Regime Changes in 20th Century Europe

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Reassessed, Anticipated and in the Making

Edited by

Marja Vuorinen, Tuomas Kuronen and Aki-Mauri Huhtinen

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

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This book first published 2016

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN (10): 1-4438-9934-8
ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-9934-5

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INTRODUCTION

REGIME CHANGE AS A PROCESS

MARJA VUORINEN AND TUOMAS KURONEN

Narratives about regime changes *as unique events* are part and parcel of the traditional history of wars, empires and ruling houses. Attempted and successful changes of political regimes are central to the history of modern ideological movements. Theories concerning the revolutionary process include generalising ideas about the economic and demographic circumstances of the kind that are the most likely to produce insurgency, while the classical elite theorists vividly describe the formative path of rebellious counter-elites, followed by their internal division and eventual displacement by the next elite formation.

In terms of scholarly genres, the concept of regime change is commonly applied in the fields of international relations and politics, security and military studies, along with critical studies of neo-colonialism. In the field of organizational and leadership studies, the term is rather rare – economics, finance, and international trade being the only notable exceptions. One could also argue that this coupling of power and sources of wealth is hardly incidental.

Meanwhile, a generalising model of regime change *as a process* is still lacking. Instead of explaining individual regime changes as unique events, this book seeks to bring to the fore their recurring features – regardless of the type of regimes that are veered away from or the new regimes steered towards. In short, we hope to sketch an outline for a general theory of regime changes, describing their common preconditions and usual phases as well as the typical personages involved. In other words, we delve into the particulars in our effort to understand the general.

To achieve this task, our book focusses on regime changes as series of moments in history, in essence open-ended while they are in the process of

occurring. Such “changing times” often involve a heightened consciousness of the concept of time – of coming to terms with a particular past, while anticipating and working for a preferred future. A regime can be rejected only in the name of a better model, formulated either upon the memory of a more distant past re-imagined as a golden age, or as a brand new, unprecedented Utopia. Moreover, the new era often comes with a vengeance: a reckoning with – or at least a reassessment of – the institutions, practices and individuals representative of the old regime.

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The editors of this book share an interest in the role of ideological forces in historical processes and the role of leaders in times of change. In her research, historian Marja Vuorinen focusses on conflicts between political elites, the interplay of enemy imagery vis-à-vis in-group identities, and the self-proclaiming rhetoric of progressive movements attacking nationalism and conservatism.

For his part, Tuomas Kuronen is interested in the processes of knowing, research methods and their philosophical underpinnings, as well as leadership theories. Holding a PhD in strategic management and philosophy of science, in keeping with an interest in continental philosophy, his recent research includes the themes of aesthetics of knowledge, embodiment in learning, as well as human reasoning processes in organisational contexts.

As a scholar, Aki-Mauri Huhtinen’s background is in theoretical philosophy and military science, with a particular emphasis on leadership and organisation studies. His publications have focussed on information, media, and hybrid and cyber warfare as strategic concepts of military leadership. He applies to his work methods from the humanities and social sciences, the discourse of knowing, semiotics and linguistic philosophy.

It should also be noted that several academic networks formed within conference organisations have made it possible for this book to be published. The *European Social Science History Conference* (ESSHC), the *Society for Phenomenology and Media*, and the *European Conference on Cyber Warfare and Security* have proved invaluable in locating authors with promising research ideas and interesting topics to be developed into articles.

The editors would also like to thank the anonymous reviewers for their constructive comments.

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Rejecting both the antiquarian (past described for its own sake) and the ideologically motivated (past utilised for present-day political purposes) approach, the book aims at obtaining historical knowledge that can be useful in shaping present-day and future processes. Past developments are described in order to inform the present about what to expect – what typically happens in times of rapid ideological, political and/or military change. The past is utilised as a laboratory of precedents, similar enough to serve as test cases for present and anticipated near-future situations.

The particular historical and present-day processes presented in the book are analysed both as unique occurrences, related to a particular era, and as test cases that offer insights into humans as social beings, motivated by ideological-political, economic, diplomatic and military motives. Some chapters are event oriented while others focus on the personality and/or image of a particular political leader. The meta-level theoretical contribution of the book, presented in the concluding articles, emerges from the general patterns revealed through analysing the individual processes of different (geo)political contexts and time periods.

The definition of our focal concept – *regime* – is broad, ranging from actual, self-declared political regimes to ideological regimes constructed through research. Regime change is understood neutrally as a change in a prevailing political philosophy, brought about either by peaceful ideological development or violent revolutionary or military action, and often accompanied by a replacement of both ruling and political elites.

To make sense of moments of rapid change, counterfactual "what if" or "what if not" questions also come in handy. On the one hand, there are times when past, present and future seem to flow freely into one another. On the other hand, however, there are times when a clean break with the past becomes the absolute precondition for any future, as well as times when the dissolution of a one-time potential future suddenly appears as a narrow escape. The inevitability of a process may seem obvious in hindsight, but not while it is still developing. We human beings are rarely able to see change from within as it happens. Aspects of time and space are inseparable from any social process, regime change included.

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Regime changes may be set off by a clearly perceivable turning point, such as the beginnings of both World Wars, the Holocaust, the 9/11 terrorist attacks on New York and, most recently, the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula. Such moments of shock give rise to the development of new societal superstructures and intra-state alliances. They often call for charismatic leadership and give it space to flourish.

On a more unofficial level, discontinuities in the social structures give rise to new "aristocracies", for example in the form of an army unit, a political party, a paramilitary group, a new social class, a gang or clan-like formation. Legitimation for new modes of government is often sought by summoning national mythologies or other aspects of cultural heritage that appeal to the collective subconscious in a particular social, historical, and cultural context.

The main focus of the individual chapters of this book is on 20th-century Europe, with extensions to the 21st century and to the developments in Euro-Atlantic relations. Regimes are studied from different perspectives along their life span, from the first emergence and establishment to eventual collapse or evanescence. Particular attention is paid to the ideological systems that contribute to their birth or destruction.

It is fitting to note that ideological constructs regard themselves as the pinnacles of human development, with eternal consequences. True enough, in many cases they do change the course of history, at least locally. However, they also produce a narrative in which certain ideologies are presented as the "right" and "true" ones, creating order in the otherwise chaotic "jungle" of human existence. This makes the eventual collapse of a regime all the more painful – for the regime itself, as well as for everyone else affected.

The geopolitical foci of the book are threefold. The actual events described in the contributions are set within a triangle of Finland, Germany and Russia. The division into centre and periphery, with the related local dynamics of expansion, is present in what might be termed the middle-size historical empires of northern Europe, namely Sweden, Germany and Russia – in its Imperial, Soviet, as well as Post-Soviet forms. The geopolitics of the post-war era is dominated by the emerging Cold War superpowers, the United States in close cooperation with the United

Kingdom in the West, and the Soviet Union in the East. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Europe entered a new phase in international relations and politics. The unilateral dominance of the global superpower, the United States, led many observers to believe that neoliberal capitalism had won, and its victory would be inevitable. According to this view, it would only be a matter of time until the remaining strongholds of protectionism and authoritarianism would succumb to the new world order.

However, not everyone believed this to be an historical necessity. Several power formations, the Kremlin included, view the logic of rule to be completely different from what the Western theorists of democracy and free-market capitalism envisioned. The past quarter of a century has witnessed a renaissance of authoritarianism, illiberalism, and nationalism – something the mainly Western critical voices cannot simply shrug off as boorish and anti-democratic. It is of the utmost importance to understand the processes that lead into the emergence of such regimes. In fact, old forms of organising and leadership have re-emerged. This is also the stage in which historical understanding becomes relevant. As human beings are fundamentally the same as before, historical awareness may provide us with insights that help us to understand not only the present, but also to make educated guesses regarding the future.

In this vein, one should bear in mind, however, that history essentially does and does not repeat itself – old facets reappear, but never in the same way or in the same circumstances as previously. Those who attempt to align current events with historical developments are doomed to fail in terms of the content of change, while those ignorant of history will be taken by surprise in every sense.

The structure and subtopics of the book

The book opens with World War I and its aftermath: the death of the old empires and the last phase of direct, state-controlled colonial rule. Part II describes the inter-war developments and their repercussions during the war years, focussing on a triangle formed by National Socialist Germany, Finland as its ally, and the emerging Soviet empire. Part III describes the British and US endeavour to create and maintain political balance in post-war mainland Europe, while actively managing the memory of the war that devastated Europe, until the collapse of the binary Cold War system. Part IV moves from post-Soviet to contemporary “post-post-Soviet” times, focussing on the former Eastern bloc with Russia as the special case. In the

concluding chapter, editors Huhtinen and Vuorinen discuss the general themes that emerge from the individual articles.

* * *

By the end of World War I, the Austro-Hungarian and German empires had effectively ceased to exist, whereas the Russian empire was busy shedding its monarchist skin to re-emerge as Soviet Russia. In the last stages of the war, the conservative elites of the much-diminished Swedish empire had embarked on an eventually failed campaign to re-establish the former union with Finland. Meanwhile, the British Empire, although suffering from an enormous loss of life, remained a monarchy and maintained its overseas colonies. In turn, the old elites of the expired empires entertained ideas of a conservative revolution, abiding by the traditional elite duties of defending, leading and educating the populace.

Focussing on the Swedish volunteers in the Finnish Civil War of 1918, **Anne Hedén** analyses the neo-Scandinavistic ideology and the warlike sentiments kindled among onlookers during the last stages of the Great War. Looking back to the pre-1809 era, when Finland was still part of Sweden, the Swedish activists hoped to re-establish what they saw as an organic unity of the two nations. Military nostalgia blended with Grand-Swedish ideology (*storsvenskhet*) inspired them to embark on an imperialistic rescue mission. Their first task would be to defeat the Finnish Reds. Later, they would civilise and modernise Finland after a period of backward Russian rule, reinstating the superior Swedish cultural and organisational heritage. During the campaign, the original condescending rhetoric – depicting the Finnish-speaking population as culturally and socially inferior – gradually lost impetus, giving way to the general modernism, neutrality and maintenance of peace that constitute the current basis of Swedish self-awareness.

Taking as his starting point a left-wing classic of the Weimar period, Joseph Roth's novel *The Spider's Web* (*Das Spinnennetz*, 1923), **Heikki Länsisalo** discusses the aftermath of the Great War from the point of view of the defeated German nations. Best known for his nostalgic portrayals of the Danubian Monarchy, the Austrian born Roth (1894-1939) started his career as a staunch leftist who shed his skin in the 1930s, becoming an anti-Nazi political reactionary. *The Spider's Web* belongs to the early left-wing phase of his career. Set in a period of political turmoil, when the Nazis were a small faction among many others, the novel depicts a right-

wing conspiracy to crush the republican Weimar government. Reflecting the political alliance between the decadent aristocracy, nostalgic for the Second German Empire, and the embittered young officers of middle-class background, the novel highlights their role in the slow decay of German democracy in the 1920s.

Among the many undemocratic political experiments of the 1930s, the state-of-exception regime in Newfoundland, from 1933 to 1948, stands out as a curious instance of late colonial rule. **Stephen Crocker** analyses a process of political devolution – the suspension of the political rights of a former self-ruling community. Originally a European settlement dating back to the 17th century, the Newfoundland of the 1920s was a "white dominion" in the British Empire, with a national sovereignty similar to that of Canada, Australia and New Zealand. In a colonial setting, emergency powers could be invoked as a means of resolving a local crisis, for example in response to a pressing economic or military situation or a natural catastrophe which was impeding the political system from functioning – but also due to supposed problems in the character, morality and social conditions of a subject population. In Newfoundland, a series of economic crises related to the costs of war and the economic depression led the British to determine that the colony's difficulties were rooted in deeper moral, sociological, geographical and climate-related problems, preventing the "normal" development of the civil society, the state and the colonial polity. As a result, the population, allegedly displaying "childlike simplicity" and much in need of moral education, were pronounced unable to run their own affairs.

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Part II describes the path that led to World War II, with the focus on a geographical triangle formed by National Socialist Germany, Finland as its ally, and the emerging Soviet empire. In all quarters, preparing for war involved propagandist plans to justify both political takeover and military aggression. The crudest propaganda techniques, including the presentations of the "entitled" Self vis-à-vis the "undeserving" Other were most useful for the purposes of war, while the more subtle means of creating new traditions best served in first unifying an emergent ideological regime and then maintaining its hold over the minds of the people.

During the 1930s, Germany's political system underwent a total change of direction. The development of the Weimar republic was discontinued with the National Socialists' rise to power in 1933. In the years that followed, the ideology of the National Socialist regime pervaded the whole society, including the school curricula. School textbooks became a key medium for educating the new generations about the superior German national identity, as well as the inferior nature of the country's enemies. **Virpi Kivioja** analyses the image of Russians in German geography textbooks published between the years 1933 and 1943, modifying the older, traditional European negative portrayals of Russians by both addition and omission. The first truly National Socialist textbooks, featuring racial ideology and military-political propaganda, were published as late as 1939. Comparing the old and new sets of books, and the different editions, the chapter tracks the transition into a new political and ideological era.

Kaisa Hirvonen analyses the establishment of National Socialist festival traditions through modifying the existing rituals. In the Third Reich, Christmas celebrations were reinterpreted with a nationalistic twist, introducing elements related to the national past and the shared wartime experiences, adding new meanings to the originally religious festivals. Even though the Nazi regime was essentially non-religious, at least in the traditional sense of the word, it was ready to exploit the Christian cycle of annual celebrations by manipulating them to serve political purposes. Christmas as the most popular of the seasonal festivals was the most lucrative in the eyes of the propagandists of the new regime. It offered an opportunity to strengthen the Nazi ideal of the family as a social unit, while simultaneously addressing each family member in a special way, offering the *Hausfrau* tips on how to cook and decorate the home in a national fashion, providing the children with Advent calendars complete with Nazi imagery, and later suggesting appropriate ways of commemorating the fallen family members during the wartime Christmases.

With the outbreak of World War II in the autumn of 1939, Nazi Germany set up the *Propagandakompanien*, a special branch of the *Wehrmacht*, to be in charge of both domestic and foreign propaganda during the war. When Finland, along with the Germans, went to war against the Soviet Union in 1941, the Finnish military forces set up similar propaganda troops. Comparing the photographic materials produced by the two propaganda units, **Olli Kleemola** points out an essential difference. The German troops were mainly expected to provide evidence of the backwardness of the Russian people, in order to justify the occupation by

"culturally superior" invading troops. Meanwhile, the Finnish troops were also expected to document the rural lifestyle and cultural traditions of Russian Karelia, an area that the ideologists of the Greater Finland movement saw as the birthplace of the Finnish language and national culture. While justifying the planned expansion of the Finnish territory eastward, the photographic material was also designed to spread the nationalistic idea that the Finns and the Karelian people were parts of one and the same nation, thus easing the establishment of a Finnish regime in the occupied territory.

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The chapters in part III describe the formation, maintenance and eventual dissolution of the binary world system of the long post-war period, from the 1940s to the 1990s, seen through the political and propaganda activities of its key players. After the estrangement of the capitalist West from the communist East, the Western, Euro-Atlantic sphere gathered around the United States and Britain; meanwhile, the Soviet Union, together with a cluster of socialist sister nations, hedged in Eastern Europe. The essential regime changes of the period relate to the beginning and the end of the Cold War system, within the context of a global propaganda war and a struggle for influence between the two blocs.

Ohto Rintala explores the American post-Stalingrad plans to create a new political balance on mainland Europe, through what proved to be a counterfactual scenario regarding the future status of three small states – Finland, Hungary and Romania. When the German army launched an attack against the Soviet Union in June 1941, the three countries had joined a coalition with Nazi Germany, while Britain, the United States and Stalin's Soviet Union allied to oppose Hitler. The US State Department's plans regarding the post-war futures of the three states concentrated on a series of regime changes, directed from the outside, aiming to ease their return to the flock after the eventual collapse of Nazi rule. Located on the fringes of Europe, the three states were in a geopolitically unstable position. It was in the interests of the United States to "normalise" these former enemy countries, and to re-integrate them into a post-war liberal Western world system.

Exploring the British and American propaganda and cultural diplomacy in Finland during the first two decades of the Cold War, **Marek Fields** picks up where the previous chapter left off, albeit within more focussed scope.

On the surface, the operations were aimed at promoting the Western culture and way of life. The actual main goal, however, was to disseminate anti-communist propaganda, through special radio broadcasts, films and TV programmes, informal cultural activities, the British Council network and the Fulbright exchange programme. In an exceptional environment, bordering the Soviet Union, the distribution of anti-communist propaganda through the often self-censoring local media would be a sensitive affair. Despite the popular resentment of the Soviet system, the two Western powers were constantly trying to find new ways to distribute their message to the masses, for example by economically supporting the anti-communist work of certain labour and other organisations, apparently to prevent Finland from going over to the Soviet side.

The post-war propaganda effort on the British-American side included the active management of the memory of the previous war, especially as regards the notoriety of its main culprit, Germany. The discovery of a stash of mangled manuscripts, belonging to Nazi propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels, in occupied Berlin, proved to be a godsend. The first post-war translated edition of the Goebbels Diaries came out in 1948, in the aftermath of the Nuremberg trials. Other excerpts kept surfacing in both West and East Germany throughout the Cold War period, while the complete set of microfilmed diaries, deposited in a Moscow archive, came to light only in 1992. **Marja Vuorinen** analyses the prefaces of the English editions of the diaries, from 1948 to 1982, by British and US authors and publishers – ranging from the scandalised, accusatory 1940s texts, seasoned with occasional personal reminiscences, to the comprehensive academic analyses of Goebbels as a modern propagandist, to the disinterested post-Vietnam introductions.

Fittingly, part III ends with an analysis of what was to become an iconic moment at the end of the Cold War. **Lucia Halder** and **Petra Mayrhofer** discuss the role of visual signals in commemorating the tearing down of the Berlin Wall and the eventual re-unification of Germany. The authors discuss the role of visuals in the formation of the sovereignty of interpretation over past events, as well as the regime change that followed. They build their argument on the work of Gerhard Paul who sees that photographs serve as vehicles for forming and superimposing history. This opens the space of interpretation not only for an unfolding regime change, but also for the retrospective battles over the sovereignty of interpretation. The collapse of the Berlin Wall was widely covered in the media, but also influenced by it. The authors analyse photographic material from West

German newspapers and school textbooks around the year 2009, as they search for particular visual narratives and frames of visibility of the 1989/1990 regime change by examining the use and *iconisation* process of certain photographs. Moreover, the authors view this as a process of legitimising the reunification of Germany and thereby initiating the identification with the emergent "new" state of Federal Germany.

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The final section of the book, part IV, takes the analysis in a completely different direction: towards understanding regime change through geopolitics, leadership and organisational studies. The dramatic changes that took place in the early 1990s initiated a political, social and economic shift towards the "Western" model. This change was not, however, permanent. In less than a decade after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the successor state of the Russian Federation emerged. At first, under the transitional leadership of Boris Yeltsin, Russia headed towards democracy and market-driven capitalism, a period which many commentators remember as an era of largely uncontrolled, overnight mass privatisation of Soviet national corporations, which resulted in the rise of the Russian *nouveau riche*, the oligarchs. These (often unscrupulous) businessmen would go on to exert considerable influence over the state as well as its citizens.

The first chapter of part IV, authored by **Tuomas Kuronen**, **Jouni Virtaharju**, and **Aki-Mauri Huhtinen**, homes in on the leadership image of President Vladimir Putin. Through their "rhizomatic" approach, the writers analyse how the leader person, leadership style, and actions of Putin as a leader constitute and contribute to his leadership image. The authors build on a contextual understanding of leadership, a view in which leadership emerges from a particular social and historical context, rather than being an objective trait. They identify Putin as a "primal" leader, someone with a masculine and strong leadership style, as well as someone who acts in securing the geopolitical interests of Russia. This resonates well in the Russian context. More precisely, the authors ask why and how a leader image invites a variety of polarised readings, and what the leadership theoretical implications are of such heterogeneity in reading leadership. An intriguing detail, in the case of Putin, is the Western judgement of him as being unethical, something that goes against the Western ideals of democracy and shared leadership. Methodologically, the authors use narrative analysis in understanding scholarly and media texts

on Putin's leadership actions, events, and arguments. They conclude their chapter with a discussion concerning the "halo of leadership" as a phenomenon of amplification, whereby the polarised readings of Putin's leadership oscillate in the rhizomatic network of geopolitical actors and the media sphere.

Following on from this, **Andrey Makarychev** and **Alexandra Yatsyk** analyse today's independent ex-Soviet borderlands (Ukraine, Georgia, and Estonia) of the Russian Federation. More precisely, they identify the cultural and social practices enabling their national identity narratives to emerge. The authors use in-depth expert interviews with policy activists, cultural entrepreneurs, analysts and governmental officers, conducted in Lviv (Ukraine), Tallinn, Tartu, and Narva (Estonia), and Tbilisi (Georgia). They construct illuminative case examples for each respective country in order to uncover cultural strategies for producing identity narratives against the neo-imperialist policies of Russia. They focus on the production of sporting and cultural mega-events that serve as the basis for understanding the countries' identities – and their confrontation, which has recently gained more momentum than at any time since the fall of the Soviet Union. The authors track the development of the region after the early 1990s, especially in terms of the Russian trauma of its "lost" empire. They identify Russian existential and imperial impulses in civilisational, cultural, religious and linguistic terms, and how they contrast with the cultural forms and strategies that embody Ukrainian, Estonian and Georgian identities related to Europe. The authors build on the tradition of British cultural studies, combining constructivist, post-colonial, and post-structuralist approaches to identities, discourses, imageries, and the politics of representation.

Building on the "securitisation" theory, **Taru Takamaa** focusses on Russian traditional culture as the most recent tool of the state security apparatus for the consolidation of the hegemony of the current regime. During the ongoing third presidency of Vladimir Putin, a new strategic document, *The Fundamentals of State Cultural Policy*, was signed by the president. This document lays the foundation of a broad, nationwide programme for bringing Russian traditional culture to the centre of society. Moreover, and more interestingly, the ruling elite of the country has resorted to security-related explanations of why culture is of such high importance for the state apparatus. This "discursive securitisation of culture" serves as one of the foundational theoretical viewpoints of this chapter. Unsurprisingly, the attention that the cultural sphere has received recently

has resulted in the increased control of artistic expression, as well as active state support for such cultural acts and objects that align well with the current political objectives of the state. In addition to this, the current Kremlin regime has used culture as a justification for its military actions, highlighted by the 2014 annexation of the Crimean Peninsula.

Niklas Eklund brings part IV to a close with his chapter on the privatisation of the Russian military. He argues that contemporary military thinking in Russia serves the purpose of strengthening the current regime by providing a conceptual and scientific base for its perceived independence. Unlike the integrative vision of the early 1990s, according to which Russia would adopt parliamentary democracy, the rule of law, and financial capitalism, the contemporary Russian regime embraces power politics and the use of military force in its borderlands. Whereas in the Soviet times, the military capabilities were centralised under the party command, the new Russian leadership has developed new forms of governing the state violence apparatus. Methodologically, this chapter draws on Russian military journals, focussing on the "crisis of military science" debate beginning in 2008. An additional analysis is conducted of public policy and law regarding military privatisation, the philosophy of science, and media commentary. Eklund argues that the simple, dichotomous understanding of the military and political domains of Russia is mistaken – contemporary Russian military thinkers cannot be meaningfully divided into "hawks" and "doves", or "modernisers" and "traditionalists" for that matter. Moreover, innovation does not trickle down from the top of the regime. Instead, the 21st-century Russian military thinking is well aligned with the oligarchic politics and instrumental interpretations of globalisation.

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In the concluding section of the book, Aki-Mauri Huhtinen and Marja Vuorinen discuss the themes presented in the articles on a more general level, attempting to weave the individual cases into a meaningful whole. They offer insights into the theoretical basis for understanding the moment as a concept, and about the constructs and narratives available for organising historical discontinuities. To give shape to the meta-level phenomena, they take as their starting point the moment as an idea, a concept and a metaphor.

Aki-Mauri Huhtinen writes about the philosophy of living and acting in the moment: from one moment to the next, without knowing what the outcome will be. He challenges the usefulness of the Western Tree metaphor, representing growth and expansion essentially from one point onwards – the Tree of Life and the biblical Tree of Knowledge, family trees, and trees of more abstract genealogies, such as those of species, or of the sciences. In a religious world view, life is represented by a tree trunk emerging from the God system, while in the scientific model of evolution the tree trunk presents the original source of all life forms.

All of this sounds safe, convenient and rational. Yet, as Huhtinen argues, at the core of these metaphors lies the idea of a permanent and unchangeable nature of reality. It presupposes a world of time periods with definite moments of beginning and ending. Guided by this model, we inevitably look for linear stories about the past. Focussing on the beginnings and the endings, we lose sight of the middle phase: the crossing lines of a living and changing situation. Instead of being self-evident, change itself becomes problematic, something that needs to be directed, managed and explained. The other option is to focus on the so-called *ontological becoming process* as developed by philosophers such as Heraclitus, Bergson and Heidegger – accepting continuous change as the very essence of Life. Change itself becomes a function of the entities, and the entities are the product of the change that is itself forever mutable.

Marja Vuorinen writes about regime changes as they appear to an historian – seen from a point further in time, when we already know what actually happened and how it all turned out. Analysing the individual processes described in the chapters, she looks for recurring elements of regime change. These include political and military elites, looking to the past for inspiration; the allegedly legitimate expansionist tendencies of countries big and small; attempts by the Great Powers to organise the future affairs of an entire geopolitical arena; and attempted re-emergences of seemingly expired empires.

Important beginnings and turning points can be recognised only in retrospect; so, too, the seemingly minor processes that eventually prove crucial. To grasp "historical" turning points as subjectively experienced, remembered realities, Vuorinen presents an array of established moment metaphors. Beginning with the *Damascus Road* moment of conversion and sacred devotion, she moves on to the Paris "moments of madness", joyously celebrating a revolutionary dream come true – sometimes

followed by the *Kronstadt moment* when a cherished ideology is irrevocably exposed as a monstrosity. To round off the sequence, she suggests a couple of novel metaphors of her own, hoping to create new insights into the events and processes that change(d) the world.

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Ultimately, this volume is about understanding regime changes over the course of time. The book provides meaningful historical insights for those interested in historical processes *per se*, as well as for those embracing a more radical philosophical angle in understanding social evolution. What is in focus here is the changing nature of ideologies, identities, and social organisation, in other words – regimes.

In sum, part I of the book traces the end of the empires in the chaos of the Great War. In part II, a more micro-historical approach is adopted in understanding contexts, by delving into the registers of the visual and the ritual. The visual register is also used at the end of part III, which brings to a close the study of the Cold War era in the book. The concluding part of the volume, part IV, could be termed *post-sovietskoye* in nature. It opens with an analysis of one of the most important charismatic leaders of our time, Vladimir Putin, and his leadership image. From there, more light is shed upon Russia's neighbours, as well as the particular characteristics and dynamics of the contemporary Russian Federation and its current ruling regime.

It should be noted that our treatment of regime changes is far from complete – it is merely a humble beginning. Our attempt in this book is to open historical and organisational enquiries into the topic of changing power formations, and understanding their enabling, contributing, and deteriorating mechanisms. Much work is still to be done in the field, particularly as the regime changes of the recent past are still lacking engaging accounts from these perspectives – Afghanistan 2001, Iraq 2003, and Ukraine 2014, to name just a few. Another case worth mentioning might be the ongoing (as of late spring 2016, at the time of writing) political turmoil in Brazil, as well as the upcoming presidential election in the United States, which will take place later in the year of this writing. These potential instances of regime change are of interest to many audiences, and should (and will for that matter) be written about at some point.

As time unfolds and history repeats itself, we are bound to see old regimes fade and new ones emerge. What shape they will take, for the present remains unknown. What is known, however, is that humanity is not on its way towards a teleological objective or end – on a trajectory of development that would follow an inevitable path or an end-state. What could be seen in the not-too-distant future is a becoming of old forms and events in new guises, or something completely different. The eternal return shapes existence itself, and will overwhelm everyone, we self-centred human beings included.

PART I:

THE END OF THE OLD WORLD: WORLD WAR I AND AFTER

CHAPTER ONE

GRAND SWEDISHNESS, HISTORICAL MISSION, AND MODES OF MODERN PROGRESSIVE THOUGHT: SWEDES IN FINLAND IN 1918

ANNE HEDÉN

This chapter discusses the participation of Swedish volunteers in the Finnish Civil War in relation to their view of the position of Sweden in the changing Baltic region. When the war started in late January 1918, the Swedish bourgeois establishment, while loyal to the Swedish policy of neutrality, started a campaign for aid to the White side. A volunteer corps, the so-called Swedish Brigade, was organised. The Brigade's anthem alluded to the high Swedish ideals and her memories of past grandeur – to a time, centuries past, when Sweden was regarded as a great military power and Finland was still a part of Sweden. Some groups within *Finlands vänner* (Friends of Finland), the association that organised Swedish support for White Finland, also nursed hopes of a Swedish-Finnish reunification, or at least, the reunification of Sweden with Finland's Åland islands (Flink 2004, 31; Andrae 1998, 157)[1]. These aspirations are often seen as expressions of a grand Swedish design aiming to return Sweden to her former glory.

The concept of Grand Swedishness, also known as the Greater-Sweden ideology – *storsvenskhet* in Swedish – translates as an aggressive claim of Swedish interests, often military, in combination with a historical nostalgia for the old Swedish empire. The term is often used as a way of labelling conservative endeavours to get Sweden to join Germany in World War I, and of explaining the Swedish activists' political aims in the Finnish Civil War. However, the notion that the patriotism of the Swedish Brigade and other Swedish volunteers in the Finnish Civil War consisted only of old school chauvinism is in itself something of an anachronistic interpretation of the Swedish history during the first two decades of the 20th century.

Sweden: from Baltic empire to small-state neutrality

In the early 17th century, the Swedish kingdom, to which Finland had belonged since the Middle Ages, became a dominant power in the Baltic Sea area. The rivals of Sweden on the shores of the Baltic were politically fractured. The Thirty Years' War had given Sweden the possession of the northern parts of Germany. These areas were lost in the early 18th century. In 1809, during the Napoleonic wars, Finland was ceded to Imperial Russia. In 1814 Denmark was forced to cede Norway to Sweden, which was accepted in Norway only after a short Swedish-Norwegian military conflict.

It has been pointed out that liberal Scandinavism continued to play a part in the Nordic cultural and social arenas and had a greater political impact than what has generally been assumed (Hillström and Sanders 2014, 14, 222). However, small state neutrality remained the ruling principle of Swedish foreign policy during most of the 19th century. After 1815, Sweden was neutral and its international role quite modest, in spite of some efforts to realise the Scandinavian visions of Sweden as one of the foremost countries in northern Europe.

This began to change in the 1880s. The notion that Sweden should hold a leading position in the Nordic politics re-emerged in a more conservative guise, as a right-wing Swedish response to the intensifying Norwegian campaign against the Swedish-Norwegian Union (Norman 1996, 219). The dissolution of that union in 1905 became the starting point for a Swedish elitist reorientation that placed the historical tradition of Sweden as a great 17th-century power in a new setting (Sejersted 2005, 26).

Meanwhile, the relative weakening of Russian military power during the early 20th century encouraged a new, more aggressive view of national security and defence in Swedish military circles (Åselius 1994, 408-409). Sweden, conservatives argued, should again assume the role of a great power in Northern Europe and the Baltic region due to its advanced economic and industrial status. These thoughts were mainly developed by activists who wished Sweden to become a unifying power in the Baltic area, gathering northern Germanic tribes to oppose "inferior races" in the East, in the way they saw Prussia as having been a driving force in the German unification process (Kihlberg and Söderlind 1961, 15).

Up until the 1920s there were in fact plans being made on various Nordic

alliances and federations, mainly to improve the position of Sweden with regard to Russia (later the Soviet Union), where the vision of Sweden's ascendancy was endorsed by activists and more moderate conservatives (Norman 1991, 329-330). It was thought that Sweden could provide military assistance to Finland, and use its cultural heritage to enlarge its territories, a view that achieved increasing support in Sweden during the last stages of World War I. This is to some extent at odds with the recent research that sees Sweden at the time as having gone through a reorientation process, which created a new self-awareness about Swedish neutrality that was connected with modernity and progressive thinking focussing on the maintenance of peace (Sturfelt 2012, 255).

These somewhat contradictory standpoints – the will to expand Swedish territory, and the mentioned new peace-oriented self-awareness – have often been overshadowed in recent historical surveys by a narrative where progress, democratisation, and modernisation are central themes (see Hirdman, Björkman and Lundberg 2012, 38).

In a similar manner, the Swedish activism in the Finnish Civil War, and the cruelties of this war, are generally regarded as part of an ugly past, closely linked to German-friendly right wing extremism (Koblik 1972, 16; Andersson 1991). However, it has been pointed out in recent research that activism in Sweden was more complex. More than just supporting Germany, there was an idea among the activists that Sweden and Finland, if joined together, could develop Sweden into a stronger regional power. The German support that the activists sought can be seen as a strategy for developing this regional power. The notion of a modern grand-Swedish community around the Baltic was also current in Estonia and in the Swedish-speaking parts of Finland (Kuldkepp 2014, 127).

Swedish activism and Finland in 1918

In 1918, Russia was still embroiled in World War I; the conflict in Finland was an offshoot of that war. The Russian Revolution had been triggered by losses against Germany. The chaotic political situation escalated into conflicts also in the Grand Duchy of Finland, then part of the Russian empire. Other contributing local factors were struggles between the workers' movement and the conservative establishment during a period of intensifying unemployment, poverty, and even starvation (Ylikangas 1995, 24-26, 30; Roselius and Tepora 2014, 1-2).

In early April 1918, German troops arrived in the south of Finland to assist the White side in the Civil War. By early May, the Whites had won. In May, General Gustav Mannerheim, the leading general in the Finnish White Army, led a victory parade through Helsinki (Meinander 2006, 151-155).

Prior to World War I, Swedish opinion-makers and elite military officers argued that if Sweden were menaced by Russian foreign policies the country should enter into a military alliance with Germany (Oredsson 1993, 257-258). These advocates included influential people in the fields of arts, culture and science. Among them were the explorer Sven Hedin and a group of officers who had recently started the *Karolinska förbundet*, an association for the study and commemoration of Charles XII and his 17th-century royal predecessors (Klinge 1988, 31).

In 1915, a pamphlet entitled *Sveriges utrikespolitik i världskrigets belysning* (Swedish foreign policy in light of the World War) was published by a grouping of anonymous activists. Its authors, including sociologist Adrian Molin and political scientist Rudolf Kjellén, argued that Sweden should side with Germany in the war, which they reasoned was as much a war between cultures as a military conflict. In such a war they believed that Sweden and Germany should be on the same side. They urged an increase in Swedish armaments, a more active foreign policy and the expansion of Swedish territory to keep pace with other nations (Kihlberg and Söderlind1961, 13-15; Oredsson 1993, 259).

This nostalgia for the old Swedish Empire entailed a revival of monarchical rule and anti-parliamentarianism, that is, the idea that the monarch should have more influence on policymaking and government, and that there should be an expansion of Swedish regional influence (Kihlberg and Söderlind 1961, 27, 52, 46). An important part of the activist world-view was the idea of the struggle of civilisations. In this struggle it fell to Sweden, as the leading power in the Baltic Sea region, to defend Western civilisation (ibid. 77; also Oredsson 1993, 262)

A study of the activist publication *Svenskt Lösen* (Swedish Message), shows that quite prominent figures within the political establishment, including several liberals and even a few social democrats, supported the activist agenda (Kihlberg and Söderlind 1961, 31). Although Sweden was a neutral power, these groups were preparing a more aggressive foreign

policy in the expected aftermath of World War I. Adrian Molin, one of their leading ideologues, argued that Sweden's relationship to Germany should be marked by the mutual high esteem characteristic of brothers in arms, not by a vassal's subordination (ibid. 14). Some activists even defined French and English democracies as exemplifying a new form of absolutism, in which the power of the monarch had been replaced by the power of the people. Germany, by comparison, was regarded as an enlightened and well-organised monarchy (ibid. 53).

Most liberals and conservatives in Sweden were engaged with the issue of the emancipation of Finland from Russia. This development, beginning around 1900, was connected with an intensified activism in the Swedish-speaking parts of Finland, and increasing networking activities between Swedes and Swedish-speaking Finns (Sundberg 1985, 11; Klinge 1988, 226). On the other hand, at the end of 1917, Swedish political policymakers, conservative as well as liberal-socialist, were intent on adhering to a policy of neutrality, despite various invitations from Germany and also from Finnish activists to come to the rescue of Finland, and thereby join World War I on the side of the Central Powers (Kihlberg and Söderlind 1961, 13-14).

The neutrality policy was, however, so interpreted as to enable the Swedish establishment to help White Finland in various ways during the Civil War in 1918. In January 1918, the Swedish organisation *Finlands vänner* (Friends of Finland) was founded in Stockholm with the financial support of the business sector. About 1100 volunteers from Sweden joined the Finnish White forces (of them approximately 500 saw combat), most of them in the Swedish Brigade. Swedish officers were allowed to take part in the Civil War, either in white Finnish regiments or in the Swedish Brigade. Some of these officers later published memoirs in which they usually idealised the Swedish Brigade's contributions in 1918.

Swedish businessmen also raised money to arm the Whites, and Swedish war ships supervised munitions consignments passing through Swedish territorial waters, as well as the movement of troop ships from Germany to Finland (Flink 2004, 27-28). However, the most important aid to White Finland came from Imperial Germany and its Baltic Sea Division, which remained in Finland until autumn 1918 and took an active part in reorganising the new Finnish army (ibid. 31, 38-39).