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Do we have a knowledge concerning the society, economical systems, and political institutions of Russia, and what we are waiting for the future of Karelia?

Some acknowledgements

I have written this story on the 19th February in 1995 - just for pleasure. This document was already available in Internet during the years 1998-1999, and I have not made any changes to this document since then - despite of that slight spell-check . It was a kind of try to make a view of the topics which were under discussion during the year 1995, but some of my conclusions might have some relevance in our present days, too. Nothing has changed so permanently, yet, and the whole process can take hundreds of years to complete those mainlines which can be stated right now.

NOTE in 2000: Personally I do not want Karelia back. Not in its present condition! If I accept it back some day, and if Russians themselves are offering it, as a kind present, it must be just in the very same condition as it was before war, or it should be better than that. I think that those GREAT nations, who made political decisions to take it from Finland, and give it to Soviet Union, should pay all the costs which may be a consequence of giving that area back to Finland, and helping to make it again a flourishing part of the country. What about that, Great Britain, and others? But as we know, this won't ever happen. They do not try to irritate Russia in no way. Therefore: I accept that Russian people can keep it, but they should NOT ask any money for preparation of those lost buildings, and other lost cultural things, or any other help. Not a penny! Never. Not from me.

I made this story in order to get some additional information for *KEHI* -course in Joensuu, and join it to my project, as well. My main purpose was to gather some staff from newspapers, and try to make a kind of interpretation of those found topics, which were just under discussion during 1985. Unfortunately nobody was interested in these remarks in Joensuu during 1985, and also later. In the current study there are some references e.g. to *Helsingin Sanomat*, which continued a debate on cross-border cooperation during those days, and I considered those articles more realistic than the information I got from *KEHI* -course. I think that they were just trying to fawn upon the Russian side of the cooperation, and the were not trying to find out any truth, or realistic knowledge of that topic. Some newspapers began to publish also some articles, where they gave a strong demand that lost Karelia should get back from Russia. But for whom, then? As far as I know, there were just very few of them who owned the land they occupied, or that they were aciculturing, because it had been so long as Russian government, and there were only few independent farmers, or similar. Taken just legally, and as an ordinary citizen, there is no sense to beg that area back, because one cannot prove that he has really owned a piece in that area, but just being as a tenant farmer of a crown, or less than that. I seems to me that they are just those people of Finnish wood industry who are the people who are trying to utilize that area, and trying to get full rights to do that - without any citizens preventing them to do that.

Personally I do not regard the question of getting Karelia back to Finland very important, and I think that people who are giving those demands has actually never lost anything important during their own lives, and they have got the property enough in Finland. Nowadays there are tens of thousands of people in Finland, who are continuously loosing something very important, as their lands, and homes -as well as all the networks of people - and no one of them are giving any demands to get those lost things back again. This is the very heart of all history of mankind, and it is now more common all over the world than it ever has been. In Finland, there are lot of people who has moved across the whole country during recent years,

and it is pretty common that one moves from one place to another several times during one's life. Many Finnish people are kinds of refugees still now, and I am an excellent example of that. Only difference between them and refugees from countries (where people are fighting between each others) is the fact that Finnish people has not a continuous fear to be killed by the machine of war. But the experience of loosing something important is common between all the people. But there is no return to past. My own father was born in that lost area just near the present boundary, which has been given to Soviet Union soon after the Second World War. In a way - he - as well as his mother - was a kind of refugee, and when they left that area, they didn't own a piece in this lost country - notwithstanding the fact that his own father was a relatively rich man with his many horses, and farms. I have no personal memories concerning the lost Karelia, and when I have met those people who were born there, they have not behaved very differently than other Finnish people used to do, and they have not even recognized me as a member of their tribe, either. Nobody has ever tried to contact me in order to get that tribe together again, and trying to treat me as an companion, or a close fellow of that lost, brave tribe of Karelian people.

Newspapers

1. Changes in ministerial organization in Finland within the cross-border cooperation

At *Helsingin Sanomat* (on the 19th February in 1955) we can read that the first financing decisions concerning the cross-border cooperation between Finnish cooperating participants, and Murmansk, Karelia, St. Petersburg, and Leningrad district - have been made by **Ministry of Interior**, and by the **factions of cross-border cooperation**, which have been founded by the **Ministry of Interior** itself. At an earlier stage in history the instance in question was the **Ministry for Foreign Affairs**.

Those factions are:

1. Lapland-Murmansk district,
2. Eastern Finnish Karelia - The Republic of Karelia, and
3. Kymi-Leningrad district.

The **Ministry of Interior** has now given a push to those factions to make plans, which are the basis for future strategy. After the proposals are received, they are deliberated upon in Finland, and thereafter they are studied with other participants.

My NOTIFICATION in 1999: There has been taken place several changes within those provincial unions in Finland, and therefore there are different agents in action right now. Actually I do not know very much about the present situation of the cross-border cooperation.

2. Have we an aim of nature conservation, or have we a kind of utilitarian moral? An example

At *Helsingin Sanomat* (on the 19th February in 1995) we can find an illustrative example concerning the threat against the original, wild nature. **Jaakko Tahkolahti** has described how Americans have bought exclusive fishing rights in *Ponoj* river, to where they had a flight by an aircraft. At the article **Tahkolahti** uses the word "Klondyke". It was just a group of reporters in Northern Finland who initiated critics concerning those fishing rights. But we know that there were some plans to establish a downhill skiing centrum to Paanajärvi, which was aimed to remain as nature conservation area alone. It is just the same stuff, I think. Karelians shall meet these threats themselves - because they are the forests of their own, or they can make some decisions concerning their use, at least. Unfortunately they cannot have very clear idea of those consequences of an industrialization, or of very heavy utilization of forests. Those modern machines can cut large areas in a short time, and they have no special plans how to renew those areas with new plants of threes. There are still living such animals as *Rangifer tarandus fennicus*, and *Dendrocopos*

leucotos, as well as *Sciuropterus russicus* on the both sides of the border, who are demanding that wilderness - which might be threatened by the wood processing industry, or by individual entrepreneurs, who are cutting and selling wood to the factories on the both sides of the border. From *Helsingin Sanomat* (on the 17th February in 1995) we know that there has been an article at *New Scientist*, in which it has been described how wilderness in Kuusamo has been cut off. According to the article, there are only some remnants of wilderness near the eastern border from place to place. And from *Helsingin Sanomat* (on the 18th February in 1955) we know that demand of biodiversity concerning forests, and that there is a report which has been made cooperatively by UNEP, WRI, IUCN, and UN, and where this demand is especially maintained.

But what is the concern of those articles for us, when discussing the cross-border cooperation? That is because the Finnish specialists of the wood processing industry, in turn, are trying to get a full independence of Finnish decision making system. Further, they want to integrate the bureaucracy of European Union, because - according to the specialists - there are too many instances deciding the forest matters - as we know from text television news. That is - I think - just the same as the demand for enlarging the "political influence of Finland" in those matters, because of our resources, but without our politicians themselves. They are just those agents of wood processing industry who shall maintain the power in those decisions - as well as the most power in economical questions has been removed from our politicians when joining to European Union. But what is wrong with this? When thinking the role, and power of the organizations, which are connected with the conservation of nature in Europe, there is the need to diminish their power by the experts of the wood processing industry - and that tendency is not very wise. Those Finnish specialist, who are just agents of monetary systems, and industry - cannot be the legal advocates of the whole country - that is - they cannot say that FINLAND is now thinking in this, or in that way. Those reports and articles, which we have been discussing, have been read by millions of people in Europe, and elsewhere, and it is quite different thing if Finnish specialist can make Finnish people ascertained of the truth of industry that those foreign people, who are reading *New Scientist*, and are getting mostly its point of view. And in every single case: European people shall decide if they want to buy FINNISH paper, or not. And both legally, and morally: it is not only the matter of Finland, when discussing the preservation of wilderness, and when planning to cut off the wilderness of Karelia for the needs of industry. The Finnish wood processing industry is not any more as important factor of production, as it was some years ago, and it has been replaced by hi-tech, and metal industry. But of course, those things which these sets of industry can make, are not capable to rebirth themselves, because they are mostly garbage after they have been used, but we can always have new trees just growing to replace the lost material of paper, or timber. But there are now also quite new different interest groups of people, who want to share the same nature, which wood processing industry has utilized alone, and which it has has privileged right. The situation is just the same with mine industry, which has the right to invalidate any ownership of a citizen, and which has the right to utilize nature e.g. before the natives of a country. But there are the people, too, who want to enjoy Finnish forests, and their aesthetic features. Those people are strongly against the manipulation of nature which a part of science, and industry are continuously maintaining, and most of them live in towns. Unfortunately there are also such groups of people, too, who are not at all interested the conservation of nature, because they are believing the world of technos, and human ability to solve all the problems. And what is interesting - those latter opinions are advocated strongly also by the people of countries who have wilderness left - and who are not interested in saving it, but only utilization.

3. Structure of Finnish industry, and the changes which it has undergone quite recently. Some topics concerning intresse groups, as well as the rights

From *Helsingin Sanomat* (on the 18th February in 1995) we know that the proportionally most increase during 1994 it was found in trade between Finland, and the Baltic Countries, as well between Finland and Russia, as between Finland and the East-Europe. Hence, there is a good chance to take in advancing this trend. There are several other interesting trends, too, as the increase in import, and export of hi-tech, and that the metal industry has now 45% of total export, when the wood-processing industry got 36% of total. The great deal of all import consists of such things as raw-materials, consumer goods, and capital goods, and that the most deal of export consists of processed products. All this suggests to know-how, and to that

from this ground-bottom we can find qualifications to the cross-border cooperation, too. But it was European Union, however, with which Finland had its most trade. But the main question is: have we the real knowledge of the Federation of Russia - other kind that we have got by trade, or by official interactions - and have we any chance to compete with other countries with this knowledge? We shall discuss this at the next topic.

4. Have we the real knowledge concerning Russia?

At *Helsingin Sanomat* (On the 18th February in 1995) there was also an article "*Onko meillä Venäjän tuntemusta?*" -where **Tiina Forsman** advocated for a sceptical attitude - proposing for that The U.S., England, and Sweden have been carrying much more critical studies than Finland during the age of the Soviet Union. According to **Forsman**, there were certain difficulties for Finnish scientists to study the society of Soviet Union - as it was - e.g. on its political institutions, and practices, and social questions, and values, because the Soviet Union was apt to maintain a sleek facade, and give an information selectively. In Finland it was not considered desirable to study on "delicate questions" concerning the institutions of the Soviet Union. On the contrary to them - in The U.S. being aware of those questions was associated to their politics of the great powers, and to the political disagreements between the east and west. Hence, their political interest was to follow the changes in political trends in the Soviet Union, as well as be aware of "delicate questions", too. For the reason, there were available both political, and economical support for the scientists, who were studying on these topics. But the Republic of Karelia and Finland border on each other now, and Sweden-Finland and Russia have done it for centuries before? Is this knowledge [from history] for nothing? Are the human contacts today, and derived from memory scientifically just for nothing, too? At her article **Forsman** has made an evaluation that the contacts which Finnish delegations have had with Russian delegations [especially with the Soviet Union], or personal contacts achieved by tourism, trade, and by several official visits, and delegations - are certainly not enough - when thinking the weight of Finland [as an expert of Russian society] for European Union. Those activities have not eventually been increasing the amount of information concerning the values, and thought of the Russian society.

But how businessmen, and politicians have then succeeded to make their ideas clear to Russians - or are Russians like *Martians*, or a kind of form of life, which have never existed elsewhere? Further, there is a claim [at the article] that both the political systems and society of the Soviet Union has been studied relatively little in Finland, and what comes to the studies in economics, they have dealt with the questions, which have been important for the current trade. But what about those claims, then, that there are no words in Russian language, which were applicable in the modern business language? How the whole business could be possible without appropriate words? And what comes to English, we know that Russians have e.g. made very effective computer viruses, which are able to collapse harddisks permanently - and that is demanding the skills which are from current origin. Is the experience of politicians, and businessmen just for nothing? Or, is the experience of Karelian refugees - both of those from the Karelian Isthmus, and Karelia - just for nothing, too? There are lot of history books, genealogical research, as well as personal histories of refugees. In addition to this, there have been lot of studies in Petrozavodsk [State] University concerning several themes, as well as there have been lot of cooperation between both Finnish, and Russian sides. Then there has been cultural cooperation for decades between the organizations of citizens. We know pretty well the material, cultural, and mental conditions, and possibilities on the both sides of the border. But when thinking the conditions in other departments of the Federation of Russia, we have not that much knowledge, or experience.

But what is wrong with it, if we don't have that knowledge yet? Nationally we are just concentrating to the cross-border cooperation between Murmansk, Karelia, St. Petersburg, and the Leningrad district, and we have got a lot of information from those Russian counterparts. By those contacts we have the connections we need to the other departments of the Federation of Russia. Right now we have two national bilateral contracts with those cross-border regions, and several bilateral contracts between the organizations of citizens of both sides, as well as other official, or formal contracts. But for what is the kernel of **Forsman's** article oriented to? What are its necessary conclusions? I think that she is emphasizing the urgent need for researches for schooling the new experts - because of those changes,

which has taken place after the end of the *Cold War* in Russia. Notwithstanding the fact that the U.S., Sweden, and England have maintained the follow-up system during the *Cold War*, and after it, there is no adequate information concerning the present conditions. For example, there are quite different political structures right now than during the *Cold War*, and some elements of the whole society are collapsed.

5. Do we really want Karelia back?

There are certain organizations who want to restitute the Karelian Isthmus, and parts of Ladogan Karelia back to Finland. Lately, at *Savon Sanomat* (on the 18th February in 1995) *Karjalan liitto* has expressed this kind of wish in its report. They have planned to make those parts of Karelia as demilitarized zone like Ahvenanmaa, and that those Russian inhabitants, who live there, could stay if they want to do that. The advocates of *Karjalan liitto* are claiming that Russian counterpart is interested much more in the cross-border cooperation, because it is offering a financial aid - without any reservations about the ownership. Now, when thinking those wanted regions more closely, they are just the best regions which we can find in the whole Karelia, because of the Ladogan climate, and therefore, because of the possibilities for an effective agriculture. Quite near to these wanted regions there is St. Petersburg, and its four million people, and their need for food. When considering the transportation with its low costs, and other similar topics, it might be reasonable enterprise to increase the modern agriculture in those regions. Then there are the forests, with which to increase importance of the district. Then there is Ladoga - with its connection, on the one hand both to the White Sea, and the Arctic Ocean, and on the other hand, to the rivers down to the south, and direct connection by waters to St. Petersburg. I cannot see there nothing more than economical interest. A good question is - why Russian people could do this as well? There is a sense in the visions of *Karjalan liitto*, however, when thinking the schedule of the plan: it could be realized relatively quickly by Finnish farmers, and forwarding agents, and by their technology. There were more interest to these enterprises if the people participating to these activities should own all of the factors of production. The people of St. Petersburg should get the most agricultural products for relatively low prizes, when comparing to the costs, which could be affected e.g. because of the costs of transporting from the southern parts of the Federation of Russia, or when transporting goods from European Union. But there is the question of Russian *farmers*, and their future expectations, and plans, as well as the question of patches, where people produce livings both to their own use, and to markets. When introducing an effective machinery of cultivation, better domestic animals, and the whole agricultural system, there would not be any chance for *farmers* in competition, and for extra incomes by home cultivation, and for all the entrepreneurship, which is just taking its first steps in Karelia. There are several competing interests, indeed, when discussing the future of Karelia.

6. Conclusions

There shall be the time of reflection, and the more sophisticated contracts between Russia, Finland, and European Union. But it is not only this, which is important. There is a decision concerning the future life of millions of people, and the reservation of democracy. If there shall be only the power of the lords of the castles, and their interests, there would be no stable development in democracy, either. In general: we ought to be acquainted with ourselves, and our motives first, and only thereafter the motives, and wishes of others.