ГРАНИ СОТРУДНИЧЕСТВА:
РОССИЯ И СЕВЕРНАЯ ЕВРОПА

RUSSIA AND NORTHERN EUROPE:
FACETS OF COOPERATION

Сборник научных статей

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A SHOWPIECE OF UNIVERSITY COOPERATION. ACADEMIC COOPERATION BETWEEN THE DEPARTMENT OF NORDIC HISTORY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PETROZAVODSK AND THE DEPARTMENTS OF HISTORY AT THE UNIVERSITIES IN TURKU

From the Soviet-Finnish Conferences of Historians to Diversified Russian-Finnish Cooperation

The Soviet-Finnish symposiums of historians, which were arranged under the Working Group on History of the Bilateral scientific-technical cooperation committee, formed a starting point for relations also between historians from Petrozavodsk and Turku. Nevertheless, despite of their contacts during these symposiums and seminars, relations between notably these two university cities remained thin during the Soviet time. On the Soviet side, cooperation was centred in the Academy of Sciences and its units in Moscow, Leningrad and Tallinn. On the Finnish side, the universities of Helsinki and Joensuu played the leading role in Soviet relations, even though a number of Turku professors participated actively in these meetings. For example, the enquiry of the Turku University Association of the Society Finland — the Soviet Union in autumn 1988 gave as a result that only two out of 71 units leaving an answer, out of 136 units together, namely folklore and biology, notified of contacts with Petrozavodsk and even these were with the Karelian Filial of the Academy of Sciences.

In Soviet Karelia, since 1991 the Republic of Karelia, the political turmoil in the late 1980s and in the 1990s brought about intense endeavour to develop relations with the neighbouring Nordic countries and especially with Finland. Starting from the early 1990s, the Nordic countries developed schemes for cooperation with the North-Western parts of the former Soviet Union, which schemes took into account the needs of universities more than former cooperation
had done. The new circumstances, even though the 1990s was a time of extreme hardships for the Russian academic community, were, nevertheless, in many respects also inclined to promote new initiatives for developing relations between North-Western Russia and the Nordic countries. For example, while during the Soviet time the Karelian Filial of the Academy of Sciences (currently the Karelian Research Centre of the Russian Academy of sciences) had arranged only one Soviet-Finnish symposium of historians (1981), the Faculty of History at the University of Petrozavodsk arranged two large international conferences in the 1990s, namely the conference on the history of the World War II in Karelia, Polar regions and Finland (1994) and a Nordic conference in 1997. The tradition was followed by the large Russian-Finnish conference in 2009 as a part of the bicentenary events commemorating the statehood of Finland.

For the emergence and development of academic cooperation networks, like the present one between Petrozavodsk and Turku, individual events are very often of crucial significance. The origin of the present cooperation dates back to the seminar «Karelia, Zapoljarie and Finland during the Second World War», convened in Petrozavodsk in June 1994. During that seminar the co-author of this article, Dr. Tapani Paavonen, and Sergey Verigin, Dean of the Faculty of History at the Petrozavodsk State University, agreed upon to seek ways of developing further cooperation. In the beginning, modest-sized financing channels were found in the first place in the Nordic Council of Ministers cooperation scheme for neighbouring areas.

There are no bilateral agreements between the Petrozavodsk State University and the universities in Turku, like the Petrozavodsk State University maintains with almost all Finnish universities. In Autumn 2005 we, the co-author of this article Dr. Tapani Paavonen and Dean Sergey Verigin visited Rector Keijo Paunio of the University of Turku and presented a draft agreement for cooperation, prepared at the Petrozavodsk State University. The draft agreement comprised exchange of researchers, students and teachers plus other forms of cooperation. The Rector invited us to coffee and bun and discussed friendly with us. Nevertheless, the university was seemingly reluctant to be engaged in new cooperation agreements with economic commitments. In Spring 1998, Rector Keijo Virtanen of the University of Turku signed, on request by Nikolai Toivonen, Vice-Rector for
international relations of the Petrozavodsk State University, an Endorsement Letter, expressing the university's interest to participate in the activities of the Northern European Open University to be established by the Petrozavodsk State University. The document ended in the reservation: «At this stage no financial commitments are agreed on by the partners».

**Improvised Teacher Exchange, 1995—1998**

The early teacher exchange was financed mainly through the Nordic Scholarship Scheme for the Baltic Countries and Northwest Russia under the Nordic Council of Ministers, within which academic private persons and departments could apply for appropriations for small-sized projects. During 1995—1998, there was a three-year period of teacher exchange between, on one hand, the departmental units of history at the University of Turku and Åbo Akademi, but carried out in practice mainly by the Department of Contemporary History (Poliittisen historian laitos) at the University of Turku, and, on the other, the Laboratory for Nordic Studies at the Petrozavodsk State University. The exchange was improvised activity based on individual interest and intellectual curiosity by the participating persons. In spite of the modest scale and provisional nature of the activity, it was, however, of crucial significance for the emergence of institutionalized exchange later on.

In the academic years 1995/96, 1996/97 and 1997/98 co-author of this article Tapani Paavonen, who in practice run the exchange, visited Petrozavodsk and gave a Finnish-language lecture course on the Finnish political history in the 20th century, notably since World War II. The lecture courses formed a study module, sized about one to one and half present credit points, and were directed to students of the educational programme of Finnish/Nordic studies. The students were seemingly interested in the course, especially those who were dedicated to studies of the Finnish language.

In return, a Petrozavodsk lecturer visited the University of Turku during the same academic years, giving a lecture course sized as one study week of that time, or two present credit points. Dean Sergey Verigin gave, in Autumn 1995, an English-language course on the Russian political history in the 20th Century. In Spring 1997, Dr. Ilya Solomeshch gave a Finnish-language course on the Russian historiography on Finland from the 19th century up to the present. In
early 1998 Dr. Yuri Kilin gave a Finnish-language course on the Soviet military and foreign policy on Finland prior to and during World War II. Next year he gave the same course at the Department of History at Åbo Akademi but in English; this visit was arranged by Professor Sune Jungar.

Raising financing for the exchange, separately for each round, was always an effort of its own. The basic financing was raised mainly from the Nordic Council of Ministers scheme. The departmental units of history at the University of Turku and Åbo Akademi together answered for the rest. In 1998, however, the old NCM scheme was cancelled (after the application round was declared and the application was submitted!). Thereafter, we submitted a couple of applications within the new NCM schemes but we were not successful to gather convincing enough a consortium of institutions in the Nordic and neighbouring countries; the new schemes also seemed to favour professional training instead of academic studies. Thus, teacher exchange was suspended for a number of years.

**Student and Teacher Exchange within FIRST and other schemes**

Finland and the universities in Turku joined the ERASMUS exchange programme of the European Communities/European Union with regard to member countries of the European Economic Area from Autumn 1992 onwards. Since the EU or the NCM had no similar exchange programme with regard to Russia, the Centre for International Mobility (CIMO) under the Finnish Ministry of Education established in 2000 the FIRST\(^1\) programme for student mobility with Russia.

The international offices of Åbo Akademi, the University of Turku and the then still independent Turku School of Economics started immediately preparations for a common FIRST programme. The international secretary of the University of Turku, Ms. Irinja Paakkanen contacted the co-author of this article Tapani Paavonen to include the Petrozavodsk State University into the programme. The

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\(^1\) Finnish-Russian Student Exchange Programme.
universities in Turku submitted a common application\(^1\) among the first ones, in Spring 2000, but only the next application round next year was successful. Associate Professor Ilya Solomeshch at the Department of Nordic History became the FIRST contact person in Petrozavodsk, working in close contact with the Directorate for International cooperation at the Petrozavodsk State university. The latter, headed by Ms. Liudmila Kulikovskaya, provides smooth and effective administrative support.

FIRST student exchange between the University of Turku and the Petrozavodsk State University has functioned regularly from the academic year 2001/02 onwards. Student flows have, however, developed unbalanced. From Petrozavodsk, almost annually one or two students of Nordic history have arrived to Turku, while the flow of Turku FIRST students has focused mostly on St. Petersburg. Russian FIRST students are received by the University of Turku but they can exercise studies at Åbo Akademi as well.

From the academic year 2001/02 up to now, ca. 20 students used the opportunities provided by FIRST and Erasmus schemes for at least one semester long stay at the partner university.

From the academic year 2003/04 onwards, FIRST was enlarged to comprise also teacher exchange. Again, Ms. Irinja Paakkanen contacted the co-author of this article to enlarge the scope of the Petrozavodsk exchange accordingly. The first round of application was failure in this respect but from the academic year 2004/05 onwards the appropriation was granted. Teacher exchange was thus resumed but now within an institutionalized framework which provides a firmer basis with regard to continuity than the earlier improvised arrangements.

In Spring 2005 and in Spring 2006, the co-author of this article Tapani Paavonen visited the Petrozavodsk State University and gave at the Department of Nordic History a Finnish-language lecture course on the developments of the Finnish society notably in the era of welfare state, sized as one credit point. The focus of the course was, thus, transferred to the economic and social developments, which better complemented the departmental syllabus proper. Thereafter, he

\(^1\) At the beginning the project was coordinated by the International Office of Åbo Akademi, but already in 2004 the responsibility was transferred to the University of Turku.
has carried out a lecture visit in May 2009, May 2010, May 2011 and May 2012, thus far, with a lecture course of one credit point. The course was, however, changed to an English-language one since it was discernible that nowadays the studying youth of North-Western Russia is more interested in English studies than studies in the neighbour country’s language — like the Finnish students with regard to Swedish. The topic of the course has dealt with the history of European integration and the Finnish societal history.

Also lecture visits from Petrozavodsk to Turku have again been arranged from the academic year 2004/05 onwards. In the 2000s, the departmental unit of Contemporary History (poliittinen historia) at the University of Turku has responded for the exchange alone, but the courses have been included also into the syllabi of the other departmental units of history in Turku. The Petrozavodsk teacher has given a course of two credit points at each time. In Spring 2005, Associate Professor Galina Tyun gave a course on Russian politics in the Caucasus. From 2007 on, Associate Professor Ilya Solomeshch has visited Turku relatively regularly. Thus far, he has given a lecture course on the Russian historiography on Finland in January 2007, in November — December 2009 in January — February 2011 and in January — February 2012. The lecture course was given in Finnish, except in 2009 in English.

From the academic year 2008/09 on, the Graduate School on Russian and East European Studies, coordinated by the Aleksanteri Institute at the University of Helsinki, has declared applications for arranging instruction by Finnish university departments on the School’s terms of reference. Thus far, the departmental unit of Contemporary History at the University of Turku has once been participant in the instruction scheme. In early 2009, Dean Sergey Verigin gave in Turku an English-language lecture course, two credit points, on the Russian political history from the early 20th century up to the present. The lecture course is scheduled also for the academic year 2012/13.

**Doctoral Students Exchange within Triple I**

The International Office of the University of Turku or, more exactly, Ms. Irinja Paakkanen, nowadays the Head of the International Office, coordinates from the academic year 2008/09 on the Europe-wide Triple I project in the framework of the EU programme Erasmus
Mundus Action 2. *I.a.*, the Petrozavodsk State university was included into the project from the very beginning. Triple I supports mobility between universities in Western Europe and Russia.

The Contemporary History at the University of Turku and the Department of Nordic History at the University of Petrozavodsk have participated in Triple I project from the academic year 2010/11 on. At the beginning of 2011, MA Andrei Muraviev arrived to Turku as the first Triple I PhD student grantee between our departments.

**Petrozavodsk — Turku Cooperation — Visions for the future**

Exchange has been integrated into the syllabi of participating departments and, in accordance with the FIRST regulations, all accomplishments of the exchange students are fully recognised in their curricula and recorded into the students’ study performances register at the home university. Teacher exchange has consisted of entire study modules, albeit modest-sized ones.

It is noteworthy that during the last academic years, exchange students coming to Petrozavodsk from Turku to other faculties than the Faculty of history, quite frequently choose courses offered by the Faculty of history as well. This trend, through its synergetic effect, might well serve to the benefit of balancing flows. One of the most crucial challenges for the Petrozavodsk State University in this respect is enlargement of the number of courses offered in English on regular basis.

The current state of academic cooperation, despite of its limited numerical range in terms of in- and outcoming flows, is highly appreciated by the both sides. Currently, it tends to cover all fields and aspects of the university life, i.e. student and teachers mobility, teaching and research. For the Petrozavodsk State university in particular this cooperation is also positively viewed within the ongoing process of adjustment to the Bologna system.

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1 Selected projects for Action 2 and External Cooperation Window. URL: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus_mundus/results_compendia/selected_projects_action_2_en.php (Read on November 22, 2011); Turun yliopisto, Vaihto-ohjelmat Venäjälle. URL: http://www.utu.fi/opiskelu/kv/vaihdot/eurooppa/venaja/ (Read on November 22, 2011).
Academic mobility between the Universities of Turku and the Petrozavodsk State university, based at this stage primarily on the FIRST and Triple I schemes, facilitates the process of internationalisation of students and young faculty members, enhances their motivation for high standard performance.