

BOOK REVIEW

«Вокруг света с Иваном Крузенштерном», Спб., 2003.

В заключении отметим, что автору в значительной степени удалось добиться своей главной цели, показать взаимные образы двух стран в процессе ранних контактов, а также проанализировать различия в дипломатическом этикете России и Японии в период визитов русских посольств в период сёгуната Токугава. Работа читается с большим интересом и заслуживает самой высокой оценки.

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Примечания

1. Например, Yulia Mikhailova & M. William Steele, *Japan and Russia. Three Centuries of Mutual Images*, Folkestone: Global Oriental, 2008.

Komori, Hiromi, *Esutonia no seiji to rekishi ninshiki (The Politics and History of Estonia)*, Tokyo, Sangensha, 2009, 235+xxv pp.

The violent events in Tallinn on 26 and 27 April 2007 were the unexpected ones for researchers who had engaged with Baltic countries and been watching the regime change and transition in Estonia ever since *Perestroika* and the recovery of independence, as there had been few violent clashes or conflicts not only in the peaceful movement for independence, which came to be symbolized as the “Singing Revolution”, but also in the processes of social, economic and political transition. Estonians themselves are proud of the fact. It seemed that Estonia had succeeded in achieving favourable economic development and social and political stabilization, overcoming potential tensions both domestic and international. Here I take into consideration the existence of so many Russian-speaking populations who immigrated under Soviet rule and continued to stay after the collapse of the USSR as a factor in domestic tensions, and the complicated relationship with the neighbouring great power of the Russian Federation as an international factor. In spite of these uneasy conditions, Estonia has succeeded in becoming a member state of both the EU and NATO, and has achieved significant economic growth, outpacing the other two Baltic countries. Estonia has been called “an honour student” of transition among the former socialist states. The success

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story of Estonia seemed manifest and indisputable until the event.

Hiromi Komori, the author of *The Politics and History of Estonia*, is the pioneering Japanese specialist in the contemporary history and politics of Estonia, and who has been observing the society and politics of Estonia since the 1990s, and has published many articles and essays on various themes. She started her academic work with the history of the “authoritarian regime” between the two world wars, and nowadays her scope of investigation is wide-ranging from the national awakening among Estonians in the 19th century to the politics, diplomacy, and transformation of society after the recovery of independence. The event in Tallinn, together with various prior symptoms, was so serious and meaningful even for such a proficient researcher as the author that she was obliged to reconsider thoroughly all of her previous standpoints and views on Estonia.

The author had long thought, as she herself wrote, that the definitive moment for the nation- and state-building of Estonia was the Estonian language. Needless to say, it is common knowledge or an axiom for historians and researchers of cultural studies on Central and Eastern Europe that language has been the decisive formative element for national awakening since the age of Romanticism, and it remains the essential ingredient for national self-consciousness. The Estonian language also played an important role in the process of recovering independence, which was manifested by the fact that the Language Law, which proclaimed the superiority of Estonian over Russian, was established by the Supreme Council of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Estonia during *Perestroika*. After the recovery of independence, the Estonian government amended the law several times, which was consistently the key issue not only in the internal politics of Estonia but also in the international arena, in which such European international organizations as the EU, COE and OSCE, which defended minority rights and demanded the liberal opportunities of economic activity for foreign enterprises, as well as the Russian Federation pretending to be “bulwark” for Russian speakers in the former Soviet states, appeared as opposition to Estonia. The Estonian language is also at the very heart of social integration policy for minorities. The language has repeatedly been mobilized and utilized by the Estonian government as an instrument for politics and governance. Consequently, it is very agreeable that the development of language issues is one of the major themes in this book and the author so often refers to it.

After the event in Tallinn, however, the author began to reconsider that it might

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not be the language but “history” that played the core role in the promotion of state building and social integration in Estonia. According to the author, Estonian nationality or citizenship is defined not as a community using a common language, rather as a community of persons sharing a common “history”. Of course, “history” in this context does not mean history as an academic discipline of the humanities or a branch of the empirical sciences. Rather, it is the role and function of history in schooling, historical perception inherited from one generation to another in each family, and, in summary, “history” socially or politically constructed and transmitted as a collective memory or perception of the world, that the author chooses as her main objects for investigation. According to the author, she “wants to consider the dynamics in which history moves and develops politics, setting Estonian experiences as the objects (p.15).”

The work consists of six chapters with a short introduction. Chapter 1 is titled “History and Historical Narratives”, and addresses the evolution of “history” itself in Estonia, dividing the process into four periods: the period until independence in 1919, the independent period between two world wars, the period of “occupations” by both Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, and the period since the recovery of independence. In this chapter the invention, transformation and utilization of “history” and historical narratives by leaders of national awakening movements, national intellectuals, historians, and political leaders are chronologically depicted. Historical narratives in each period had their own peculiar features reflecting the political situation in the age and legitimating the regime and the dominant ideology. This enables readers to understand the specific significance of “history” for the Estonian state and nation.

The other five chapters discuss the relationship between “history” and the five realms of the national agenda for the Estonian state: Politics under *Perestroika*, Legislation (Constitution, Language Law, Nationality Law and Foreign Law), Diplomacy, Europeanization, and Citizenship. In each chapter the author tries to illustrate how Estonian historical experiences and memories have been mobilized and utilized as the fundament for each realm of the political agenda, how different perceptions of history have provoked frictions not only between the Republic of Estonia and the Russian Federation, or Estonians and Russian-speakers in Estonia, but also between various political groups among Estonians (for example, between the People’s Front and the Estonian Congress under *Perestroika*, or nowadays between the Centralist Party and nationalist parties

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such as *Isamaa* (“Fatherland”)).

For example, the author argues in Chapter 4 that the conclusion of the Border Treaty between Estonia and the Russian Federation has been suspended and run aground because of the different understandings of the legal force of the Tartu Treaty (1920). Although Estonia insists on its legitimacy, Russia proclaims that the treaty has already become a historical document and lost its legal force. In 2005, the ratification of the Border Treaty was cancelled at the last moment, even though it had been agreed and signed by both sides, because the Estonian Diet (*Riigikogu*) adopted a resolution referring to the legitimacy of the Tartu Treaty and other diplomatic documents at the ratification, and this provoked Russia into revoking its signature to the Border Treaty. Such a troublesome evolution of diplomacy concerns the recognition of the legal continuity of Estonia between the interwar independent state and what it is today and, of course, the evaluation of Estonia’s affiliation to the Soviet Union, whether it is “voluntary (at least legally)” or compulsory and occupational. The political implications of “history” and its “usefulness” as an instrument of governance is adequately and cautiously depicted by the author in other policy realms, as well.

The author, on the other hand, appropriately points out that friction had been comparatively repressed before Estonia’s accession to the EU, because EU membership was the matter of the highest priority for Estonian state security and economic growth, and so the Estonian government was, at least until the accomplishment of its goal, obliged to respect and obey the unpleasant directions and suggestions set by the EU and other European international organizations that did not always fully support Estonian ethno-politics, suppressing nationalistic sentiments and opinions among the Estonian people. Perhaps they had long been dissatisfied and frustrated with the situation, so Estonians were “liberated” from psychological restrictions after EU enlargement in 2004, and the liberation apparently revealed the existence of antagonistic attitudes over historical events among people and peoples. The author closely traces a series of troubles and conflicts around memorial monuments, which commemorated Estonian national heroes in World War II, who in practice fought for Nazi Germany, and in some cases, cooperated in the Holocaust, on the one hand, and the symbolical meaning of the Bronze Soldier at *Tõnismägi* which honours Soviet Heroes against Fascism, on the other. The Tallinn event in 2007 might be the outcome of such a tangled and complicated situation invented by differing appreciations

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of historical events and political movements based on them. Drawing a very clear picture of the situation, the author questions what historians and history as a human science can and must do in the face of plural antagonistic “histories” and the conflicts these “histories” provoke. This question is very significant not only for Estonian history, but also for contemporary history as a whole.

Unfortunately, description in this outstanding work sometimes becomes obscure and labyrinthine, so it might be a little difficult for readers to understand clearly. It is partly because the author was obliged to relate tangential details to explain events and interpretations. The author wanted to avoid inaccurate understanding by readers who did not have enough knowledge of Estonia and might invent illusions of its history and contemporary situation, projecting their own simple representation on history and ignoring the more puzzling reality. However, the reviewer thinks that obscurity was provoked by the complexity of reality in itself and the agonizing situation with which the author is confronted. Following the end of the Cold War, the world lost its simplified narrative of history and rushed into an age in which plural historical views and perceptions chaotically coexist and tend to reject each other violently. The Estonian experience is one such tragedy. The author, however, is courageously struggling to surmount the situation and to construct a “history” that promotes mutual understanding and tolerance between different peoples, even though they cannot fully agree. This experience of a small nation and the struggles of a researcher who sincerely faces these challenges necessarily brings valuable insights and instruction for a wider context of world history, and facilitates historians to reconsider their own responsibilities.

Nobuya Hashimoto

Mikhailova, Yulia and M. William Steele (eds), *Japan and Russia: Three Centuries of Mutual Images*. Folkestone, Kent, United Kingdom: Global Oriental, 2008. xiii+237 pp. Bibliography.

This volume attempts to examine the role played by visual images in Russo-Japanese relations over the past three hundred years in forming the perceptions of “the other” and the identity of the “self.” The objective is to ask what images the Japanese and the Russians hold of each other, how mutual representations