



## Eurozine Review

### Erring on the side of secrecy

*Index on Censorship* covers another chapter of the fruitless cartoon debate; *Glänta* pays attention to nature; *RiLi* picks over the debris of aviation's dreams; *Multitudes* calls on cognitarions of all lands; *L'Homme* misses women's lib in the 68 anniversary; *Edinburgh Review* takes Kafka's Prague down from the top shelf; *NZ* says Russian readers never had it so good as during Glasnost; *Osteuropa* doubts there's anything left in the pan-Slavic idea; *Mehr Licht* appeals to philosophy's transformative potential; and *Vikerkaar* uncovers the ancient origins of the telenovela.

## Index on Censorship 4/2009



Jytte Klausen talks to *Index on Censorship* about Yale University Press' decision to publish her book on the Danish cartoon crisis (*The Cartoons That Shook the World*, 2009) without reproductions of the cartoons themselves.

"When we launched the book I always had an agreement with the press that we would never detach the illustrations from the context of the book", Klausen reveals. "They would never be posted, they would never be removed from the book itself. And the book should not be a symbolic issue. So it's highly ironic that by this act of censorship on the part of Yale, they have turned my book into another chapter of this fruitless debate — and have in fact made it a symbolic issue."

"The whole point of the book is that the cartoon conflict has been misreported as an instance of where Muslims are confronted with bad pictures and spontaneous riots explode in anger. That is absolutely not the case. These images have been exploited by political groups in the pre-existing conflict over Islam. They have become not just a tool for extremism but also created a soap opera in the West about what Muslims 'do' with respect to pictures. Similarly, the cartoon episode also reinforced pre-existing prejudices about the things westerners do on the part of the broad Muslim middle class."

**US:** Obama has improved government transparency in several areas, yet his administration continues to suppress material documenting the abuse of foreign prisoners in US custody and illegal surveillance practices, writes Melissa Goodman. "Where disclosure would promote the view that his administration, as opposed to the prior one, is acting openly, legally and

wisely, Obama has erred on the side of disclosure. Where disclosure and openness would effectively fan the flames for holding Bush administration officials accountable for illegal activity, Obama has erred on the side of secrecy."

**Russia:** Dmitry Muratov, editor of *Novaya Gazeta*, explains to [Maria Eismont](#) why investigations into the murder of staff journalists are getting nowhere and why he pulled his correspondent out of Chechnya: "What are we getting from Chechnya now that Estemirova is dead? Nothing at all. We have no idea of what is going on there. But we shan't be risking lives. To me, Chechen independence isn't worth a single hair on a colleague's head."

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### Glänta 4/2009



*Glänta's* new issue on "Nature" — produced before but published after the Copenhagen summit — goes way beyond the current discussions on climate change. Thus, [Michael Azar](#) asks if man's home is in nature or in culture (answer: we are homeless); Stefan Foconi presents a brief philosophy of gardening, suggesting that the fascination of yardwork comes from its futility; and in a "musical swoon", Trinh T Minh-ha listens to the sound of "nature" (the word): "The natural *lies* at the edge of nature and culture."

**Art and climate change:** It is, however, difficult to discuss nature without also touching on the issue of climate change. In a conversation between curators and art critics, Danish cultural theorist Mikkel Bolt notes that the recent boom of art exhibitions dealing with nature clearly has to do with the public attention the climate crisis has received. The problem, says Bolt, is that these exhibitions tend to move within "the world of consensus-oriented ideology". The politics of contemporary art "is unfortunately not unreasonable" enough: "The micro-utopia of relational aesthetics [represented by for example Nicolas Bourriaud] is a paradigmatic example of how small ambitions are and how humble the demands."

**Ecological materialism:** What is natural is good; what is unnatural is bad — this simple dichotomy still dominates much of the debate on environmental issues. But such a fundamentalist justification for ecological politics is outdated, [writes](#) leading German Green MP [Jürgen Trittin](#). The ecological reform of the global economy must bring on board those with no interest in preserving nature *per se*. The more radical, "nature-oriented" and naive a demand is, the less likely it is to be realized and the more catastrophic the consequences will be.

**Also:** Camilla Flodin looks at the swine flu and Lars von Trier's *Antichrist* through the lens of Adorno; and photographer Tyrone Martinsson juxtaposes his own pictures of the Antarctic with those taken during Salomon August Andrée's polar expedition in 1896 — a project which is more than just another example of the effects of global warming.

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## Revue Internationale des Livres et des Idées 15 (2010)



In *RiLi*, Aude Vidal tackles a report on "The aeroplane: the dream, the potential and the uncertainty". Contributors from the aviation industry are disparaging of the "hysterical bias of eco-purists", frankly admitting the aim of ensuring that supply continues to meet demand. Preferable to this brutal assessment, writes Vidal, are philosophical approaches such as that of Xavier Guchet, who cites Orwell and Arendt on the dehumanizing powers of machines (e.g. biometric technology). The eighties thesis of air travel causing the ultimate extinction of humans remains a potent image: unmanned Afghan bomber drones remotely operated by humans whose reaction times still cannot be matched by robots.

Reducing greenhouse gas emissions is another important consideration, as is the finite nature of petrol resources and its impact on the cost of flying. Some contributors distinguish between "worthwhile" and "frivolous" travel, remarking on the modern tendency to pick the cheapest destination available. Philippe Ayoun asks whether "long-distance tourism impacts negatively on our own tourist industry", driving up property prices and increasing pollution. We must drop the middle-class western notion of "hyper-mobility", writes Ayoun, which causes global fuel prices to soar to the detriment of living standards in poorer countries.

**The climate of history:** While freedom has been the most important motif of accounts of human history since the Enlightenment, writes Dipesh Chakrabarty, there has never been an awareness of the geological agency human beings were gaining through processes linked to their acquisition of freedom. Whatever the rights we wish to celebrate, we cannot destabilize conditions that work like boundary parameters of human existence.

**Also:** Yves Citton explores how the Left can turn its traditional tolerance and awkwardness (*mal-à-droite*) — as contrasted with the certainties and self-possession of the Right — to its advantage; and Partha Chatterjee discusses post-colonial India.

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## Multitudes 39 (2010)



Last year's strikes in French universities, the longest-ever, were mirrored in many other European countries. Running through the latest issue of *Multitudes*, devoted to the crisis in education, is the thesis that while French and European government policies are to be blamed in the short term, the ultimate cause is the rise of a "knowledge economy". "Universities", writes Yves Citton in his introduction, "are for cognitive capitalism what factories were for industrial capitalism: crucial locations for the production and concentration of wealth".

Yet this also makes them the natural site for resistance to encroaching capitalism, and for the development of alternatives. One method is to publish under group pseudonyms, as proposed in an article signed "Bourfouka". This

sidesteps the competitive evaluation of researchers by the number of papers they have published.

**Perma–temps and cognitarians:** Christopher Newfield explores the stratification of the knowledge economy, as it has developed in the US. Only a small "creative class" achieves the independence, creativity and freedom attributed by stereotype to all knowledge workers. Below this elite exist far more numerous insecure and poorly–rewarded "perma–temps". Their skills have been commodified, and so they become interchangeable and exploitable.

Beyond the Ivy League and other elite universities, most American higher education is devoted to training students in commodity skills, preparing them for a working life at the mercy of the corporations employing them, writes Newfield. Those teaching them are in an even more precarious system: young researchers can expect to spend much of their academic career on short–term contracts with little job security.

Like the proletariat of an earlier era, the "cognitariat" powers economic growth while receiving little in return. Davy Cottet, Jon Bernat Zubiri–Rey and Patrick Sauvel see the university protests of 2009 as a marker of the increasing self–awareness of this group. "The academic cognitariat is engaged in collective reflection on the role it plays, or should play, in our society."

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## L'Homme 2/2009



As the wave of memoirs and publications on '68 ebbs, European journal for feminist history *L'Homme* reflects on a conspicuous gap in the academic and media debate: "Gender dimensions and relations ranged from being underexposed to being blanked out altogether, or were dealt with by simple reference to the New Women's Movement", writes editor [Ingrid Bauer](#).

Analyses of the treatment of '68 in the press, TV and radio in Germany, Switzerland, Austria and the Netherlands can be summed up by Hedy d'Ancona's question: "Where is women's emancipation in articles recalling May 1968?"

**Feminism as security risk:** How were feminists and female terrorists perceived in the security discourse of the 1970s? asks Irene Bandhauer–Schöffmann. "Witches, Amazons, gun–toting molls, perverted feminists, brutal terror girls" — these are the fear–loaded, aggressive and distinctly sexualized images of women purveyed by German–language media in their coverage of the Red Army Faction and the Bewegung 2. Juni. Mainstream media and official reports clearly linked female terrorism with a perverted, excessive feminism and were intended to discredit the aims and actors of the feminist movement: "The medial conjunction of feminism and terrorism and the representation of murderous women framed the entire feminist movement as a security risk; it was aimed at women who did not conform to hegemonic standardization."

This dramatically changed in the security discourse after 9/11, "which did not dwell upon *menacing* women, but portrayed *menaced* women who had to be

protected by Western men against backward, Islamic men. Legitimation strategies for the war against terror and against so called 'rogue states' were essentially based on the representation of the female and the defence of (western) women's rights."

**Also:** Claudia Kraft on the role of the category "gender" in the democratization processes in eastern and western Europe since 1968.

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### Edinburgh Review 128 (2010)



How has it come about that Prague, "this most history-ridden of cities" should be "the closest Europe can offer to history-less Las Vegas"? For [James Hawes](#), writing in *Edinburgh Review*, it can be explained in one word: repression. The Czech capital's architectural debt to greater Germany; its authoritarian past during the Habsburg era; the fact that it was the Czechs, not the Germans, who were the anti-Semites in

Prague — these unwelcome truths are bad for business, writes Hawes.

This repression extends to the reputation of Prague's most famous son. In his biography *Excavating Kafka* (2008), Hawes controversially attested to a blindness in Kafka studies, specifically towards the fact that Kafka's first publisher, Franz Blei, had a sideline as a pornographer, and that Kafka was an avid subscriber. Also repressed, according to Hawes, is Kafka's pro-German sympathies: he invested large sums of money in the Austro-German war effort and founded a sanatorium for German speaking soldiers. "The good soldier Schweyk, no matter how shell-shocked, would simply not have made Kafka's linguistic cut."

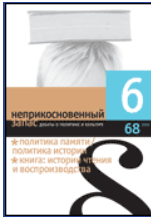
"The fate of the truth about Kafka makes it seem [...] vaguely proper, if endlessly sad, that Prague has become what it is: a place of booze, brothels and endless tourist shops selling babushka dolls to overnight trippers unable to distinguish between Czech and Russian culture. The facts will be efficiently repressed in the name of business, locked away in some lumber-room of the mind, like Josef K.'s sado-masochistic vision in *The Trial*, wiped clean by the kerosene wake of the Ryanair flight home."

**Czech literature:** Jan Culik on how the arts react to the "political kitsch" in Czech politics post-89; Ritchie Robinson on Kafka as an international writer and his first English language translators, the Scottish couple Willa and Edwin Muir; fiction by Jáchym Topol, Milos Urban and Hana Sklenková; and photographs by Michal Maku.

**Po-mo RIP:** Novelist Ewan Morrison on the dilemmas of a post-postmodernist: "I find myself in an impasse: there can be no going back to old certainties. [...] My voice is just another in the shopping mall. Yet I don't want my work to add to the stockpile of the already endlessly recycled."

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## Neprikosnovennij Zapas (NZ) (6/2009)



The latest issue of *NZ* offers fresh insights into writing and book–production in Soviet and post–Soviet Russia. Yuri Senokosov, head of the publishing programme at the Moscow School of Political Research, argues that if liberalization is to be encouraged, Russia's political lexicon needs serious revision and analysis.

Whereas, for example, the English language offers three words to denote the political sphere ("politics", "policy" and "polity"), Russian has only one word — which can inhibit clarity of expression. Equally, a paucity of language, as well as fear of potential political chaos, may explain the current attraction of neo–Slavophile and communalist thinking, and the popularity of traditional (monarchist or religious) ideas.

Vadim Kostrov, the former head of publications of the CPSU Central Committee, points out to Nikolai Mitrokhin the remarkable success of the mass production of cheap state newspapers and books, particularly during *glasnost* and *perestroika*, when "half of the party's budget came from the publishing sector". And Andrei Zakharov discusses the prospects for the survival of the printed word with philosopher and literary critic Leonid Karasaev. "Books are the best tools for concentrating and transmitting meaning," remarks Karasaev.

**Falsifying history:** Galina Mikhaleva considers the impact of largely populist and uncritical attempts to re–evaluate the Soviet past in Russia. The recent creation of a presidential commission to monitor attempts to "falsify history" in a way "detrimental to Russia's prestige abroad" is an example of how the country is seeking to establish an ideological base for its aspirations to become an "energy empire".

**Also:** As Auschwitz draws attention away from the still greater horrors of Treblinka, the Gulag distracts us from the Soviet policies that killed people directly and purposefully, by starvation and bullets, [writes](#) historian [Timothy Snyder](#).

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## Osteuropa 12/2009



The idea that all Slavs or Slavophones are united across space and time comes in many forms, writes [Stefan Troebst](#) in an issue of *Osteuropa* on "The Slavic idea after pan–Slavism". "Slavicity" periodically acts as an instrument of political mobilization and remains a highly productive myth in art and literature. Nevertheless, the emergence of an "all–Slavic" movement, as envisioned by writers, artists and political activists since the first half of the nineteenth century, is no more likely than the Bulgarians deciding, for pragmatic reasons, to give up the Cyrillic script — a genuinely Bulgarian "invention" — in favour of the Latin one.

"Judging from the many, frequently successful revivals of the 'Slavic' idea in the twentieth century, a 'renaissance' [...] in the

twenty-first century is likely to be a political and cultural option; yet [...] at the most in a part-Slavic, i.e. bi-lateral or regional form", writes Troebst. "In the age of nationhood, the end of which is not foreseeable despite European integration and accelerated globalization, the asymmetry between Russia — as the '(eastern) Slavic' empire — and the western and southern Slavic national movements, or rather medium-size, small and micro Slavophone states, is too dominant — not to mention the differences in political system, economic structure and legal culture. This, and not the EU/non-EU border, is currently the real division between the Slavophone nations."

**Also:** Georg von Rauch documents Soviet pan-Slavism as a tactical weapon; Frank Hadler suggests "rational state historicism" over the evocation of the "Slavic"; and Agnieszka Gasior depicts Alfons Mucha's monumental "Slav Epic" as a call to overcome narrow nationalism and to redeem humanity.

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### Mehr Licht! 35 (2009)



Mira Meksi, editor-in-chief of Albanian journal *Mehr Licht*, regrets the state of philosophy publishing in her country: secondary literature abounds but the original works themselves remain untranslated. Publishers operate a scattergun approach, lacking any sense of historical development in the field and responding entirely to intellectual fashion. Hence the predominance of the "scandalous" Nietzsche, whose works are read with "something between half-comprehension and incomprehension". This leads to scepticism and indifference, with readers concluding that philosophy is "a waste of time or an unattainable luxury".

Philosophy in Albania peaked in the 1930s, "when for the first time Albanians could read distinguished thinkers of both the western and eastern worlds in their mother tongue". Under communism, philosophy suffered as ideological factors and cultural politics meant publications followed "a predefined programme set by the politically empowered caste". Like in revolutionary China, in Albania the political leadership, wholly ignorant of philosophy, promoted the thought of its ideologues as "trailblazing". This tactic differed from other communist satellite states, writes Meksi, where the elites preferred to denigrate prohibited thinkers as the best proof against their eventual emergence.

So "do we really need philosophy?" asks Meksi. Undoubtedly, since "it greatly assists not only the formation of individual life perspectives, but also of society and the emancipation of its mindset". To change the attitudes and worldview of society, "changing the mindset of an individual or group of individuals is not sufficient. What is required is change of at least the majority of society, and that would be greatly facilitated by the ongoing presence of philosophy and philosophical editions at highest level."

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