Kaliningrad, Transformation and the Emerging Geopolitical

Significance of a Former German Landscape

by

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DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY

Dear Prof. Letton,

I've been in Africa for the past three plus months and only returned this past Sunday. Forgive my delay in providing you with the promised document. Perhaps we will have an opportunity to discuss East Prussia in the near future? The AAGHAA meets in Atlanta at the beginning of June.

With best wishes,

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Abstract

Ravaged by a seemingly unstoppable and revengeful Red Army starting in late 1944, East Prussians learned first hand some of the horrors of a conflict that knew few bounds. Unprepared, many were overrun by the advancing troops. Evacuation of the region assumed gigantic proportions and often tragic consequences, for the participants and for the German State.

This occurred more than fifty years ago. The once politically powerful emigre East Prussians no longer count for much in German domestic politics. More startling is the disappearance of the Soviet Union. Its wartime acquired most western-protruding window, the northern portion of former East Prussia know today as Kaliningrad, once was one of the most militarized regions in the USSR. Today, Kaliningrad lacks even a contiguous border with the remainder of Russia. It is having to adjust to a new Europe and to a Baltic Region undergoing radical transformation. Kaliningrad's once significant ocean fishing fleet and manufacturing sector whose production was primarily for the military no longer count for much in the new dispensation. The region is finding it difficult to adjust to new markets

and new ideas. That former Politburo member and later Head of State, Mikhail Kalinin still has his name enshrined on a piece of Russian geography could be reflective of the decision-making processes in both Kaliningrad and Moscow. The paper traces some of the issues impacting the region beginning with the last months of World War 2. KEY WORDS: Kaliningrad (Königsberg), East Prussia, Baltysk (Pillau),World War II, Geopolitics, Exclave, Ethnic Cleansing, Military Zone, Balticum.

Kaliningrad, Transformation and the Emerging Geopolitical Significance of a Former German Landscape[1]

The post-Cold War vernacular has seen the revival of a word once shunned in some circles because of its perceived association with Third Reich expansionism. Geopolitics, the geography of politics, is increasingly employed to explain political change in areas rife with real or latent instability (Swerew 1996). The margins of the former Soviet Empire offer numerous examples of instability, situations where political change is both conditioned by and responsible for geographical realignments. Russia has the world's longest border (60,933 km) and shares borders with more countries (16) than any other nation (Grandberg 1999:75). Following the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991, new border regions came into being. Eight former Soviet republics became independent states at the same time that Russia lost direct borders with six East European and Near Eastern states.

Geopolitical Instability?

One model of latent instability is the Russian oblast of Kaliningrad, the northern portion of former German East Prussia. In this case the instability is in part the result of the physical separation of Kaliningrad from mother Russia now that Lithuania has gained its independence. It also is due to the fracturing of economic interconnections (Economist

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1996:36; Rupert 1997:1) developed when the larger area was part of the Soviet Union and in no small measure to the negative implications of economic and social uneasiness throughout Russia. More disturbing despite the scope and intensity of discussions related to NATO expansion eastward (Albright 1997: 4,7) and the risks of antagonizing this still powerful country is the fact that Russia now shares a common boundary with NATO now that Poland is part of the alliance. It is as if strategic planning in certain circles blithely ignores the organic relationship between Kaliningrad and Russia. Furthermore, the three Baltic states and Poland also seem destined for eventual admission into the European Community. When that occurs, there will be increased pressure for Kaliningrad to enter into some manner of association with her neighbors (Korneyevets 1996:26) if only to safeguard an already fragile economy. How Moscow will choose to respond to what still is a hypothetical situation should have considerable impact upon the future tranquility of the Baltic region (Prevelakis 1995:2). The issue could well evolve into a contest between economic pragmatists and hard line nationalists.

Poland is Kaliningrad's immediate neighbor to the South and, officially, appears to be unconcerned for her remaining boundary with Russia. Churchill stated in 1943 that Poland should receive all of German East Prussia as war compensation and Stalin, never one to refuse gifts, raised the issue of Königsberg and Memel at Yalta. He stated that the USSR should be given both port cities and adjacent territories. One of Roosevelt's key foreign affairs advisors went so far as to state that " a new western frontier for the Soviet Union will solve rather than create political and economic conflicts" (Welles 1946 :119).

Transfer of these lands was made official at the Potsdam Conference. Poland was assigned the southern portion of East Prussia in addition to Germany's Silesia and Pommerania. Stalin presumably placated his western allies, but not necessarily the Poles, by pushing Poland's prewar boundary to the West and North at the cost of potential long term enmity with Germany over the loss of its eastern territories. This is how it seemed at the time (Davies 1981:Chapter 21). Later events, in particular Germany's seminal role within the expanding European Community and its acceptance of the new Polish boundary have defused much of animosity caused by the loss of its eastern territories. Nevertheless, the loss of East Prussia remains a troubling issue for some Germans and non-Germans. Davies, a chronicler of Polish History and hardly an apologist for Germany's role in World War II, tried to place the issue in perspective:

> "Of all Poland's neighbours, however, the Germans have the most reason to query the official version of polish History as propagated in Warsaw. Whatever they may feel about the irrevocable loss of their eastern provinces--and they seem to feel a mixture of guilt, resentment, and indifference--they cannot consign a substantial slice of their heritage to oblivion" (1981:525).

Not only was East Prussia divided, the 200 km Kaliningrad-Polish frontier was permanently sealed by the Soviet Union until 1956 when, for the first time, Communist Party delegations from Poland were allowed to visit in the North. For Poles who had replaced the German population in what formerly had been southern East Prussia, the Soviet portion to the North was unknown territory. Cross-border movement did not exist

(Sakson 1994: 180). As if to reinforce their claim, the Soviets constructed an imposing demarcation line of manned watch towers, plowed strips of land and considerable fencing. For nearly 45 years, Kaliningrad was sealed from the one country with which it shared an international boundary. In 1990-91, however, two international border crossings (Figure 1) were opened at Bagrationowsk (ex-Prussian Eylau) and Mamonowo (ex-Heiligenbeil). There is a third crossing at Goldap but only for local residents.

Taken near the end of World War 2 at no small cost to the Red Army and with terrible consequences for its resident German population (Donhoff 1971;Werth 1964), this small territory until recently constituted the westernmost extension of the Soviet Union and presently serves the same role for Russia. Whereas added access to the Baltic clearly was a factor in Stalin's decision to acquire the region and the strategic, ice free ports of Baltysk (ex-Pillau) and Klaipeda (now Lithuania, ex-Memel), shrinking of Germany through removal of its easternmost territory may also have been an important consideration. Clearly, this was no ordinary territory (Thadden 1987). Königsberg, capital of East Prussia, was the ultimate symbol of whatever constituted Prussian identity including militarism, for it was in this city's cathedral that the Prussian Kings were crowned. The fact that East Prussia had been German for 691 years did not make any difference (Guttzeit). The victorious USSR would define and enforce the changed political parameters for most of postwar eastern Europe. Furthermore, because he was not a party to the Atlantic Charter, Stalin was under no obligation to observe the no territorial acquisitions' statement (the first clause) of this lofty document formulated in 1941 by Churchill and Roosevelt. Being a signatory hardly

constrained one's actions (Conquest 1991: 250-51). Churchill later in the war openly advocated territorial change at the expense of Germany.

Prior to 1990, a variety of factors made Kaliningrad into one of the most restricted areas in the Soviet Union. These ranged from Moscow's concern for real or imagined threats on the part of the United States and NATO, to secrecy about weapons deployed in the submarine flotilla based at Baltysk and at the numerous military installations. There also was concern for the several specialized manufacturing plants in Kaliningrad City which were sole suppliers of many of the weapons electronics used by the Soviet military. East bloc citizens were routinely denied access and internal movement controls within the USSR restricted its own citizenry. The more permissive environment since 1991 has removed restraints on travel other than financial considerations and the secrecy formerly associated with Kaliningrad no longer exists. For example, with a modest cash payment the visitor from the West can photograph freely the rusting remnants of this once proud Baltic Fleet.

The visitor seldom escapes some visual reminder of this military presence. Also troubling is the environmental degradation identified at sites of active and abandoned military installations. Prior to 1991, there were reports of upwards of 300,000 soldiers based in this small region including air and naval units. This likely has fallen below 200,000 in spite of repositioning in Kaliningrad some of the units formerly stationed in East Germany. At one time, every third resident of Kaliningrad was a member of the Soviet military. Nevertheless, troop concentrations in this relatively small territory remain disproportionately high and represent a situation whose domestic and international

implications warrant understanding.

To better appreciate the mosaic of events shaping Kaliningrad (city and region have the same name) in the late 1990s, one is encouraged if not obliged to return to the final months of World War 2, beginning in October 1944. It was at this time that certain policies and attitudes prepared and nurtured for this area were first implemented.

1944-46: East Prussia's Tragedy

The formerly semi-autonomous Memel and adjacent northeastern East Prussia were the first German territories encountered by the westward moving and increasingly victorious Red Army. Civilians generally were treated harshly (Keiser 1978; Solzhenitsyn 1974) as the Soviets set in motion policies intended in the final analysis to clear all Germans from these territories. It was as if all of the venom generated by more than three years of war, mostly on Soviet territory, exploded with the Red Army's initial entry into German lands (Thorwald 1951, 1964). For their part, the German forces fought hard to defend East Prussia and to push back the Soviets. This was, after all, territory carved out from the Slavs and Balts in the first instance by the Teutonic Knights in the 13th Century who then fought periodically and bloodily to retain it (Mortensen 1968). At this critical emotional juncture of rising expectations in the Red Army and collapsing dreams amongst the Germans, Hitler declared Königsberg to be a Festung (Fortress). In this instance, the city including its immediate hinterland truly was a fortress, having been designed and built

with defense in mind since the days of the Prussian King, Frederick II, the Great. The battle for Königsberg, which continued into April, 1945 had only mixed implications for the vast bulk of East Prussia's population. Those able to leave had already done so or were in flight (Bode 1995:7). Nevertheless, Königsberg's trauma and its tying-up of Red Army formations permitted the Baltic port of Pillau to remain open for refugee evacuation almost to the end of the war.

In the vicinity of the small eastern village of Nemmersdorf, after three days under Soviet control, the Germans recovered the village and nearby territory and discovered atrocities. Berlin by this time had few friends overseas and official pronouncements as to what had taken place at Nemmersdorf generally fell on deaf ears or were ascribed to propaganda. Domestically, however, and especially throughout East Prussia, Minister Goebbels' radio pronouncements had an unintended result. Rather than mobilizing greater resistance to the Red Army, many East Prussians, concerned for the implications of Nemmersdorf (Dobson 1979:16-17) and fed by real and exaggerated accounts of the behavior of Soviet troops, prepared for an exodus which, by early 1945, was to achieve massive proportions. A few regional officials observing first hand the magnitude of the exploding human crisis ignored Gauleiter Koch's 'stand and fight' ultimatums and prepared their charges for an orderly evacuation. It reached its climax in the depths of one of the coldest winters in memory. Red Air Force photos taken in late 1944 on display in Kaliningrad depict a massive, seemingly unorganized panorama of horses and horse-drawn carts of various description hauling East Prussians singly or in groups across the frozen

evacuation ports. "Königsbergers saw nothing but fire, dust, ashes, and smoke curling around the spires of their Gothic churches" (Applebaum 1995: 29). For the great majority, however, their plight had only begun. Many who reached Pillau (Baltysk), Danzig (Gdansk) or Gotenhafen (Gdynia) for sea evacuation had the misfortune to sail on vessels sunk by Soviet submarines. One such tragedy was the prewar cruise liner Wilhelm Gustloff which sank near the East Pommeranian coast with a loss of approximately 7,000 people, mostly refugees but also including wounded troops and some naval cadets (Dodson 1979:).

In 1945, the Soviets admitted to the loss of 225,000 troops in their East Prussian campaign. More recently, and only after some of Russia's neighbors cast what could be considered covetous eyes toward this now detached territory ('unhealthy thoughts' according to one senior Kaliningrad official--Matochkin 1995: 19), and perhaps to stress the cost in blood for a Kaliningrad over which Russia had no intention of readily surrendering its sovereignty, Moscow raised the postwar announced casualty figure to 900,000 troops killed or missing. The true cost for the Soviet victors probably falls between the two figures. Soviet historians generally agree that their losses were four to eight times higher than those of the Germans (Conquest 1991:266). What is not in dispute are the 58 mostly massive war memorials referenced on a 1992 Russian map, including four commemorating Russians who fell in the First World War. The latter were erected and maintained during the German period and manifest a soldierly camaraderie clearly not reciprocated by the Soviets after World War 2.

Transformation of an Alien Landscape

Devoid of the last remnants of its ever-dwindling German population whose forced evacuation after the end of hostilities in 1945-47 was more orderly if no less harsh than the chaotic wartime departures, Moscow proceeded to bring in scores of peasants and artisans to occupy its newly acquired territory (Vesilind 1997:112). Drawn largely from areas in the Soviet Union that had suffered severe destruction in the war, these new settlers for the most part were conscripted for the transfer to former East Prussia. Set adrift by the authorities, sometimes with little more than a cow and their personal effects, in a chaotic end-of-war Soviet Union and conquered East Prussia faced with massive reconstruction, the new arrivals were largely dependent upon their own resources until the first crops matured. They surely realized that they were occupying a cultural-economic landscape quite different from the ones they knew in the Soviet Union. It also is conceivable that a few of the new arrivals might have questioned the length of their stay in this wartime acquisition with its non-Slavic, non-Soviet connotations.

Whereas this figurative looking over of one's shoulders may have affected some of the first generation of immigrants, those born in Kaliningrad (and there have been several generations) unquestionably consider themselves to be Russian. They know no other landscape as well as they do this one. Unlike other Russian residual and minority populations in the former republics of the Soviet Union, the Russians in Kaliningrad

no replacement population, German or otherwise, awaiting its marching orders. Indeed, former German Foreign Minister Genscher, responding to some of the instability talk common after the collapse of the Soviet Union, reportedly said that "he wouldn't touch Kaliningrad even if it was handed to Germany on a platter".

Many among the first Russian settlers, likely assisted by soldiers, vandalized much of the then existing German cultural landscape. Graves were violated on a scale that, in hindsight, can only be viewed as having been systematic and massive. This was done presumably in search of gold (teeth and rings) to be traded for food and other necessities on the black market. The visitor to Kaliningrad City or to any of the other towns and villages is fortunate to find even one German headstone, much less a German cemetery. There is, however, one notable exception. Honored by Russians as 'one of their own', to the dismay of some Germans , the grave of the great Prussian philosopher Immanuel Kant still has a place of honor next to one of the restored walls of what was once Königsberg's Cathedral. One of the more striking aspects of contemporary change in Kaliningrad is an emerging interest on the part of some Kaliningrad youth in better understanding the remaining German facets of this landscape. It is their homeland and they seek now to appreciate what many of their elders sought to destroy.

Kantograd frequently arises as a replacement name for Kaliningrad. A competitor is "amber"(Bernstein) after the well known and still sporadically exploited deposits at Jantarnyi (ex-Palmniken). Stalin's name is gone from Stalingrad, Lenin's is gone from

Leningrad and yet, one of the founding members (Kalinin) of the Bolshevik Revolution is still commemorated in a city's name. It is almost as if the changing of a name might subject the region to still other, yet unknown and most likely unwanted forms of stress (Harris 1997: 60). It is sometimes better to do nothing.

Had it not been for reconstruction money provided by German churches, the previously roofless walls of Königsberg's Cathedral and a few other churches might already have collapsed. Only 70 of the region's 224 churches were destroyed in wartime action. Twenty-six were demolished in the 1950s and 29 suffered the same fate in the 1960s, including 11 in Kaliningrad City. The process of cultural obliteration continued with the destruction of another 14 churches in the 1970s, followed by ten more during the 1980s (Bachtin 1994: 116-33). In a few cases, former churches were taken over for Russian Orthodox services but this was only possible after the restoration of freedom of worship. For the most part, the remaining shells stand empty and deteriorating, their sturdy red brick construction deterring all but concerted efforts to demolish. Only ruins remain to mark the castles built by the Teutonic Knights and the hundreds of well built and spacious warehouses constructed during the German period. The great majority were purposely destroyed after the war by Soviets more intent upon eradicating evidence of a German cultural landscape than in preserving structures for use by the arriving Soviet immigrants.

Unintended Complications

Systematic eradication of the former cultural landscape has caused unexpected

problems. For example, the first wave of German tourists after 1991 was optimistically viewed by some Kaliningrad leaders as the harbinger of an economic renaissance based in the first instance on sentimental tourism from relative wealthy Germany. Both Germany and the European Community have provided grants for infrastructural improvements including the upgrading of transport facilities (Harris 1997:60). Several Russian-German joint ventures were formed to build hotels, offer tours and generally cater to this new phenomenon comprised in the main of elderly nostalgic, former East Prussians and younger adults who, as children, fled with their families in 1944-45 or who were evicted after the war (Matthies 1991:10). Quite naturally, the first German visitors were especially interested in visiting family graves. What they found, literally, were empty holes in the ground and fragments of former headstones. As if that was not sufficient shock, these same visitors often were unable to locate the villages which characterized the former landscape and served as their emotional connection to it.

Some 800 German villages were totally dismantled or destroyed by the Soviets (Knappe: Personal Communication). War time action would have been responsible for some of the destruction. In some instances, building stone salvaged from the purposeful dismantling of homes and shops reportedly was transported by rail to the Soviet Union to help in the rebuilding of towns or cities that had suffered wartime destruction (suggesting that, in the immediate postwar period, Soviet plans regarding this portion of former German East Prussia may not have been fully formulated). Many German settlements were destroyed because they no longer were necessary to a rural landscape soon to undergo

massive collectivization.

Agriculture in Difficulty

East Prussia historically was one of Germany's premier agricultural regions, characterized in the main by grain cultivation and dairy cattle (Knappe 1993b). This province also had the greatest number of horses of any of Germany's administrative units and was known for a locally bred draft horse, the Trakehn. Indeed, for some of the fleeing farmers in 1944-45, there was considerable anguish in having to leave behind their beloved horses. Knappe's informative map detailing land use near Znamensk (ex-Wehlau) before the war and in 1992 illustrates the enormity of crop land conversion to pasturage. Even with the agricultural reforms of 1991, less than four percent of cultivated land had been privatized two years later. The region's glacially formed moraine landscape is also noteworthy for its multitude of lakes and for soils requiring drainage. Unfortunately, few of the drainage systems built in the German time have been maintained by the new occupants. Furthermore, and contrary to perceptions that former East Prussia was primarily a Junker landscape of great estates, dependent in the main upon a semi-feudal farm labor system, the reality is something else. Freehold farms and families, served by a well-connected network of small villages and towns, were increasingly the norm. In a recent "before and after" study of the Polessk area (ex- Labiau) District northeast of Kaliningrad City, some 5,000 family operated farms in the German time had been replaced by nine massive state farms

(Knappe 1993a:10). These nine factory farm townsites collectively house fewer workers and their families than were provided for earlier by 5,000 farms. This may help to explain the redundancy of many of the former German agricultural villages once Soviet planners set forth to Sovietize their new acquisition.

From all accounts, agricultural output from the large collectives was seldom measured against the costs for inputs and hardly ever in relation to the declining productivity of the land. Crop rotations designed during the German time for nurturing productivity of soils were abandoned for mono-agriculture, primarily grain or milk production. This resulted in lower average yields per acre and declining milk output per cow (Kornejewez and Knappe 1996). Incredibly, and suggestive of the enormity of the collapse of the Soviet system, Kaliningrad's agricultural production in 1997 still had not returned to the production levels recorded in 1991 (Kaliningrad Region 1996:53). The issue for the most part is one of accountability. Farm managers are no longer able to call upon Moscow or the local administration to make up financial shortfalls. After 1991, in theory at least, overdrafts would have to be repaid and with interest. Equipment maintenance was deferred and, in some cases, equipment was sold to raise money for current operations. In short, the agricultural component of the economy was grinding down to what might best be described as near subsistence level, frequently dependent upon sanctioned or illegal bartering.

Collective farm managers were neither trained nor prepared to function in a free market nor to suffer its measures of accountability. Typically, these large scale enterprises

and processing of food. Realistic financial accounting has led to underemployment which, in some instances, threatens to turn into unemployment. Farm workers are not immune from the economic transformation and many seem destined to lose previously generous socioeconomic benefits. Housing, however, appears to be secure. Homes on the collective farms are generally of a much higher quality than urban housing.

A personal interview in October, 1996 with the Director of a farm cooperative in the Polessk Region revealed the range of conflicting pressures. Workers frequently interrupted our discussions to describe a crisis in production, spare parts, a child care issue or a breakdown in equipment. Problems invariably had a common theme--lack of funds. Conversely, the Director bemoaned the Cooperative's deepening financial problems and his inability to service loans outstanding.

Fishing

A well established pre-war inshore fishing industry has been decimated by the combined effects of collectivization, over fishing and outright pollution of the Kurskly Zaliv (Kurisches Haff) and nearby portions of the Baltic. Several small coastal communities which once housed independent fishermen using small boats in close economic and environmental juxtaposition with aquatic resources all but disappeared in the Soviet period. In addition, the former USSR's largest ocean going and now largely inactive fishing fleet is based in Kaliningrad. Its catches together with some from fishing fleets

based elsewhere in the country often were processed in Kaliningrad canneries. This rusting fleet is a stark reminder of the need to modernize in a world consisting of numerous low cost operators. During the last 14 years (1976-90) of South African control over Southwest Africa (Namibia), there were upwards of 350 deep-water Kaliningrad based Soviet trawlers fishing in Namibian waters. The Southwest African Peoples Organization (SWAPO) received political and material support from the Soviet Union during its long conflict with South Africa. Accepting the presence of this massive fleet was one way in which the Soviets could be repaid. Today, a handful of these same vessels (rusting, visually in need of repair, and flying the Russian flag) remains to fish under contract for Namibian companies. The remainder of this once impressive fishing fleet is back in Kaliningrad City underutilized and at anchor, a visual reminder that there are few politically free fishing grounds left in the world.

A trip astride the sea canal connecting Kaliningrad City to Baltysk offers an endless panorama of vessels in need of repair but with no repairs taking place, scenes of a once active shipbuilding and ship repair industry where much of the activity appears to have stopped in 1991. The local unemployment consequences of this industrial collapse surely are significant.

The Soviet City

Königsberg in its day seldom dominated the region's urban hierarchy to the extent that Kaliningrad City does today (Knappe 1994: table p.20). Admittedly, in the case of the

latter, its service area is less than half the size of what existed in prewar. The Soviets embarked upon an industrialization program for Kaliningrad City and some of the other heavily damaged towns, mirroring the centralized planning implemented earlier in other USSR cities. Furthermore, and aside from Stalingrad, Königsberg (Kaliningrad) probably suffered war time destruction on a scale equal to or exceeding any major war ravished Russian city, thus offering physical reconstruction and functional reorientation within the parameters of a new ideological underpinning. In this manner, a former regional service center-provincial capital, intertwined with a landscape of numerous smaller decision-making centers, was converted into an administrative node from which practically all significant economic decisions were imposed. Thus Kaliningrad was connected to the labor, raw material, manufacturing, and marketing systems encompassing all of the Soviet Republics, and especially to the nearby ones of Lithuania, Latvia and Byelorussia.

Components of the USSR's external trade directed through the city and port were processed locally (Fjodorow and Korneyevets 1996; 45-7). Industrialization for Kaliningrad, however, did not entail heavy industry. A light industrial base was envisioned, with special emphasis upon the more sophisticated technological demands of the military whose local presence was pronounced from the outset of Soviet control. The agricultural strength of the oblast was not neglected in post war planning; plants were constructed to process locally produced diary products and grain. Before the collapse of the USSR, a factory in Kaliningrad might have shipped the greater portion of its output to markets beyond the region without concern for the true costs. To the extent that production quotas

were met, other issues could be ameliorated.

The urban setting offers little in the way of alternatives. Factory managers face many of the financial constraints as their agricultural counterparts. Furthermore, they likely have fewer socioeconomic perks to offer their employees during this period of economic transformation. Entrepreneurs abound, from the enterprising street peddler to an emerging class of tycoons, but much of the population has only begun the mental transformation necessary to enter an economy predicated upon market forces. In this regard, Kaliningrad mirrors the situation elsewhere in Russia.

Unfortunately, market-oriented economics can result in distressing consequences or spatial inequities. There is a visual reminder of the latter in western Kaliningrad City where a reemerging affluent suburb comprising large homes interspersed with a few surviving pre-war dwellings that once housed the German elite stands apart from housing elsewhere. The stark contrast between these new, frequently gaudy, and comparatively opulent homes, and the drab, visually decaying, and nondescript apartment blocks that house the great majority of the population is overwhelming. There surely will be unpleasant socio-political connotations in the future if the trend continues unabated. No less telling are some of the quasi-rural residences surrounded by walled compounds with sophisticated security systems and guard dogs. These are the homes of the very wealthy 'New Russians'. There is much discussion among those not so fortunate as to the origins of this wealth.

Tourist Potential? For Russians?

Kaliningrad's North Coast (Figure 1) health spas were to become popular for the Soviet military and industrial syndicates. The military had first choice of existing facilities whereas the latter generally were obliged to construct their own hotels to accommodate all-expense paid summer visits. An example is Svetlogorsk (Rauschen), popular during the German period and undamaged in the war. Svetlogorsk also became popular with non-Kaliningraders, those who lived closer to the Baltic than to alternative Black Sea resorts. Partial collapse of the Russian economy, reduced vacation benefits and the need to pay for one's own transportation have caused the number of visitors to decline. There may be many reasons to the popularity of Kaliningrad for retired military. Rauschen, with its attractive pre-war architecture, coastal dune setting and rail access to Kaliningrad City must be one of them.

Even in the best of times which these clearly are not, it is doubtful whether tourism from abroad or from elsewhere in Russia would provide for more than a modest and localized addition to Kaliningrad's economy. Moscow assigned Kaliningrad a free trade zone and, more recently, declared its westernmost oblast to be a Special Economic Zone (Fjodorow and Korneyevets 1996:45). Still, a much expanded version of the marketing arrangement for amber (Jantar) is needed, not only to reconnect and improve upon former regional economic linkages established during Soviet control but to nurture new ones in this portion of the Baltic. The latter have more than passing potential with continued European integration. For example, the main road corridor envisioned to connect Finland to East-

Central Europe likely will be through Estonia (by ferry), Latvia, Lithuania, Kaliningrad and Poland (Wendt 1998:166).

Borderland Trade

At the outset, refurbishing and legitimizing the still locally important trade between Kaliningrad and Lithuania should have priority. This could be followed by rebuilding and developing mutually advantageous trade between Kaliningrad, Lithuania, Poland and Belarus (Wendt 1998). It is anticipated that Poland will seek an expansion of its once important linkages to Lithuania now that these two countries share a common border as well as shared religious and historical political connections. Belarus is a dubious proposition so long as its government continues to direct its development within Russia's economic shadow, while using the old Soviet model for inspiration and implementation. As for Kaliningrad-Lithuanian trade, more cooperation on the part of both entities is required to control a growing and unofficial, clearly profitable, illegal trade in guns, automobiles, cigarettes, alcohol and an almost endless list of items for everyday use. Not only are the frontiers between Kaliningrad and Lithuania porous, the suspected volume and value of illegal trade detract from customs duties and encourage corruption. A perspective on this border and how it compares with Russia's other new border areas was presented at a 1997 symposium at Finland's Joennen University. Substantial risk for the Kaliningrad-Lithuania border was identified in three of nine problem categories: isolation or dependence upon passage through a neighboring country; inevitable uniting of a border region, and

excessive border crime (Grandberg 1999:85). The attractiveness for this illegal, cross border trade can only be enhanced as membership in the European Community beckons for four of Kaliningrad's neighbors.

Further Baltic cooperation associated with the likely expansion of the European Community will enhance Kaliningrad's potential, but only if Russia agrees to a formula which, in all probability, weakens its sovereignty over the area. To enhance the economic attractiveness of Kaliningrad (Fjodorow 1995) to the point where this region, better yet its port and urban area, were to compete seriously with St. Petersburg for the country's western external trade, poses a potential dilemma for Moscow. The easy solution would be to let the nationalists have their way and accept the consequences of a Kaliningrad in economic decline, without meaningful growth potential. This course of action could result in still other problems if doing nothing forces the residents of Kaliningrad to live in the shadow of strong and increasingly enticing neighboring economies.

Alternatively, an economically healthy Kaliningrad functioning within a special political arrangement with its Baltic neighbors or European Community might serve as Russia's window to future European integration. Kaliningrad's port offers foreign trade a seasonal and distance advantage relative to St. Petersburg and might prove to be a compelling route once the necessary economic pieces were in place. There is some room for optimism. Bayerische Motoren Werke recently announced that Kaliningrad would become the site of its first automobile assembly facility in Russia and headquarters of a national distribution network of 17 dealers (BMW 1999;2-3). Assembling will be in

cooperation with the local company Avtotor and comprise semi knocked down and completely knocked down vehicles. BMW is looking forward to the production (assembly!) of 10,000 units yearly.

Some would advocate that Kaliningrad could become the Hong Kong of the Baltic, a special status exclave whose multinational economic hinterland would enrich Russia much as adjacent Chinese territory benefits from Hong Kong's window to world markets. During the last half century, however, Kaliningrad has been more akin to a Gibraltar. This was territory taken in war, prepared for war and presumably, still armed for war. Given this history and offered the choice, neighboring countries would support some form of special economic status for Kaliningrad if only to defuse its potential as a "loose cannon" in the Baltic Region.

If economic recovery in Russia continues to lag behind that of its western neighbors, coincidental with new opportunities for intra-European trade expansion into the eastern Baltic, the Kaliningrad exclave could become a cancer on regional stability. Expansion of existing regional connections (Stanley 1997) and development of new trading relationships between Kaliningrad and the countries surrounding the Baltic is needed, not only to interconnect the economic and cultural diversity of the region (Wein 1994: 105-09), but to integrate or reconnect the region with a Kaliningrad whose instability can only increase with the reluctance of Moscow to initiate or respond to regional integration. The absurdity of the current situation can be seen in the delays occurred in developing a relatively small petroleum field in the eastern Baltic.

The offshore boundary between Lithuania and Russia (Kaliningrad) starts at a point where the River Neman enters the Baltic. There is contention on the part of Lithuania that the offshore boundary, as originally drawn, is predicated upon a northwesterly-southeasterly line, allocating the bulk of the oil field to Russia. In spite of a statement in 1994 by the Russian Ambassador to Lithuania that the offshore oil belongs to Russia, Lithuania contends that the boundary should be drawn by a straight, east-west line. This in theory would give it a portion of the oil. Speculation is only enhanced by the fact that the exploration maps, prepared when the Soviet Union still existed, are housed at an institute in Riga, Latvia, formerly the documentation center for Soviet Baltic petroleum exploration. Latvia is unwilling to release maps and other documents to Lithuania unless it is guaranteed some of the future oil production (presumably, irrespective of whatever information is deduced from the documents) and Russia is not prepared to accept Lithuania's definition of their mutual offshore boundary. The result, not unexpectedly, is that this particular petroleum field still awaits full development. This may be of little consequence to Kaliningrad or Russia, but it is significant to a Lithuania or Latvia totally dependent upon imported oil. Nationalism still exists in Balticum and should be countered by inducements for regional cooperation. One might have thought that the removal of Soviet control in 1991 would have stimulated if not mandated cooperation between the small Baltic countries.

Summary

Victory in World War 2 and the acquisition of northern East Prussia gave the Soviets an enhanced Baltic window while simultaneously depriving defeated Germany of long-held territory adjacent to the Soviet Union and the heartland of Prussian military tradition. The recent demise of the Soviet Union, coupled with the loss of its eastern European colonies, leaves only Kaliningrad, southern Sakhalin and the Kurile Islands as spoils from the Great Patriotic War. Much as France drew a proverbial line in the sand in Algeria after her 1954 defeat in Vietnam, nationalists in Russia appear determined to retain sovereignty over their remaining wartime acquisitions. All the same, no country is prepared to challenge Russia on its right to sovereignty over Kaliningrad. The German dream to return lives largely in the minds of a soon-to-be dead generation; the once powerful post war political strength of this group has dissipated through time. German youth appear to be unconcerned. Lebensraum at the end of century has more significance in the tourist industry than with potential colonists.

Poland and Lithuania have historic claims but it is difficult to assign any credence to potential irredentism. Some in Poland may harbor a desire to reunite former East Prussia and people both portions with Poles (but not to encourage Volga German resettlement). Poland struggled to enter NATO in no small part because of its tragic history adjacent to an expanding Germany or expanding Soviet Union/Russia. Just as Germany has accepted the loss of its eastern territories, knowing that far more can be achieved through economic cooperation than by militarism, so surely will Poland reach a similar conclusion with

respect to an area where the historical record is contentious. Lithuania will tread carefully to avoid antagonizing powerful and neighboring Russia whatever might be her historical claim to a portion of Kaliningrad. Not only does Lithuania have an awkward and potentially dangerous irredentism issue in its own substantial Russian speaking minority population, it also has a small Lithuanian population in Kaliningrad. Approximately 20,000 ethnic Lithuanians settled in Kaliningrad after the death of Stalin in 1953. They or their descendants may be active in the growing and illegal cross border trade.

A Problem Acquisition?

What to Stalin in 1945 seemed a golden opportunity could, for his successors in Moscow, eventually become an intolerable burden, to be sustained no longer than absolutely necessary for reasons of domestic politics . A frail President Yeltsin visited Kaliningrad during the 1995 election campaign to deliver a speech emphasizing its Russian character. This presumably was to dispel any notion that he might be weak regarding the sanctity of Russia's borders. The speech not only was meant to attract a portion of the active and retired military vote, it also was intended to attack his nationalist opponents on their own emotional turf.

The Soviet Union created Kaliningrad and it is for Russia to find a role for it within the new Europe. There are no healthy alternatives. The transformation process currently underway in East-Central Europe could easily be detoured by a Kaliningrad still lacking a role in the new dispensation. Much was anticipated in 1995 when Moscow promulgated

the revised law, formalized on January 5, 1996 granting Kaliningrad the privileges of a 'special economic zone' with customs dispensations and currency regulations favoring foreign investors (Harris 1999:60). That this and other gestures failed to provide Kaliningrad with the momentum necessary to emerge from a former military cantonment to a Baltic economic miracle can be attributed in part to Russian politics and mismanagement of the economy. For real change to occur, Moscow must accept a special role for Kaliningrad and a role that very likely could mean reduced sovereignty. Whether enshrined as a fourth Baltic Republic or as a 'Free Port' containing some of the characteristics of a pre-war Danzig or contemporary Hong Kong, the existing situation is not conducive to either regional economic cooperation or political tranquility. One of the first steps leading to the transformation would entail a substantial reduction in Kaliningrad's military establishment. Unfortunately, the current environment within Russia does not bode well for such transfers. One reason for many commissioned personnel wanting to remain in Kaliningrad may relate to housing. Here at least they and their families do not have to constantly worry about the basics, however shoddy these might be. Hopefully, European integration will not flounder on this issue.

Notes

1. An earlier version of this paper appeared in a Festschrift honoring the 80th birthday of Professor Karl Sinnhuber.

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