



Eurozine Review

Why should I fill my pack with stones?

Edinburgh Review tells the Uighurs' side of the story; *Blätter* discusses '68 East and West; *Osteuropa* returns to memory politics in eastern Europe; *Arche* responds to a ban on Belarusian spelling; *Vikerkaar* maps cultural landscape; *Le Monde diplomatique* (Berlin) reports on the battle for online customers; *Springerin* theorizes zombiehood; *Magyar Lettre Internationale* explores photography, politics, and the body; *Akadeemia* evaluates laws on stem cell technology; and *Merkur* gets to the imaginary heart of fundamentalism.

Edinburgh Review 124 (2008)



The timely new issue of *Edinburgh Review* features prose, poetry, essays, and photography on and from China. Outstanding is [Nick Holdstock's reportage](#) on the city of Yining in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region of China. The region has a long history of inter ethnic hostility between the majority Uighurs and the Han Chinese ("The only time I ever saw Han and Uighurs happily together was at a cockfight") and there have been a series of violent incidents in the region from the 1980s onwards. However it was in Yining that the largest protest took place on 5 February 1997.

There are many versions of what happened, but all more or less agree on the following. A thousand Uighurs, most of them young and male, marched through the streets. They shouted slogans and destroyed property, and there were attacks on Han Chinese. When the marchers clashed with the police, there were numerous injuries and deaths.

Most foreign news agencies portrayed the clash as a separatist riot or "a protest against Beijing rule". Chinese reports meanwhile called it random violence, a view that changed after 9/11. "The Yining riots were suddenly no longer the work of 'social garbage' and other criminal elements. In January 2002, the People's Daily described it as a 'serious riot' perpetrated by the East Turkestan Islamic Party of Allah, during which 'the terrorists shouted slogans calling for the establishment of an Islamic kingdom'."

Labour migration: [Will Brady](#) writes on the new Chinese underclass without whom China's economic miracle could never have happened. The 200 million labour migrants are owed, it is estimated, 43 billion US dollars in unpaid wages. Nevertheless, it is the savings of the peasant population and not tax on the nouveau riche that has propped up China's boom economy. "A peripatetic (and diligently parsimonious) workforce might have facilitated China's recent

flush of affluence, but it cannot sustain such growth indefinitely."

Also to look out for: Iain Orr outlines the environmental crises facing China and suggests how traditional Chinese attitudes towards nature might pave the way to a solution.

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Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik 8/2008



Blätter publishes a [discussion](#), held at the Akademie der Künste in Berlin in May, between leading protagonists of '68 in eastern Europe and their western counterparts. Eastern European dissidents, recalls [Adam Michnik](#), shared with the western opposition the spirit, if not the letter, of Che Guevara. "Our protest was a protest against this blocked society. This blockade was different everywhere." The Prague Spring, says

Michnik, introduced an internationalism in eastern Europe where Brezhnev had failed. Former Czech foreign minister [Jirí Dienstbier](#) agrees: "After 1968, a debate in the Russian communist party began that had not existed since the 1930s. [...] The result was that in the 1980s, the climate at a Russian university was pretty much as free as with us in the 1960s."

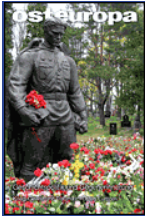
According to [Lionel Jospin](#), "'68 in France demonstrated that in the developed democratic countries there are no more violent revolutions. '68 in Czechoslovakia, on the other hand, showed that the communist system was unable to reform itself." For poet and Czech diplomat [Jirí Grusa](#), meanwhile, the key feature of the Prague Spring was the media coverage it received: had it not been for Austrian television, the communists "would have done something similar to what they did with the Hungarian revolution in 1956 and simply suppressed the images".

In the opinion of [Oskar Negt](#), '68 in Germany was specific insofar as it was a generational revolt against the institutional leftovers of the Third Reich. Recent revisionist interpretations of '68 in Germany (e.g. that it was a leftwing version of Nazism) deny its enduring democratic contribution, he argues. [Friedrich Schorlemmer](#), cleric and former leader of the opposition movement in the GDR, concurs: "There were various [western leftwing] groups with whom in those days I had nothing to do with and with whom I still want nothing to do with — especially not when they publish sensationalist books writing the story 'the other way around'."

Also to look out for: Franziska Augstein on how Jorge Semprún swapped critique as a weapon for critique with a weapon — against the Franco and Vichy regimes; Falk Hartig on the Chinese Communist Party's process of reform; and [Georg Vobruba](#) on how European neighbourhood policy provides the key to gradual EU integration.

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Osteuropa 6/2008



Does the future need memory? What are all these sordid stories good for? Why should I fill my pack with stones? [...] Isn't noisy identification with the past an idealization of the self? Wouldn't it be more reasonable to shrink to an individual being, responsible only for one's own actions and failures?" Thus asks the Hungarian writer [György Konrád](#) in the current issue of *Osteuropa* on the politics of memory in eastern

Europe.

Yet, he continues, "Whether they like it or not, Europeans are gradually sharing their memories with one another. In retrospect, they are recognizing that delusions have led to the deaths of millions. Errors in reasoning, unreal fantasies, lack of self-knowledge can unleash hell. Warlike spirit has caused war; hate — murder. It is a good thing if we exchange memories and find out what others think about our history."

The German historian [Karl Schlögel](#) is in accord. After the annus mirabilis of 1989, he writes, "The archives, the depots in which society's memory was stored were opened. Historical research began that previously would only have been possible abroad, in 'the West'. [...] The victims, whom until now no one had bothered about, at last had restored to them their names, their faces, their physiognomy, their dignity."

Nevertheless, caution is necessary: "In many cases, historical discourse is merely an oblique and masked form of a contemporary political conflict, a proxy struggle fought in historical get-up. That makes them interesting, relevant, but also dangerous."

Further articles include: [Boris Dubin](#) on the Russian state's monopoly on memory, in which every assessment of past that deviates from the official line is perceived as hostile; [Delphine Bechtel](#) on the exaltation of traditions of Ukrainian nationalism by local elites in L'viv; and [Astrid Sahm](#) on how in Belarus, commemoration of the Holocaust exists alongside the suppression of the memory of Stalinism.

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Arche 6/2008



Writing in *Arche*, [Piotra Rudkouski](#) discusses the consequences of a new law that will ban the use of "non-Soviet" spelling of the Belarusian language in the media, education, and other areas of public life. Belarusian spelling is used by a number of independent media, including the weekly *Nasha Niva*, the website of the Belarusian section of Radio Liberty, and *Arche* itself. Given that the regulation, which comes into force in September 2010, is designed to further restrict the independent press, Rudkouski suggests adopting Soviet-style spelling instead of being squeezed out of the public domain altogether.

Catching up with Europe? [Vital Silicki](#) analyzes Lukashenka's new logic. At the beginning of his presidency, his electoral core consisted of poor strata of population such as pensioners and rural farm workers. Nowadays Lukashenka declares that he will ensure levels of consumption comparable with neighboring EU nations. Is he trying to shift his support base to the middle

classes?

Also to look out for: *Nasha Niva* editor-in-chief [Andrei Dynko](#) criticizes the colonial biases and pro-Russian sentiments of public speeches and interviews by the writer and journalist Sviatlana Aleksijevic; and Ales Ancipienka discusses the leftovers of colonial perceptions in modern Belarusian Russian-language intellectual discourse.

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Vikerkaar 7–8/2008



"The best example of Estonian imaginary geography is the representation of landscape on Estonian banknotes. Banknotes are powerful ideological messengers, although we do not notice their political and cultural symbolism in everyday life. The design of the Estonian kroon emphasizes the national identification with the countryside and the continuity of tradition." Thus writes geographer Helen Sooväli in an issue

of *Vikerkaar* on cultural geography.

Interview: The late cultural geographer Denis Cosgrove (1948–2008) outlines how approaches to geography in parallel sciences are changing as well as how fashions have influenced its applications. "For a long time, geography and history were seen as two similar disciplines. Both of them are synthetic. One synthesized our knowledge of the world, the physical world, in terms of time, the other one in terms of space."

With the emergence of the new independent states in the postwar period, "the various ways that the nation displayed itself — or symbols of nationhood — became important in the objects of study and we know that landscape — particularly iconic landscapes of the nation — are always important dimensions."

Also: Linda Kaljundi discusses how the Estonian national awakening of the nineteenth century produced new images of ancient landscapes; and Ulrike Plath shows how the understanding of the homeland changed among the Baltic-German nobility in Estonia during the nineteenth century.

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Le Monde diplomatique (Berlin) 8/2008



In the current issue *Le Monde diplomatique* (Berlin), Julia Niemann describes how newspapers are waging an online battle for readers. The goal is to get as many clicks as possible, since that's what advertisers pay for.

Marie Bénhilde takes off from precisely this point. In order to attract more clicks, newspapers' websites rely heavily on images and (possible) half-truths. As the French case shows, there has been an increase in commercial online

news portals whose quality and independence is dubious. The days of old-school journalism are over.

There is another Internet battle for customers being fought, Hervé Le Crosnier observes: over data storage and processing. Increasingly, these tasks are moving from the home computer to online systems. While this could be an advantage for companies, the experience of private users already suggests that it means a loss of autonomy.

Art for hedgefunds: "The dissolution of the concept of art goes hand in hand with its economization", remarks [Sighard Neckel](#). The rules according to which art and finance functioned used to differ. Today, they have become indistinguishable to an outsider. Record sums are offered for artworks, which are seen as investments with a prospect of far greater returns than any share portfolio.

However a limit resides in the rules of art itself. The only way finance can become central to art is if it develops existing artistic currents. Hence, Damian Hirst's diamond-studded skull is to be seen less as an investment and more as a reflection on the relation between art and finance.

Also: [Ilija Trojanow](#) appeals for a humane future based on cultural exchange. "Whether we like it or not, engagement with what is foreign to us, with the Other, leads above all inwards, into one's self."

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Springerin 3/2008



Writing in *Springerin*, [Krystian Woznicki](#) notes that central organizing principles such as "community" have been redefined by globalization. Art faces the question of the representability of community — or rather, its unrepresentability. The latter includes the community of the excluded.

Referring to photographs by Bruno Serralongue, Woznicki suggests that the excluded are best represented as zombies: they appear as a community that wants to force its way into society. Their goals are unclear. "The unsettling, threatening 'we' constitutes itself in distinction to 'us'. Yet as a characteristic, this 'we' cannot really be comprehended, since it is not communicable." If we were all to look towards the same horizon, however, our gaze and theirs would converge. A new "we" would emerge.

Cultural journals in South America: Maria Berrios explains that the most important South American cultural journals emerged in opposition to authoritarian regimes. Translations were published that could be understood as critiques of the current situation and were used as what Berrios calls "public thought machines". Now, she laments, most journals have either been discontinued or moved to the web.

Contemporary art in Turkey: "In Turkey," writes [Süreyya Evren](#), "the perception of the 'Other' is always subject to control mechanisms that fear 'free-moving spirits'. Spirits are supposed to be subservient to the control of

official history and national identity. There is one discourse to which we all have to conform." Contemporary Turkish art opposes this by representing the Other and the "movement of their spirits". These spirits "shine in their absence"; yet their presence can be divined.

Also: Julia Gwendolyn Schneider describes how, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, art in Kyrgyzstan both responds to national politics and is influenced by art in neighbouring countries; Alice Creischer and Andreas Siekmann have visited the Dubai Art Fair and witnessed the globalization of the art system; and Anett Busch considers how viewer habits have changed thanks to YouTube and Co.

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Magyar Lettre Internationale 69 (2008)



The summer issue of *Magyar Lettre Internationale* features a dossier on photography's transformation of human bodies into political bodies. In her introduction, Gabriella Csizek asks what impact this process has on bodies, the photographer, and on photography itself. Photography, she writes, is both a private, intimate exercise and a public, political practice. This ambiguity is demonstrated by the relation between contemporary non-artistic photography and photography classified as art. Csizek continues by exploring the various processes behind contemporary photography: creation, mediatization, donation, communication, and reception.

Further articles include: Zoltán Kékesi's comments on literature and photography in László Márton's novel about the Holocaust, *Mainstreet in Shadow*; Miklós Peternák discusses the role of television in the Romanian revolution; and François Soulages writes on Lombroso, Bertillon, and Arbus.

India between modernity and tradition: Austrian theorist of religion [Adolf Holl](#) talks to Indian psychoanalyst and author [Sudhir Kakar](#) about the boundaries of the ego in Western and Indian culture; the male and female principles in Christianity and Hinduism; globalization and religious fundamentalism in contemporary India; and the role of the psychoanalyst-astrologer in the two cultures.

Also: [Ilija Trojanow](#) writes that Bombay's city administration uses the word "slum" to mean "encroachment". The laager mentality of Bombay's rich has led to a social apartheid where slums are cleared to make way — quite literally — for golf courses.

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Akadeemia 8/2008



The discovery of human embryonic stem cells makes it possible to create artificially any human cell types and to use them to cure many diseases for which there is no proper treatment today. But then there is the question of instrumentalization of humans. New technologies, for example the development of embryonic stem cells from adult somatic cells, do not simplify the problem but complicate it further, writes Toivo Maimets in *Akadeemia*. Maimets believes that a single agreement between different views is impossible to achieve. National legal regulations should be developed considering different cultural, religious, and social backgrounds of particular countries.

Freedom and the law: *Free* and *social* as principles are compatible from a legal perspective, claims Joachim Rückert. He approaches this through both philosophy and history, starting with Kant's definition of human as purpose and how there should be a general law of freedom. The classic example of legally enshrined freedom is 1789 is the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen*, where the philosophy of freedom became the law of freedom. In order to assess the concept as a whole, Rückert discusses the main economic programme of the era pointing out that Adam Smith, in *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776), seriously argues that freedom and well-being have a social meaning.

Also: Elmar Kirotar's diary series continued. It provides an insight into the functioning of the Republic of Estonia and the complicated international situation in the 1930s.

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Merkur 8/2008



In *Merkur*, Lee Harris examines the background of fundamentalist movements. Every culture believes its impact in the world to be greater than it actually is, he claims. This discrepancy creates imaginary worlds dreamt by people who are actually very powerful. As soon as this fantasy is shared by a group, an ideology — complete with symbols and rituals — is created that allows the group to act out a kind of role-play.

This role-play serves as a justification for one's own behaviour. According to Harris, al-Qaeda does not pursue a political goal but seeks to prove that God is on its side. America will be fighting a unilateral war as long as it fails to recognize that fantasy, and not poverty or lack of education, is the true root of fundamentalist terrorism.

The privatization of war: Private military companies provide illegal troop reinforcements and form armies that can be controlled without parliamentary influence, writes Thomas Speckmann. The downsizing of the military in western democracies is the paramount obstacle to fast and sustainable peacemaking in war regions, he continues. Some states, however, have already taken steps to legally prevent mercenaries — war is too important an issue to be left to the private sector.

Also: Horst Meier explains latest trends in discussions on the death penalty in China and the US; architect Christoph Mäckler reminisces about times when

the front door still had a socio-cultural meaning; and [Ralph Bollmann](#) tells the story of one great reformer — Kaiser Joseph II.

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