering regional cooperation and gaining a voice in international organizations. Internally, consolidating democratic systems and integration of ethnic minorities have been the two most significant challenges.

The Forgotten Pogroms, 1918

MICHAEL L. MILLER

The outbreaks of anti-Jewish violence in the former Habsburg lands in the fall of 1918 are often overlooked, in part because of the subsequent violence in Hungary (1919–1921), in part because of the myth of Czechoslovak exceptionalism that emerged during the interwar period. It is tempting to view the post-war power vacuum as the main context – and catalyst – for this wave of violence that erupted after the collapse of the monarchy. A closer look at the anti-Jewish violence, however, suggests that it was part of the state-building process, or at least part of an effort to demarcate the exclusive terms of membership in the newly-established states. In explaining or justifying the anti-Jewish violence, perpetrators (and their supporters) often invoked the canard of Jewish “provocation” or the myth of Jewish “power” as part of a larger discourse of exclusion that placed Jews outside the Hungarian, Polish, or Czechoslovak body politic.

A Century of Selective Ignorance: Poland, 1918–2018

MACIEJ GÓRNY

The article identifies some of the rarely recalled phenomena accompanying Poland’s path towards independence. First is the level of economic, cultural, and everyday integration with imperial centers. Second is the growing intensity of interethnic strife. Third, the social turmoil, at times bordering on popular revolt, started in 1917 and lasted long after 1918. Fourth is the large-scale economic transformation and deprivations that this transformation brought about. Finally is the general longing for restoring law and order, a feeling that facilitated actions by minor groups of nationalists capable of creating at least a rudimentary state apparatus. None of the newly-created states of east central Europe was a result of consequent political action. Rather, they came into existence out of the interplay of social, economic, and cultural factors.

Post-Imperial Europe: When Comparison Threatened, Empowered, and Was Omnipresent

DOMINIQUE KIRCHNER REILL

The article examines how the post-WWI, post-Habsburg city-state Fiume (today known as Rijeka in the Republic of Croatia) tried to shore up loyalty and diminish local discontent by providing welfare and economic initiatives, in direct conjunction with how much neighboring states offered. Of particular concern were comparisons with how the Fiume state dealt with the Krone currency crisis, especially as locals in Fiume were very aware of and traded in currencies of neighboring lands using the same base money. The article calls for more work to be done on the dynamic of “on-the-ground” post-imperial Europeans questioning their new governments based on how they compared their lot with their other post-Habsburg neighbors.

The Local Boundaries of the Nation: Borderland Guard Activists in Polish-Occupied Volhynia, 1919–1920.

KATHRYN CIANCIA

This article traces how Polish national activists in the Borderland Guard (Straż Kresowa) constructed the local boundaries of the nation in the multi-ethnic borderland of Polish-occupied Volhynia. In 1919 and 1920, as Russian imperial structures collapsed and those of the Polish state remained embryonic, these men created a series of exclusions and conditional inclusions that emerged from, rather than in spite of, their nominal celebration of democracy and equality. In addition to debating how far—and on what terms—Ukrainians (or Ruthenians) and Jews could be included in the Polish nation, they also marked out internal Polish boundaries, based on religious, linguistic, economic, class, and affective criteria. Taking readers beyond intellectual debates in Warsaw and toward competitive local questions about the grounds for national membership, the article challenges the usefulness of the broader analytical dichotomy between the “inclusive” (civic) and “exclusive” (ethnic) strains of modern nationalism.

Global Money and Bolshevik Authority: The NEP as the First Socialist Project

OSCAR SANCHEZ-SIBONY

The article recounts the Bolsheviks’ first attempt at organizing the economic life of their young project in peace time following the establishment of the New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1921. It argues that the Bolsheviks built their regime on a liberal foundation, concretely the gold standard; although this is often noted in passing, it has not been given the socio-economic weight this political decision deserves. In an attempt to establish their monetary authority within their territory—a sine qua non for the formation of state authority—and in international markets, they appealed to the legitimating institution of the gold standard. The prescriptions of that institution led to a set of policies and chronic political anxieties that structured much of the domestic and interna-

tional policies of the Soviet Union throughout the 1920s. The study documents the thinking behind the monetary reform that tied the Communist project to the liberal world order as well as the international economic conjunctures that determined its small failures and eventual success. The analysis takes an interdisciplinary approach to the understanding of money as a social institution, and aims to renew the historiographical debate over NEP by establishing its trajectory firmly within the international context that governed it.

The People and the Poster: Theorizing the Soviet Viewer, 1920–1931

MOLLIE ARBUTHNOT

The relationship between political posters and their intended viewers was the focus of numerous texts in the 1920s; this article analyzes the ways in which Soviet theorists sought to understand this relationship. They operated in an intellectual context that tried to conceive the modern subject as an active consumer and co-creator, rather than a passive audience. Their study of the contexts of viewing, of display practices and of the role of the viewer as an active participant in the creation of meaning, caused concern about the risk of misunderstandings and led to calls for images to address specific audiences with greater clarity. Many imagined that audiences and producers of images were in dialogue with one another, negotiating over the content, form, and function of political art. The image would thus mediate the relationship between individual and state, integrating political messages into everyday life, and aiming to integrate the individual into the process and practice of propaganda.

Lessons from the Terror: Soviet Prosecutors and Police Violence in Molotov Province, 1942 to 1949

IMMO REBITSCHKE

This paper examines the role of state prosecutors in the Stalinist dictatorship by analyzing the conflict between the Procuracy and the police in the Molotov region in the 1940s. This regional case study exemplifies how a Soviet prosecutor, by professional conviction and motivated by personal experience from the Great Terror, engaged in a daily struggle against arbitrariness, imprecise legal work, and police brutality, pressuring police authorities to prosecute their own officials. The paper demonstrates how since 1938 the procuracy articulated and defended (sometimes successfully) the principle of a justice system based on rules, even though these rules were used for the purpose of repression. This eventually enabled post-Stalinist transformation.

Between National Tradition and Western Modernization: *Soviet Woman* and Representations of Socialist Gender Equality as a “Third Way” for Developing Countries, 1956–1964

CHRISTINE VARGA-HARRIS

This article analyzes *Soviet Woman*, the main publication of the *Komitet Sovetskikh Zhenshchin* (Committee of Soviet Women), during the 1950s and

1960s. Approaching it as a medium of international outreach, the article illustrates how the magazine reflected official Soviet strategies toward developing countries and propagated “peaceful coexistence.” Specifically, it delineates the ways in which *Soviet Woman* presented Soviet women (especially those in the “Soviet East”) as models of female emancipation so as to persuade women in the Third World of the potential of socialism to effect social and economic progress, and to sustain national liberation. Assessing also reception among readers of its messages about advancement, international friendship, and solidarity, it concludes that *Soviet Woman* provided women in decolonizing countries an alternative to a return to traditional modes or a shift to western ones by demonstrating the possibilities that the Soviet system held for realizing gender equality and modernization.